

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 1 of 78

- [1- Truss Pros Help Wanted Ad](#)
- [2- Weekly Church Calendar](#)
- [3- Bethesda Lutheran Church Ad](#)
- [3- New Deal Tire Help Wanted Ad](#)
- [4- Sunday Extras](#)
- [23- SD News Watch: Schools seek ways to overcome COVID-19 learning loss](#)
- [27- Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller](#)
- [32- Noem Waives Hours of Service Regulations to Deal with Fuel Shortage](#)
- [33- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [34- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [35- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [36- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [38- EarthTalk -Climate Change on National Parks](#)
- [39- Redfield Jr. Legion Runs Away With Early Lead In Victory](#)
- [40- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [41- Weather Pages](#)
- [44- Daily Devotional](#)
- [45- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [46- News from the Associated Press](#)





**HOW
HIRING!**

Day shift and night shift assemblers!

**Competitive starting wage
with monthly tier increases!
Full benefit package!**

To apply:
www.uslbm.com/careers or
call Diane at 605-448-2929

Britton



TRUSS PROS
A Division of **US**



**Precision
Wall Systems**
A Division of **US**



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 2 of 78

United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, July 18, 2021

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

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM
Conde Ad Council 5:00 PM

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM
Groton Ad Council 7:00 PM

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Newsletter Items Due

Sunday, July 25, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Serve Sunday Mission Project in Groton 9:30 AM
NO Groton 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)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, July 18, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship/Communion

Monday, July 19, 2021

6:30 a.m.: Bible Study

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Newsletter Items Due

Sunday, July 25, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, July 18, 2021

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

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Quilting, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 25, 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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 3 of 78



"Tea - A Taste of Happiness"

Ladies' Luncheon & Program
Wednesday, July 21st at Noon
Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol
Silent Auction at 10:30

Door Prizes

Skit by the WELCA members
Advance tickets required: \$10

Call Kay Espeland 605-492-3507
Alice Jean Peterson 605-216-2835

Full or Part time help
wanted. Must be able
to lift 50lbs. Usual
hours Monday-Friday
8 to 5.

\$15/hr starting wage.
Contact Bob Wegner at
New Deal Tire Groton,
SD.

605-397-7579

HELP

WANTED!

(0711.0808)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 4 of 78



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

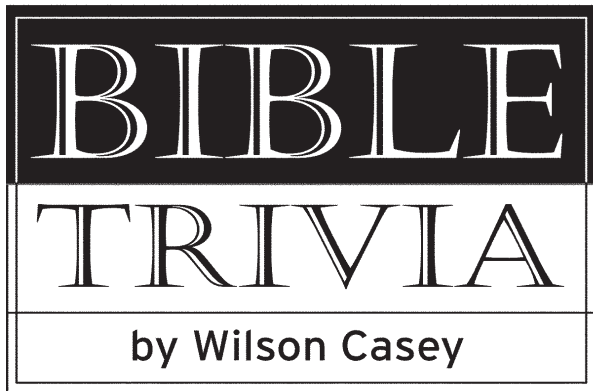
🌀 ACTS 17: 30-31 🌀

© 2021 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 5 of 78



1) Is the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2) Where is "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" found? *Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians, 1 Timothy*

3. Who asked God, "Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable?" ? *Moses, Jeremiah, Abraham, Noah*

4. How many angels rescued Lot and his family from Sodom? *2, 7, 13, Dozens*

5. Where is the story of the burning bush found? *Genesis, Exodus, Luke, John*

6. What is the longest Psalm in the Bible (KJV)? *1st, 23rd, 119th, 130th*

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Galatians 6:7; 3) Jeremiah 15:18; 4) 2; 5) Exodus; 6) 119th

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

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.



by Healthy Exchanges

Zucchini Ham Pasta Salad

When the temperature and the heat index create readings of 100 F in the shade, you definitely need a plan of action for supper that doesn't add to the problem. Bring this to the supper table and see if you don't become an instant hero!

1 1/2 cups cold cooked rotini pasta, rinsed and drained

1 cup chopped unpeeled zucchini

1 1/2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved

1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms

3/4 cup fat-free Ranch dressing

1/4 cup fat-free mayonnaise

1/4 cup reduced-fat Parmesan cheese

3/4 cup reduced-fat Cheddar cheese

1 1/2 cups diced 97% fat-free ham

1. In a large bowl, mix Ranch dressing, mayonnaise and Parmesan cheese. Add rotini pasta, zucchini, tomatoes and mushrooms. Mix well to combine. Stir in Cheddar cheese and ham.

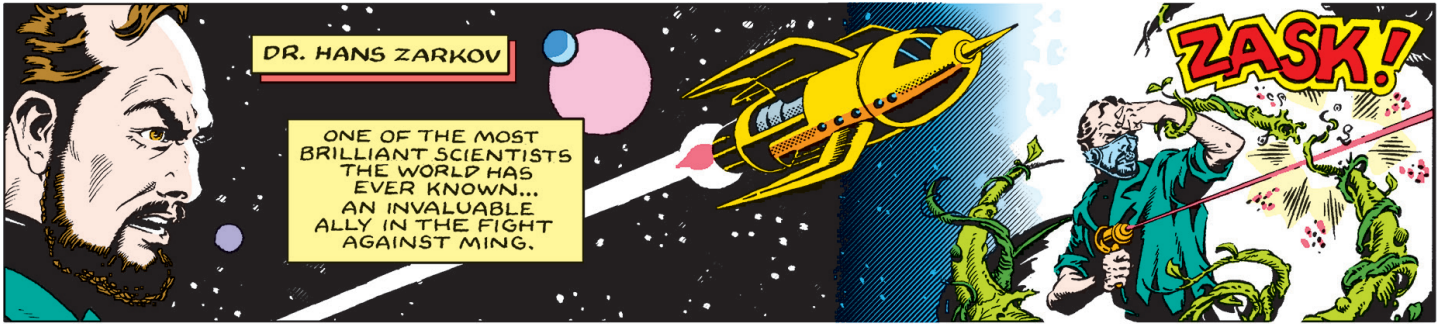
2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Gently stir again just before serving. Serves 6 (1 full cup each).

* Each serving equals: 151 calories, 3g fat, 7g protein, 24g carb., 557mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Meat, 1 Starch, 1 Vegetable.

(c) 2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 6 of 78



FLASH GORDON
By JIM KEEFE
7-11

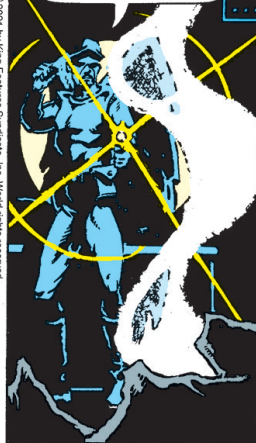
THE ONLY FUNCTIONING MEMBER OF THE SEARCH PARTY STILL REMAINING, CAPTAIN RANOK CONFERS WITH DOCTOR ZARKOV BACK AT BASE CAMP.

HOW IS VULTAN FARING, CAPTAIN? NOT GOOD.
HE NEEDS MEDICINE FROM THE SHIP FAST OR ELSE HE'LL DIE.



WAIT, I'VE FOUND SOMETHING. HEAT IS COMING UP THROUGH A BREACH IN THE HULL.

IT OPENS UP INTO A SHAFT BURROWED RIGHT INTO THE MOUNTAIN.



THEN THAT'S WHERE THE LIZARD-MEN MUST HAVE TAKEN FLASH AND THE LIEUTENANT.

CAPTAIN, YOU HAVE TO SEAL IT UP UNTIL WE HAVE A PLAN OF ATTACK.



WE HAVE TO FLY UP TO THEM, HANS. WE'RE OF NO HELP DOWN HERE.

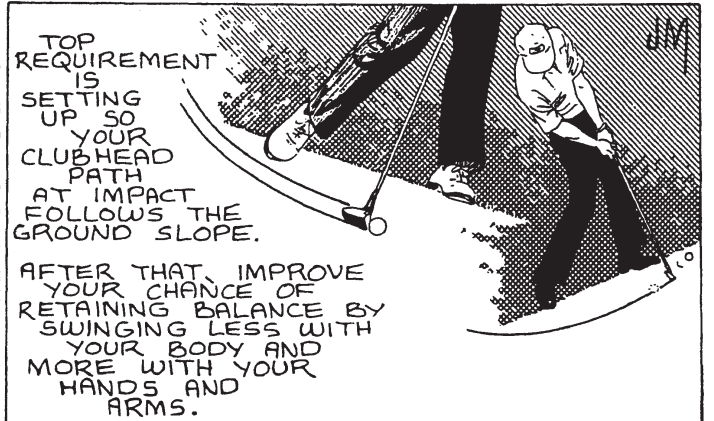
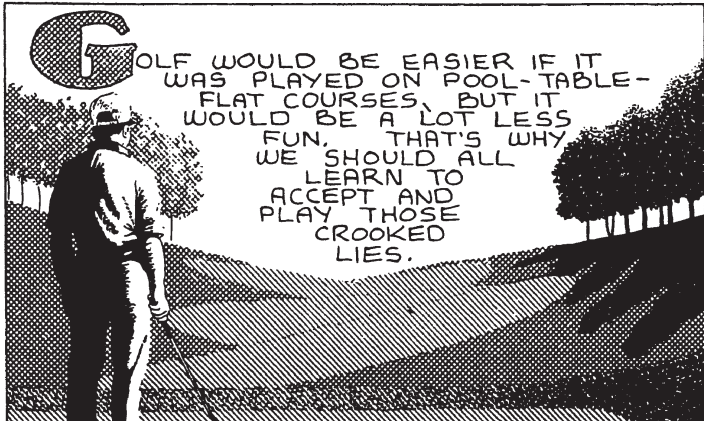
IT WOULD BE SUICIDE IN THIS STORM. CHANCES ARE WE'D END UP CRASHING RIGHT INTO THE MOUNTAIN.



IF WE CAN'T FLY, THEN MAYBE THERE'S ANOTHER WAY...

TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Paraplegic Battles UTIs

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a paraplegic due to a spinal cord injury back in 1979. I battle one UTI after another, and I am becoming immune to most antibiotics. Why the constant infections? My urologist just ordered a CT scan, but seems uninterested in me as a patient. I am sick of being sick. I straight catheterize four times a day usually. It's getting very hard for them to match the antibiotic to the culture. At times the infections are so bad I get "foggy headed." These times I am in misery. The last time I went to the ER hoping it wasn't sepsis. They gave me antibiotics. I can't keep running to the ER. My copays are too much. Maybe I need a doctor who specializes in working with people who have a spinal cord injury. -- Anon.

ANSWER: Regular drainage of the bladder with a "straight catheter" is the most effective way to reduce the risk of urine infections in a person with a spinal cord injury, but it is not perfect. People may still get bacteria in the bladder. Although it may be worthwhile to review your catheterization technique with an expert, it's possible to get infections even with perfect technique.

You haven't become immune to antibiotics, but the frequent use of powerful antibiotics will make you colonized with resistant bacteria, so that if you do get an infection, it's likely to be with a difficult-to-treat organism.

The CT scan is a good idea to see whether there is an anatomic reason for recurrent (or persistent) infections. I am disappointed to hear your urologist does not seem to be doing his or her best for you.

Recurrent infections are dangerous. Becoming foggy headed is a sign of serious systemic infection, and sepsis (a dysfunctional body response to infection) is life-threatening. Some people take antibiotics to prevent infection. Often, these are rotated to reduce resistance.

A urologist experienced in spinal cord injury, perhaps in consultation with an infectious disease doctor, would be ideal.

DEAR DR. ROACH: When is the best time of day to take things like fish oil, vitamin D3 and calcium supplements? -- M.W.R.

ANSWER: There is moderately strong evidence that fish, or fish oils, may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. One or two servings a week of oily fish provides about as much benefit as more. For people who don't want to eat fish but want the benefit, a fish oil supplement daily (of about 1 gram) provides some of the benefit. I recommend taking it with meals to minimize the side effect of "fish burp" and to maximize absorption.

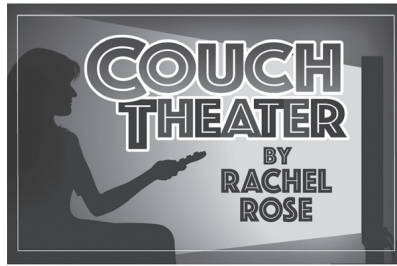
Vitamin D, given to people at risk for deficiency or with proven deficiency, also should be given with meals to improve absorption. Vitamin D is also needed for some people with inability to absorb vitamins properly. I recommend once-daily dosing with the largest meal of the day.

I seldom prescribe calcium supplements anymore. Recent data suggest that vitamin D and calcium together actually increased stroke risk. While vitamin D is important for bone health and is very difficult to get through food, calcium should be consumed as food, not as supplements. In addition to dairy products, many seeds, legumes, almonds and sardines are excellent calcium sources.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 8 of 78



The Movies That Made Us, Season 2 — There was a time when the phrase “Run, Forrest, Run!” meant nothing, and the idea of a time machine built out of a DeLorean seemed a ridiculous notion. But for GenX viewers, it is hard to remember life before these big-screen gems that were so much a part of our formative years. Playing to our love for pop culture nostalgia, this docuseries reveals more behind-the-scenes insight for some of the biggest films of the 1980s and 1990s. Through interviews with members of production crew, each 50-minute episode highlights one movie’s lifespan from creation to its lasting legacy. Films highlighted this season include “Forrest Gump,” “Jurassic Park,” “Pretty Woman,” and “Back to the Future.” (Netflix)

Schmigadoon! — When a young couple take a hike in the woods to discuss the status of their relationship, they magically and mistakenly find themselves stuck in another land called Schmigadoon. It’s a weird but overly happy land where everything is old-timey musical theater. The couple cannot leave Schmigadoon until they find true love — either with each other or with someone new. It’s sort of like “The Wizard of Oz” meets “Pleasantville,” as played by “Saturday Night Live” alumni. The six-episode series stars Cecily Strong and Keegan-Michael Key as the couple, but supporting cast Kristin Chenoweth and Alan Cumming keep it interesting. (Apple TV+)

Golden: The Journey of USA’s Elite Gymnasts — Before the 2021 Summer Olympics commence, rev up your enthusiasm for Team USA with this six-part docuseries. In a profile of five top contenders among the mighty women of gymnastics, watch as they train during the pandemic, battle the mental and physical tolls of this highly competitive sport, and face the National Team selection committee. They

have only one chance to be perfect ... who will come out on top? (Peacock)

Through Our Eyes — Intended for adult viewers and accompanied children aged 9 and older, this docuseries is the first from Sesame Workshop. It unpacks and explores some of today’s toughest social issues through the perspectives of children. The four-part series shows how these kids are directly affected by each issue, rather than simply discussing them on a rhetorical level. Parental incarceration, family homelessness perils and various localized effects of climate change are covered. Sesame Workshop aims to build empathy for families in crisis through the series and assure those experiencing hardships that they are not alone. (HBO Max)



Apple Inc.

Martin Short in “Schmigadoon!”

Walking With Dinosaurs: The Movie (PG) — Take a journey back 70 million years or so to watch the story of young Patchi, the runt in a litter of Pachyrhinosaurus hatchlings. Voiced by Justin Long, Patchi vies to impress a female interest, Juniper, is attacked by a bigger dinosaur, and migrates south with the herd of a protector friend, Bulldust. Obstacles must be overcome along the way and chaos ensues featuring a gaggle of dinosaur creatures. Realistic CGI dinosaurs are placed in real-life locales filmed in Alaska and New Zealand, providing a visually impressive live action/animation hybrid. (Disney+)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 9 of 78



1. What was the original name of "The Macarena"?
2. Lionel Richie's "Say You, Say Me" was the title song for what film in 1986?
3. How did Spandau Ballet get their name?
4. Who released "Last Night a DJ Saved My Life"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "In the midnight moonlight I'll be walking a long and lonely mile, And every time I do, I keep seeing this picture of you."

Answers

1. "The Magdalena," taken from a spoken verse in honor of a flamenco dancer in Venezuela in 1992. When Los Del Rio turned it into a song, they changed it to Macarena. The duo has been performing together since 1962.

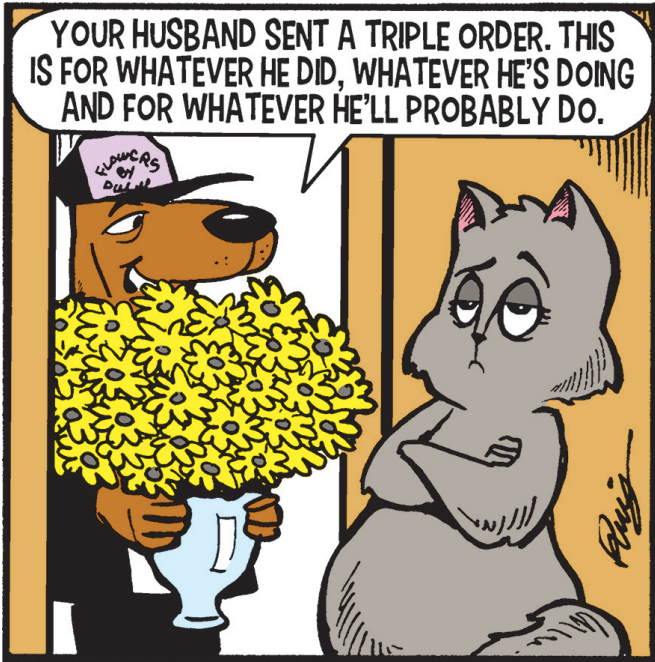
2. "White Nights," starring Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gregory Hines.
3. A friend saw it written on a wall in Berlin. They made the change from Gentry and Martin when they moved over to electronic music.
4. IndeeP, in 1982.
5. "Here Comes My Baby," released by Britain's The Tremeloes in 1967. The song was written by Cat Stevens (born Steven Demetre Georgiou) and had been released on his debut album, "Matthew and Son." The Tremeloes had a string of hits in the '60s, including "Do You Love Me" and "Silence Is Golden."

(c) 2021 King Features Syndicate

Groton Daily Independent

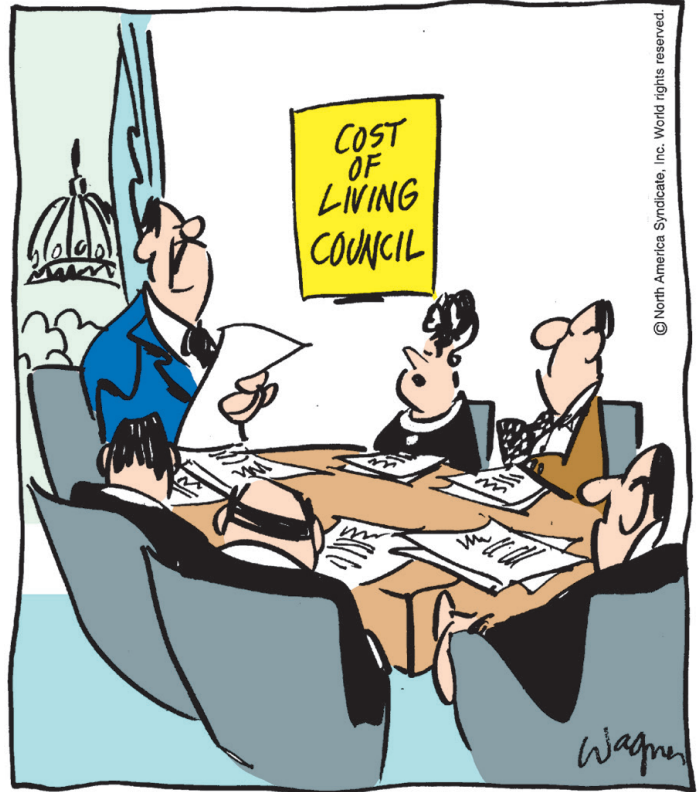
Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 10 of 78

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}

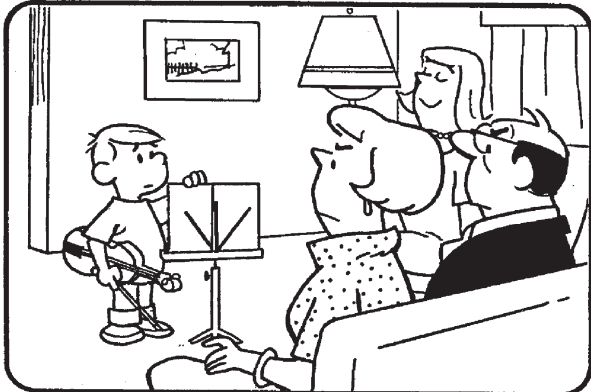


© North America Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

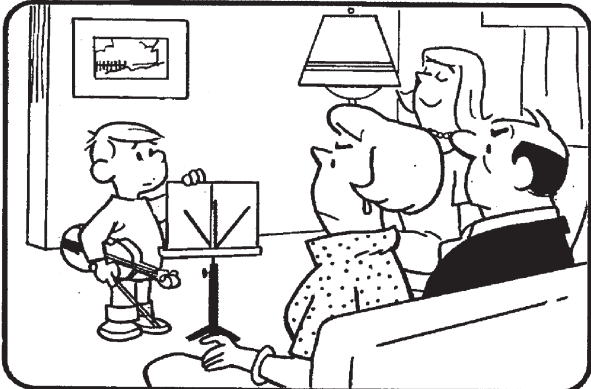
"My financial manager tells me things are getting expensive!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.
Differences: 1. Music stand is different. 2. Glasses are missing. 3. Curtain is narrower. 4. Picture is moved. 5. Lampshade is moved. 6. Sleeve is longer. 7. Lampshade is different. 8. Sleeve is longer.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 11 of 78



- Keep a pretty basket by your front door for anything you need to take along when you leave. This can be store returns, backpacks, exercise gear for the gym, your sunglasses, whatever. When you leave the house, check the basket!

- “Necklaces can be stored together without tangling if you thread each one through a straw. You can cut the straw to a shorter length for choker-length necklaces or bracelets. No knots!” — *I.A. in Arizona*

- If you have a little bit of touchup paint left in your gallon can, transfer it to a mason jar. Write the exact color and brand on the lid, and it will be much easier to store.

- “Our basement was dark and a little claustrophobic. My husband painted it a lovely sunny yellow and that helped,

but it needed something else. I took a photo of the spectacular view at our son’s house in Montana, and had the photo blown up. We mounted it on the wall with some dummy curtains! It’s perfect, and it reminds me of him.” — *R.W. in New York*

- Need to chill a bottle of wine quickly? Wet a kitchen towel, then wrap it around the wine. Twist the ends to secure, and put the whole thing in the freezer for 30 minutes.

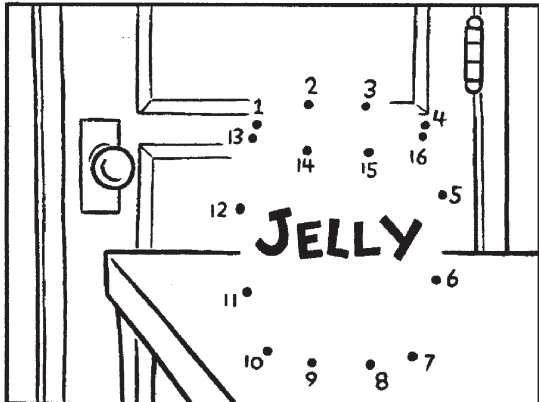
- Great ways to remove stuck labels: nail polish remover (NOT for use on plastics), WD-40 oil, soaking in hot water, rubbing alcohol.

Send your tips to Now Here’s a Tip, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475 or e-mail JoAnn at heresatip@yahoo.com.

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 12 of 78



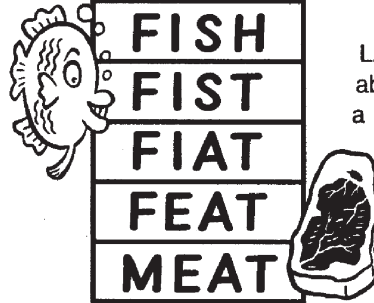
©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

CONNECT THE DOTS and find out when a door is not a door.

When it is ajar ("a jar").

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

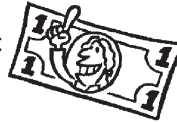


UP THE LADDER!

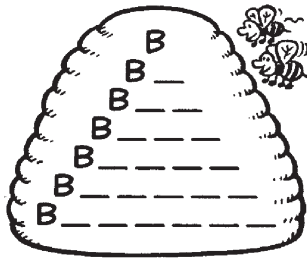
LADDER puzzles test your ability to look ahead. You are given a word that must be changed into another word in a series of moves. During each move you must change one letter in the previous word so as to form a new word. In our example we changed FISH into MEAT in four moves. See if you can change the following five words in four moves:

1. COIN to BILL.
2. STAR to FEET.
3. BELL to SIFT.
4. CALL to MUTE.
5. RAFT to WING.

A MONEY MATTER! Take out an American one-dollar bill and see if you can count how many times the numeral "1" and the word "one" appear on both sides of it. (The numeral "1" does not count when it appears in a date or a serial number.)



The numeral "1," and the word "one" each appear eight times.



BUSY BEE WORD HIVE! Each word, as you go down the hive, contains the same letters as the word above it plus a new letter. We've given you all of the B's. Here are some hints from the top down:

- 1) Second letter of alphabet (given).
- 2) To exist.
- 3) A place to sleep.
- 4) Ran, as color.
- 5) Part of an ice skate.
- 6) Removed water from boat.
- 7) Having two feet.

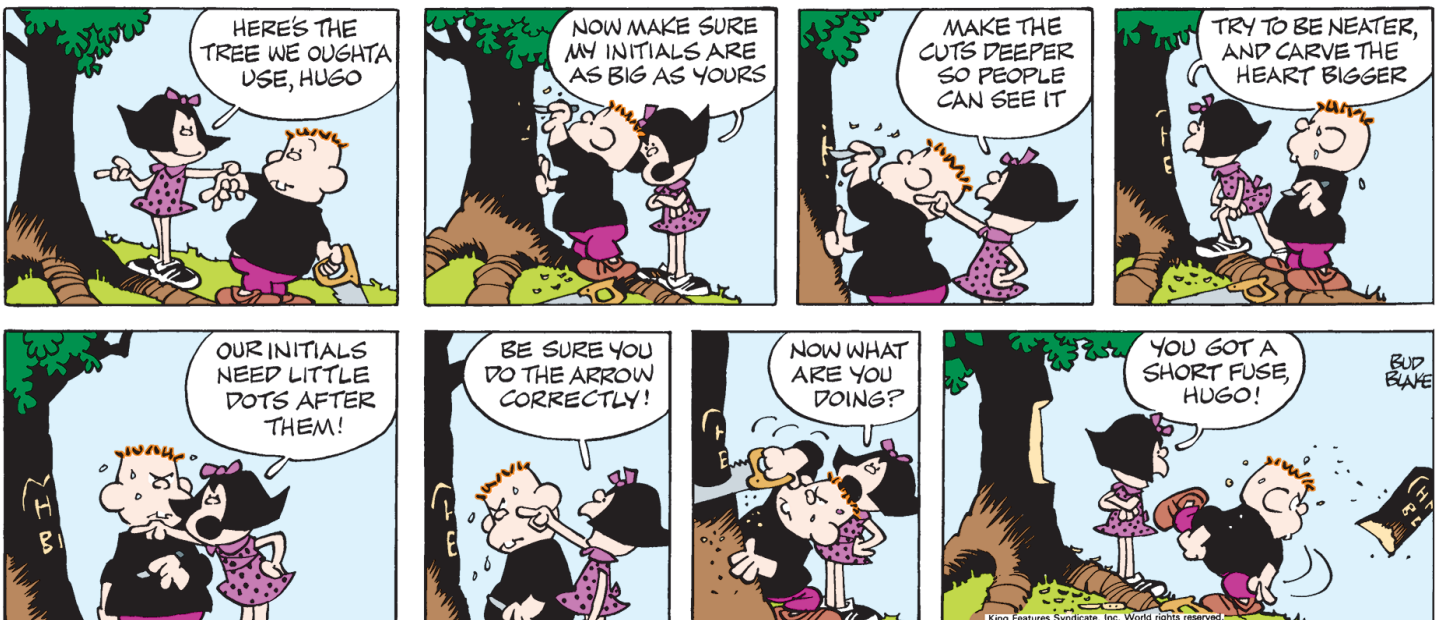
B, be, bed, bied, blade, bailed, bipedal.

Illustrated by David Coulson

Answers:
1. Coin, coil, boll, boll, bill.
2. Star, sear, fear, feat, feet.
3. Bell, sell, sill, silt, sift.
4. Call, mall, male, mate, mute.
5. Raft, rant, rang, ring, wing.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 13 of 78

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Circulate
- 5 Jolly laugh
- 9 Lustrous black
- 12 Zero, in tennis
- 13 Scent
- 14 — glance
- 15 Border on
- 16 Reply to "Shall we?"
- 17 Rug cleaner, briefly
- 18 Gestation location
- 19 Goat's plaint
- 20 Roman censor
- 21 Fib
- 23 Medit. nation
- 25 Cellist Pablo
- 28 Keep perusing
- 32 Muscat resident
- 33 Sky blue
- 34 Lively dances
- 36 "Be that as it may ..."
- 37 Sch. URL ender
- 38 Atty.'s title
- 39 Libretto
- 42 Plead
- 44 "Oops!"
- 48 Priestly garment
- 49 Competent
- 50 Tiny bit
- 51 2016

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19				20			
			21	22			23	24				
25	26	27					28			29	30	31
32							33					
34					35		36					
			37				38					
39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48					49					50		
51					52					53		
54					55					56		

- Olympics city
- Composer Bartok
- Figure skating leap
- Gender
- Mideast gulf
- Helen's home
- Classic theaters
- Empty talk
- Hosp. areas
- Coffee
- Coup d'—
- Mexican entree
- Hodgepodge
- Homer classic
- Penn and Connery
- Police officer
- "I love," to Livy
- Bando of baseball
- "Gee, ya think?"
- Spanish gold
- Just out
- Filled in
- Sea off Greece
- Old salts
- Author Wiesel
- PlayStation alternative
- Vogue rival
- 60 minutes
- "Beetle Bailey" dog
- Vague
- Lawyers' org.

DOWN

- 1 Imperfection
- 2 Timber wolf
- 3 Egg
- 4 Stick-in-the-mud
- 5 Baker Street sleuth

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 14 of 78

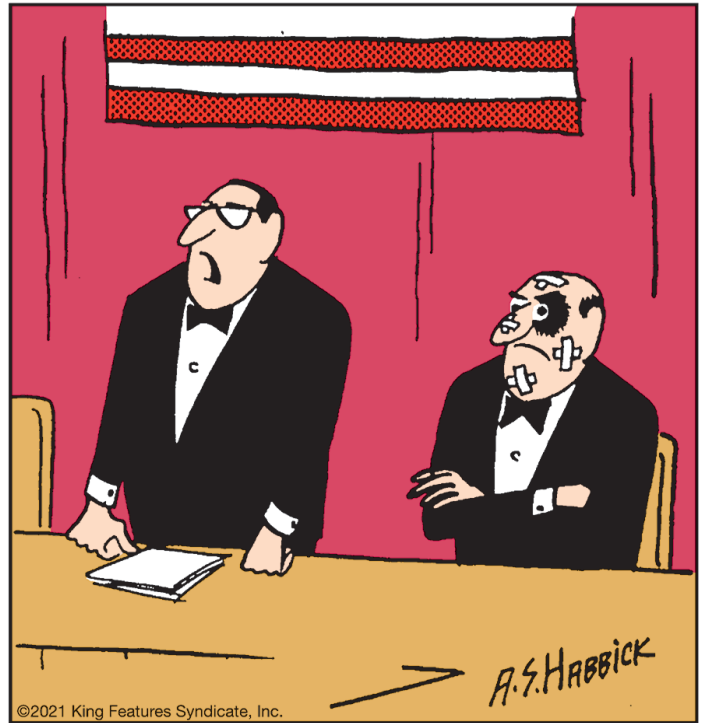
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY



©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. A.S. HABBICK
 "Our next speaker is an outspoken man who is not afraid to speak his mind."

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

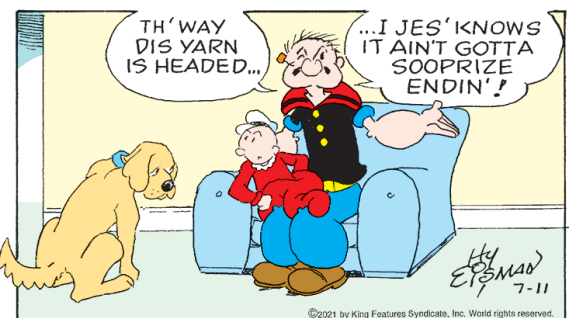
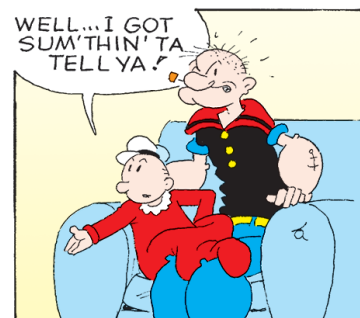
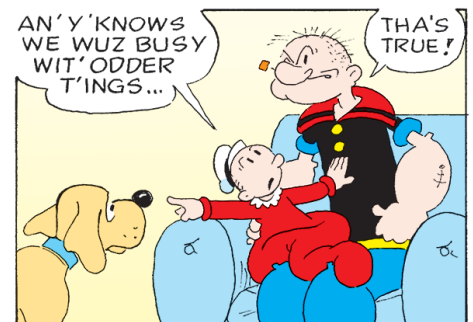
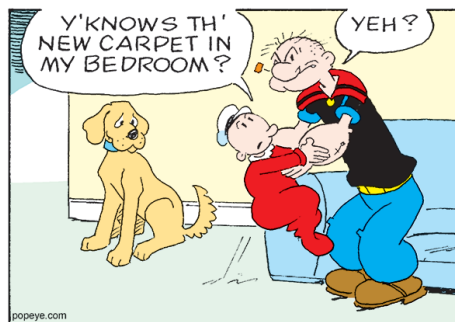
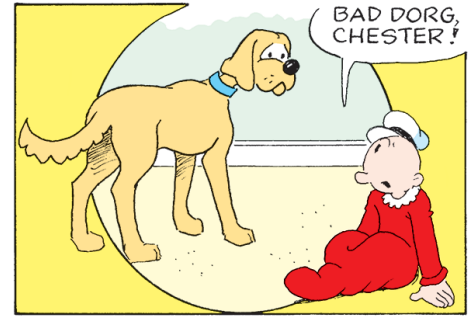
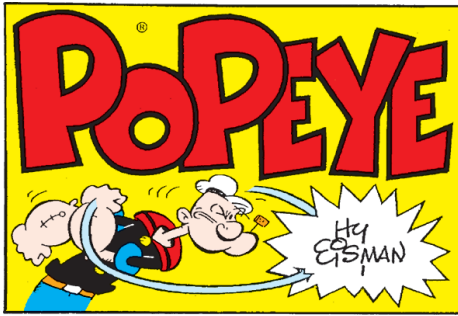


©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

KOPERVAS

Groton Daily Independent

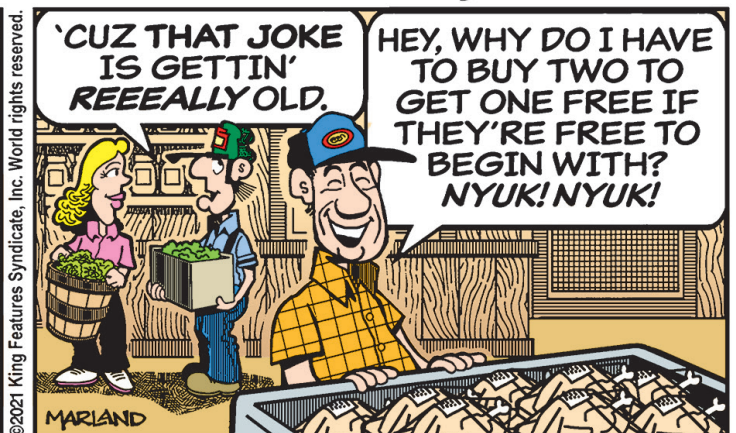
Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 15 of 78



©2021 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 16 of 78

1st Fosters
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ



THE LITTLE PEOPLE APPROACH VAL'S COMPANY.
"WE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY," HISSES THEIR LEADER.
"ANOTHER THREATENS YOU. MY NAME IS SILBUG.
WE THUAATHA ONCE RULED THE SURFACE WORLD,
UNTIL YOUR ANCESTORS BESTED US, AND
DROVE US TO THESE DEPTHS."

© 2010 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

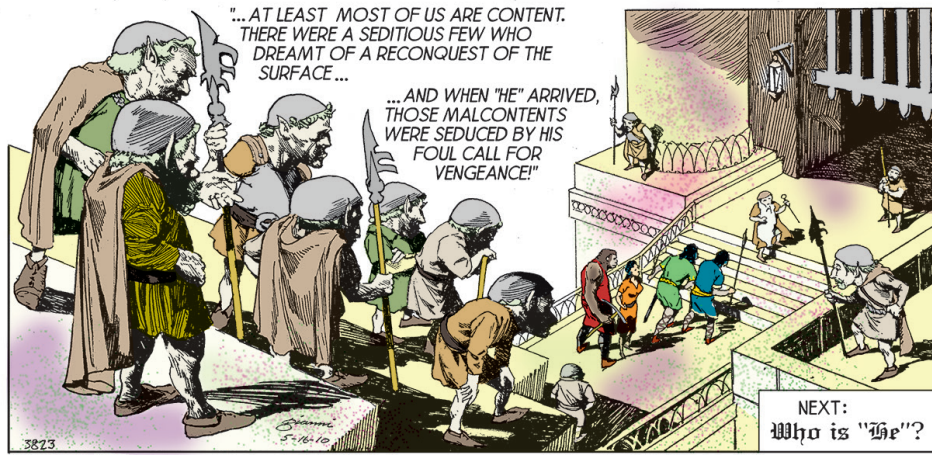
GAWAIN STARES AT THE SUBTERRANEAN HAVEN
WITH AWE. "BESTED YOU? BUT YOU MUST BE
MIGHTY MAGICIANS TO BUILD SUCH
A PLACE!"



SILBUG SNEERS. "FEH! MAGIC IS ONE THING, BUT WE ARE
ENGINEERS WHO STUDY THE LAWS OF NATURE AND
WORK THE MATERIALS OF THE EARTH. WE STAY
HERE BECAUSE WE ARE CONTENT HERE ...



"... AT LEAST MOST OF US ARE CONTENT.
THERE WERE A SEDITIOUS FEW WHO
DREAMT OF A RECONQUEST OF THE
SURFACE ...



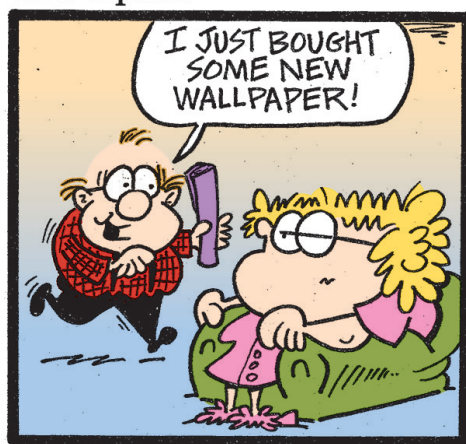
... AND WHEN "HE" ARRIVED,
THOSE MALCONTENTS
WERE SEDUCED BY HIS
FOUL CALL FOR
VENGEANCE!"

3823

NEXT:
Who is "He"?

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



I JUST BOUGHT
SOME NEW
WALLPAPER!

©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.



I'M GONNA TRY
PUTTING IT ON
MYSELF



WOULDN'T IT
LOOK BETTER
ON THE WALL?

Pickering

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

No, Life Has Not Returned to Normal

A recent survey concluded that we seniors are ready to go back out into the world, to resume our former pre-COVID activities.

I suspect the poll questions weren't asked of seniors in my part of New England. We are not, for the most part, ready to get back to what we were doing before.

We learned to talk to family and friends on internet conferences and managed the software quite well. We explored new hobbies with materials that arrived by mail since we weren't going into stores. We mastered complicated recipes (with ingredients picked up curbside at the grocery), and we renewed our interest in chess and other games, playing online. We explored parts of our state we hadn't seen before because we could safely drive around — as long as we didn't get out of the car.

Our senior center is still holding the men's Monday lunch in the park-

ing lot, socially distanced, of course. The French language class still isn't meeting because it didn't work out well trying to hear and speak French while spaced out across the parking lot with cars going by. The art classes are still done remotely because it's difficult to do watercolor painting outside with the breeze blowing, and no one is ready to go inside the building.

A few fast phone calls revealed that, no, the American Legion hall still isn't open. The auto dealership is trying to restrict potential buyers to test driving only three cars because each one has to be sanitized after customers take one out for a spin. The deli on Main Street is still taking orders only at the front window and doesn't know when it will open for indoor eating.

If a poll were done here, I suspect it would conclude that, no, we're not ready to come out yet.

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 18 of 78

1. On June 10, 1962, Major League Baseball teams set a modern-era record for total runs scored in a single day with how many?

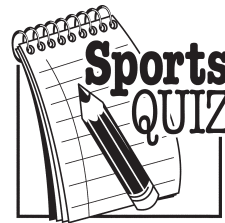
2. Name the Basketball Hall of Famer who won the NBA's first two Defensive Player of the Year honors while playing for the Milwaukee Bucks in 1982-83 and 1983-84.

3. As of the 2020-21 season, who are the three quarterbacks to beat all 32 NFL teams during their careers?

4. Who won the Warren Spahn Award for Major League Baseball's best left-handed pitcher three straight seasons from 2007-09? (Hint: He played for the Cleveland Indians, Milwaukee Brewers and New York Yankees during that span.)

5. What national soccer team won consecutive UEFA European Championship tournaments in 2008 and 2012?

6. What was the name of the NBA's



by Ryan A. Berenz

official minor league basketball organization when it was founded in 2001?

7. What does sportswriter and commentator Stephen A. Smith's middle initial stand for?

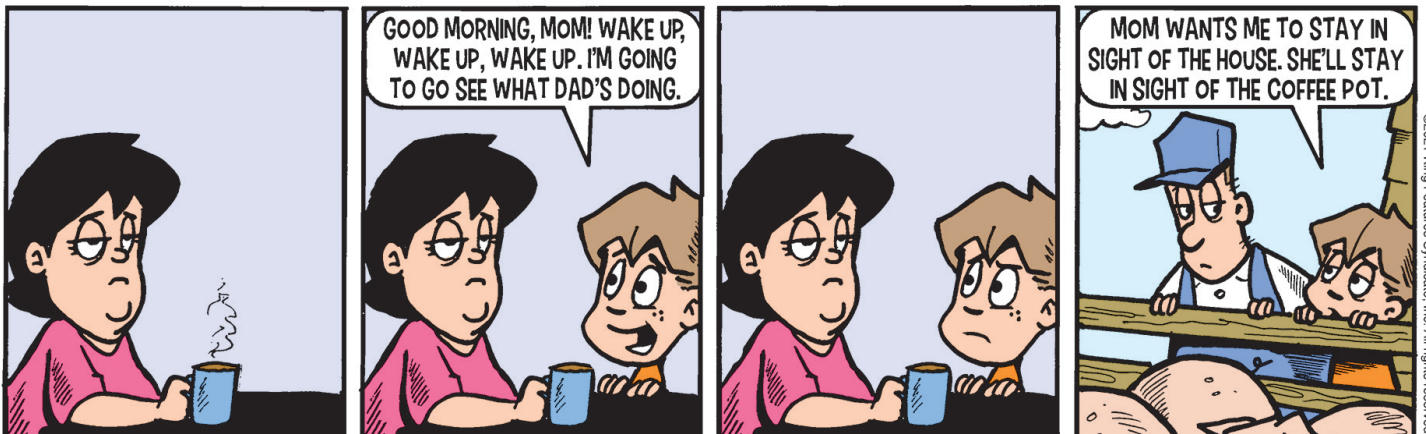
Answers

1. 222.
2. Sidney Moncrief.
3. Drew Brees, Brett Favre and Peyton Manning.
4. CC Sabathia.
5. Spain.
6. National Basketball Development League (NBDL).
7. Anthony.

© 2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Why the U.S. Ban on Dog Imports?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I've been working for months to purchase a purebred dog located in Ukraine. Today, the transaction was put on hold by the breeder, who said that dog imports are being banned by the U.S. What is going on? — *Nadiya in NYC*

DEAR NADIYA: What happened is that dogs are being imported into the U.S. with rabies certificates that are fraudulent. After at least 450 imported dogs were found to have fake certificates, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention took action in June and temporarily banned the import of dogs from more than 100 countries* with a high rabies risk, including Ukraine, for at least one year.

According to the CDC's official notice, in 2020 it identified a signifi-

cant increase in the number of imported dogs that were denied entry into the U.S. from high-risk countries. Due to reduced flight schedules, dogs denied entry are facing longer wait times to be returned to their country of departure, leading to illness and even death.

Why did the number of fraudulent rabies certificates rise so quickly? In a word, the pandemic. During lockdown, demand for dogs (and cats) soared. Worried about the risk of animals being abandoned when their owners went back to the office, many shelters drastically raised fees and other requirements for adoption. Demand for imported dogs rose.

Unfortunately, there are no options for those who intend to purchase or adopt a dog from one of these countries. If you try to import the dog anyway, or even hand-carry it across the border, it will be denied entry and shipped back home at your expense. It's a bummer, but necessary to reduce the risk of rabies spreading in the U.S.

*For a map showing banned countries, go to www.statista.com and search for "CDC bans dog imports." To read the official notice, go to www.cdc.gov and search for "high-risk dog ban."

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 20 of 78

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* In the 1880s, businessman LaMarcus Thompson was so upset over the temptations presented by saloons and brothels that he decided to clean up what he viewed as one of America's most immoral places—New York's Coney Island. To that end he built the country's first roller coaster in a bid to give folks some good, clean fun well away from sleazier pursuits.

* Flamingos bend their legs at the ankle, not the knee. Their knees are closer to the body and covered by feathers.

* Those apples you buy at your local market aren't all that fresh. They're typically plucked between August and November, then covered in wax, hot-air dried, and sent to cold storage before landing in stores six to 12 months later.

* The world's largest waterfall, in the Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland, is underwater.

* Dunce caps used to be a sign of intelligence! Thirteenth-century philosopher John Duns Scotus believed that a pointed cap helped spread knowledge from the tip to the brain, and his followers proudly wore them as badges of honor. A few hundred years later, when his ideas became less popular, the meaning of the Duns cap was turned on its, er, head, becoming a joke that led to its less flattering association.

* About a month after its dedication, the Statue of Liberty became a working lighthouse for 16 years.

* When Benjamin Franklin designed the first U.S. penny in 1787, it was emblazoned not with E Pluribus Unum, but "Mind Your Business."

* The tongue of a blue whale can weigh as much as an elephant.

Thought for the Day: "The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts: therefore, guard accordingly, and take care that you entertain no notions unsuitable to virtue and reasonable nature."

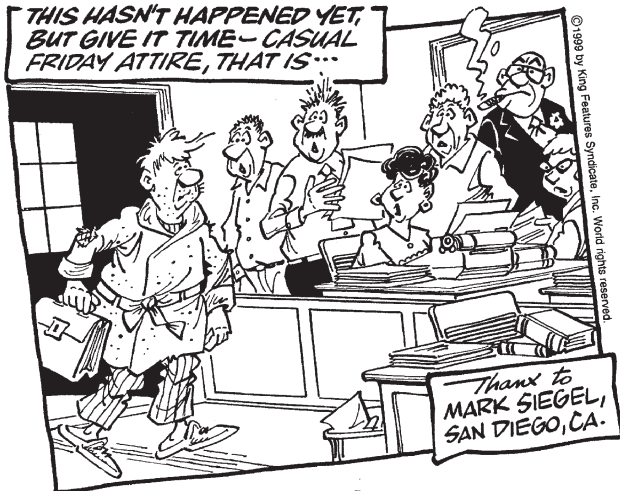
-- Marcus Aurelius

(c) 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

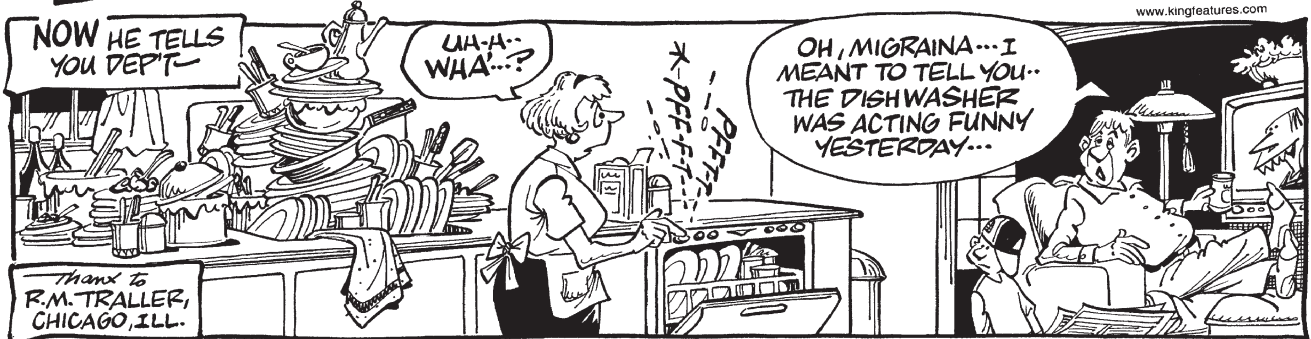
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 21 of 78

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO



United States Botanic Garden

The Botanic Garden is the oldest continuously operating public garden in the United States. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison helped establish it on the National Mall in 1820; George Washington's letter written in support of it is on display in the Library of Congress. Its displays include rainforest plants, succulents, grasses, shrubs, orchids, medicinals, endangered species, butterfly gardens, a children's garden, water gardens and seasonal exhibits. - Brenda Weaver



Source: www.usbg.gov

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

The VA's Fourth Mission

The Department of Veteran's Affairs has been busy. It was recently announced that it has completed 150 Fourth Mission assignments across the country.

Fourth Mission's goal is to improve preparedness for response to war and national emergencies by developing plans and taking actions to support service to veterans as well as national efforts. In other words, when a need is there, so is help. (The first three VA Missions are health care, benefits and national cemeteries.)

If you ever doubted that the COVID pandemic has been a true emergency, you only need to look at the very long list of Fourth Mission humanitarian efforts to back up the nation's health care system.

Here are a few examples of what the VA's Fourth Mission has accomplished in all 50 states plus territories:

— Provided 935,000 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment.

— Admitted 488 non-veteran citizens

to VA medical centers for treatment.

— Deployed over 5,000 medical personnel to 1,215 state VA homes, 980 community nursing homes and 94 non-VA hospitals. In Arizona alone, they provided staffing for six civilian hospitals. In Florida, they worked with over 8,000 long-term-care patients at 82 facilities. In Virginia, it was 852 long-term-care facilities.

There were untold thousands of COVID tests given and results processed. When the vaccines came out, VA personnel were there across the country to administer them.

The efforts weren't limited to hands-on medical staff. Truck drivers were sent to multiple states to deliver supplies and vaccines. Pharmacists were sent to numerous locations, including federal prisons. VA personnel fed 250 veteran families every month in Georgia, along with 150 homebound VA patients. They held town hall and state meetings with civilian authorities to coordinate how to contain the spread of COVID.

I'm impressed by this massive effort. To the thousands of VA personnel who volunteered to go, thank you.

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Schools seek ways to overcome COVID-19 learning loss

Andrew Rasmussen

South Dakota News Watch

South Dakota public school systems are trying to provide additional education to thousands of students who lost ground in learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, but educators and parents face major challenges in trying to keep students on track.

Almost half of South Dakota School districts, many in rural areas, do not have summer school programs aimed at keeping students on pace or helping them catch up in learning. Some districts that offer summer school programs are seeing heightened enrollment as students try to avoid falling behind after two school years of pandemic-related instructional interruptions and upheaval.

The need for continuity of education over the summer months is important in a normal set of circumstances, but with the pandemic the need has been expanded, especially for those in rural communities.

The typical summer learning loss, in which students lose educational progress over the summer months when most schools are not in session, was compounded during the pandemic, when many schools either shut down temporarily, shifted to online, remote learning, or had teachers working in challenging classroom conditions.

In South Dakota and across the country, educators are worried that it will be difficult or even impossible to ensure that students who lost significant learning time during the pandemic will be able to make up the lost instruction before moving to the next grade or toward graduation.

"The gaps that happen in a student's learning are one of the most detrimental things that can happen to the continual progress and growth," said Patrick Hales, a professor at South Dakota State University who coordinates the SDSU secondary teacher education program.

Nationwide, 53% of educators surveyed reported "significant loss of learning" and 44% saw "some loss of learning" over the past school year, according to a study conducted by Horace Mann Educators Corporation in February and March 2021. Additionally, 30% of educators assessed students as being 1-3 months behind in their education compared to previous years.



Lori Simon

While most South Dakota students had in-person instruction for much of the year, the impacts of COVID-19 still slowed the learning process for many children.

The Rapid City Area Schools system, the state's second-largest district that serves about 14,000 students, recorded 6,169 student absences due to positive COVID-19 tests or quarantine protocols in the recent school year, equaling about 70,000 learning days missed, according to Superintendent Lori Simon.

Educators also were hampered by the pandemic. In Rapid City, 828 of the district's roughly 1,800 staff members missed work due to COVID-19 during the last school year, a loss of the equivalent of 10,230 days of teaching or administrative time.

In an attempt to make up for lost classroom time, the district has seen a nearly 400% increase in participation in high-school credit recovery summer courses offered in 2021 compared to 2019.

"When you think about half of our students out and missing that much

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 24 of 78



Students use computers to learn during a summer school program offered by the Rapid City school system in an attempt to stay on track or catch up on learning missed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo: Courtesy Rapid City Area Schools

school, it's going to have an impact on learning," said Simon. "When you think about staff, especially teachers not being in front of their classrooms and the lack of availability of substitute teachers, you put all of that together and certainly there are concerns about learning loss."

For the credit recovery program, which allows students to make up missed, incomplete or failed credits, Simon said the increase in participation is in response to concerned students, parents and teachers for on-time graduation. This summer, 450 students are enrolled in credit recovery in Rapid City, compared to 90 students two years ago.

Across the country, the U.S. Department of Education has estimated that summer school enrollment will rise in 2021 and very

likely exceed the roughly 3.3 million students who attended summer school programming in 2019.

Learning loss an ongoing concern

Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, summer learning loss was an annual concern for schools and school districts, especially among students in rural areas who do not have access to summer programming or those from low-income or minority families, including Native Americans, who historically have struggled more than their peers.

"It's just a fact of the matter that the learning loss is going to happen, particularly for the students that need it not to happen the most," said Hales, of SDSU. "It puts students who are behind even further behind in terms of meeting learning goals."

About 46% of South Dakota public schools do not offer formal, in-person summer education programs, according to the South Dakota Department of Education, which did a COVID-impact survey of school systems in May 2021, said Mary Stadick-Smith, deputy secretary of the South Dakota Department of Education, said in an email to News Watch.

"At the state level, we recognize that extended opportunities for learning, including summer school, are a solid strategy for addressing challenges and accelerating a student's progress," said Stadick-Smith. "The choice of whether to operate a summer school is a local decision."

Summer school attendance cannot be required of students, and most districts do not charge fees for summer school unless the district offers speciality programming. In Sioux Falls, the district offers scholarships for families who want a student to attend summer programming but cannot afford it.

Some South Dakota communities are supported by local organizations, such as Boys and Girls Club, that

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 25 of 78



A Sioux Falls teacher works with her students during a summer school class at Garfield Elementary aimed at helping students stay focused on education during the summer break. Photo: Andrew Rasmussen,

South Dakota News Watch

provide informal summer educational programming. In rural communities with no summer school or community organizations to fill the gap, some students are at greater risk for falling further behind. The lack of summer school opportunities will make it harder for students to stay on track or catch up in the wake of the pandemic, experts said.

Hales said scholarly research is mixed on the effectiveness of summer programs due to the variables in how the programming is carried out. Several factors, such as the student's level of engagement with the instructors or materials, can affect the overall effectiveness of the programs.

Students without books and computers at home, or those whose parents are

unsure how to teach or are unable to commit time to a child's summer learning program, are put at an even greater risk for learning loss.

South Dakota schools struggled to generate widespread student success even before the challenges of the pandemic arrived. Based on standardized test results in the 2019 Department of Education Report Card, just over half of students in grades three through eight and in 11th grade were deemed proficient in reading and writing, and only 47% of those students were proficient in math and 40% proficient in science for their grade level. Native American students fared worse, with 23% deemed proficient in reading and writing, 14% proficient in math and 13% proficient in science.

In recent years, about 30% of South Dakota high-school graduates who enrolled in a state university had to take remedial math or English courses because they did not perform sufficiently on entrance exams.

One rural school district in South Dakota used federal funding to create a new summer school program in 2021 to provide continuity of learning for students who fell behind during the pandemic.

The Sioux Valley School district in Volga started a general summer school program in their elementary school for the first time this year to help bridge the gaps in learning for students. The new program features 30-minute sessions of one-to-one instruction by six teachers in the areas in which the 27 enrolled students need support.

"We definitely wanted to make sure we closed any gaps that would have taken place during 2020," said Alanna Bezdichek, a teacher in Sioux Valley who specializes in Title I courses for disadvantaged students.

Creation of the the programs was enabled when federal funding was offered and the need for additional programming became evident. Although teachers put in extra work and support during the regular school year to catch up, some students still needed additional support.

Participating students were selected based on end of year assessments, teacher recommendations, and

parent interest, according to Dawn Lucas, a kindergarten teacher for the district.

Summer programs vary across state

Across the state, summer school programming can vary in which students are targeted for summer school and for what reasons, ranging from remediation to acceleration of academic programming. Some districts saw increased summer enrollment while others saw greater increases in summer 2020 compared to this year or years prior.

In Tea, the school district saw an increase in credit recovery participation in 2020 with numbers normalizing this year, according to Jennifer Nebelsick Lowery, Tea Area Schools superintendent.

"Our credit recovery numbers were high last year when we ended the year virtual," the district wrote to News Watch in an email. "The credit recovery numbers this year were the same as most other years. We do not run a formal program. We just provide the support to those needing extended time to earn credit."



Jeff Danielsen

The Watertown School District allows for students to take summer school classes to recover credits in core course work, including reading and language arts, math and science. Summer school opportunities were broadened in Watertown with the criteria for qualifying and number of slots available expanded this year. Previously students in Watertown only had access to summer programming if they qualified but this year any student who wanted to participate was given the option to do so.

"Because we were in session and we were able to serve the majority of our population in person, I think we had a pretty good year," said Jeff Danielsen, Watertown superintendent. "I think we caught up most of where we needed to be."

The Sioux Falls School District offers a wide variety of summer school options for its students, ranging from Birth to 3 Programs through Grade 12 teaching, according to Teresa Boysen, assistant superintendent of academic success. In addition to core coursework, students have the opportunity to participate in English as a Second Language (ESL), career and technical education (CTE) and transitional programs for students entering middle or high school.

"I believe a lot of families want their students in for that consistency programming," Boysen said. "It gives them that opportunity to get ahead so they can get other options during the school year."

In total, the Sioux Falls School district offers 16 summer school options, according to a January school board report.

Summer credit recovery gives students the chance to work through courses they fell behind in at their own pace with more individualized instruction and a lower teacher-to-student ratio than a traditional school year class.

"I do think they can catch up and I think it's really helpful for them to have a more casual setting where they can come and just focus on one class at a time rather than go through a whole schedule where they have six classes in a day," said Joel Sage, a language arts teacher at Sioux Falls Roosevelt High School. "I think they are a lot less overwhelmed when they have just that one class to focus on."

Elementary summer programming was expanded from three buildings to 10 this year in Sioux Falls due to an increase in the number of students served from 187 to 600. High school summer programming saw a decrease of 39 students from 2020 to 345 students this summer.

"The Sioux Falls School District will provide rigorous, effective and engaging curriculum and instruction for all students to emphasize growth and reduce the achievement gap" according to the school board report. "Summer 2021 programming will include opportunities for students to fill academic gaps, credit recovery, and course acceleration."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 27 of 78

#451 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

I really did not want—ever—to report cases were on the increase again, yet here we are. Sigh. At mid-day today, we're up to 33,851,623 reported cases and 606,577 reported deaths in the US. Our 14-day new-case average sits at 23,025, which is a 94 percent increase from two weeks ago.

Yesterday I took a look at a list of the 100 worst counties in the country in terms of new case rates; all of them have an average daily new case rate (per 100,000 residents) of at least 25; one county in Louisiana is at 215, and a good third of them are at 50 or more. Fifty-nine of these counties are in Missouri (36) and Arkansas (23), states which have vaccinated just over a third of residents. No one else is close; states with five or six counties in trouble are Colorado, Texas, Illinois, and Florida. Over half of these counties have experienced at least a 500 percent increase in new cases in the past two weeks, almost one-fifth of them over 1000 percent increases and some well over. This is pretty much what's been predicted—a lot of local outbreaks in low-vaccination areas.

On July 13, one year ago today, the US had reported 3,378,800 cases and 135,398 deaths. We were still setting records pretty much every day both nationally and in many states. These were the worst days we'd had in the pandemic thus far. We talked about some wild claims that our population could reach herd immunity with maybe 10 or 20 percent of us immune so that it would be smart to just let this virus burn through the population until we achieved that. Not hearing much about that these days when we have nearly half of us vaccinated and 20 percent in the worst places and are still seeing some serious outbreaks across the country. Most garbage debunks itself if you can afford to wait around long enough.

We're deep in it again this week. We've had several consecutive days with over 20,000 new cases—haven't had even two consecutive since May. Three sets of events are coming together in various locations around the country: low vaccination, rising case numbers, and Delta; the result is disastrous. At least it's locally disastrous, not disastrous nationwide; but disaster feels like disaster where it's happening no matter who else is or isn't suffering. Last time we talked, we mentioned the low vaccination and the high caseloads; in the past week, states which have vaccinated over half their population have a case rate one-third of states who haven't.

Now we can add Delta to the equation. You will recall that Delta or B.1.617.2 is the variant first identified in India. Mississippi's state health officer, Dr. Thomas Dobbs, told CNN, "We've seen almost an entire takeover in the Delta variant. We're seeing a lot of outbreaks. We're seeing a lot of outbreaks in youth. We're seeing a lot of outbreaks in summer activities. We're also seeing a lot of outbreaks in nursing homes, where we have our most vulnerable people." Hospitalizations are rising, pretty much entirely in unvaccinated people. Sigh. Who saw this coming? Everyone.

Eric Frederick, chief administrative officer at Mercy Hospital in Springfield, Missouri, told CNN on Saturday that over 90 percent of their ICU patients are on ventilators. "We are absolutely stretched, further than we were stretched last year. We're seeing things that we didn't see last year at a pace that is almost unbelievable, when you look at how quickly this accelerated." They went from 26 Covid-19 patients on June 1 to 133 Sunday. The local vaccination rate is 38 percent, but in some rural areas is below 20 percent. Ugh.

Forty-two states now have rising case numbers, and hospitalizations are rising with those case numbers. The three states with the lowest vaccination rates are all in the top-10 for case numbers, each one showing almost 40 percent increase in a week. That's pretty stark.

We're developing a picture of just what a more transmissible variant like Delta means in real life. Some excellent public health detective work in Australia found a videorecording on closed-circuit security cameras in a shopping mall that captured the moment of transmission between two shoppers. Their encounter was fleeting: They simply passed one another in the mall. Their infections were later confirmed by genome sequencing to be the result of transmission from the one of these shoppers to the other, so we're pretty sure of our facts here. Several other shoppers in the same location have been identified as part of this same cluster with more to come as contact tracing continues. Remember the good old days when we warned you about encounters of 15 minutes duration? Well, we can throw those guidelines away; these

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 28 of 78

people were in proximity for mere seconds. Our margin of error on this variant is near zero. This is not what we needed.

So far, death rates have not kept pace with increases in caseloads, and that looks likely to continue. If we have a look at what's been happening in countries where Delta hit earlier, we see that, while death rates did increase, they haven't yet matched the increases in case numbers. We can hope that holds here as well; there is no particular reason to think it won't. Nonetheless, Dr. Jonathan Reiner, medical analyst for CNN, says, "In places like Missouri where ICUs are packed, you're going to see a surprising amount of death." Considering that 91 percent of ICU patients on ventilators cited by Mercy Hospital's Frederick above, we're looking at a whole lot of more severe disease than we've seen in the past; during the winter peak, they had 40 to 50 percent of patients on vents. And Frederick also reported that many of these vent patients are in their "20s, 30s, and 40s." Sicker and younger: That's not great. Everyone expects mortality to increase in a few weeks; the lag time from new case to death runs something like three to four weeks. The thing that gives me trouble is, given more than 99 percent of Covid-19 deaths in the US are now in unvaccinated people, almost all of these deaths are completely preventable and utterly unnecessary. Only around a quarter-million people are beginning vaccination each day; that's 88 percent lower than in April. There are plenty of folks at risk yet, and that's not changing very fast at all.

I received some questions after my last Update; one of them was about infection rates in vaccinated people. After all, vaccines are not 100 percent effective; we knew that before any of us lined up for a shot. Here's the latest information from the CDC on that: According to the CDC, as of July 6, 2021, 157 million Americans have been fully vaccinated. Of those, there have been 5186 hospitalized or fatal cases of Covid-19. We can eliminate 1355 (28 percent) which were asymptomatic and were discovered only because they were hospitalized for something else and tested consequent to the hospitalization, which brings us down to 3831 who were hospitalized or died due to Covid-19. Seventy-five percent of those were over 65; half were female. Death occurred in 733 (19 percent of those hospitalized for Covid-19). That's a hospitalization rate of 0.002% and a death rate of 0.00047% in vaccinated people—both miniscule. Since virtually everyone being hospitalized or dying these days is unvaccinated, we have stronger evidence than even the clinical trials provided that these vaccines work—and they're working almost as well against Delta as they are against the variants circulating when the trials occurred. What's more, the evidence is accumulating that vaccinated people who do get infected have such small viral loads that they are exceedingly unlikely to shed enough virus to act as a source of infection to others; so there's not much worry about them spreading virus either. If you are not vaccinated, it's time to get off the dime.

Pfizer and BioNTech met on Monday with US scientists to present their case for authorizing boosters, something they did not do last week before announcing their plan to seek authorization, which caught experts by surprise. The meeting was scheduled to include Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the CDC; Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health; Dr. Vivek Murthy, the US Surgeon General; Dr. Rachel Levine, assistant secretary for health; Dr. Janet Woodcock, acting FDA commissioner, and Dr. David Kessler, who is running vaccine distribution in the country. The companies have data showing a third dose produces a massively increased immune response, which is no surprise, given how the immune system works; but we have not yet seen data showing that increased response is needed at this time. I don't know whether we're going to get a readout on that meeting or not. I do know many experts are saying these data should have been presented in a more public way to the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) since this is the group who would ultimately decide whether and when boosters are needed. The associated government agencies have issued no changes in their guidance since the meeting, and none were expected. I do expect they will continue to monitor the situation and the state of the research; if changes come, they will be evidence-based.

The FDA has added information to the fact sheet for the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine saying there may be an increased risk of Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare neurologic complication associated with weakness and, occasionally, paralysis from which most people fully recover. It appears to be autoimmune

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 29 of 78

in nature, that is, the damage is done by the person's immune system which produces antibodies that damage nervous tissue. This is a condition we've seen following other viral infections and some vaccinations; seasonal flu shots result in about one to two cases of Guillain-Barre per million doses administered. The increase in incidence we're seeing here is slight—much smaller than with flu vaccine—with only about 100 preliminary reports turning up in the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) in the 12.8 million people vaccinated; one person has died. They've turned up within six weeks (mostly within two) after vaccination, primarily in males 50 and older. These reports are now under investigation, just as any adverse effect would be. A connection to the vaccine has not been confirmed at this point, but it appears there is an association. Regulators still maintain the benefits of the vaccine strongly outweigh the risks. The CDC's ACIP has scheduled a discussion for an upcoming meeting.

A friend has kindly provided me with another bag of trash that needs hauling out. It is entitled, "The Spike Protein Is the reason why the vaccines might kill you," and it is accompanied by a neatly labeled diagram of a coronavirus and a whole lot of text. For as long as I can stand it, I'll take its points one by one and discuss. Rather than litter the following quotes with the "sic" notation, I'll just assure you now that what appears inside quotation marks below is faithfully reproduced from the original document: Any flaws are from the original. I'll say up front that the folks who ostensibly put this together (a "distinguished" list of presumably smart people—more on them later) should have known enough to run the whole thing past a good editor; I generally question the credibility of purportedly educated people writing in their native language when their product is riddled with technical errors. This alone got my spidey senses tingling. Now, on with the show:

"It normally takes over 10 years to make a new vaccine—This vaccine has been rushed." It has been rushed, no doubt. That's because there was a pandemic on and people were dying all over the place. However, rushed doesn't mean this was a slap-dash effort—far from it. The entire development effort and the authorization process were rigorous and tightly controlled. This took less time than usual for a number of reasons. One is that much of the groundwork for, in particular, mRNA vaccines was laid over the course of three decades, not just a few months as it appears to the naked eye. The details of that long effort appear in my Update #443 posted June 5, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwab-miller/posts/4789540054395696>. A look at this post debunks the BS about a rushed development process. If you go there, check out the link to the story of the development of a stable prefusion S protein; it's a good read. Another reason things went more quickly than usual is that the FDA pledged (and fulfilled its pledge) to reduce wait-time. Instead of a file going to an agency official's desk and languishing there for days or weeks until he/she got around to looking at it, everyone was on high alert to prioritize attention to these applications and their accompanying data. This paperwork was handled expeditiously at every step of the regulatory process; this is because everyone involved knew we were losing hundreds and hundreds—sometimes thousands—of Americans every day and they wanted to stop that as much as anyone did. A lot of folks burned a lot of midnight oil throughout this thing.

"No matter what you have been told there's no way they could have done all the tests they normally do in 10+ years in just a few months. Including waiting 9 months to see if children born to vaccinated patients are healthy." Here, the writers are conflating two things—vaccine development and vaccine testing. Development is the longer of the two processes, and we've already discussed that just above: Most of the development was done well before Covid-19 reared its ugly head at all. Testing was pushed along by skipping over the usual animal safety trials (or doing them simultaneously with the early-stage human trials). This might present unusual risks to the subjects of those early human trials because we did not have the benefit of seeing how the vaccine acted in animals before it was given to them, but in the end does not compromise the safety of the vaccine in the larger population because all stages of human trials were done as usual before it was widely distributed. That's where the rubber meets the road.

Safety issues that were going to emerge in 30,000 or 40,000 individuals would have done so in the trials that were conducted, just as they routinely do. The safety issues that only show up after hundreds of thousands or millions of doses were given wouldn't have shown up sooner in clinical trials conducted at

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 30 of 78

a more sedate pace; either way, what you need to surface rare adverse effects is millions of doses, and that's not going to happen until you put a vaccine out into the population. It has ever been thus.

We should note that the greatest contributing factor to the rapid completion of phase 3 clinical trials was the ridiculous transmission rates we were seeing at the time these trials were conducted—nothing like an uncontrolled pandemic to expedite the statistical work. We've had vaccine candidates for less rapidly-spreading diseases take years for phase 3 trials because it takes so long under those circumstances for a sufficient number of cases to turn up in the trial groups; no worry about that here with the horrifying numbers we were seeing back in October and November.

As for pregnancy, we've had people who were vaccinated before becoming pregnant beginning pregnancies afterward with no untoward effects. We've had people who were in various stages of pregnancy at the time of vaccination give birth to healthy, normal infants. I am not clear on whether anyone has been vaccinated, then become pregnant and given birth; but there couldn't be too many since these would all have to have been clinical trial participants: The vaccines haven't been authorized long enough for anyone to have gone through this whole cycle since the emergency use authorization (EUA) was issued. What we know is there is no increased incidence of pregnancy loss or birth defects and no difficulty becoming pregnant associated with any of the vaccines. We've also seen no increase in complications of delivery or in the newborns. It seems unlikely anything's going to show up at this point. And we know for sure, since the disease itself does not exclude pregnant individuals from its trials, that Covid-19 increases the probability of bad outcomes for a pregnancy by a lot.

"The COVID-19 Virus is covered in spikes—called 'The Spike Protein'. The new mRNA Vaccines get our body to produce millions of these 'Spikes'. There is no OFF button, once you are injected there's no telling when the body will stop making the Spikes." Taking these in order: (1) The virus is, indeed, covered in spikes; (2) the vaccines do, indeed, get our bodies to produce these spikes—not sure whether the number is in the millions, but we'll go with that; and (3) here's the rub: There isn't exactly an "off button," but the thing is the mRNA degrades fairly quickly, so there is a built-in self-destruct mechanism for these instructions. So no, this will not go on forever. In fact, one of the greatest challenges in designing these mRNA vaccines was to get the mRNA to last long enough to even stimulate a decent immune response; the problem was never getting this thing to shut off—it was getting it to start, that is, prolonging the stimulus enough to produce the necessary response at all.

"The latest studies show that upto 75% of the vaccine leaves the injection site and travels in the blood all over the body. Potentially ending up in your ovaries, heart, brain and even bone marrow, which could lead to Blood Cancer (Leukaemia)." Nope, nope, and nope. Substances don't just make their way, willy-nilly, into the capillaries that deliver blood to tissues like the deltoid muscle where these vaccines are delivered, and humungous molecules like mRNA certainly aren't going to seep through the capillary walls very easily at all. This vaccine is going to stay local; it is never going to show up in your ovaries, your heart, your brain, or your bone marrow. And it has no capacity to cause "Blood" or any other kind of "Cancer;" it just can't. That is because mRNA never makes its way into the cellular compartment called the nucleus (which is protected from marauders like this foreign mRNA by a highly selective membrane) where the DNA hangs out; and absent access to DNA, it can't alter the DNA to "turn" a cell cancerous. That's not how cancer works. The immune cells that respond to it, on the other hand, are certainly going to get to circulating all over the body, and that is just what we want. People who want to scare you often holler, "Cancer!" these days, just the way they used to holler, "Fire!" in a crowded theater. When someone runs around screaming about cancer, I'm always a bit suspicious.

"These 'Spikes' are like having millions of tiny daggers inside your body. Many people have died from blood clots caused by the vaccines." OK, now we're just making stuff up. I think the writer was hoping the reference to "spikes" would evoke sharp objects like "daggers" for you. That's complete garbage; the spikes on the coronavirus do stick up all over the place, but are not sharp and pointy at all. And "tiny daggers" are not the cause of blood clots, even on a good day. Those "millions" who've died from blood clots caused by the vaccines are actually a handful. I've had difficulty rounding up solid numbers, but as of May, there had been two deaths in the US from the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine and two in

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 31 of 78

Australia and around two dozen in Europe from the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine which is not authorized in the US. No death is unimportant, but this is a far cry from "millions." What we do have is a great many (don't know whether it's "millions," but it's a lot more than from the vaccines) people who have died from blood clots caused by Covid-19. If I was really, really worried about blood clots, I'd be rushing to the nearest vaccination site to protect myself from the most likely cause, this virus.

"When they tested previous mRNA Vaccines in animals. The animals seemed fine at first. But when they were exposed to the real virus, their bodies over-reacted and they died." They made this up too. Totally. Animals in studies of mRNA vaccines did die because they were euthanized at the completion of the tests. Now, you may not like this (and I'm not nuts about it either), but they weren't killed by the vaccines.

"Many people that died from COVID—died because their bodies over-reacted to the virus (this is called the cytokine storm)—Taking Vitamin D regularly (at least 4,000iu per day) will help prevent this overreaction." It is true that some—many—of the people who died from Covid-19 died from cytokine storms. We've talked about this many, many times, perhaps in the most detail in my Update #39 posted way back on April 2, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3479312205418494>. The vitamin D thing is a bit more nebulous, and I discussed it in my Update #310 posted December 29 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4300903866592653>. Bottom line is that while vitamin D may offer some protection and it may make sense to supplement at lower levels, there isn't much evidence for a benefit yet. It's certainly no cure-all.

There are some other evidence-free claims for the wonders of vitamin D: "Flu season always occurs in winter when people cannot make enough Vitamin D from the sun. Taking Vitamin D is the easiest way to help reduce sickness from Flu/COVID. Taking Vitamin D will also help reduce joint and back pain in as little as 2 weeks (take at least 4,000iu per day). As well as reduce your chance of getting Cancer, Heart Disease, Diabetes, Multiple Sclerosis and many other medical conditions. If more people took Vitamin D the medical companies would loose Billions in lost revenue." To the best of my knowledge, there is no research to back up any of these claims and some of them are fanciful, to say the least. Also, vitamin D is stored; so if you get a good amount of sunlight in the summer months, you may well have enough reserve to get through the winter in good order. If you know of some research on this, let me know so I can report on it; but none of this has anything to do with Covid-19, so I'm not going to get overexcited about it either way.

Then we come to the appeal to authority; this is a logical fallacy where the support for a position is offered by way of people purporting to be experts who also support the position. The trick is that the people in question have to be credible, and there's the rub. The folks listed are "Dr. Robert Malone, Inventor of the mRNA Technology;" Dr. Michael Yeadon, who was once a Vice President at the Pfizer company; Dr. Geert Vanden Bossche; Professor Dolores Cahill from the University College Dublin School of Medicine (who "[e]xpects those that get injected to start dying or getting very sick within the next few years"); and Dr. Roger Hadkinson, Dr. Byram Bride, Dr. Peter McCullough, Dr. Zev Zelenka, Dr. Carrie Madej, Dr. Sherri Tenpenny, Dr. Stephanie Seneff, Dr. Lee Merritt, Dr. Vernon Coleman, and Professor Sucharit Bhakdi. I am not familiar with all of these folks, but I am with enough of them. Here's what I have:

Dr. Robert Malone is an actual doctor, so that much is true. The claims he is the "inventor of mRNA technology" are seriously overblown. He was involved in RNA research back in the '80s and made important contributions, but it is rare for a single person to be responsible for inventing any new technology these days. Besides that, if anyone were to receive singular credit for the mRNA technology, it really should be Dr. Katalin Kariko who, with the help of her collaborator Dr. Drew Weissman, laid the groundwork for where we are today. Malone, not so much. Whenever I see someone touting him/herself as the inventor of something that was clearly a group effort, much less something in which he was a smaller player, I get suspicious; and I'm suspicious now. These claims make anything else this guy says suspect in my opinion.

We've discussed Michael Yeadon before in my Update #287 posted December 6 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4237138519635855>. Short version: He is not credible.

We talked about Geert Vanden Bossche, Dolores Cahill, Sherri Tenpenny, and Michael Yeadon (again!) in my Update #431 posted April 29 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4669383029744733>.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 32 of 78

If you stack up the collective credibility of all of these folks in one big pile, my old granny could jump over it, and she's been dead for years.

I'm going to mention just one more of these "experts" here, and that is Carrie Madej. I've run across her before too. You can check that out in my Update #430 posted April 28, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4666322240050812>.

This thing ends with an exhortation to check out the various videos from these folks that YouTube has cruelly and unfairly removed for providing false information to the public; I've addressed a number of these videos in the linked Updates above. I'm not going to provide you with the means to see this garbage; if you're interested in misinformation, you're going to have to do some detective work yourself.

There's a whole industry that recycles and repackages these lies and fantasies into new forms and runs them back up the old flagpole, each time drawing at least some adherents to add to the growing mass of anti-science rubbish. We can't debunk fast enough. Please be a critical consumer of information. Question everything you read—including what you read here. Check out the claims; don't just believe things. Lives are at stake.

With that, I'll wrap up. Be well. Let's talk again in a few days.

Noem Waives Hours of Service Regulations to Deal with Fuel Shortage

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem has signed Executive Order 2021-10 granting extended hours of service for the commercial delivery of petroleum products in South Dakota.

The order declares a state of emergency and exempts delivery of gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, and ethyl alcohol from federal motor carrier regulations on drivers' hours of service. Residents and businesses in western South Dakota are faced with an unexpected shortage of supply.

"We are at the height of our tourism season, as well as a busy time for our agriculture industry. Maintaining the supply of fuel is crucial to preventing a disruption of service to two of our state's major industries," said Noem. "This 30-day order is meant to ensure a steady supply of fuel is available to our visitors, businesses, farmers, and ranchers in the western part of the state."

The governor noted that this is not just an issue within South Dakota, but a regional emergency that is being met with swift action.

Although hours of service have been temporarily suspended for commercial deliveries, companies may not require or allow fatigued drivers to make deliveries.

The executive order was signed July 17 and expires at midnight on August 16, 2021. All other road safety and vehicle compliance regulations still apply.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 33 of 78



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



Not Perfect, but Progress

In Congress, hardly anything is perfect. But just because it's not perfect, doesn't mean there's not progress.

This past week we made progress for South Dakota.

The first comes following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) decision to walk back plans to change the city status of Rapid City.

In January, OMB began toying with the idea to increase the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) qualification from 50,000 to 100,000 people. This set off the alarm bells in smaller cities across the country, including ours.

Upon learning of this proposal, I led several of my House colleagues to introduce the Metropolitan Statistical Area Preservation Act to preserve the more than 140 MSAs from losing their classification.

Rapid City is a robust, growing city – and it deserves the resources that come with being classified as an MSA. Following my legislative push, I'm glad to see the city's classification is safe.

Secondly, the USDA announced two much needed and frankly overdue investments for our regional cattle producers to help level the playing field.

The first is a program to help expand meat processing capacity for small cattle processors which mirrors the Butcher Block Act that I recently introduced.

The second is the implementation of my bill - the Small Packer Overtime & Holiday Fee Relief for COVID-19 Act - leveling the regulatory playing field for small meat processors running extra shifts.

While we still have a long way to go, these programs will certainly get us one step closer to a fairer cattle market.

As reflected in both the OMB and USDA announcements, common-ground and common-sense proposals can be achieved in Washington.

It's easy to get swept up in the more partisan issues of the day, but it's important to acknowledge the small victories. This time, we made progress for cattle producers and residents of Rapid City.

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Learning from Our Mistakes

One of the main reasons why we study history is to learn from both our triumphs and our mistakes. Sometimes those mistakes are painful to admit, but we study them nonetheless so that we can ensure that they are never repeated. That's why students learn about the Holocaust. That's why we study the atrocity of American slavery and the Civil War that great leaders like President Lincoln fought to end it. It's also important that our state and our nation know about the tragic story of early Indian boarding schools.

Indian boarding schools were created in 1860 in a purported effort to assimilate Indian children into American culture. From 1860, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) established its first Indian boarding school, throughout a majority of the 1900's, many Indian children were forcibly removed from their homes and families and placed into these BIA schools. They were prohibited from (or punished for) speaking their language or practicing their traditions. Countless Indian children never came home, overcome by sickness and harsh conditions, and many of those who survived the boarding school experience struggled to share their traumatic memories.

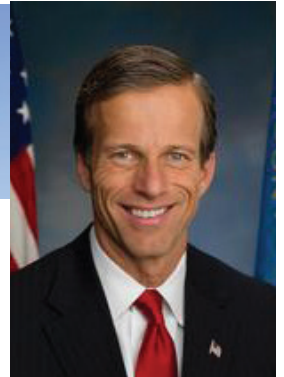
The history of Indian boarding schools is not well known outside of Indian Country. However, the Tribes sharing borders with South Dakota suffered losses of their children. The accounting of children who died at these schools is inadequate at best. Mass burials, unmarked graves, and poorly kept death records haunt family histories.

In meetings with the tribes, I heard stories of heartbreak, appreciated the need for closure on this part of their history, and respected how important it was to have these children appropriately identified and returned to their homelands. I worked with the Army to help facilitate this long process of repatriating these children.

Our Tribes in South Dakota have been working diligently to retrace the steps of their lost children and will be repatriating their remains to lay them to rest in their homelands. This week, the first children will be brought home to South Dakota and to Rosebud. As I continue to be made aware of Dakota and Lakota children being repatriated, I'm happy to see those early efforts have yielded results.

It is with great sincerity that my family and I offer our thoughts and prayers to the families and to the Tribes in South Dakota as they conduct their ceremonies for those coming home, and we are with them until all their children are returned.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Demonizing and Defunding Police Has Consequences

American communities are less safe today than they were a year ago. Crime rates have surged since “defund the police” became a rallying cry. It’s no coincidence that cities that have slashed their police budgets have seen huge increases in violence. As of the end of May, Portland, Oregon, was on track to exceed 1,000 shootings for this year. In the first 14 weeks of 2021, New York City shootings were up 81 percent. In Oakland, California, carjackings are up almost 88 percent. Unfortunately, these are just a few examples.

The crime surge is real, and it is frightening. Statistics and percentages can seem abstract, but there are people behind every one of those crimes. People whose lives have been cut short or ravaged by violence. People whose sense of safety has been destroyed.

This won’t be a surprise to most South Dakotans, who overwhelmingly support our law enforcement officers, but defunding the police is a terrible idea. Some of the cities who cut their own police funding are even recognizing the mistake they’ve made and seeking to restore funding they cut. Unfortunately, the problem won’t necessarily be fixed that easily. Because the “defund the police” movement has not just resulted in smaller police budgets, it has also resulted in lower police morale, leading to a wave of police retirements and resignations.

Now, police departments are worried about having enough officers to keep their communities safe. It turns out that when you spend months vilifying police officers and demonizing them for doing their jobs, some of them no longer want to stay. To me, this is perhaps the worst consequence of the defund the police movement. Resources and equipment can be built back up again, but it’s a lot harder to replace good, seasoned officers – particularly right now, when it’s difficult to imagine why anyone would want to become a police officer. Why would men and women sign up for a job where they are regularly characterized as the worst kind of criminals? The sickening scene of protesters shouting “death to police” outside a hospital where two ambushed law enforcement officers were fighting for their lives has to be emblazoned on the minds of police officers nationwide.

The defund the police movement unjustly paints the entire law enforcement community as corrupt and immoral. We all know that simply isn’t true. Police officers are heroes in their communities – brave and committed Americans who put on the badge each day knowing the risk to their own safety. These are the people we call when we have a car accident, see someone in trouble or in need, or fear for our safety. These are the people who run toward danger and violence when the natural reaction is to run away from it. Our law enforcement officers deserve the highest level of respect.

Now, are there bad police officers out there? Of course there are. There are bad teachers out there too. And bad social workers. And bad businessmen. But just as it would be outrageous to demonize all teachers because of the few bad apples in their profession, it is outrageous to demonize the hundreds of thousands of dedicated Americans defending public safety because of a handful of bad officers.

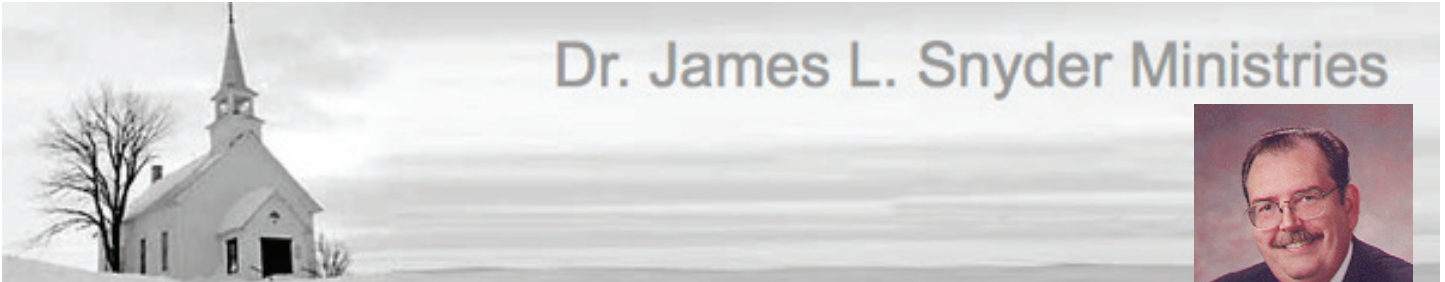
We owe our men and women in law enforcement a great debt – a debt we can’t even fully comprehend. These men and women go out and risk their lives every day of the week, every month of the year, to keep us safe. And they bear a heavy physical and emotional burden. It’s tough to have to see evil on a daily basis – to spend years rescuing children who are in trouble or supporting victims of violence or bringing rapists to justice. They confront violence so that we don’t have to – and they pay a price. We owe them and their families our profound gratitude.

Democrats bear a substantial amount of responsibility for this situation. Far too many of them actively supported the “defund the police” movement and encouraged resentment toward law enforcement. It is disgraceful that anti-police rhetoric has become such an accepted part of our national conversation – and has been winked at or endorsed by so many Democrat leaders. We owe our police officers much better.

If any good can come out of all this violence and heartbreak, I hope it’s an increased recognition of how essential police officers are to keeping our communities safe and a rejection of any idea of defunding the police. It’s time to focus on protecting public safety and honoring the men and women who spend every day working to promote it.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 36 of 78



The Blossoming Flower Whisperer

When it comes to flowers, I am the epitome of naivety. I have no expertise whatsoever in the plant world. All I see are red, blue and yellow.

Don't get me wrong here; I enjoy flowers. However, when it comes to names, I am off the planet. I don't need to know the name of a flower to really enjoy that flower. Instead, I enjoy the fragrance and the optics of a row of flowers.

If I had to take care of flowers, they wouldn't last more than 24 hours. Just because you like something doesn't mean you know how to take care of something.

On the other side of this marital relationship, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is quite the expert when it comes to plant life and developing flowers. She grew up on a farm, and her father was a farmer, so she understands how to take care of plants.

Being the gracious husband that I am, I give her plenty of space in this area. However, I know what I should stay away from, and this is one of them.

I know that if one of her flowers wasn't going the way she wanted it to, she would not be a happy planter. So, to encourage her in this realm, I stay away from the flowers. Instead, I admire them from afar and complement my wife on their beauty. That gives me a few kudos, and I need as many as I can get.

A couple of weeks ago, as I passed the glass door that goes out into the porch area, I heard my wife talking. Not wanting to interfere, I assumed she was talking to our neighbors. That happens quite a bit. I'm not saying it's in the area of "gossip," but it comes very close.

I just wrote that off and continued my day. The next day I heard the same thing, but I couldn't understand what she was saying; I just assumed she was, again, talking with our neighbor.

This happened quite a few times and I, being of the curiosity strain of humanity, wanted to know who she was talking to and what they were talking about.

I don't gossip, but I sure do like to hear gossip to know what in the world is going on.

Trying to listen, I heard her say, "Oh, you look so beautiful today."

That caught my attention. I've never heard the neighbors talk about being beautiful. So I just shrugged it off as neighborhood nonsense.

A day later, as I was passing the door, I heard her say, "Don't you worry about the rain. I'll take care of you."

Then she said something curious, "I'll be careful, and promise this will not hurt; it is something that I need to do."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 37 of 78

Then I heard, clip, clip, clip.

"See," I heard her say very lovingly, "I told you that it wouldn't hurt. So now you're going to look a lot more beautiful."

At the time, I did not want to know what in the world was going on. I could not even imagine who she was talking to and what was going on.

My dilemma was, shall I walk away and pretend I haven't heard anything? Or, should I go out and find out for myself what was going on?

I have the philosophy that once you step into a puddle of water, you can never unstep.

Then I heard, "Don't worry, little friend, I'll get to you soon."

At this point, I've had enough. No matter what it cost me, I was going to find out what was going on.

I opened the door and stepped out on to the porch, and said, "Who are you talking to?"

She looked at me, gave me one of her contagious smiles, and said, "I'm talking to my flowers. Aren't they beautiful?"

Being a husband for as long as I have been, I know what it's like to be in a position where you don't know what to say. Unfortunately, this was not one of them.

For anybody to talk to flowers was pretty silly as far as I was concerned.

After a short pause, I responded, "Do they ever talk back?"

Laughing for a moment, she replied, "Silly boy, they're flowers, and flowers don't talk."

She then went back to her flowers, and I could hear her still talking to them. Evidently, her talking to them was working out because all of the flowers were blooming quite beautifully.

I went back to my office and began reflecting on this. I can understand talking to a dog or a cat or even a horse. But when you talk to a flower, it just doesn't make sense to me.

On further reflection, if talking to flowers is beneficial to their growth, who in the world am I to question that. The end result is the flower, and that's what we appreciate.

As I was pondering this, I decided to look up some Scripture along this line, and I found one that blessed my heart. "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land" (Song of Solomon 2:12).

I guess from my wife's point of view, the delicacy and fragrance of a blossoming flower are in the voice that comforts it. When God speaks to me, I also blossom.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 38 of 78

EARTHTALK

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: I've heard that U.S. national parks are disproportionately affected by climate change. Is this true, and if so, why?

--- Joseph Pearl, Longmont, CO

The effects of climate change can be felt all over the globe in various ways, but America's national parks seem to be suffering more than U.S. overall land mass. A 2020 study by researchers from UC Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin found that "human-caused climate change has exposed the U.S. national park area to more severe increases in heat and aridity than the country as a whole and caused widespread impacts on ecosystems and resources." Since 1895, annual average temperature of the area of the 419 national parks has increased at a rate of 1.8°F per century, double that of the U.S. as a whole. Precipitation declined significantly on 12 percent of national park area, compared with just three percent nationally.

What's driving this exaggerated response? One theory holds that national parks are feeling the heat more because they tend to be located in extreme environments to begin with. Their rarer ecosystems are in some cases fragile and less resilient to change than the average backyard or suburban park.

Some of the specific ways national parks are affected disproportionately include twice as much wildfire decimation and tree mortality from infestations and disease as non-parks lands, the melting of glaciers in northern parks in the continental U.S. as well as Alaska, a loss of bird species and biodiversity in southerly parks, and sea level rise at coastal sites everywhere.

According to Patrick Gonzalez, the study's lead author and a UC Berkeley climate scientist, climate change could increase temperatures in some U.S. national parks by as much as 16°F by 2100. "This could melt all glaciers from Glacier National Park, raise sea level enough to inundate half of Everglades National Park, dissolve coral reefs in Virgin Islands National Park through ocean acidification, and damage many other natural and cultural resources."

Some individual parks are taking matters into their own hands and channeling some of their maintenance budgets to bolster ecosystem resilience to the climate-induced changes already underway. Biologists in Joshua Tree National Park, for example, are cordoning off sections of the park to reduce the trampling of sensitive plants in particularly biodiverse areas. And Florida's Biscayne National Park is raising heat-resistant local corals they hope can play a role in stemming the tide of underwater biodiversity loss.

While these efforts are laudable and are no doubt helping address a dire situation, the only way to really turn things around across the board is to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions. Gonzalez underscores the importance of energy conservation and efficiency improvements, renewable energy, public transit and other actions to reduce global warming. Like at no other time in history, the future is in our hands today. Whether or not our grandkids will get to see glaciers at Glacier National Park may well depend on actions we undertake today.

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



Yellowstone National Park, home of the Old Faithful geyser pictured here at sunset, is one of the nation's hardest hit when it comes to negative impacts from climate change.

Credit: Roddy Scheer

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 39 of 78

Redfield Jr. Legion Runs Away With Early Lead In Victory

Groton Jr Legion watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in a 16-12 loss to Redfield on Saturday. Redfield scored on a single by P O in the first inning and a single by Rolfs in the second inning.

Groton Jr Legion collected 19 hits and Redfield had 14 in the high-scoring affair.

Redfield got things started in the first inning when P singled on a 1-0 count, scoring one run.

Groton Jr Legion put up five runs in the fourth inning. Groton Jr Legion batters contributing to the big inning included Colby D, Tate L, and Cade L, all driving in runs in the frame.

Redfield scored ten runs in the fourth inning. Salmon, S S, E M, K H, O O, and N G each drove in runs during the inning.

P pitched Redfield to victory. P surrendered six runs on ten hits over three and a third innings, striking out two. O and Rolfs entered the game out of the bullpen and helped to close out the game in relief.

Bradin A took the loss for Groton Jr Legion. The pitcher allowed three hits and three runs over one inning, striking out one.

Groton Jr Legion tallied 19 hits in the game. Andrew M, Colby, Jordan B, Dillon A, Ryan G, Kaleb H, and Tate each managed multiple hits for Groton Jr Legion. Andrew led Groton Jr Legion with four hits in five at bats. Groton Jr Legion was sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Cade made the most plays with five.

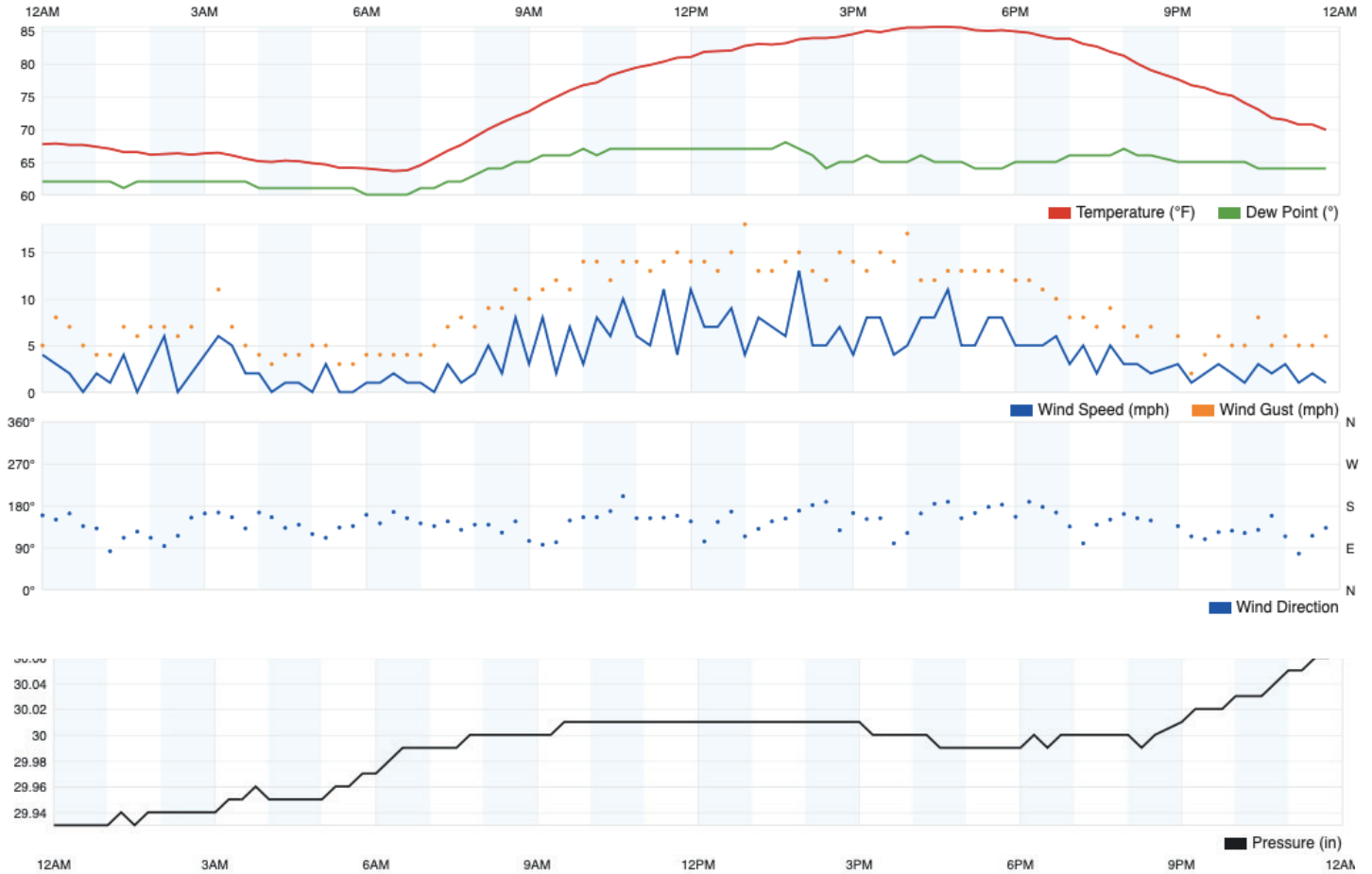
Redfield totaled 14 hits in the game. N and P each collected multiple hits for Redfield. Redfield didn't commit a single error in the field. P had the most chances in the field with seven.

"Powered by Narrative Science and GameChanger Media. Copyright 2021. All rights reserved."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 40 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 41 of 78

Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 89 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 67 °F

Monday



Hot

High: 93 °F

Monday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 65 °F

Tuesday






Hot

High: 95 °F

The graphic features a background image of a sunset over a green field with trees. Two semi-transparent boxes are overlaid on the image. The top box is light purple and contains the text 'Today', 'Elevated Smoke', and 'Highs: 84 to 96°'. The bottom box is light blue and contains the text 'Monday', 'Mostly Sunny', 'Highs: 87 to 97°', and 'Warmest along and west of the Missouri River'. At the bottom of the graphic is the National Weather Service logo and contact information for Aberdeen, SD.

Today
Elevated Smoke
Highs: 84 to 96°

Monday
Mostly Sunny
Highs: 87 to 97°
Warmest along and west of the Missouri River

 **National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD**
weather.gov/Aberdeen  National Weather Service Aberdeen  @NWSAberdeen

Hot and dry conditions are expected through the first half of the week. Elevated smoke will continue to stream over the region from fires in the western U.S. and Canada.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 42 of 78

Today in Weather History

July 18, 1883: An estimated F3 tornado moved southeast from south of Redfield to north of Hitchcock, to 6 miles southeast of Crandon in Spink County. At least one farm house was destroyed and swept away. Three people were killed on one farm.

July 18, 1986: In the afternoon, an F2 tornado that touched down in the northern suburbs of Minneapolis became one of the most observed and photographed tornadoes ever. The detailed coverage included video from a Minnesota DOT traffic camera and a remarkable aerial video taken from a helicopter by a television camera crew. The tornado began in Brooklyn Park and moved slowly northeast, causing light to moderate damage. It then turned east and slowed as it crossed the Mississippi River. Also on this day, an F2 tornado touched down two miles southeast of Bryant, in Hamlin County. This tornado traveled near Dolph Creek and moved east along the creek to the Lake Norden area. The tornado damaged many trees and destroyed a barn. A second F2 tornado touched down three miles west of Toronto and moved southeast. The tornado destroyed a barn, silo, and six other buildings and caused extensive damage to farm equipment on a farm one mile south and a half mile west Astoria.

July 18, 2008: Severe thunderstorms developed across parts of central and north-central South Dakota bringing large hail up to the size of golf balls and damaging winds to near 80 mph. Some tree, vehicle, and building damage occurred with some of the storms. Eighty mph winds or higher brought down many branches along with some trees in Fort Pierre. Power was cut off for parts of Fort Pierre when branches fell on power lines. Several truck trailers and feed silos were tipped onto their sides by the high winds. Also, some buildings were damaged. A loaded train was pushed down the tracks almost a quarter of a mile by the strong winds. Seventy mph winds or greater brought down many tree branches along with some trees in Pierre. There were power outages in Pierre along with some buildings receiving damage. Damaging thunderstorm winds also downed six power poles between Sully Buttes and Onida knocking power out to over 800 homes in and around Onida.

64: The great fire of Rome breaks out and destroys much of the city on this day. Despite the well-known stories, there is no evidence that the Roman emperor, Nero, either started the fire or played the fiddle while it burned. The fire began in the slums of a district south of the legendary Palatine Hill. The area's homes burned very quickly, and the fire spread north, fueled by high winds.

1889 - A cloudburst in West Virginia along the small creeks in Wirt County, Jackson County and Wood County claimed twenty lives. Rockport, WV, reported nineteen inches of rain in two hours and ten minutes that Thursday evening. Tygart Creek rose 22 feet in one hour, and villages were swept away on Tygart, Slate, Tucker, and Sandy Creeks. (The Weather Channel)

1942 - A record deluge occurred at Smethport in northern Pennsylvania, with 30.7 inches in just six hours. The downpours and resultant flooding in Pennsylvania were devastating. (David Ludlum)

1986 - One of the most photo-genic tornadoes touched down in the northern suburbs of Minneapolis, MN, during the late afternoon. The very slow moving tornado actually appeared live on the evening news by way of an aerial video taken by the KARE-TV helicopter crew. The tornado, unlike most, was quite the prima donna, staying visible to tens of thousands of persons for thirty minutes. It was moderate in intensity, with winds of 113-157 mph, and caused 650 thousand dollars damage. (Storm Data)

1987 - Cool weather prevailed in the western U.S. Seven cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Alamosa, CO, with a reading of 38 degrees. The low of 52 degrees at Bakersfield, CA, was a record for July. Up to eight inches of snow covered the Northern Sierra Nevada Range of California from a storm the previous day. During that storm, winds gusting to 52 mph at Slide Mountain, NV, produced a wind chill reading of 20 degrees below zero. Susanville, CA, reached 17 degrees that previous day, Blue Canyon, CA, dipped to a July record of 36 degrees, and the high of 44 degrees at Klamath Falls, OR, smashed their previous record for July by ten degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Sweltering heat continued in California, with record highs of 111 degrees at Redding and 112 degrees at Sacramento. Death Valley, CA, hit 127 degrees. Late afternoon and evening thunderstorms in the Central Plains Region produced baseball size hail at Kimball, NE, wind gusts to 79 mph at Colby, KS, and six inches of rain near Lexington, NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

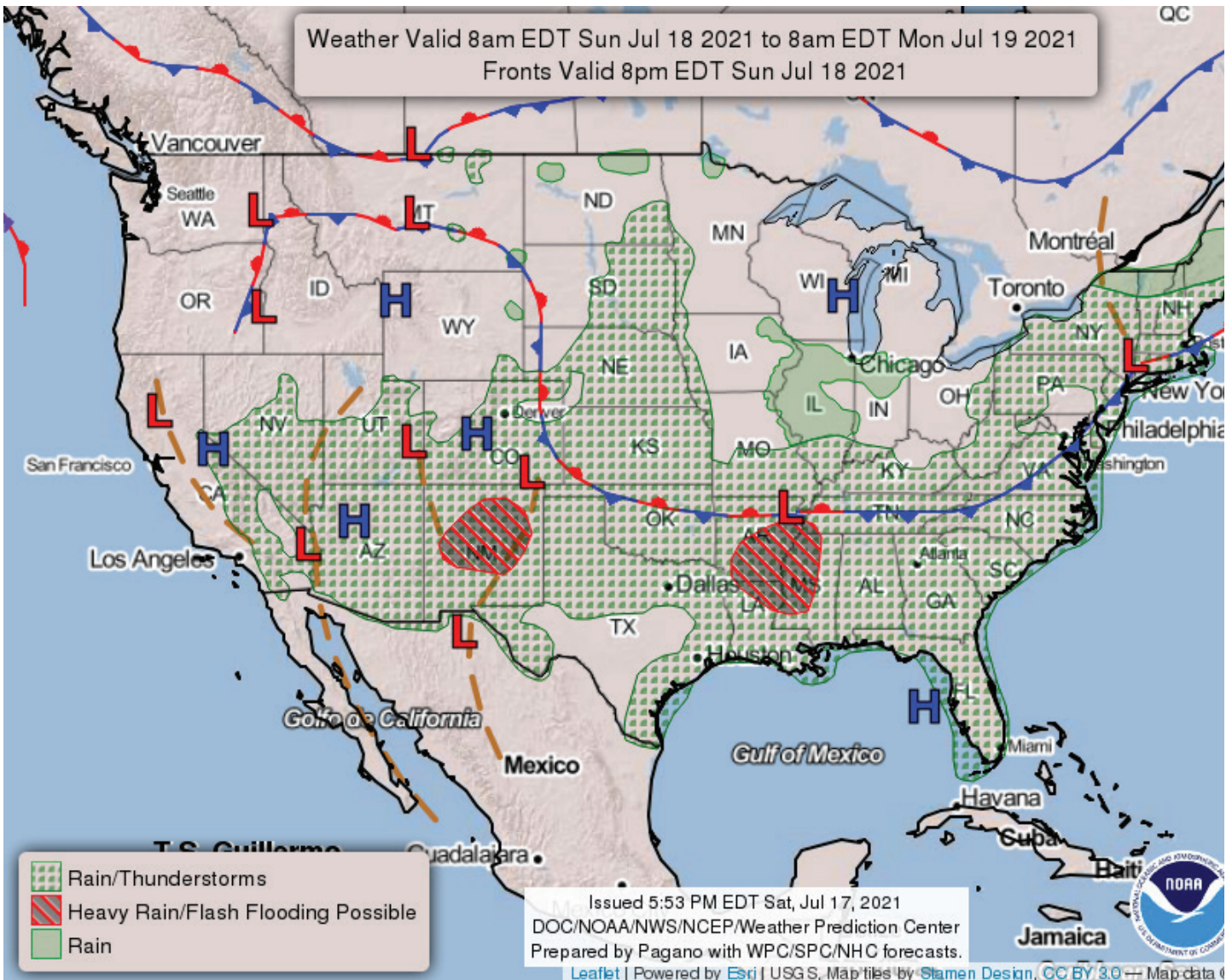
Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 43 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 86 °F at 3:50 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 6:27 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 12:53 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1936
Record Low: 40° in 1915
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July.: 1.90
Precip to date in July.: 1.73
Average Precip to date: 12.91
Precip Year to Date: 6.48
Sunset Tonight: 9:16 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:04 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 44 of 78



I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE TO TURN TO

A young child had been lost in the woods. After a long search, the rescue team found him and returned him to his anxious parents. With tear-filled eyes he looked at his mother and said, "Mom, when I was lost in the woods, I had no one to turn to. Now that I'm back in your arms, I do!"

A Psalmist made the same statements: "Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing that I desire besides You."

No one or no thing can do for us what our Heavenly Father can do for us. Nor is there anyone anywhere who will ever mean more to us or be more for us than our Lord – if we allow Him.

Some, we know, turn to materialism rather than the Master. There is nothing wrong with having money and what money can buy, but it is wrong when we worship money, allow our lives to be consumed with making money so we can acquire the things of this world. In the end, materialism consumes us because there is never enough to calm our fears or give us peace.

Others look for the answers to life in science. Science has provided many benefits and increased and made our lives more enjoyable. But science cannot cleanse us from sin or assure us of peace and hope in this world and a life with our Father in the world to come. Science can improve our earthly lives, but it cannot impart eternal life.

Wisely the Psalmist reviewed his past carefully, considered his future, and realized that apart from God there was nothing worth living for. He asked the right question.

Prayer: Help us to understand, Father, that in You we find peace and satisfaction, completeness and hope. May we discover what brings fullness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing that I desire besides you. Psalm 73:25

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 45 of 78

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
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament
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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 46 of 78

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

02-09-22-23-31

(two, nine, twenty-two, twenty-three, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

26-30-37-40-45, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 4

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

Estimated jackpot: \$2 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$128 million

Powerball

15-22-38-54-66, Powerball: 3, Power Play: 2

(fifteen, twenty-two, thirty-eight, fifty-four, sixty-six; Powerball: three; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$150 million

South Dakota's Noem taking swings at potential 2024 rivals

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — More than 18 months before the first presidential primary of 2024, most potential Republican candidates are just getting a sense of the political landscape, tiptoeing through early-voting states and trying to make friends in key places. Then there's Kristi Noem.

The South Dakota governor has come out swinging as she tries to carve a niche among an early crowd of possible GOP rivals for the White House. Her combative style, no surprise to those who follow her, is evidence of how competitive the nomination race will be if Donald Trump stays on the sidelines.

Noem charged into Iowa on Friday singing a battle hymn and armed with barbed comments for her fellow GOP governors. At a conservative gathering in Des Moines, she told the crowd she "really hates this America" under President Joe Biden's leadership, then led them in singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

But Noem didn't just take aim at political foes. She also unleashed sharp-edged comments on those within her own party, accusing fellow GOP governors of "rewriting history" by claiming they kept their states open during the pandemic.

"To pretend that they didn't take actions that they had no authority to take isn't standing on truth," she told reporters Friday.

It's easy to see why the 49-year-old governor, who is known as a scorched-earth campaigner in her home state, is elbowing out anyone trying to claim a more hands-off approach to the pandemic. She doesn't have the experience of working alongside Trump, like Mike Pence, Nikki Haley or Mike Pompeo — all of whom have visited the presidential-proving ground of Iowa in recent days. Other potential rivals like Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott have the advantage of governing states that figure prominently in national politics.

The pandemic was rocket fuel for Noem's political rise. While she had been laying the groundwork to build a national profile and looking for ways to make South Dakota a testing ground for conservative policies, she jumped on decrying coronavirus restrictions early.

Conservatives nationwide have since made efforts to try to halt the pandemic's spread into a favorite punching bag. At the Family Leadership Summit, where Noem spoke alongside Pence, Pompeo and Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, speakers warned that government restrictions were eroding personal liberties. De-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 47 of 78

Santis has even begun selling "Don't Fauci My Florida" merchandise to raise money for his gubernatorial reelection campaign, taking aim at another favorite target, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Noem didn't mention DeSantis by name during a Sunday speech at another conservative conference in Texas, but seemed to single him out when she accused other GOP governors of "pretending" they didn't shut down their beaches.

"All I'm saying is that we need leaders with grit. That their first instinct is to make the right decision," Noem told the audience at the Conservative Political Action Conference.

But as an early wave of virus cases hit her state in the spring of last year, Noem initially showed a willingness to step in and use the force of her office. She declared an emergency and told schools to close, urged a meatpacking plant to temporarily shutter after an outbreak among workers, and even issued a stay-at-home order in two hard-hit counties for people over 65 or vulnerable to the virus.

While Noem never ordered businesses to close, many did so anyway. And city leaders, frustrated with Noem's inaction, issued their own orders that forced many to shutter for weeks in the spring.

As the response to the virus became increasingly politicized, however, Noem moved to the forefront of governors railing against government orders. By June of 2020, her message had shifted: "More freedom, not more government is the answer."

With an eye on the economic and mental health ripple effects of the pandemic, she frequently touted the fact that her state has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation and a growing economy.

But even as virus cases and deaths surged last year, she refused to urge people to wear masks in public. Instead, the state spent more in federal coronavirus funds on an ad campaign inviting tourists to visit than it did on public health advertising.

As her appearances on Fox News increased, conservatives across the country began suggesting she run for president. Noem has demurred when asked publicly about her White House ambitions and says she is focused on next year's gubernatorial campaign. But recent actions — from registering a federal political action committee to hitting the nationwide speaking circuit — show she has her sights set beyond South Dakota.

It's not clear how her record on the virus would play beyond the Republican base. South Dakota recorded the nation's 10th highest COVID-19 death rate. Although some states with far more aggressive approaches to mitigating the pandemic saw similar outcomes, South Dakota had the worst mortality rate in the Midwest. But that hasn't stopped Noem from bragging about it.

"When I ran for governor I ran on it being an example to the nation," she told the crowd Friday. "I had no idea that that was going to happen through a pandemic."

Tribe claims remains of kids who died at assimilation school

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The remains of nine Native American children who died more than a century ago while attending a government-run school in Pennsylvania meant to assimilate them into white culture have been returned to their South Dakota tribe for burial on its reservation.

The Rosebud Sioux planned to rebury the remains during a ceremony on Saturday, the Argus Leader reported.

The effort to return the remains took nearly six years. A caravan of young adults tasked with bringing the remains home to the reservation set out Tuesday from the site of the former Carlisle Indian Reform School, which is about 20 miles (32 kilometers) west of the Pennsylvania capital Harrisburg.

It made several stops along the way, including in Yankton and Whetstone on Friday for emotional ceremonies with tribal members. Another ceremony was held earlier Friday at a Missouri River landing near Sioux City, Iowa, which was where the children, who died between 1880 and 1910, boarded a steamboat for their journey east.

"This is a common sorrow we share, but on this day we have a common celebration," Ben Rhodd, a member of the Rosebud Sioux, told the gathering in Yankton.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 48 of 78

Rodney Bordeaux, the tribe's president, said Friday's events were historic and thanked the young people for bringing the remains back.

"This is going to make us that much stronger as a people as we reclaim who we are," he said. "Indian Country nationwide is rising up. We're going to be stronger as we go forward."

Christopher Eagle Bear, 23, who was part of the youth council responsible for bringing returning the remains, said, "On this day, it is an honor to be Lakota. Hopefully, what we do here can inspire another youth group to move the road further than what we have started."

Some of the children will be reburied in a veterans' cemetery on the reservation and others will be interred at family graveyards, tribal officials said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland last month announced a nationwide investigation into the boarding schools that attempted to assimilate Indigenous children into white society.

Haaland, the first Native American to serve as a Cabinet secretary, said "forced assimilation practices" stripped away the children's clothing, their language and their culture. She said the government aims to locate the schools and burial sites and identify the names and tribal affiliations of children from the boarding schools around the country.

The Carlisle school, which was founded by an Army officer and opened in 1880, was the first of its kind off a reservation and set an example later used by other schools to assimilate Native American children into white culture. It took drastic steps to separate students from their Indigenous cultures, including cutting their braids, dressing them in military-style uniforms and punishing them for speaking their native languages. They were also forced to adopt European names.

More than 10,000 Native American children were taught at the Carlisle school and endured harsh conditions that sometimes led to death from such diseases as tuberculosis.

Man accused in 2013 death of South Dakota woman

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man is accused in the death of Custer woman, whose decomposed body was found in the Black Hills in 2013.

The Rapid City Journal reports Richard Melvin Schmitz, 53, was arrested at his home near Hill City without incident Friday morning.

Schmitz will make his initial court appearance Monday on a second-degree murder charge.

Meshell Will, 38, was last seen alive in Keystone on Aug. 24, 2013. Originally from Wisconsin, she had been in Custer for about six months, authorities said.

Someone taking photos along Iron Mountain Road near Mount Rushmore discovered the body about a week after she went missing.

The Pennington County Sheriff's Office said in a statement that Schmitz has a been person of interest in the case for the past eight years.

Authorities declined to say what changed to allow investigators to take Schmitz from a person of interest to a murder suspect. The case has been turned over to the Pennington County State's Attorney's office where the files have been sealed.

Home for harvest: Paralyzed farmer makes it back in combine

By MARY GALES ASKREN Madison Daily Leader

CHESTER, S.D. (AP) — The phrase "caught in a rut" has a unique meaning for a Chester farmer whose life was radically changed last July. Normally, it means someone is stuck in a boring lifestyle.

Justin Minnaert, a champion in dirt bike racing, was always a bit of a daredevil. The rut that caught him and slammed him to the ground was a rain rut at a local track.

He and his dad were checking the track following a race at a local club. He took a jump he'd made 100 times before, but that time, he hit the rut, went down and the bike hit his back.

"I've crashed much harder. It's just where the bike hit," Minnaert said.

He knew immediately he was seriously injured because his lower body was completely numb. When his

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 49 of 78

dad arrived, he didn't mince words. He said, "Go get help, I'm paralyzed."

Minnaert was airlifted to Sanford Health where his wife Kendra, a nurse who was on duty that day, met him in the emergency room. Testing over the next couple of days indicated the bike had not only injured his spine in the area of the T7 and T8 vertebrae, but had also broken ribs which punctured both lungs.

From the beginning, they realized Justin would be a paraplegic, and they were faced with a choice.

"You have two choices," Minnaert said. "You let the accident define you or you move on."

They chose to move on. After two weeks at Sanford, Minnaert was transferred to the Craig Hospital in Denver, a neurorehabilitation hospital specializing in spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries. He and Kendra were there for 10 weeks.

"I think I got through rehab quicker because she knew what was going on," Minnaert said. "I had my wife with me, but I also had a nurse with me."

Kendra said that wasn't a new role for her, that even before the accident she was both a wife and a nurse. The role which has expanded since Justin's accident is her role on the farm.

Even before they were married, Justin's dad Kevin had drawn Kendra into the operation. He called on her for assistance when she didn't even know how to drive the equipment and gave her a quick tutorial. Prior to the accident, she was helping with harvests.

Now, she's one of the people Justin calls when he needs help in the field.

"I can run the equipment, but if something happens, I have to wait for Kendra or my mother to come and fix it," Minnaert said.

Often it's something he could have taken care of in just a few minutes if he had the mobility he previously enjoyed. That can be frustrating.

Minnaert doesn't glamorize or gloss over the challenges of farming as a paraplegic. He admits he has good days and bad days, days when it's hard to get out of bed.

"We all have those days," he said. He and Kendra know what helps him get through those days.

"We have the support we need and we have each other," Kendra said.

Farming helps, too. When Justin was at Craig, a single goal motivated him, the Madison Daily Leader reported.

"My goal was to make it home in time for harvest," Minnaert said. While he missed the bean harvest, he was in a combine for half of the corn harvest.

"The first day I was back in the combine was the first day I felt normal," he indicated. "A lot of healing started happening that day."

A second healing experience was the fund-raiser hosted by the Chester Volunteer Fire Department. Funds raised at that event and a second one later have helped the Minnaerts to purchase adaptive equipment and to make modifications to their house.

However, the gathering is what he remembers months later.

"When we had that event and everyone was there, it was like our wedding all over again," Minnaert said, recalling how he smiled and laughed until he was shot.

Survivors recall escape, ponder future after Europe's floods

By ERIC FUX and EMILY SCHULTHEIS Associated Press

PEPINSTER, Belgium (AP) — Paul and Madeline Brasseur were at home with their two sons in the Belgian town of Pepinster when the water "came all of a sudden" late in the evening.

It "was like a tsunami," the way it entered the house and kept rising instead of retreating, said Paul Brasseur, 42.

The family went upstairs and kept seeking safety during the night as the water climbed steadily below them. They ended up on the roof, watching.

"We started to see buildings collapsing, people on the rooftops, buildings collapsing, falling into the water," Brasseur said.

Eventually, making their way from rooftop to rooftop, they ended up perched on one with 15 other people,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 50 of 78

waiting hours for help to come. A boat arrived to rescue the children, but it began taking on water while a makeshift jetty started to collapse. Brasseur held his sons back.

"We held out, for those nine hours," said Brasseur, who has lived in Pepinster since he was 10. "Then it was citizens, the father of my sons' best friend who came ... up over the rooftops and saved us, too."

More than 180 people in Belgium and Germany didn't survive the massive flooding that crashed through parts of Western Europe on Wednesday and Thursday. Thousands of those who did, like the Brasseurs, found their homes destroyed or badly battered.

As the floodwaters subsided, attention turned to the gargantuan task of repairing the damage wrought by the storm-induced deluges — and to the immense losses faced by those in affected areas.

In Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, in western Germany, Andreas Wachtveitel spent Saturday clearing debris out of his apartment building. The 39-year-old's home and office were submerged and badly damaged, so he doesn't know what he'll do next.

"This was the worst thing that's ever happened to me," said Wachtveitel, who was covered in mud. "Thank God everybody in our house is still alive, but it was close."

The sounds of the water rushing into his building's lower floors and of nearby screaming haunt him, he said.

"We heard screams from the other side," Wachtveitel said. "There's a clinic and the patients were trapped."

Franco Romanelli, who owns the Pizzeria Roma in the same town, stood in front of the restaurant that was his livelihood as workers cleared ruined furniture.

"It took such a long time to build the restaurant to get it where it is," he said. "And now after the pandemic, this is catastrophic."

"We are not talking about a few thousand euros" to repair the damage, he said. "I made a rough calculation; we are talking about a few hundred thousand euros to rebuild the place."

Romanelli, originally from the Abruzzo region of Italy, came to Ahrweiler in 1979 when he was 15 years old. He said the extent of the damage in his adopted home is devastating.

"If I look at Ahrweiler now, I could cry," he said. "It's my home."

In the Netherlands, thousands of people who evacuated threatened areas on Thursday and Friday started to return home to survey the damage on Saturday.

In Brommelen, in the southern Netherlands, Wiel de Bie found his basement completely flooded. De Bie, 75, had carefully collected decades' worth of old magazines, photos and important documents. All of them were in his basement; what hasn't disappeared entirely is waterlogged and destroyed.

"Apart from the emotional value, which I find more important, magazines, radio bulletins from 1960 until 1997 all vanished," he said, picking up a dripping copy of a magazine from 1924 as he pumped water out of the basement.

Down the street, the Kant family's car still was partially underwater. A single rubber boot floated in their flooded garden. Professor Ijmert Kant, 62, said he was grateful for their safety. Still, he added, the task of cleaning up the debris and repairing their home was daunting.

"It's all material. Nothing happened. People were spared, and I mean that," Kan said, "But I'm not looking forward to the hassle of, 'How do you repair this? How does it work with insurance?'"

In Belgium, Brasseur celebrated his 42nd birthday on Saturday. The occasion may have turned out nothing like the day he expected, but the important thing was that his family was safe and together, he said.

"My gift today," Brasseur said, his voice breaking, "is that my family and all the friends who we were with are still alive."

Europe flooding toll over 180 as rescuers dig deeper

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The death toll from flooding in Western Europe climbed above 180 on Sunday after rescue workers dug deeper into debris left by receding waters. Heavy rain fueled new floods in southeastern Germany and Austria, though not on the scale of last week's devastating onslaught.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 51 of 78

Police put the toll from the hard-hit Ahrweiler area of western Germany's Rhineland-Palatinate state at more than 110 and said they feared the number may still rise. In neighboring North Rhine-Westphalia state, Germany's most populous, 45 people were confirmed dead, including four firefighters. And Belgium has confirmed 27 casualties.

Chancellor Angela Merkel was due to visit Schuld, a village near Ahrweiler that was devastated by the flooding, later Sunday. Her visit comes after Germany's president went to the area on Saturday and made clear that it will need long-term support.

Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said he will propose a package of immediate aid at a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, telling the Bild am Sonntag newspaper that more than 300 million euros (\$354 million) will be needed. And he said that officials must start setting up a rebuilding program which, from experience with previous flooding, will be in the billions of euros.

Although rain has stopped in the worst-affected areas of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, storms and downpours have persisted in other parts of western and central Europe. There was flooding Saturday night in the German-Czech border area, across the country from where last week's floods hit, and in Germany's southeastern corner and over the border in Austria.

About 130 people were evacuated from their homes in Germany's Berchtesgaden area after the Ache River swelled. At least one person was killed. The railway line to Berchtesgaden was closed.

A flash flood swept through the nearby Austrian town of Hallein late Saturday, but there were no reports of casualties. Further west, parts of the town of Kufstein were flooded. Heavy rain and storms caused serious damage in several parts of Austria.

Climate scientists say the link between extreme weather and global warming is unmistakable and the urgency to do something about climate change undeniable.

Scientists can't yet say for sure whether climate change caused the flooding, but they insist that it certainly exacerbates the extreme weather that has been on show around the world.

Vaccine inequity: Inside the cutthroat race to secure doses

By LORI HINNANT, MARIA CHENG and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — No one disputes that the world is unfair. But no one expected a vaccine gap between the global rich and poor that was this bad, this far into the pandemic.

Inequity is everywhere: Inoculations go begging in the United States while Haiti, a short plane ride away, received its first delivery July 15 after months of promises — 500,000 doses for a population over 11 million. Canada has procured more than 10 doses for every resident; Sierra Leone's vaccination rate just cracked 1% on June 20.

It's like a famine in which "the richest guys grab the baker," said Strive Masiyiwa, the African Union's envoy for vaccine acquisition.

In fact, European and American officials deeply involved in bankrolling and distributing the vaccines against coronavirus have told The Associated Press there was no thought of how to handle the situation globally. Instead, they jostled for their own domestic use.

But there are more specific reasons why vaccines have and have not reached the haves and have-nots. COVID-19 unexpectedly devastated wealthy countries first — and some of them were among the few places that make the vaccines. Export restrictions kept the doses within their borders.

There was a global purchase plan to provide vaccines for poorer countries, but it was so flawed and underfunded that it couldn't compete in the cutthroat competition to buy. Intellectual property rights vied with global public health for priority. Rich countries expanded vaccinations to younger and younger people, ignored the repeated pleas of health officials to donate their doses instead and debated booster shots — even as poor countries couldn't vaccinate the most susceptible.

The disparity was in some ways inevitable; wealthy nations expected a return on their investment of taxpayer money. But the scale of the inequity, the stockpiling of unused vaccines, the lack of a viable global plan to solve a global problem has shocked health officials, though it wasn't the first time.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 52 of 78

"This was a deliberate global architecture of unfairness," Masiyiwa told a Milken Institute conference.

"We have no access to vaccines either as donations or available for us to purchase. Am I surprised? No, because this is where we were with the HIV pandemic. Eight years after therapeutics were available in the West, we did not receive them and we lost 10 million people."

"It's simple math," he said. "We have no access. We have no vaccine miracle."

The World Health Organization has duly updated its epidemic playbook after every outbreak, most recently with Ebola in mind. Then, as often in the decades before, an emerging illness was largely contained to countries lacking robust public health services, with poor sanitation and crowded living conditions and limited travel connections.

For years, the WHO assessed countries' readiness for a flu pandemic: The United States, European countries and even India ranked near the top. The U.S. readiness was 96%, and Britain at 93%.

On Jan. 30, 2020, WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak in China to be a global emergency. It would be months before the word "pandemic" became official.

But that same day, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovations, or CEPI, was planning for the worst. CEPI announced "a call for proven vaccine technologies applicable for large scale manufacturing," according to minutes from its scientific advisory group. CEPI said it would be critical "to support the strategy for global access" early in the game.

CEPI quickly invested in two promising coronavirus vaccines being developed by Moderna and CureVac.

"We said very early on that it would be important to have a platform where all countries could draw vaccines from, where there's accountability and transparency," said Christian Happi, a professor at Nigeria's Redeemer's University and a member of CEPI's scientific advisory committee. "But the whole idea was that we thought rich countries would fund it for the developing world."

Happi said officials never expected the pandemic would strike first and hardest in Europe and the U.S. Or that their assessment of preparedness in the world's most advanced economies would prove horrifically optimistic.

Global health experts would soon come to realize that rich countries "could sign a piece of paper saying they believe in equity, but as soon as the chips are down, they will do whatever they want," he said.

On March 16, five days after the global pandemic was declared, the novel mRNA vaccine developed by Moderna was injected into a trial participant for the first time.

By then, the disease was tearing through the elderly populations of Europe and the United States.

Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech were the first companies to come out with an mRNA vaccine, devising methods of mass production almost on the fly. Scientists at Britain's Oxford University also came up with a vaccine with a more traditional platform, and Bill Gates brokered a deal for them to partner with AstraZeneca, a pharmaceutical company with global reach but no experience in vaccine production.

On April 30, the deal was confirmed: AstraZeneca took sole responsibility for the global production and distribution of the Oxford vaccine and pledged to sell it for "a few dollars a dose." Over the next few weeks, the U.S. and Britain secured agreements totaling 400 million doses from AstraZeneca.

The race to make and secure vaccines was on, and the United States and Britain were leagues in front of the rest of the world — a lead they wouldn't lose. Still, both countries would see life expectancy decline by at least a year in 2020, the biggest drop since World War II. In the European Union, 22 countries saw their average lifespans cut short, with Italy leading the list.

But as grim as the situation was, all those countries had a major advantage: They were home to the pharmaceutical companies with the most promising vaccine candidates, the world's most advanced production facilities, and the money to fund both.

On May 15, 2020, President Donald Trump announced Operation Warp Speed and promised to deliver vaccines against coronavirus by New Year's. With unparalleled money and ambition behind the project, Warp Speed head Moncef Slaoui was more confident than his counterparts in Europe that a vaccine was

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 53 of 78

in the offing. He signed contracts almost without regard to price or conditions.

"We were frankly focused on getting this as fast as humanly possible. If I had to redo it, I probably should have voiced more of a global dimension," said Slaoui. "The operation had focused, which was frankly also part of its success, on staying out of the politics and making the vaccines."

The idea of including clauses to ensure that vaccines would go to anyone besides Americans wasn't even considered.

At the same time, the U.S. repeatedly invoked the Defense Production Act — 18 times under the Trump Administration and at least once under Biden. The moves barred exports of crucial raw materials as factories were ramping up production of the as-yet-unapproved vaccines — and eventually, of the vaccines themselves.

But it also meant those materials would run low in much of the rest of the world. The U.S. stranglehold would lift only in spring 2021, and only partially.

Operation Warp Speed supercharged the global race to secure vaccines, but it would still take another two weeks until COVAX — the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility — was formally announced as the entity to ensure equity, with the Serum Institute of India as the core supplier for the developing world.

COVAX had the backing of the World Health Organization, CEPI, vaccines alliance Gavi and the powerful Gates Foundation. What it did not have was cash, and without cash it could secure no contracts.

"Operation Warp Speed signed the first public deals and that started a chain reaction," said Gian Gandhi, UNICEF's COVAX coordinator for supply. "It was a like a rush on the banks, but to buy up the expected supply."

Some involved in the COVAX project flagged India as a potential problem early on, according to minutes of meetings in late spring and early summer of 2020.

India's government had blocked exports of protective gear, but many global health authorities who hadn't fully grasped the extent of pandemic nationalism found it unimaginable that the country would block vaccines when the world was counting on them. Also, India had so far been spared the waves of death that were sweeping across Europe and the Americas.

A separate plan put forward by the government of Costa Rica and the World Health Organization to create a technology-sharing platform to expand vaccine production foundered. Not a single company agreed to share its blueprints, even for a fee — and no government pushed them behind the scenes, according to multiple people involved in the project.

On the global scale, the one organization that could have pushed for more technology sharing was the Gates Foundation, whose money to WHO nearly matches that of the U.S. government.

Instead, Bill Gates defended stringent intellectual property rights as the best way to speed innovation. His foundation poured money and influence into the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, which also failed to generate the money or influence needed to ramp up production outside already existing hubs.

In the United States, meanwhile, manufacturing and the trials went on in parallel, which is where taxpayers and the companies took enormous risks that paid off for both.

But in retrospect, Slaoui said, given the sheer amount of taxpayer money involved, each time they signed new contracts the U.S. and other countries could have pushed companies harder to share their knowledge, if only for the duration of the pandemic.

"From a geopolitical standpoint, it's critical that they do that," he said.

Nowhere was the situation more dire than Africa. In February, WHO's African expert in vaccine development, Richard Mihigo, was among many who said the continent's experience with other pandemics had uniquely prepared it for a complex vaccine deployment.

Five months later, contemplating the plight of a continent that gets 99% of its vaccines from abroad, Mihigo adds a rueful footnote: "One of the lessons we learned from this pandemic is how badly prepared we were in vaccine production in the region and how dependent we were on imports."

Those imports have only barely begun to materialize — and they are insufficient to meet even the limited goals of the COVAX initiative to vaccinate at least 20% of the population of 92 low- and middle-income countries by the end of this year.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 54 of 78

From the start, the coalition of organizations that created COVAX found themselves fighting the last war. The plan was designed as an international pool to spur demand for vaccines and treatment of diseases with a relatively small global footprint, said Winnie Byanyima, head of UNAIDS.

Something like Ebola. But the coronavirus pandemic looked nothing like an Ebola outbreak.

"That itself was a structural weakness," she said.

Although the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had between them set aside billions for vaccinating the developing world, that money was intended to go to countries and was out of bounds for a global vaccine sharing plan like COVAX, said Mike Muldoon, managing director for innovative finance at the Rockefeller Foundation.

Meanwhile, governments competed to secure contracts for vaccines by the hundreds of millions.

On Dec. 8, Britain became the first country to formally authorize a start to widespread vaccinations, injecting 90-year-old Margaret Keenan with a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Six days later, the United States started its own vaccinations. And on Dec. 26, the EU followed suit. China and Russia had been vaccinating even before releasing data from their homegrown inoculations.

The Western companies with the most promising doses, including Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca, had by then been churning out vials for months before formal approval, based on pledges from the wealthy countries that an enormous market awaited. Those doses were stockpiled in Europe and North America and a small number of countries, like Israel, that paid a premium.

COVAX pleaded for cash to do the same. Instead, it got pledges.

"As time passed and it became clear which vaccine candidates were going to be the leading contenders and which were most likely to succeed, the governments that had resources went and bought the supplies," CEPI chief executive Dr. Richard Hatchett told the AP. "COVAX was not in a position to do that."

Months later, when COVAX finally had the money to sign deals for global supplies, Hatchett acknowledged they were at the end of the line.

The lack of capital available to vaccine makers to boost their capacity outside the small number of existing manufacturing hubs was also "a lost opportunity," Hatchett said.

"We approached the international financing institutions, including the World Bank and the (International Finance Corporation) about making those investments and they were not willing to do that," he said. CEPI ended up investing about \$1.5 billion, far less than what a major financial institution might have been able to commit.

COVAX missed its own goal of beginning vaccinations in poor countries at the same time as rich ones. It finally delivered vaccines on Feb. 24, to Ghana, a load of 600,000 AstraZeneca doses manufactured by the Serum Institute of India and transported by UNICEF planes.

By that date, 27% of the population in Britain had been vaccinated, 13% in the U.S., 5% in Europe — and 0.23% in Africa, in countries that had secured their own bilateral deals after growing impatient with COVAX delays. The rift was growing by millions of doses every day.

And pharmaceutical plants were beginning to crumble under the promises they'd made.

AstraZeneca announced repeated delivery cuts to Europe. Pfizer's production briefly slowed. A fire at a Serum Institute construction site prompted a letter to Brazil warning that "supply to you cannot be guaranteed in the foreseeable months." Moderna supply cuts soon followed to Britain and Canada.

In the United States, officials tossed millions of corrupted doses of vaccine from the Emergent Biosolutions plant in Baltimore after discovering that workers had inadvertently blended ingredients from the AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. An untold number of doses were never produced because of new restrictions meant to prevent errors. Many of those vaccines were intended for export.

So COVAX had to hope that the AstraZeneca vaccine being produced in India would come through, because it had secured few of the innovative mRNA doses that are now considered the most effective against the coronavirus variants. The initial refrigeration requirements were daunting, and the price was higher than the traditional vaccine candidates.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 55 of 78

The mRNA vaccines are widely considered a scientific and manufacturing triumph — and a risky bet. Never before approved for use against any disease, they are now considered a hugely promising medical innovation and a potential gamechanger against infection.

But by the time it was clear the mRNA doses were a viable alternative, even in poor countries with limited cold chain, the available supply had been snapped up in Europe, the United States and Canada. And India, in the throes of its own COVID-19 surge, diverted its vaccines for its own use.

According to the People's Vaccine Alliance, a grouping of human rights organizations advocating for broader sharing of vaccines and their underlying technology, the coronavirus has created nine new billionaires. The top six are linked to the successful mRNA vaccines.

For Byanyima, of UNAIDS, this is a travesty and a sign that the world has learned little in the decades since the AIDS pandemic was brought under control in the United States, only to kill millions in Africa because treatments were unaffordable: "Medicines should be a global public good, not just like a luxury handbag you buy on the market."

COVAX has delivered only 107 million doses, and now is forced to rely upon uncertain donations from countries that may prefer to donate directly to the needy, so they can receive the credit.

A readout from its June board meeting slipped in an acknowledgement that it needed to better interpret and respond to market conditions and "the reality that a higher risk appetite is needed in a pandemic setting."

For the pharmaceutical industry, mRNA is the ultimate confirmation that hard work and risk-taking is rewarded. And those companies keep tight hold on the keys to their successful vaccines.

When Moderna and Pfizer created new production lines, it was in the insular European and American manufacturing networks that had as much stake as anyone in both ensuring that the injections meet the highest standards and keeping promises not to abuse intellectual property.

Many public health officials have pushed for technology transfer during the pandemic. Initially resistant, the Gates Foundation has changed its position in favor of sharing.

Dr. Clemence Auer, the EU's lead negotiator for vaccine contracts last summer, said the question of compelling pharmaceutical companies to suspend their vaccine intellectual property rights to increase the worldwide supply of coronavirus vaccines never even came up.

"We had a mandate to buy vaccines, not to talk about intellectual property," Auer said.

"The global community should have had this discussion back in 2020 but that didn't happen," he said. "Maybe we should have done it last year, but now it's too late. It is spilled milk."

CEPI includes equity clauses in the vaccines that it invests in, among them the successful Moderna candidate, but has yet to invoke them during the pandemic. Some include requirements to make a vaccine available to populations in need at affordable prices, as is the case in CEPI's Moderna contract. But Moderna was first available exclusively in wealthy countries and even now only limited amounts are going outside Europe and the United States.

A separate push to lift intellectual property restrictions on vaccines and medicines has also gone nowhere in the World Trade Organization.

And WHO is reticent to make demands of donor nations or the pharmaceutical companies. It needs them for other aspects global health — and for its own continued existence. The Biden administration has reversed Trump's decision to defund and leave WHO, but the damage has been done.

"A lot of these multinational organizations, these plans, these coalitions, they don't have teeth to enforce what they think is a fair and equitable way to distribute resources," said Dr. Ingrid Katz, an infectious disease researcher at the Center for Global Health at Massachusetts General Hospital. She said the key question is whether vaccines and essential medications are a commodity or a right.

"If it's going to be a commodity, we're going to keep walking down this road every time we have something like this," she said.

And if it is all going to rely on the generosity of rich countries, a lot of people are going to die. Four million have died already.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 56 of 78

In all, at the recent Group of Seven meeting of wealthy nations pledged to donate 850 million doses, compared with the 11 billion that WHO says will be needed to end the pandemic.

A close look at the G-7 promises of donations shows that most aren't expected to be delivered until well into 2022. The Biden administration fell short on its pledge to send 80 million doses abroad by the end of June: By mid-July, at least 44 million doses had been sent, including 2.5 million to Canada, which has already given at least one vaccine dose to more of its population than any other country. Africa has yet to receive its doses from the United States.

Oceans away from the deprivation of the developing world, 7-year-old Russell Bright and his 5-year-old brother went to Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans to get their shots — part of a trial for young children. Maybe they got the vaccine; maybe they got the placebo.

Wearing a Spider-Man mask, Russell said he longs for a vacation trip to the water park and then a return to school without having to wear masks and stay at arms' length from his friends.

"Both me and my wife are already vaccinated," said his father, Adam, "and so the sooner I can get them vaccinated and to feel comfortable being outside, not having to wear a mask, I thought the easiest way to get it is to go through the trial."

Scientists agree that children are at low risk from COVID-19. But that hasn't stopped richer countries from stockpiling precious vaccine supplies to inoculate the young, even as poor countries have few or no shots to give.

A recent meeting of WHO's vaccine allocation group disbanded with nothing accomplished, because there was no vaccine to allocate. "Zero doses of AstraZeneca vaccine, zero doses of Pfizer vaccine, zero doses of J&J vaccine," said Dr. Bruce Aylward, a senior advisor at the organization.

"Every single one of our suppliers is unable to supply during this period because others are making demands on those products, others who are vaccinating very young populations that are not at risk," Aylward said.

Both Trump and Biden administration officials reject the notion that the U.S. or any country would share vaccines until they'd protected their own. And they both note that the U.S. bore the brunt of the pandemic last year, topping the world in confirmed cases and deaths.

"We had a responsibility to what I say, 'put on our own oxygen masks before helping others,'" CDC Director Rachele Walensky said in May.

But a plummeting jet takes all passengers with it, whether or not they are wearing masks. And the failure to provide vaccines across the globe ensures that COVID-19 will continue to spread, and mutate, and sicken, and kill.

"It speaks volumes about where we are as a globe when you have the source of decision-making sitting with very few people who have a lot of wealth and are essentially making life and death decisions for the rest of the globe," Mass General's Katz said. "Every month that we lost put us further and further behind."

Bucks edge Suns 123-119 to take 3-2 lead in NBA Finals

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Jrue Holiday seized his chance to give the Milwaukee Bucks the lead in the NBA Finals. Took it right out of Devin Booker's hands, actually.

Holiday's steal and alley-oop pass to Giannis Antetokounmpo for a dunk sealed a wild Game 5 and gave the Bucks a 123-119 victory over the Phoenix Suns on Saturday night.

"It's who he is," teammate Pat Connaughton said. "He's a winner."

And for the first time in 50 years, the Bucks have a chance to be.

Antetokounmpo had 32 points, nine rebounds and six assists. Khris Middleton added 29 points, and Holiday had 27 points and 13 assists.

The Bucks fought their way out of an early 16-point hole by flirting with the best-shooting night in NBA Finals history, but then won it by making a huge defensive play for the second straight game.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 57 of 78

They can win their first title since 1971 on Tuesday night in Milwaukee.

"Obviously we know what the deal is. It's one game away from being the NBA champ," said Antetokounmpo, whose postgame press conference was delayed because he was dehydrated.

Booker had 40 points, his second straight 40-point game. But with the Suns rallying and down one with 16 seconds left, he drove into the middle and Holiday wrestled the ball out of his hands.

"I was just trying to score the ball, he was behind me," Booker said. "I turned and he was right there."

Antetokounmpo sprinted down the court to his right and Holiday — rather than pulling the ball out to run the clock down — fired a perfect lob pass that the Greek Freak slammed down while Chris Paul fouled him to make it 122-119.

"Giannis took off and he was calling for the ball," Holiday said. "At that point, I just threw it as high as I could and only where Giannis could go get it,"

Antetokounmpo missed the free throw, but the Bucks grabbed the rebound and Middleton made one free throw for the final point of the night.

Before the defensive stand, Milwaukee's offense was the story. The Bucks made 32 of 45 shots in the middle two quarters, outscoring the Suns 79-53 during that stretch.

Milwaukee became the first road team to win in the series and with one more victory will complete its second 2-0 comeback in this postseason — along with the fifth in NBA Finals history.

Game 5 winners of a tied series have won the series 21 of 29 times in the NBA Finals.

"We've got to win one game to put them back on the plane. That's it," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "And you have to have that determination that you're willing to do whatever it takes to put them back on the plane."

Paul had 21 points and 11 assists, and Deandre Ayton finished with 20 points and 10 rebounds. But the Suns missed a chance to move within a victory of their first championship and will need a victory at Fiserv Forum to bring the series back to the desert for Game 7 on Thursday night.

"We knew this wasn't going to be easy. We didn't expect it to be. It's hard," Paul said. "Coach said it all year long, everything we want is on the other side of hard and it don't get no harder than this."

Milwaukee was at 62.1% shooting after three quarters, threatening to challenge Orlando's 62.5% mark against the Lakers in Game 3 of the 2009 finals. Holiday's basket had the Bucks in good shape at 108-94 with about 9 minutes remaining, but the Suns put together a push in the final minutes.

Down 10 with just under 3 1/2 minutes remaining, the Suns got a 3 from Booker and a basket by Paul to cut it to 120-119 with 56 seconds to play. Holiday missed a jumper, but that didn't matter once the defensive ace of the Bucks backcourt took it back from Booker.

It wasn't as spectacular a defensive play as Antetokounmpo's block of Ayton's dunk attempt that preserved a two-point lead in Game 4, but it was every bit as important to a Bucks team making its first finals appearance since 1974.

It got off to a bad start when the Suns won the first two games, but things changed when the series moved — even the name of the arena. The Suns announced a naming rights deal Friday that changed Phoenix Suns Arena into the Footprint Center.

Whatever the name, the arena was so loud during the Suns' sensational start to the first quarter that nobody could hear a foul on P.J. Tucker after a turnover to prevent a breakaway. The Suns passed it ahead to Booker, who threw down a dunk as Antetokounmpo sprinted back and grabbed his arm in what otherwise may have drawn a flagrant foul.

Not getting that basket didn't slow the Suns, who scored the next seven points to open a 32-16 lead on Mikal Bridges' 3-pointer. The Suns made 14 of 19 shots (73.7%) in the first quarter and led 37-21.

But Booker started the second on the bench and the Bucks opened with a 21-5 spurt to quickly tie it at 42 on Connaughton's 3-pointer with 7:48 remaining in the half.

Milwaukee took a 64-61 advantage to the break, becoming the second team in finals history to lead at halftime after trailing by at least 15 after one, according to Elias.

TIP-INS

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 58 of 78

Bucks: Milwaukee played without Thanasis Antetokounmpo. Giannis' older brother was placed in health and safety protocols. Coach Mike Budenholzer said the Bucks wouldn't have their whole staff for the same reason.

Suns: Paul has 1,068 assists in the playoffs. He moved ahead of Steve Nash and Larry Bird into seventh place on the career list during the game. ... Bridges scored 13 points.

OFFICIAL OUT

James Williams was the umpire for the game. He replaced Sean Wright, who was placed in the NBA's health and safety protocols.

California fire prompts evacuations; Oregon blaze balloons

By DAISY NGUYEN and GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A rapidly growing wildfire south of Lake Tahoe jumped a highway, prompting more evacuation orders and the cancellation of an extreme bike ride through the Sierra Nevada on Saturday as critically dangerous wildfire weather loomed in the coming days.

The Tamarack Fire, which was sparked by lightning on July 4, exploded overnight and was over 32 square miles (82 square kilometers) as of Saturday evening, according to the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The blaze was threatening Markleeville, a small town close to the California-Nevada state line. It has destroyed at least three structures, authorities said, and was burning toward the Alpine County Airport after jumping a highway.

A notice posted on the 103-mile (165-kilometer) Death Ride's website said several communities in the area had been evacuated and ordered all riders to clear the area. The fire left thousands of bikers and spectators stranded in the small town and racing to get out.

Kelli Pennington and her family were camping near the town Friday so her husband could participate in his ninth ride when they were told to leave. They had been watching smoke develop over the course of the day, but were caught off guard by the fire's quick spread.

"It happened so fast," Pennington said. "We left our tents, hammock and some foods, but we got most of our things, shoved our two kids in the car and left."

Saturday's ride was supposed to mark the 40th Death Ride, which attracts thousands of cyclists to the region each year to ride through three mountain passes in the so-called California Alps. It was canceled last year during the coronavirus outbreak.

Paul Burgess, who drove from Los Angeles to participate in the ride, said most of the cyclists he met were thankful to steer clear of the fire danger.

"They just said this is just how it goes," Burgess said. "It's part of climate change to a certain extent, it's part of just a lot of fuels that are not burnt, the humidity is low, the fuel moisture levels are low, and ... around the state, many parts of it are much like a tinderbox."

Afternoon winds blowing at 20 to 30 mph (32 to 48 kph) fanned the flames as they chewed through bone-dry timber and brush. Meteorologists predicted critically dangerous fire weather through at least Monday in both California and southern Oregon, where the largest wildfire in the U.S. continued to race through bone-dry forests.

The Bootleg Fire grew significantly overnight Saturday as dry and windy conditions took hold in the area, but containment of the inferno more than tripled as firefighters began to gain more control along its western flank. The fire was still burning rapidly and dangerously along its southern and eastern flanks, however, and authorities expanded evacuations in a largely rural area of lakes and wildlife refuges.

The fire was 453 square miles (1,173 square kilometers) in size, or more than 100 square miles larger than the area of New York City.

"This fire is large and moving so fast, every day it progresses 4 to 5 miles," said Incident Commander Joe Hassel. "One of the many challenges that our firefighters face every day is working in new country that can present new hazards all the time."

Extremely dry conditions and heat waves tied to climate change have swept the region, making wildfires

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 59 of 78

harder to fight. Climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

In southern Oregon, fire crews have dealt with dangerous and extreme fire conditions, including massive "fire clouds" that rise up to 6 miles (10 kilometers) above the blaze. The Bootleg Fire has destroyed at least 67 homes and 117 outbuildings.

The conflagration has forced 2,000 people to evacuate and is threatening 5,000 buildings, including homes and smaller structures in a rural area just north of the California border.

The Tamarack Fire sent heavy smoke over Lake Tahoe and into Nevada.

The National Weather Service warned of possible thunderstorms stretching from the California coast to northern Montana on Sunday and that "new lightning ignitions" are likely because of extremely dry fuels across the West.

Firefighters said in July they were facing conditions more typical of late summer or fall.

The fires were just two of numerous fires burning across the drought-stricken U.S. West, as new fires popped up or grew rapidly in Oregon and California.

There were 70 active large fires and complexes of multiple fires that have burned nearly 1,659 square miles (4,297 square kilometers) in the U.S., the National Interagency Fire Center said. The U.S. Forest Service said at least 16 major fires were burning in the Pacific Northwest alone.

A fire in the mountains of northeast Oregon was also growing rapidly and was 17 square miles (44 square kilometers) in size on Saturday. The Elbow Creek fire started Thursday and has prompted evacuations in several small, rural communities around the Grande Ronde River about 30 miles (50 kilometers) southeast of Walla Walla, Washington.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act to mobilize more firefighters and equipment to help fight that fire.

The Dixie Fire, near the 2018 site of the deadliest fire in the U.S. in recent memory, was 5% contained and covered 39 square miles Saturday. The fire was in the Feather River Canyon, northeast of the town of Paradise, California, and survivors of that horrific fire that killed 85 people watched warily as the new blaze burned.

Officials ordered the evacuation of a wilderness recreation area and kept in place a warning for residents of the tiny communities of Pulga and east Concow to be ready to leave.

"We're prepared," said Mike Garappo, a retired military veteran. "We've dealt with fires living in the mountains forever. We know there's a chance it may not hit here, but we're ready to go in case."

Padres-Nats game suspended after shooting outside DC stadium

By HARVEY VALENTINE and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The game between the San Diego Padres and Washington was suspended in the sixth inning Saturday night after a shooting outside Nationals Park that caused echoes of gunfire inside the stadium and prompted fans to scramble for safety in the dugout.

The shooting, an exchange of gunfire between people in two cars, left three people injured, according to Ashan Benedict, the Metropolitan Police Department's executive assistant police chief. One of the people who was shot was a woman who was attending the game and who was struck while she was outside the stadium, he said. Her injuries weren't considered life-threatening.

Two people who were in one of the cars later walked into a local hospital with gunshot wounds and were being questioned by investigators, Benedict said, and the extent of their injuries wasn't immediately clear. Investigators were still trying to locate the second vehicle involved in the shooting.

The gunshots caused panic among fans inside the stadium, some of whom ducked for cover, hiding underneath tables and behind seats as announcers warned people to stay inside the park.

"It was just a chaotic scene," umpire crew chief Mark Carlson told The Associated Press. "We heard what sounded like rapid gunfire. We didn't know where it was coming from."

The Padres had just taken the field for the bottom of the sixth when several loud pops were heard from

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 60 of 78

the left field side of the ballpark.

Fans sitting in left field quickly began leaving through the center field gate. A short time later, fans along the first base side began briskly leaving their seats.

Some fans crowded into the Padres' dugout on the third base side for cover, while sirens could be heard from outside the park.

Ted Borenstein, 26, was at the game with his girlfriend and his best friend, celebrating her birthday and "having a great time" when he heard two pops. He said the group thought it was practice for a fireworks show.

Borenstein said he quickly realized it was far more serious when he saw people in the stands start filing out and watched Padres star shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. "bolt from the field."

In the stadium's Diamond Club, where he and his friends were, people were hiding under tables and chairs, thinking there was a shooter inside the stadium.

"People were down on the ground, kind of petrified, trying to calm down the younger kids," he said.

"I was taken aback, I was scared," he said.

The Nationals initially announced there had been an incident outside the stadium and posted a message on the scoreboard telling fans to remain inside the stadium.

About 10 minutes later, the team tweeted: "A shooting has been reported outside of the Third Base Gate at Nationals Park. Fans are encouraged to exit the ballpark via the CF and RF gates at this time."

More than two dozen police cars, ambulances and fire engines were on the street outside the third base side of the stadium and a police helicopter hovered overhead.

The shooting comes as Washington, like many other cities in the U.S., is facing a rising number of violent crimes and homicides. A 6-year-old girl was killed and five other people were wounded in a shooting Friday night about three miles from Nationals Park.

Just hours before Saturday night's shooting, Washington's mayor and police chief, flanked by federal law enforcement officials to announce a \$60,000 reward for information in that case.

By nightfall, they had another incident to investigate.

Arman Ramnath, 27, from nearby Arlington, Virginia, and a recent law school graduate, said he and a friend were sitting in the third base side of the Nationals Park when they heard what sounded like fireworks.

"We weren't sure what it was. Then everyone started ducking," Ramnath said.

Ramnath said he and his friend ended hiding behind the seats for five or more minutes. After a while people started getting up and leaving, he said, but stadium announcements told fans to wait. Eventually they were allowed to leave.

"It felt very surreal. I wasn't really sure how to react," Ramnath said. "I mean, you hear about it ... but you never expect it to be something that could affect you."

Police had initially said they believed one of the victims worked at the stadium, but that was not the case.

The Padres led 8-4 when the game was halted. It will be resumed Sunday afternoon, followed by the regularly scheduled game. Officials said fans should expect to see an increased police presence at Sunday's game.

Tatis had four hits for San Diego. Ryan Zimmerman homered for Washington.

"Hope everyone is safe!" Tatis posted on Twitter.

'Titane' wins top Cannes honor, 2nd ever for female director

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Julia Ducournau's "Titane," a wild body-horror thriller featuring sex with a car and a surprisingly tender heart, won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, making Ducournau just the second female filmmaker to win the festival's top honor in its 74 year history.

The win on Saturday was mistakenly announced by jury president Spike Lee at the top of the closing ceremony, broadcast in France on Canal+, unleashing a few moments of confusion. Ducournau, a French filmmaker, didn't come to the stage to accept the award until the formal announcement at the end of the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 61 of 78

ceremony. But the early hint didn't diminish from her emotional response.

"I'm sorry, I keep shaking my head," said Ducournau, catching her breath. "Is this real? I don't know why I'm speaking English right now because I'm French. This evening has been so perfect because it was not perfect."

After several false starts, Lee implored Sharon Stone to make the Palme d'Or announcement, explaining: "She's not going to mess it up." The problems started earlier when Lee was asked to say which prize would be awarded first. Instead, he announced the evening's final prize, as fellow juror Mati Diop plunged her head into her hands and others rushed to stop him.

Lee, himself, spent several moments with his head in his hands before apologizing profusely for taking a lot of the suspense out of the evening.

"I have no excuses," Lee told reporters afterward. "I messed up. I'm a big sports fan. It's like the guy at the end of the game who misses the free throw."

"I messed up," he added. "As simple as that."

Ducournau's win was a long-awaited triumph. The only previous female filmmaker to win Cannes' top honor — among the most prestigious awards in cinema — was Jane Campion for "The Piano" in 1993. In recent years, frustration at Cannes' gender parity has grown, including in 2018, when 82 women — including Agnes Varda, Cate Blanchett and Salma Hayek — protested gender inequality on the Cannes red carpet. Their number signified the movies by female directors selected to compete for the Palme d'Or — 82 compared to 1,645 films directed by men. This year, four out of 24 films up for the Palme were directed by women.

In 2019, another genre film — Bong Joon-Ho's "Parasite" — took the Palme before going on to win best picture at the Academy Awards, too. That choice was said to be unanimous by the jury led by Alejandro González Iñárritu, but the award for "Titane" — an extremely violent film — this year's jury said came out of a democratic process of conversation and debate. Juror Maggie Gyllenhaal said they didn't agree unanimously on anything.

"The world is passion," said Lee. "Everyone was passionate about a particular film they wanted and we worked it out."

In "Titane," which like "Parasite" will be distributed in the U.S. by Neon, Agathe Rousselle plays a serial killer who flees home. As a child, a car accident leaves her with a titanium plate in her head and a strange bond with automobiles. In possibly the most-talked-about scene at the festival, she's impregnated by a Cadillac. Lee called it a singular experience.

"This is the first film ever where a Cadillac impregnates a woman," said Lee, who said he wanted to ask Ducournau what year the car was. "That's genius and craziness together. Those two things often match up."

On stage, Ducournau thanked the jury "for letting the monsters in." Afterward, she acknowledged to reporters her place in history, but also said she "can't be boiled down to just being a woman."

"Quite frankly, I hope that the prize I received has nothing to do with being a woman," said Ducournau. "As I'm the second woman to receive this prize, I thought a lot about Jane Campion and how she felt when she won."

More women will come after her, Ducournau said. "There will be a third, there will be a fourth, there will be a fifth."

Cannes' closing ceremony capped 12 days of red-carpet premieres, regular COVID-19 testing for many attendees and the first major film festival to be held since the pandemic began in almost its usual form. With smaller crowds and mandated mask-wearing in theaters, Cannes pushed forward with an ambitious slate of global cinema. Last year's festival was completely canceled by the pandemic.

The slate, assembled as a way to help stir movies after a year where movies shrank to smaller screens and red carpets grew cobwebs, was widely considered to be strong, and featured many leading international filmmakers. The awards were spread out widely.

The grand prize was split between Asghar Farhadi's Iranian drama "A Hero" and Finnish director Juho Kuosmanen's "Compartment No. 6."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 62 of 78

Best director was awarded to Leos Carax for "Annette," the fantastical musical starring Adam Driver and Marion Cotillard that opened the festival. The award was accepted by the musical duo Sparks, Ron and Russell Mael, who wrote the script and music for the film.

Jurors also split the jury prize. That was awarded to both Nadav Lapid's "Ahed's Knee," an impassioned drama about creative freedom in modern Israel; and to Thai filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasthukul's "Memoria," a meditative film starring Tilda Swinton.

Caleb Landry Jones took home the best actor prize for his performance as an Australian mass killer in the fact-based "Nitram" by Justin Kurzel. Renate Reinsve won best actress for Joachim Trier's "The Worst Person in the World." Best screenplay went to Ryusuke Hamaguchi's "Drive My Car," a Haruki Murakami adaptation he penned with Takamasa Oe.

The Croatian coming-of-age drama "Murina," by Antoneta Alamat Kusijanović, took the Camera d'Or award, a non-jury prize, for best first feature. Kusijanović was absent from the ceremony after giving birth a day earlier.

Lee was the first Black jury president at Cannes. His fellow jury members were: Gyllenhaal, Mélanie Laurent, Song Kang-ho, Tahar Rahim, Mati Diop, Jessica Hausner, Kleber Mendonça Filho and Mylène Farmer.

3 Texas Democrats who fled elections bill vote get COVID

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and KEN MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Three of the Democratic state lawmakers who fled Texas to stymie a Republican-backed effort to impose broad new voting restrictions have tested positive for COVID-19 and are quarantined, the Texas House's Democratic Caucus director said Saturday.

One lawmaker tested positive Friday and the other two did so on Saturday, according to caucus director Phillip Martin. All three were fully vaccinated against the disease, according to Martin, who declined to release their names or conditions to "respect the privacy of Members and their personal health."

More than 50 Texas lawmakers arrived in Washington on Monday after leaving their home state on a private charter flight. They received criticism from Republicans and others after a photo showed them maskless on the plane, though federal pandemic guidelines don't require masks to be worn on private aircraft.

Rep. Chris Turner, the caucus chairman, said in a statement that the caucus was conferring with health experts in Texas for additional guidance.

"This is a sober reminder that COVID is still with us, and though vaccinations offer tremendous protection, we still must take necessary precautions," Turner said.

COVID-19 infections in people who have been fully vaccinated against the disease — also referred to as "breakthrough" infections — are rare, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Democrats left the state to deny the Republican-controlled Legislature the necessary quorum to pass a bill that would place new restrictions on voting in Texas.

Members of the caucus met with Vice President Kamala Harris, including two of the three lawmakers who tested positive, Harris spokesperson Symone Sanders said a statement on Twitter.

"Based on the timeline of these positive tests, it was determined the Vice President and her staff present at the meeting were not at risk of exposure because they were not in close contact with those who tested positive and therefore do not need to be tested or quarantined," Sanders wrote.

"The Vice President and her staff are fully vaccinated," according to Sanders.

Martin said it is not known where or when the three Texas lawmakers were infected.

"We don't know. In order to be on the plane everybody had to be fully vaccinated," according to Martin.

Members of the group also met with Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer, the Senate majority leader, but none of the three infected attended that meeting and Schumer's office has been notified of the positive tests, according to Martin.

Turner said the White House was also notified.

Texas House Speaker Dade McPhelan, a Republican, issued a statement saying he and his wife were praying for the health and safety of the sick lawmakers.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 63 of 78

"My staff has reached out to Dr. John Hellerstedt, Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, and his epidemiology team for any additional guidance on protocols for those exposed to COVID-19 post-vaccination," Phelan wrote.

Dozens treated after chemical leak at Texas water park

A chemical leak at a Houston-area water park left dozens suffering from minor skin irritation and respiratory issues Saturday, authorities said.

Twenty-nine people were taken to local hospitals following the incident at Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Splashtown in Spring, the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office tweeted. Thirty-nine others declined to be taken to a hospital after undergoing decontamination procedures.

KPRC-TV reports that some of those who became sick were children, including a 3-year-old who was hospitalized in stable condition.

The chemicals involved included hypochlorite solution and 35% sulfuric acid, officials said.

"The safety of our guests and team member is always our highest priority and the park was immediately cleared as we try to determine a cause," Hurricane Harbor Splashtown spokesperson Rosie Shepard said in a statement, according to news outlets. "Out of an abundance of caution, the park has been closed for the day."

Authorities are investigating the cause of the incident, which they said was contained to one attraction at the park.

"Grateful for the swift action from first responders today at Splashtown," Houston's chief elected official, Lina Hidalgo, tweeted. "We've issued a closure order to investigate and ensure the park meets all requirements before reopening again."

Confederate monument removed from city hall in Louisiana

LAFAYETTE, La. (AP) — Spectators cheered Saturday as a stone statue of a Confederate general was hoisted by a crane and removed from a pedestal where it stood for 99 years in front of a city hall in south Louisiana.

The Advertiser posted video of the work that happened a day after United Daughters of the Confederacy signed a settlement agreeing to move the statue of Gen. Alfred Mouton or let the city do so. A trial had been scheduled for July 26.

"The Confederacy has surrendered," attorney Jerome Moroux told The Advocate. Moroux represented the city and 16 city residents who wanted the statue gone.

The murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in 2020 prompted new calls across the country to remove Confederate statues, many of which had been erected decades after the Civil War, during the Jim Crow era, when states imposed new segregation laws, and during the "Lost Cause" movement, when historians and others inaccurately depicted the South's rebellion as a fight to defend states' rights, not slavery.

Mouton, whose full name was Jean-Jacques-Alfred-Alexandre Mouton, was a slave owner and son of a former Louisiana governor. He died leading a cavalry charge in the Civil War Battle of Mansfield.

"It's been 99 years right now, and that's way too long for that to have remained in place," Fred Prejean, president of Move the Mindset, a group created to push for the statue's removal, The Advertiser reported.

In 1980, outgoing Mayor Kenny Bowen wanted to move the statue to what was then the new Lafayette city hall. Although United Daughters of the Confederacy gave the statue to the city in 1922, the group fought the move, partly because Mouton's father once had owned the statue's site.

The group delayed the move until Dud Lastrapes took office, then got a permanent court order forbidding any move unless it was needed for road work or the land was sold, The Advertiser has reported.

Residents asked the city in 2016, during a national movement to remove Confederate statues, to get Mouton's away from City Hall. But, after the United Daughters threatened a lawsuit, the City-Parish Council backed down.

That prompted the creation of Move the Mindset and other groups to raise awareness about the statue's

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 64 of 78

Jim Crow-era history, the treatment of Black people during that period and the negative implications of having a Confederate statue at an entrance to Lafayette's downtown.

Sixteen members of Move the Mindset filed papers in 2019 to intervene in the 1980 injunction, arguing that the group's unconditional donation of the statue left it without any legal right to fight a move.

Mayor-President Josh Guillory asked lawyers to investigate options and in 2020 the City Council endorsed removal. The city joined Move the Mindset in the legal fight against the 1980 injunction.

Martine Moïse, wife of slain president, returns to Haiti

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Martine Moïse, the wife of Haiti's assassinated president who was injured in the July 7 attack at their private home, returned to the Caribbean nation on Saturday following her release from a Miami hospital.

Her arrival was unannounced and surprised many in the country of more than 11 million people still reeling from the killing of Jovenel Moïse in a raid authorities say involved Haitians, Haitian-Americans and former Colombian soldiers.

Martine Moïse disembarked the flight at the Port-au-Prince airport wearing a black dress, a black bulletproof jacket, a black face mask, and her right arm in a black sling as she slowly walked down the steps of what appeared to be a private plane one by one. She was greeted by Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph and other officials.

Earlier this week, she tweeted from the Miami hospital that she could not believe her husband, Jovenel Moïse, was gone "without saying a last word," she wrote. "This pain will never pass."

On Friday, government officials had announced that Jovenel Moïse's funeral would be held on July 23 in the northern Haitian city of Cap-Haitien and that his wife is expected to attend.

She arrived hours after a key group of international diplomats on Saturday appeared to snub the man currently running Haiti by urging another politician, the designated prime minister, to form a government following Moïse's killing.

Joseph has been leading Haiti with the backing of police and the military despite the fact that Moïse had announced his replacement a day before the president was killed.

Joseph and his allies argue that the designated successor, Ariel Henry, was never sworn in, though he pledged to work with him and with Joseph Lambert, the head of Haiti's inactive Senate.

The statement was issued by the Core Group, which is composed of ambassadors from Germany, Brazil, Canada, Spain, the U.S., France, the European Union and representatives from the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

The group called for the creation of "a consensual and inclusive government."

"To this end, it strongly encourages the designated Prime Minister Ariel Henry to continue the mission entrusted to him to form such a government," the group said.

U.S. officials could not be immediately reached for comment. A U.N. spokesman declined comment except to say that the U.N. is part of the group that issued the statement. Meanwhile, an OAS spokesman only said the following: "For the moment, there is nothing further to say other than what the statement says."

Henry and spokespeople for Joseph did not immediately return messages for comment.

The group also asked that "all political, economic and civil society actors in the country fully support authorities in their efforts to restore security."

Robert Fatton, a Haitian politics expert at the University of Virginia, said the statement is very confusing especially after the U.N. representative had said that Joseph was in charge.

"More confusion in a very confusing and bewildering situation," he said.

The question of who should take over has been complicated by the fact Haiti's parliament has not been functioning because a lack of elections meant most members' terms had expired. And the head of the Supreme Court recently died of Covid-19.

A day after the assassination, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price noted that Joseph was the

incumbent in the position and was serving as acting prime minister before the assassination: "We continue to work with Claude Joseph as such," he said.

On July 11, a delegation of representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, and National Security Council traveled to Haiti. They reviewed critical infrastructure, talked with Haitian National Police and met with Joseph, Henry and Lambert in a joint meeting.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump makes false claims about Arizona audit

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Former President Donald Trump issued three statements in two days falsely claiming that voting fraud and irregularities cost him Arizona's electoral votes.

Trump relied on comments made Thursday by contractors hired by state Senate Republicans to oversee a partisan review of the 2020 vote count in Maricopa County, which includes metro Phoenix.

The "forensic audit," as Senate GOP leaders are calling their review, is overseen by Cyber Ninjas, a small computer security firm with no election experience before Trump began questioning the 2020 results. Its CEO, Doug Logan, spread false conspiracy theories about the election before he was hired to lead the Arizona review.

Logan and Ben Cotton, a digital forensics analyst working on the audit, described issues they say need further review. Trump has parroted them as evidence the election results are tainted.

County officials and elections experts say the claims are false and based on a misunderstanding of election materials, which they say creates an appearance of irregularities where none exists.

Trump laid out his claims most specifically in a statement Friday night. A look at the irregularities he alleges in that statement:

TRUMP: "168,000 fraudulent ballots printed on illegal paper (unofficial ballots)"

THE FACTS: All of that is false. The ballots were not unofficial or printed on illegal paper, and even Logan never alleged they were fraudulent.

Logan pointed to ballots with the printing slightly offset between the front and back. He claimed this could cause votes to be counted for the wrong candidate if ink from one side bleeds through to another. He said the alignment issues were mostly from polling-place ballots, which are printed onsite, and said about 168,000 ballots were cast that way. The overwhelming majority of Arizona voters cast ballots by mail.

"We are seeing a lot of very thin paper stock being used especially on Election Day," Logan added.

The allegation harkens back to the debunked "Sharpiegate" conspiracy theory that arose in the days after the election. Election experts say bleed-through doesn't affect the vote count because bubbles on one side of a ballot don't align with those on the other. Ballots that can't be read are flagged and duplicated by a bipartisan team.

Arizona's election procedures manual says only that ballots "must be printed with black ink on white paper of sufficient thickness to prevent the printing from being discernible on the reverse side the ballot." Maricopa County uses 80 pound Votesecur paper from Rolland, which is among the papers approved by Dominion Voting Systems, which makes the county's tabulation equipment, said Fields Moseley, a county spokesman.

Logan did not provide any evidence that alignment problems affected the vote count and said the issue needs more analysis.

TRUMP, citing "74,000 mail in ballots received that were never mailed (magically appearing ballots)."

THE FACTS: No, there were no magically appearing ballots. He is alleging that the number of filled-out ballots received in the mail by election officials exceeded the number of people who had asked earlier for mail-in ballots, by 74,000. But that's not at all what happened.

The claim mischaracterizes reports created for political parties to track who has voted early so they can target their get-out-the-vote efforts.

One report tracks all requests that voters make for early ballots, either by mail or in person, up to 11

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 66 of 78

days before the election. The other report tracks all ballots received through the day before the election. That leaves a 10-day window during which people who vote in-person but don't request a mail ballot would appear on one report but not the other.

TRUMP, claiming "11,000 voters were added to the voter rolls AFTER the election and still voted."

THE FACTS: There's nothing untoward about voters rolls growing after Election Day. The rolls are simply updated to reflect people whose provisional ballots are added to the tally after election officials verify that they were eligible to vote.

The allegation that the updated tally was the result of electoral wrongdoing first came from Logan this past week, when he told state lawmakers of "11,326 people that did not show up on the Nov. 7 version of the voter rolls, after votes were cast, but then appeared on the Dec. 4 voter rolls."

Maricopa County officials said Logan is probably referring to provisional ballots, which are cast by people who do not appear on the voter rolls or don't have the proper identification on Election Day. They're only counted if the voter later shows he or she was eligible to vote. To be eligible, such voters must have registered before the deadline.

"These go through a rigorous verification process to make sure that the provisional ballots cast are only counted if the voter is eligible to vote in the election," Maricopa County officials wrote on Twitter. "This happens after Election Day. Only eligible voters are added to the voter rolls."

TRUMP, alleging "all the access logs to the machines were wiped, and the election server was hacked during the election."

THE FACTS: That flies in the face of the evidence. Maricopa County's election server is not connected to the internet and independent auditors found no evidence the election server was hacked.

Trump's hacking allegation refers to the unauthorized download of public data from the county's voter registration system. That system, which is connected to the internet and broadly accessible to political parties and election workers, is not linked to the election management system, the web of ballot counters, computers and servers that tallies votes.

The election management system is "air gapped," or kept disconnected from the rest of the county's computer network and the wider internet. Two firms certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to test voting systems found Maricopa County's machines were not connected to the internet and did not have malicious hardware or software installed.

TRUMP: "Arizona shows Fraud and Voting Irregularities many times more than would be needed to change the outcome of the Election."

THE FACTS: Not so. The number of potential fraud cases is far smaller than President Joe Biden's margin of victory in Arizona.

County election officials identified 182 cases where voting problems were clear enough that they referred them to investigators for further review, according to an Associated Press investigation. So far, only four cases have led to charges, including those identified in a separate state investigation. No one has been convicted. No person's vote was counted twice.

Biden won Arizona by 10,457 votes out of 3.4 million cast. Of the four cases that have resulted in criminal charges, two involved Democratic voters and two involved Republicans.

France: Thousands protest against vaccination, COVID passes

By CONSTANTIN GOUVY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Over 100,000 people protested across France on Saturday against the government's latest measures to push people to get vaccinated and curb rising infections by the delta variant of the coronavirus.

In Paris, separate protest marches by the far-right and the far-left wound through different parts of the city. Demonstrations were also held in Strasbourg in the east, Lille in the north, Montpellier in the south

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 67 of 78

and elsewhere.

Thousands of people answered calls to take to the streets by Florian Philippot, a fringe far-right politician and former right hand of Marine Le Pen who announced earlier this month that he would run in the 2022 presidential election. Gathered a stone's throw away from the Louvre Museum, protesters chanted "Macron, clear off!", "Freedom," and banged metal spoons on saucepans.

While Philippot has organized small but regular protests against the government's handling of the coronavirus crisis, Saturday's demonstration drew a larger and more diverse crowd of people broadly disaffected with politics: yellow vest activists angry over perceived economic injustice, far-right supporters, medical staff and royalists.

They denounced the government's decision on Monday to make vaccines compulsory for all health care workers, and to require a "health pass" proving people are fully vaccinated, have recently tested negative or recovered from the virus in order to access restaurants and other public venues. President Emmanuel Macron's government is presenting a draft law Monday to enshrine the measures.

"I will never get vaccinated," Bruno Auquier, a 53-year-old town councilor who lives on the outskirts of Paris. "People need to wake up," he said, questioning the safety of the vaccine.

While France already requires several vaccinations to enter public school, Auquier pledged to take his two children out of school if the coronavirus vaccine became mandatory. "These new measures are the last straw," Auquier said.

The government warned of the continued spread of the delta variant, which authorities fear could again put pressure on hospitals if not enough people are vaccinated against the virus. The pandemic has cost France more than 111,000 lives and deeply damaged the economy.

During a visit to a pop-up vaccination center in the southwest, Prime Minister Jean Castex exhorted the French to stick together in order to overcome the crisis.

"There is only one solution: vaccination," he said, stressing it "protects us, and will make us freer."

At the Paris protest, a manual worker in his sixties expressed bitterness about jobs in his sector sent offshore. A 24-year-old royalist said he was there to demand "the return of God and the King."

Lucien, a 28-year-old retail shop manager, said he wasn't anti-vaccine, but thought that everyone should be able to do as they please with their own body. "The government is going too far," he said. His 26-year-old friend Elise said, "I am vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, and polio. But the COVID vaccine is just too experimental."

While a majority of French health care workers have had at least one vaccine dose, some are resisting the government's decision to make vaccination compulsory for all staff in medical facilities.

At Saturday's Paris protest, a 39-year-old green party supporter and hospital laboratory worker said she might resort to buying a fake vaccination certificate to avoid losing her job. A health care worker dressed as the Statue of Liberty called it "act of violence" to force people to get vaccinated.

In Montpellier, more than 1,000 people marched to the train station, chanting "Liberty!" and carrying signs reading "Our kids aren't Guinea pigs." Security officials closed the main entrance to travelers and a dozen police officers took posts in front.

The Interior Ministry said 114,000 people took part in protests nationwide.

Overnight on Friday, vandals ransacked a vaccination center in the southeast. Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin asked prefects and police chiefs to reinforce security for elected officials, after several complained they had received threats in recent days over the latest anti-COVID measures.

Vaccine hesitancy is considered widespread in France, though appears to have faded somewhat as 36 million French people have gotten coronavirus vaccine doses in recent months. Millions more have gotten injected or signed up for vaccinations since Monday's announcement.

French health care workers have until Sept. 15 to get vaccinated. The requirement for COVID passes for all restaurants, bars, hospitals, shopping malls, trains, planes and other venues is being introduced in stages starting Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the French government announced tightened border controls starting Sunday, but also said it would allow in travelers from anywhere in the world who have been fully vaccinated.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 68 of 78

That now includes people who received AstraZeneca's Indian-manufactured vaccine. The move came after a global outcry over the fact that the European Union's COVID-19 certificate only recognizes AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured in Europe.

Biden, Harris: Protect voting rights to honor John Lewis

ATLANTA (AP) — President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday both marked the one-year anniversary of U.S. Rep. John Lewis' death by urging Congress to honor the legacy of the civil rights icon by enacting laws to protect voting rights.

Biden said he often reflects on the last conversation he and his wife, Jill, had with Lewis, days before the Georgia congressman died.

"Instead of answering our concerns for him, he asked us to remain focused on the unfinished work — his life's work — of healing and uniting this nation," Biden said in a statement.

The president said the unfinished work includes "building an economy that respects the dignity of working people with good jobs and good wages" and "ensuring equal justice under law is real in practice and not just a promise etched in stone."

"Perhaps most of all, it means continuing the cause that John was willing to give his life for: protecting the sacred right to vote," Biden said. "Not since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s have we seen such unrelenting attacks on voting rights and the integrity of our elections."

Biden said the attacks include the Jan. 6 insurrection and lies about the 2020 election.

Lewis was a high-profile civil rights activist before he won a Georgia congressional seat as a Democrat in 1986. Harris said in her own statement Saturday that he was "an American hero."

"Congressman Lewis fought tirelessly for our country's highest ideals: freedom and justice for all, and for the right of every American to make their voice heard at the ballot box," Harris said.

Lewis was 80 when he died months after announcing he had advanced pancreatic cancer. He was the youngest and last survivor of the Big Six civil rights activists, a group led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. that had the greatest impact on the movement.

Lewis was best known for leading some 600 protesters in the Bloody Sunday march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, in 1965. Alabama state troopers beat Lewis and other activists who were marching for voting rights that day.

As a college student at American Baptist College and then Fisk University, Lewis helped desegregate public spaces in Nashville and pushed for racial justice across the South.

Nashville celebrated with events Friday and Saturday, renaming a large portion of Fifth Ave. to Rep. John Lewis Way. Among establishments lining the street is the Woolworth downtown building, where Lewis and other Black civil rights leaders defiantly sat at the segregated lunch counter that wouldn't serve them in 1960. Lewis was punched in the ribs and saw someone put out a cigarette on the back of another protester.

Hundreds marched down the street before arriving at Ryman Auditorium, for a celebration ceremony that included the Rev. James Lawson, author Jon Meacham and musicians Rodney Crowell and Darius Rucker.

In San Diego, senior U.S. lawmakers and members of Lewis' family gathered Saturday for the christening of a Navy ship named after Lewis.

"This ship will be a beacon to the world reminding all who see it of the persistence and courage of John Lewis," Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Ca., said at the christening of the USNS John Lewis.

Lewis' nephew, Marcus Tyner, said the family was grateful for the honor, but said "what would please my uncle most" is if Congress passed the voting rights bill named after him.

The ship will be the first in the Navy's fleet of oilers designed to transfer fuel and water to vessels carrying out missions in the Western Pacific, Indian Ocean and beyond.

In her statement Saturday, Harris recalled crossing Alabama's Edmund Pettus Bridge with Lewis during a commemoration in 2020.

"The right to vote remains under attack in states across our nation," Harris said. "And the best way to honor Congressman Lewis' legacy is to carry on the fight — by passing the John Lewis Voting Rights

Advancement Act as well as the For the People Act, and by helping eligible voters no matter where they live get registered and vote, and have their vote counted.”

Democrats on Capitol Hill are pushing for a sweeping federal voting and elections bill that Senate Republicans have united to block, saying they think it intrudes on states’ ability to conduct elections. Most Republicans have also dismissed a separate bill, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore sections of the Voting Rights Act that were weakened by the Supreme Court.

The Latest: 3 lawmakers who fled Texas over vote have virus

By The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON — Three of the Democratic state lawmakers who fled Texas to stymie a Republican-backed effort to impose broad new voting restrictions have tested positive for COVID-19 in the nation’s capital.

The Texas House’s Democratic caucus says in a statement that one of the three tested positive on Friday and the others did so on Saturday. It didn’t release their names or conditions. It said all three were fully vaccinated against the disease.

More than 50 Democratic Texas lawmakers left the state to deny the Republican-controlled Legislature the necessary quorum to pass a bill that would enact new voting restrictions.

Republicans and others had criticized the Democrats after a photo showed them on a charter flight to Washington without masks, though federal pandemic guidelines don’t require masks on private flights.

Members of the caucus have met with Vice President Kamala Harris, but it was not immediately known whether the three who contracted COVID-19 did so. Harris’ office said it would issue a statement later Saturday.

MORE ON THE PANDEMIC:

- Biden grappling with “pandemic of the unvaccinated”
- Thailand tightens measures as daily cases cross 10,000
- European nations impose incentives, penalties to boost shots
- Desperate for vaccines amid surge, Iranians flock to Armenia
- Arkansas governor’s vaccination tour reveals depths of distrust.

— Find more AP coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

HERE’S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

LAS VEGAS — Some Las Vegas resorts and casinos are again requiring employees to wear masks, a response to a recommendation by regional health officials amid rising COVID-19 case rates.

The Southern Nevada Health District on Friday recommended that all people, vaccinated or not, wear face coverings in public settings such as stores, malls, casinos and events.

The recommendation isn’t a mandate, but local media outlets reported that it prompted properties such as Westgate Las Vegas, The Venetian and Las Vegas Sands to impose masking requirements for employees.

Some also offered complimentary masks to visitors.

Restrictions affecting casinos and other venues were lifted in May when the state fully returned pandemic control measures to counties.

Nevada health officials on Thursday reported 938 new cases of COVID-19 statewide — the biggest one-day coronavirus case jump since February — and 15 new deaths. An additional 866 cases were reported Friday.

PHOENIX — Arizona on Saturday reported over 1,000 additional COVID-19 cases for the fourth straight day as virus-related hospitalizations continued to increase.

The state Department of Health Services’ coronavirus dashboard reported 1,152 additional cases and 14 deaths, increasing Arizona’s pandemic totals to 907,268 cases and 18,114 deaths.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 70 of 78

Public health experts attribute the increases to low vaccination rates, the fast-spreading delta variant and July Fourth gatherings.

The number of virus-related hospitalizations in Arizona generally ranged between 500 and 600 during May and June but rose in the past week, with 745 COVID-19-related hospitalizations as of Friday, according the dashboard.

Virus patients occupied 9% of in-patient beds as of Friday, up from 6% a week ago but far below the pandemic peak of nearly 60% seen in mid-January during the winter surge.

ATHENS, Greece — The island of Mykonos has become the first location in Greece to have a curfew reimposed due to a spike in coronavirus cases.

Greek authorities said Saturday that one in 10 individuals tested on the island in recent days tested positive.

The 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. curfew took effect Saturday and authorities also imposed a round-the-clock ban on music in bars, cafes and restaurants starting 6 pm Saturday. Fines for renting out properties for parties of more than 20 people can range up to 200,000 euros (\$236,000).

The ban on music and the curfew will end on Monday, July 26, unless the government decides to extend it. Police on the island, a high-end tourist destination, say that violations of social distancing norms had gotten out of hand recently.

Authorities say the single hotel assigned to people quarantining has overflowed and visitors who have tested positive have been camping on beaches.

Greece continued to report a relatively high number of new infections Saturday, with 2,562 cases reported in the 24-hour period ending 3 pm Saturday. There were also seven deaths.

HELSINKI — Residents in the Finnish capital were able to get coronavirus jabs without advance appointment on Saturday at four dedicated walk-in vaccination points in a one-day trial meant to lure young people in particular to get vaccinated.

Health officials in Helsinki, a city of 631,000 inhabitants, urged all those aged 16 and above, and those 12 to 15 who belong to a risk group, to get vaccinated.

"Now it's possible to drop by and get the vaccine if you go for a walk or drive, or even in a group. We're trying this for the first time now on Saturday and depending on the result we might offer this possibility more frequently," said Leena Turpeinen, the city's director of health and substance abuse.

Finnish media reported long lines in front of the vaccination points located in four city districts.

About 65% of adult Helsinki residents have received their first coronavirus jab so far, slightly more than the respective figure in entire Finland, a nation of 5.5 million, officials said.

LONDON — Britain's health minister says he has tested positive for the coronavirus and is experiencing mild symptoms.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid says he has tested positive with a rapid test and is self-isolating as he awaits the results of a more accurate PCR test.

Javid said Saturday, "I'm grateful that I've had two jabs of the vaccine and so far my symptoms are very mild."

Cases of the virus are surging in the U.K., driven by the highly infectious delta variant, despite a high level of vaccination.

Javid took over last month from Matt Hancock, who resigned after breaching social distancing rules. Hancock was ill with COVID-19 early in the pandemic last year. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spent several days in intensive care with the virus in April 2020.

PARIS — France will allow international travelers who have had AstraZeneca's Indian-manufactured vaccine into the country starting Sunday.

At the same time, France is tightening border checks to control the spread of the delta variant and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 71 of 78

protect hospitals, according to a statement from the prime minister Saturday.

The move to accept visitors vaccinated with AstraZeneca's vaccine made by India's Serum Institute came after global outcry over the fact that the European Union's COVID-19 certificate only recognizes AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured in Europe. Several other EU countries already accept the Indian version. France still does not recognize vaccinations by Chinese or Russian vaccines, only those authorized by the EU medicines regulator.

Tunisia, Indonesia, Cuba and Mozambique have now been added to France's "red list" of countries with high virus risk, according to Saturday's statement.

LONDON — Tourists and the travel industry are venting frustration and anger after Britain reversed a plan to ease travel restrictions on France just two days after the change was due to start, citing concerns about a variant of the coronavirus.

The U.K. government says people arriving from France must self-isolate for 10 days on entering Britain, even if they are fully vaccinated.

The announcement came just days after the government said fully vaccinated U.K. residents will no longer face quarantine starting Monday when arriving from European Union nations and dozens of other countries.

British health authorities say France is being singled out because of cases of the beta variant, which is believed to be more resistant to vaccines than other strains.

ATHENS, Greece — European nations are scrambling to ramp up vaccination drives.

They are using a carrot-and-stick approach to persuade those who are reluctant to get their shots as the more transmissible delta variant drives a surge in infections.

Greece became the latest to enact new restrictions on Friday. The country is requiring proof of vaccination or recent recovery from COVID-19 for access to indoor restaurants, cafes, bars and movie theaters. Children can enter with negative tests.

Some European countries like France and Greece have also introduced mandatory vaccinations for certain professions.

YEREVAN, Armenia — A surge of new coronavirus infections in Iran fueled by the fast-spreading delta variant has threatened to overwhelm hospitals.

Thousands of Iranians are taking matters into their own hands and flocking to neighboring Armenia as the urgency of vaccination grows.

Vaccine uptake has remained sluggish in the ex-Soviet Caucasus nation amid widespread vaccine hesitancy. Authorities have been doling out free doses to foreign visitors.

That has been a boon for Iranians afraid for their lives and sick of waiting. Iran has the highest COVID-19 death toll in the Middle East, less than 2% of the country's 84 million people have received both doses. But the trip has become so popular for Iranians that the price of the journey is soaring.

BANGKOK — Thailand has tightened coronavirus restrictions and warned of further measures as daily cases surpassed 10,000 and the death toll hit a record 141 despite an overnight curfew in Bangkok and several other provinces.

The surge since April has overwhelmed hospitals, strained the economy and thrown tourism recovery plans in doubt.

The vaccine rollout, hindered by supply problems, is slugging with some 5% of the population fully vaccinated and 15% only partially.

Cases have been climbing particularly in Bangkok and surrounding provinces.

The government imposed additional measures overnight including a ban on any gatherings and activities that can spread the virus, including anti-government rallies that have criticized Prime Minister Prayuth

Chan-ocha's handling of the pandemic.

Analysis: How Afghan war showed limits of US military power

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It took only two months for U.S. invaders to topple the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, a seemingly tidy success against a government that had given refuge to 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden. Twenty years later, the United States is withdrawing — visions of victory long vanished and an ascendant Taliban arguably within reach of restoring their rule.

Afghanistan proved to be a lesson in the limits of America's military power.

It demonstrated the seeming paradox that it is possible to win the battles and still lose the war. Or at least that a technologically superior force can kill more efficiently than its enemy yet fail to achieve a final result resembling victory.

It showed that in the 21st century, it takes more than a conquering army, even one as well armed as America's, to convert the overthrow of a government, even one as tenuous as the Taliban's, into a lasting success. It showed that it takes, at a minimum, an understanding of local politics, history and culture that the Americans were slow to acquire.

The United States underestimated how much its presence as an occupier fueled Taliban motivation to fight and limited the Kabul government's ability to unite. Although bin Laden eventually was killed and his al-Qaida network blunted as an international threat, Afghans are still caught in a cycle of violence and misrule with no end in sight.

In his book, "The American War in Afghanistan, A History," Carter Malkasian, a former adviser to senior U.S. military leaders in Afghanistan and Washington, says one reason for the futility of the American effort was the influence of Islam and resistance to foreign occupation. Those were factors, he says, that were not well understood by the Americans.

"The very presence of Americans in Afghanistan trod on what it meant to be Afghan," he wrote. "It prodded men and women to defend their honor, their religion, and their home. It dared young men to fight. It animated the Taliban. It sapped the will of Afghan soldiers and police."

The U.S. military may have missed opportunities to stabilize Afghanistan in the early years after ousting the Taliban, which had run the country as an international pariah since 1996. But the bigger question is whether the military, after its initial success, was miscast in the lead role of transporting Afghanistan from chaos to stability.

The U.S. military does not fight wars entirely on its own terms. It operates through civilian direction. Although civilian leaders may be accused of having overreached with visions of building Afghanistan into a democracy capable of defending itself, the military eventually embraced that goal. Claims by senior military officers of having "turned a corner" toward success in Afghanistan were repeated so regularly that critics wondered whether the military was going in circles.

Karl Eikenberry, a retired Army lieutenant general with a rare combination of high-level military and diplomatic experience in Afghanistan, said the U.S. military initially balked at an open-ended mission of nation-building in an impoverished country traumatized by decades of civil war.

"But it warmed to the task," he said, and the United States became further entangled as it pursued a military strategy not informed by realistic policy debates in Washington about what outcome was achievable and at what cost.

By numbers alone, the costs were enormous. Tens of thousands of Afghan government forces and civilians were killed. The United States lost more than 2,440 troops, and the allies lost more than 1,100. The U.S. spent hundreds of billions, and even after the withdrawal, the Biden administration plans to ask Congress to spend billions more in support of Afghan soldiers — even to continue paying their salaries.

The war, conceived in the traumatic aftermath of the hijacked plane attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on 9/11, devolved from the triumphant moment of ousting the Taliban from Kabul to nearly a decade of revived insurgency, starting in 2005. The killing of bin Laden in 2011 seemed like an opportunity to wind

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 73 of 78

down the war, but it dragged on.

Experts disagree on the central reason the U.S. failed to stop a Taliban resurgence after its initial losses, but a contributing factor was a decision by President George W. Bush to invade Iraq in 2003. Within a few years that war became so all-consuming that Afghanistan was officially relegated to a secondary priority.

"Making it a sideshow was a fatal choice," Eikenberry said.

A full decade after bin Laden's demise, President Joe Biden decided that continuing the war was senseless. He announced in April that he was ending it, arguing that waiting for an ideal moment to leave was a formula for never leaving, and citing the pullout commitment the Trump administration had made to the Taliban in 2020. The last troops are to depart by Aug. 31.

Biden argued that the central purpose of starting the war — to crush al-Qaida and to prevent Afghanistan from again being a breeding ground for another attack on the United States — had been achieved, leaving no reason to further risk U.S. troops. The risk that remains is a collapse of the Afghan government and a return of extremist threats, although Biden has promised to keep a U.S. diplomatic presence in Kabul and to push for a peace settlement.

On the day American forces began the war, Oct. 7, 2001, then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggested it would be open-ended, but no one anticipated it turning into the longest war in U.S. history.

"While our raids today focus on the Taliban and the foreign terrorists in Afghanistan, our aim remains much broader," he told reporters. "Our objective is to defeat those who use terrorism and those who house or support them." He made clear that this was a global war on terrorism, not just a fight in Afghanistan.

Yet even as talk of a war on terrorism faded, the war in Afghanistan persisted, long after victory fell out of reach.

"In the end, we prosecuted the war in Afghanistan because we could," Eikenberry said. "With no peer competitor, a volunteer force, and deficit spending, we had the luxury strategically and politically of fighting a forever war."

GOP governor's vaccination tour reveals depths of distrust

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

TEXARKANA, Ark. (AP) — Free lottery tickets for those who get vaccinated had few takers. Free hunting and fishing licenses didn't change many minds either. And this being red-state Arkansas, mandatory vaccinations are off the table.

So Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson has hit the road, meeting face-to-face with residents to try to overcome vaccine hesitancy — in many cases, hostility — in Arkansas, which has the highest rate of new COVID-19 cases in the U.S. but is near the very bottom in dispensing shots.

He is meeting with residents like Harvey Woods, who was among five dozen people who gathered at a convention center ballroom in Texarkana on Thursday night. Most of the audience wasn't masked, and neither was Hutchinson, who has been vaccinated.

Woods, 67, introduced himself to Hutchinson as "anti-vax" and said that he thinks there are too many questions about the effects of the vaccine and that he doesn't believe the information from the federal government about them is reliable.

Hutchinson and his top health official tried to reassure Woods about the Food and Drug Administration's review process. But Hutchinson had a question for Woods.

"Do you believe COVID is real?" the governor asked.

"I'm not afraid of it," said Woods, who later said he contracted the virus last year.

Hutchinson embarked on the statewide tour as he took over as chairman of the National Governors Association. In that role, he has called combating vaccine resistance a priority.

Studies have shown the vaccines to be highly safe and effective. But misinformation continues to sow doubts about them, especially in conservative and rural areas. Hutchinson has urged the FDA to give full approval to the vaccines instead of emergency authorization, saying that would address one of the arguments used by opponents.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 74 of 78

At the forums, Hutchinson tries to empathize with the vaccine skeptics' anti-government, anti-media sentiment. His message: Listen to your own doctors and medical professionals, not conspiracy theories.

"Let me make sure it's clear: I'm not asking you to trust government," he told the Texarkana audience. "I'm asking you to look at, do your own research, talk to people that you trust, and that to me is the right approach."

The approach is different from that of other Republicans who are portraying health leaders as adversaries even as they try to tamp down cases.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has been selling shirts and other merchandise emblazoned "Don't Fauci My Florida." In Missouri, Gov. Mike Parson has suggested some health officials are trying to scare people into getting vaccinated. In Tennessee, the top vaccine official was fired amid GOP anger over her efforts to get teenagers vaccinated.

With the highly contagious delta variant rapidly driving up case counts around the country and filling hospital beds in places like Arkansas and neighboring Missouri, just 35% of Arkansas' population is fully vaccinated. Only Mississippi and Alabama are lower, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And 98% of the people hospitalized in Arkansas since January because of COVID-19 were unvaccinated.

Hutchinson has few tools left at his disposal after signing into law measures curbing his own authority to respond to the pandemic. They include bans on public schools and other government agencies mandating masks or requiring vaccinations.

A mostly unmasked audience of about 100 people gathered at one of his town halls in Batesville, a town of 11,000 approximately 90 minutes outside Little Rock.

Nathan Grant, a 66-year-old retired accountant from Batesville, said he didn't know of anything Hutchinson could tell him that would change his mind. Grant has resisted getting the vaccine despite contracting COVID-19 last year. He said he didn't trust any of the advice coming from Washington.

"They haven't shot straight with us. The CDC hasn't shot straight with us. Fauci hasn't shot straight with us. They've changed their stories multiple times," said Grant, next to whom sat a fellow vaccine skeptic in a baseball cap that read "Trump: No More Bulls—t."

Some holdouts at the forums aren't ruling the vaccine out. In Texarkana, one woman said she hadn't gotten the shots over concerns about how they would interact with her allergies. Doctors in the audience encouraged her to talk with her physician.

The forums are also drawing vaccinated residents who are concerned about the state's rising cases and exasperated at its lack of options to stem the surge.

Kameron Bethel, a Batesville mother of six, asked if there was a way she could obtain a waiver to get her 10-year old son vaccinated. She also asked the governor to reinstate the mask mandate he lifted in March.

"Yes, we are a great community, but I think if we don't work together and get it together, it's all going to fall apart," she said.

The forum was enough to sway Teresa Cox and her daughter, who got vaccinated at a mobile clinic after the Texarkana town hall. Cox said she doesn't trust Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top COVID-19 expert, but had confidence in the doctors who spoke at the event.

"What they said in there scared me," Cox said. "I have been anti-vaccine all along, but I have also been on a ventilator three times, and I don't want to be back on a ventilator. You don't forget it."

Biden pledges appeal of 'deeply disappointing' DACA ruling

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Saturday that the Justice Department intends to appeal a federal judge's ruling deeming illegal an Obama-era program that has protected hundreds of thousands of young immigrants from deportation and he renewed his calls for Congress to create a permanent solution.

He said in a statement that Friday's decision was "deeply disappointing," and although the judge's order did not affect those already covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, it "relegates hundreds of thousands of young immigrants to an uncertain future."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 75 of 78

The program has allowed thousands of young people who were brought illegally into the United States as children, or overstayed visas, to live, work and remain in the country. Many of the recipients, commonly known as "Dreamers," have now been in the U.S. for a decade or longer.

But Texas and eight other states sued to halt DACA, arguing that President Barack Obama lacked the power to create the program because it circumvented Congress. U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen in Houston agreed, and while his ruling left the program intact for existing recipients, it barred the government from approving any new applications.

In his statement, Biden urged Congress to move forward with legislation to permanently protect those covered by the program. "Only Congress can ensure a permanent solution by granting a path to citizenship for Dreamers that will provide the certainty and stability that these young people need and deserve," the president said.

"I have repeatedly called on Congress to pass the American Dream and Promise Act, and I now renew that call with the greatest urgency," he said. "It is my fervent hope that through reconciliation or other means, Congress will finally provide security to all Dreamers, who have lived too long in fear."

The House approved legislation in March creating a pathway toward citizenship for those impacted, but the measure has stalled in the Senate. Immigration advocates hope to include a provision in sweeping budget legislation Democrats want to pass this year, but it's unclear whether that language will survive.

GOP eyes Latinos in South Texas in effort to regain Congress

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — In Republicans' bid to retake control of Congress, this traditionally Democratic stretch of South Texas has quietly become a top battleground.

After making unexpected gains last November, the GOP is zeroing in on a trio of House seats in the region as key targets heading into next year's midterm elections. They include the 15th Congressional District, which hasn't sent a Republican to Washington since its creation in 1903, but where a GOP newcomer came within three points of winning in 2020.

Republican leaders believe the party is on the precipice of a political realignment among Hispanic voters in communities along the U.S.-Mexico border like McAllen. Inroads among Latinos could potentially offset the party's growing vulnerabilities among voters, particularly in the suburbs. The elections next year will determine whether these shifts are enduring or a more limited response to the turbulent politics of the Trump era, as Democrats hope.

But with Congress having just a six-seat majority in the House, Democrats in Texas say the party has to take the threat seriously.

"I don't think there's any question that we need to be concerned about it and we need to put more resources into it," said Gilberto Hinojosa, the chair of the Texas Democratic Party.

Republicans' top target in the area is the 15th District. It currently stretches from the border's Hidalgo County, which is more than 90% Hispanic, to the eastern suburbs of San Antonio. Voters here have never sent a Republican to Washington, which is why national party leaders were so stunned when Monica De La Cruz-Hernandez, a small business owner, came within 10,000 votes of beating Rep. Vicente Gonzalez, a two-term Democrat.

Sitting behind her office desk in Alamo earlier this month wearing cowboy boots and a campaign T-shirt, De La Cruz-Hernandez, who is running again, credited her performance to former President Donald Trump. She said his "colorful personality" had sparked new interest in national politics that changed many Texans' minds about politics.

"When they paid attention to what was happening on the national stage, I think that the lights started to turn on for people where they saw, you know what? My conservative values no longer align with the Democrat Party," she said. "The bottom line is that the Hispanic values are pro-God, pro-life and pro-country. And we are conservatives down here."

Border security, she said, is "number one issue from the north side of the district to the south side of

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 76 of 78

the district," as border crossings have soared. And Republicans in the state have been laser-focused on the issue, with Trump staging a post-presidential visit to the border last month that drew hundreds of supporters.

Democratic state lawmakers have been focused on blocking a sweeping election overhaul bill and have been camped out in Washington — though some Democrats representing the Rio Grande Valley did not join them.

Nationally, the Pew Research Center estimates that about 38% of Hispanic voters supported Trump in 2020, compared with 28% in 2016. While Trump lost Hidalgo County by 17 percentage points in 2020, he more than doubled his support from 2016, when he lost by a whopping 40 points, earning just 28% of the vote. And he flipped a handful of other nearby districts, including Zapata County, which Democrat Hillary Clinton had won 66%-33%, and Kenedy, which Clinton carried 53%-45%.

Beyond those gains, Republicans point to other data points to support their optimism. Javier Villalobos in June was elected mayor of McAllen, becoming the first Republican to hold the post in decades. Texas' redistricting process, which is controlled by state Republicans, could produce districts that are even more favorable to GOP candidates as the lines are redrawn to reflect the state's gain of two congressional seats.

Villalobos, who joined Trump at his border briefing and was hailed as a "superstar" by other officials at the event, said he saw his election as part of a trend driven both by Trump as well as economic changes as more Hispanics have entered the middle class.

"Historically, it's been Hispanic people are very conservative, but they vote traditionally Democrat. And little by little, even the older people are changing," he said. "And that's a beautiful thing. Competition is good."

It's unclear whether the gains Republicans made in 2020 will carry over when Trump isn't on the ballot in 2022. Democrats insist their poor performance last year was a one-off and point to unique circumstances, including the party's decision to largely forgo in-person campaigning during the pandemic. The McAllen mayor's race, they also note, was nonpartisan, and turnout was less than 10,000 votes.

Gonzalez, the Democratic incumbent in the 15th District, insists he's unfazed by the strong showing of De La Cruz-Hernandez. He described last year's results as "an anomaly" driven by a pandemic that devastated the district, killing thousands of residents, including some of his personal friends, and dissuaded many elderly voters from casting their ballots.

He pointed to concrete gains made under the Biden administration that he will campaign on, including an economic recovery, mass vaccinations and relief dollars that helped keep small businesses open.

"Everyone at the end of the day is running on results and the work that we've done and we will be running on what we've done for the people," he said.

But Hinojosa, the Texas Democratic chair, was more cautious. He acknowledged the party was caught off guard by a surge in first-time voters who cast ballots for Trump. Because no one thought the races would be competitive, little money and effort were spent on the contests, with no canvassing, phone banking or get-out-the-vote drives.

Trump's message, he said, also resonated with voters, especially in the Rio Grande Valley, where poverty rates are high and the economy remains hobbled by a shuttered southern border. He cited concerns about the future of the oil and gas industry, the border, and calls from some Democrats to "defund the police," which "freaked out" many voters who have ties to law enforcement.

"It was just almost a perfect storm for the Republicans down here," he said, noting the party lacked the "resources that were needed to shore up support down here" because the race's weren't considered competitive.

In preparation for next year's election, he said he has already held meetings across South Texas with local leaders, forming coalitions along the border, as well as hiring a full-time organizer.

"We're going to spend a heck of a lot more money and lot more time than we ever have before just to make sure that what Republicans say is going to happen won't happen," he said. "We're not going to take any chances."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 77 of 78

But interviews with voters suggest there is work to be done.

Eryc Palomares, 42, who lives in McAllen and works in a medical laboratory, said he was thrilled to see others like him who had broken their allegiance to the Democratic Party "because that's all we've seen, that's all we've known here."

It's "as if they have you already brainwashed: Go vote Democrat. That's all it was here," said Palomares, who now tends to vote Republican.

"People are waking up," said Manuel Pescador Jr., 54, an occupational safety consultant and local activist who lives in McAllen.

Pescador Jr. said he switched parties seven years ago, rejecting what he saw as a culture of "handouts and false promises," and now rails against immigrants who enter the U.S. illegally.

"They come here, they refuse to assimilate and they're here to use everything they can, in any way they can. And so that's why I call them 'depleters,'" he said. "That's why that Hispanics that can vote, vote Republican, because we know who's coming in."

Joe Guerra, an independent who lives in McAllen, didn't vote in last year's presidential election, but said he wasn't at all surprised by the GOP's gains.

"The Republican Party was, for years, just a token presence here. But the conservative spirit has always been here," he said. "They were always there and (Trump) just had the ability to bring them out. That's who they've always been."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, July 18, the 199th day of 2021. There are 166 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 18, 1918, South African anti-apartheid leader and president Nelson Mandela was born in the village of Mvezo.

On this date:

In 1536, the English Parliament passed an act declaring the authority of the pope void in England.

In 1863, during the Civil War, Union troops spearheaded by the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, made up of Black soldiers, charged Confederate-held Fort Wagner on Morris Island, S.C. The Confederates were able to repel the Northerners, who suffered heavy losses; the 54th's commander, Col. Robert Gould Shaw, was among those who were killed.

In 1872, Britain enacted voting by secret ballot.

In 1940, the Democratic National Convention at Chicago Stadium nominated President Franklin D. Roosevelt (who was monitoring the proceedings at the White House) for an unprecedented third term in office; earlier in the day, Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to the convention, becoming the first presidential spouse to address such a gathering.

In 1944, Hideki Tojo was removed as Japanese premier and war minister because of setbacks suffered by his country in World War II. American forces in France captured the Normandy town of St. Lo.

In 1964, nearly a week of rioting erupted in New York's Harlem neighborhood following the fatal police shooting of a Black teenager, James Powell, two days earlier.

In 1969, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., left a party on Chappaquiddick (chap-uh-KWIH'-dihk) Island near Martha's Vineyard with Mary Jo Kopechne (koh-PEHK'-nee), 28; Kennedy's car later went off a bridge into the water. Kennedy was able to escape, but Kopechne drowned.

In 1976, 14-year-old Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci (koh-mah-NEECH'), competing at the Montreal Olympics, received the first-ever perfect score of 10 with her routine on uneven parallel bars. (Comaneci would go on to receive six more 10s in Montreal.)

In 1984, gunman James Huberty opened fire at a McDonald's in San Ysidro (ee-SEE'-droh), California, killing 21 people before being shot dead by police. Walter F. Mondale won the Democratic presidential

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 011 ~ 78 of 78

nomination in San Francisco.

In 1994, a bomb hidden in a van destroyed a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 85. Tutsi rebels declared an end to Rwanda's 14-week-old civil war.

In 2005, an unrepentant Eric Rudolph was sentenced in Birmingham, Alabama, to life in prison for an abortion clinic bombing that killed an off-duty police officer and maimed a nurse.

In 2013, Detroit, which was once the very symbol of American industrial might, became the biggest U.S. city to file for bankruptcy, its finances ravaged and its neighborhoods hollowed out by a long, slow decline in population and auto manufacturing.

Ten years ago: Gen. David Petraeus handed over command of American and coalition forces in Afghanistan to Gen. John Allen as he left to take over the Central Intelligence Agency. Reeling from months of tragedy caused by a devastating tsunami and earthquake, Japan celebrated after its women's soccer team won the World Cup by beating the United States 3-1 on penalty kicks, after coming from behind twice in a 2-2 tie.

Five years ago: Republicans opened their national convention in Cleveland as they prepared to nominate Donald Trump for president; Trump's wife, Melania, delivered a speech in which she assured delegates and voters that her husband had the character and determination to unite a divided nation. (Mrs. Trump's well-received address was marred by two passages with similarities to a speech first lady Michelle Obama delivered at the 2008 Democratic convention; a speechwriter accepted responsibility for the passages in question.) President Barack Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to retired Lt. Col. Charles Kettles, a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War credited with helping rescue more than 40 American soldiers under heavy fire.

One year ago: The World Health Organization reported a single-day record of new coronavirus infections – more than 259,000 worldwide – for a second day in a row. South Africa became one of the five worst-hit countries in the pandemic. Florida reported more than 10,200 new cases and 90 additional deaths. Canadian officials said the Toronto Blue Jays baseball team would not be able to play its home games in Toronto during the shortened 2020 season because it wasn't safe for players to travel back and forth from the United States. (The Blue Jays would play "home" games in the ballpark of their minor league affiliate in Buffalo, N.Y.)

Today's Birthdays: Skating champion and commentator Dick Button is 92. Olympic gold medal figure skater Tenley Albright is 86. Movie director Paul Verhoeven is 83. Musician Brian Auger is 82. Singer Dion DiMucci is 82. Actor James Brolin is 81. Baseball Hall of Famer Joe Torre is 81. Singer Martha Reeves is 80. Pop-rock musician Wally Bryson (The Raspberries) is 72. Country-rock singer Craig Fuller (Pure Prairie League) is 72. Business mogul Richard Branson is 71. Actor Margo Martindale is 70. Singer Ricky Skaggs is 67. Actor Audrey Landers is 65. World Golf Hall of Famer Nick Faldo is 64. Rock musician Nigel Twist (The Alarm) is 64. Actor Anne-Marie Johnson is 61. Actor Elizabeth McGovern is 60. Rock musician John Hermann (Widespread Panic) is 59. Rock musician Jack Irons is 59. Talk show host-actor Wendy Williams is 57. Actor Vin Diesel is 54. Actor Grant Bowler is 53. Retired NBA All-Star Penny Hardaway is 50. Bluegrass musician Jesse Brock (The Gibson Brothers) is 49. Alt-country singer Elizabeth Cook is 49. Actor Eddie Matos is 49. Dance music singer-songwriter M.I.A. is 46. Rock musician Daron Malakian (System of a Down; Scars on Broadway) is 46. Actor Elsa Pataky ("The Fast and the Furious" films) is 45. Rock musician Tony Fagenson (formerly with Eve 6) is 43. Movie director Jared Hess is 42. Actor Jason Weaver is 42. Actor Kristen Bell is 41. Actor Michiel Huisman (MIHK'-heel HOWS'-man) is 40. Rock singer Ryan Cabrera is 39. Actor Priyanka Chopra is 39. Christian-rock musician Aaron Gillespie (Underoath) is 38. Actor Chace Crawford is 36. Actor James Norton is 36. Musician Paul Kowert (Punch Brothers) is 35. Actor Travis Milne is 35.