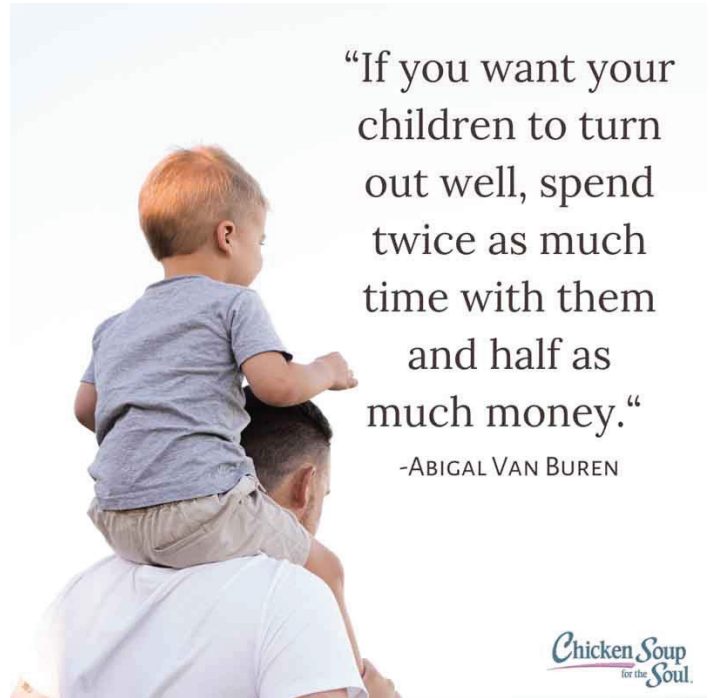


Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 1 of 79

- [1- Truss Pros Help Wanted Ad](#)
- [2- Weekly Church Calendar](#)
- [3- Love Groton is Today](#)
- [4- Sunday Extras](#)
- [23- Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller](#)
- [29- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [30- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [31- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [32- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [34- EarthTalk -SST Jets](#)
- [35- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [36- Weather Pages](#)
- [39- Daily Devotional](#)
- [40- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [41- News from the Associated Press](#)



“If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them and half as much money.”

-ABIGAL VAN BUREN

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

Mobridge Post 4 Blows Away Redfield Post 92 By Eight Runs

Mobridge Post 4 easily did away with Redfield Post 92 9-1 on Saturday in the Region 6 American Legion championship game. The game was played at Locke-Karst Field in Groton.

Mobridge Post 4 tallied three runs in the sixth inning. Each had RBIs in the big inning.



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



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 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 2 of 79

United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, July 25, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

Serve Sunday Mission Project in Groton 9:30 AM

NO Groton Worship

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Bible Study with Rev Sheila Richards on the
Apostle's Rules they Followed 10:00 AM

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

Sunday, August 1, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

No worship today due to Emmanuel participating in the 'LOVE GROTON' service project. Those willing to offer a helping hand can meet at Emmanuel at 9:30 am for a short prayer send off before heading over to the UMC church.

Monday, July 25, 2021

6:30 a.m.: Bible Study

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30pm Groton

Sunday 8:30am Groton & 11:00am Turton

Weekday

Tues 5:00pm Turton, W-F 8:30am Groton

Sat 10am Newman Center

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Each morning before Weekday Mass at 7:15am

Tues 3:45pm Turton

Confessions:

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

Sun. 10:30-10:45am (T)

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, 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 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 3 of 79

How can we...
"Love Groton"?



Serve Sunday

July 25 from 9:30am-1pm

Groton UMC • Emmanuel Lutheran

FCA • Table Talks

Is there something we could assist you or
someone you know with?

Yard Work • Window Washing • Trash Pick-Up
Garage Cleaned Out • Let Us Know!

TO SIGN UP FOR A SERVICE TEAM OR TO GIVE US A PROJECT
PLEASE CALL 605-397-8270
OR EMAIL PASTORBRANDON@NVC.NET



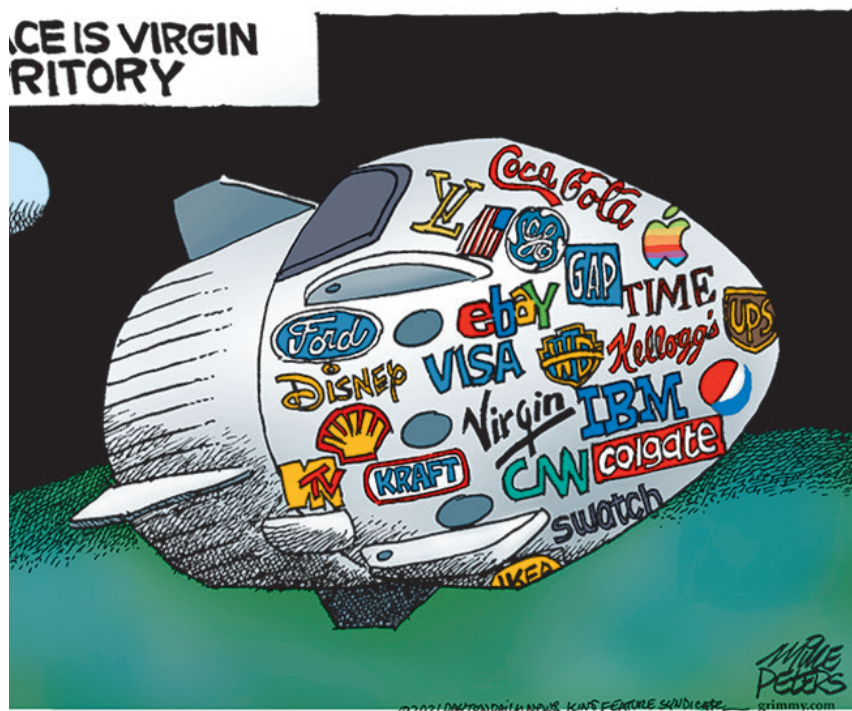
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him!" And when the unclean spirit had torn him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.

☞ MARK 1: 25, 26 ☞

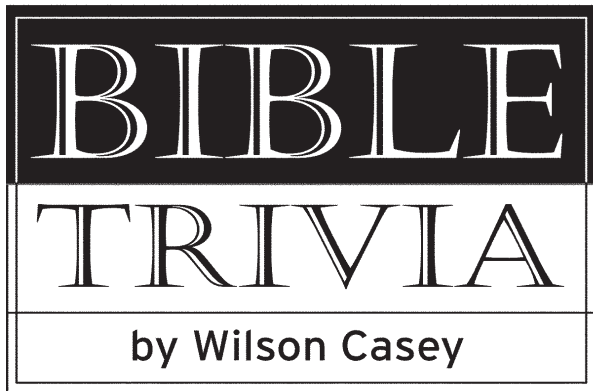


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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 5 of 79



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

2. What happened to Jeroboam's hand on confronting the man of God at the altar? *Fell off, Turned to salt, Became a viper, Dried up*

3. The children making fun of Elisha's bald head were torn apart by? *2 bears, 3 lions, 7 serpents, Locust swarm*

4. From Acts 13, who was called "A man after mine own heart"? *Gideon, David, Matthew, James*

5. In John 19, who said, "What I have written, I have written"? *Daniel, John the Baptist, Pilate, Jesus*

6. From Genesis 1:20, on what day did God create the birds? *1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Dried up; 3) 2 bears; 4) David; 5) Pilate; 6) 5th

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

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by Healthy Exchanges

Sour Cream Raisin Cake

It's Fair Time, but many county and state fairs have been put on hold due to the pandemic. So, we decided to hold a recipe fair of our own, and declared this the Best of Stove Winner!

- 3/4 cup no-fat sour cream
- 2 eggs or equivalent in egg substitute
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- Sugar substitute to equal 1/2 cup sugar, suitable for baking
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 cup raisins

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray a 9-by-9-inch cake pan with butter-flavored cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine sour cream, eggs and vanilla extract. Add flour, sugar substitute, baking soda and pumpkin-pie spice. Mix just to combine. Fold in raisins. Spread batter into prepared cake pan.

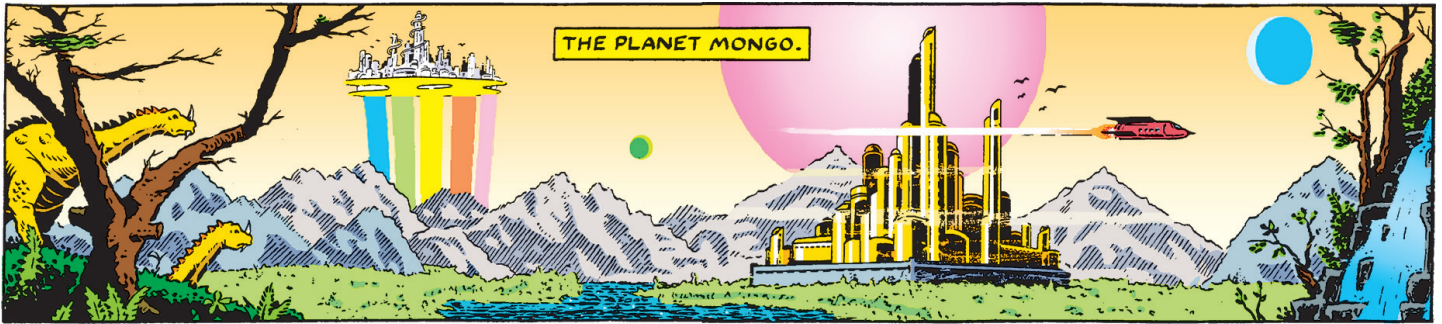
3. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Place cake pan on wire rack and let set for at least 5 minutes. Makes 8 servings.

* Each serving equals: 173 calories, 1g fat, 5g protein, 36g carb., 205mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch, 1 Fruit.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 6 of 79

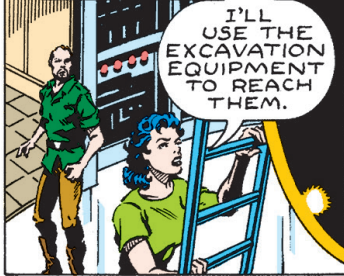


FLASH GORDON

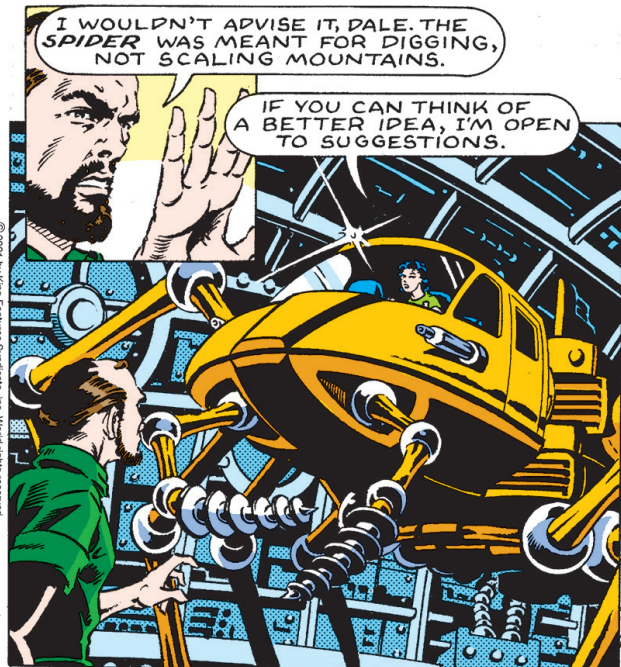
By JIM KEEFE
7-18

DALE LEADS DR. ZARKOV INTO THE PAYLOAD BAY TO EXPLAIN HER PLAN TO RESCUE THE CREW STRANDED HIGH ON MOUNT CHOMOMATHA

IF WE CAN'T USE THE SHIP BECAUSE OF THE STORM...

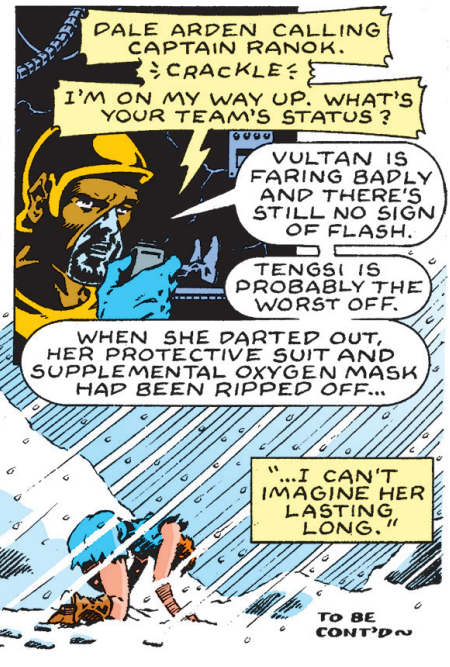


I'LL USE THE EXCAVATION EQUIPMENT TO REACH THEM.



I WOULDN'T ADVISE IT, DALE. THE SPIDER WAS MEANT FOR DIGGING, NOT SCALING MOUNTAINS.

IF YOU CAN THINK OF A BETTER IDEA, I'M OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS.



DALE ARDEN CALLING CAPTAIN RANOK.

CRACKLE

I'M ON MY WAY UP. WHAT'S YOUR TEAM'S STATUS?

VULTAN IS FARING BADLY AND THERE'S STILL NO SIGN OF FLASH.

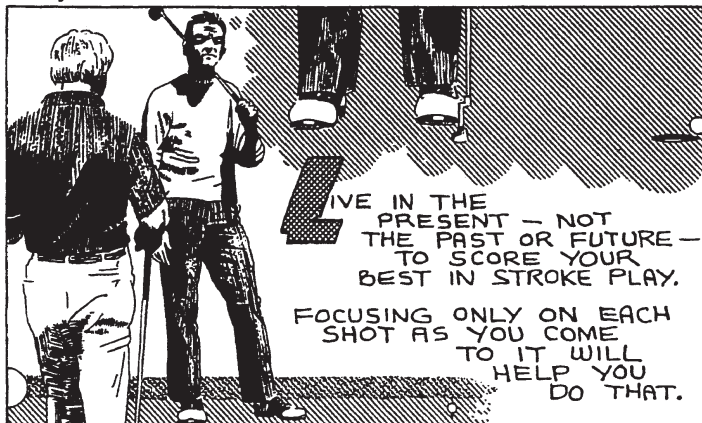
TENGSI IS PROBABLY THE WORST OFF.

WHEN SHE DARTED OUT, HER PROTECTIVE SUIT AND SUPPLEMENTAL OXYGEN MASK HAD BEEN RIPPED OFF...

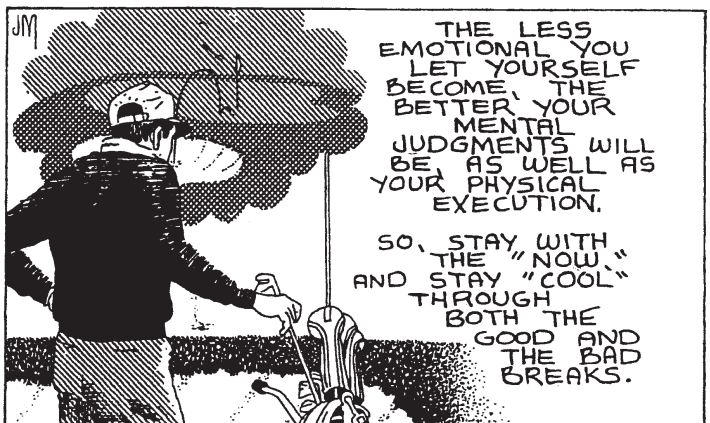
"...I CAN'T IMAGINE HER LASTING LONG."

TO BE CONT'D

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



LIVE IN THE PRESENT - NOT THE PAST OR FUTURE - TO SCORE YOUR BEST IN STROKE PLAY. FOCUSING ONLY ON EACH SHOT AS YOU COME TO IT WILL HELP YOU DO THAT.



THE LESS EMOTIONAL YOU LET YOURSELF BECOME, THE BETTER YOUR MENTAL JUDGMENTS WILL BE, AS WELL AS YOUR PHYSICAL EXECUTION.

SO, STAY WITH THE "NOW" AND STAY "COOL" THROUGH BOTH THE GOOD AND THE BAD BREAKS.

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Does Oatmeal Contain Roundup Herbicide?

DEAR DR. ROACH: Experts advised us to "throw out sugar-laden cereals" and eat a healthy breakfast, such as oatmeal. Now we are told that oatmeal contains a significant amount of glyphosate, which they say is an ingredient in Roundup! Are we poisoning our children? -- A.D.

ANSWER: There have been traces of glyphosate (an herbicide) found in oatmeal and other cereals. However, as always, the dose makes the poison. The Environmental Protection Agency has set a level of 30 parts per million, below which the exposure is considered safe. A 2018 study by the Environmental Working Group found levels of glyphosate in oatmeal

breakfast cereals to be between 0.5 and 1 parts per million. It is unlikely that consumption of these cereals causes any significant health risks. Nobody likes the idea of eating an herbicide, but these are very low amounts, and some experts have questioned the specificity of the detection method used.

The same EWG report found that organic cereals had less, but often still some, glyphosate in them. Although the levels in both conventional and organic cereals were safe, glyphosate itself is found at generally lower levels in organic products. Unfortunately, there have not been good studies on residual amounts of organic pesticides (some of which are substantially more toxic than glyphosate) that might be found in organically grown food.

I agree with reducing the simple sugars found in many cereals, especially those marketed to children. However, I recommend more protein for breakfast than is found in oatmeal. You can add more with nuts, egg whites or seeds.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was diagnosed with high LDL cholesterol 20 years ago. I have been taking higher statin doses and now take Crestor 20 mg. Due to muscle pain, my cardiologist prescribed Praluent injections of 75 mg every two weeks to lower my LDL to below 77. I am 74 and have two heart stents in my right coronary artery, but have never had a heart attack.

Praluent is a monoclonal antibody, and the literature states that it can lower your immunity. I also have low-grade (Gleason 3+3) prostate cancer that has been stable since diagnosed in 2012. Is there a risk that Praluent could cause my prostate cancer to advance? -- J.E.

ANSWER: Although taking a statin (such as the Crestor you were taking to reduce cholesterol) was once thought to increase cancer risk, multiple studies have since found no convincing evidence that this is the case.

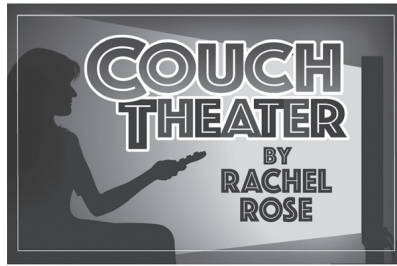
Praluent (alirocumab) is in a new class of drugs, called the PCSK-9 inhibitors. They have not been used for very long, but I found no evidence that these drugs increase cancer risk either. There was some concern that the increase in bile acids seen in people treated with these drugs might predispose them to colon cancer, but initial studies have not shown any problems so far with either Praluent or evolocumab (Repatha).

I believe that for you, heart disease is a larger risk to your life than your prostate cancer. Since you can't tolerate a statin, a PCSK-9 inhibitor is more likely to prolong your life by reducing heart disease risk than it is to shorten your life by increasing prostate cancer risk. There is no evidence that it does so.

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 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 8 of 79



Dragging the Classics: The Brady Bunch — When producers randomly pull actor names and potential situations out of a hat and mash them together, here is the result. Three original cast members of the classic 1970s sitcom teamed up with drag queens from “RuPaul’s Drag Race” to precisely re-create a “Brady Bunch” episode. Yes, it’s corny. Yes, the actors are long in the tooth to be playing teenagers, and their acting is a little stiff. But for lifelong “Bunch” fans, this is guilty pleasure. Costumes are accurate, set design is perfect, and drag queens Kylie Sonique Love and Kandy Muse provide hilarious yet sincere perspectives to playing Jan and Cindy Brady. (Paramount+)

The Artist (PG-13) — New this week to Hulu’s current offerings is the 2012 Academy Award-winner for Best Picture. Starring Jean Dujardin and Bérénice Bejo, this French comedy-drama is a tribute to the magic of the silent-film era of Hollywood. Set from 1927-1932, the plot revolves around an older silent-film star who has a chance meeting with an up-and-coming starlet whose career he then helps propel. Filmed in black-and-white, and largely silent except for the musical score, “The Artist” also won Oscars for costume design and original score. It is a throwback to an almost forgotten style of movie, and a welcome change from the modern. (Hulu)

Fresh Fried and Crispy — Food critic Daym Drops visits eight cities across the U.S. to highlight unique and decadent fried foods. Focusing less on the recipes and more on the final dishes, the show uses a lot of slow-motion effects and up-close camera angles to draw out the indulgence of that first incredible bite. It’s so visually enticing, you’ll find yourself desperately craving a mile-high Maryland blue crab sandwich or a San Diego-style cast iron-fried ribeye steak. (Netflix)

Jolt (R)— There’s something very satisfying about watching a female character with a rage “problem” act on her impulses against overbearing and generally annoying men. In “Jolt,” Kate Beckinsale stars as Lindy, a bouncer with a neurological affliction that affects her impulse control. Self-administered electric shocks help to maintain her temper, until tragedy hits. When her love interest is murdered, Lindy is the prime suspect and must deal with the detectives trying to nail her for the crime (Bobby Cannavale and Laverne Cox), while simultaneously hunting for the real killer. An Amazon Studios original, the cast is rounded out with Susan Sarandon and the man who makes every movie better, Stanley Tucci. (Prime Video)



Paramount+

Kandy Muse as Cindy Brady

Critter Country Vets (Season 2) — The popularity of animal-focused shows continues in this docuseries based in rural Georgia. Friends since childhood, Dr. Terrence Ferguson and Dr. Bernard Hodges own and operate two Critter Fixer vet clinics, whose motto is “We Treat ‘Em All.” So don’t expect the usual cat-fight injuries or dogs that ate the car keys. These docs tend to everything from an alligator with a lung infection to a lethargic chin-chilla, without ever losing their sense of humor or love for the job. (Disney+)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 9 of 79



1. Which Kool & the Gang song was used in "Pulp Fiction"?

2. Who wrote and released "Silly Love Songs"?

3. Which Canadian singer won Best Female Pop Vocal Performance for "You Needed Me"?

4. Name the U.K. boy band who released "I Owe You Nothing."

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "If I see you tomorrow on some street in town, Pardon me if I don't say 'Hello.'"

Answers

1. "Jungle Boogie," in 1994, during the opening credits. The song has seen wide usage, ranging from a Justin Timberlake cover, to a Muppets short film, to playing at the Cincinnati Bengals home games.

2. Paul McCartney, in 1976. He wrote the song in response to critics (as well as John Lennon) who claimed McCartney only wrote silly love songs. The song went to No. 1.

3. Anne Murray, in 1979. The soap opera "Guiding Light" used the song in its show for two years.

4. Bros, in 1987. The song climbed charts in Australia, France, Iceland and more.

5. "Walk On By," by Leroy Van Dyke in 1961. Released on the country singles chart, Van Dyke's song spent 19 weeks at No. 1. That record held for 51 years until 2013, when it was topped by Florida Georgia Line's "Cruise."

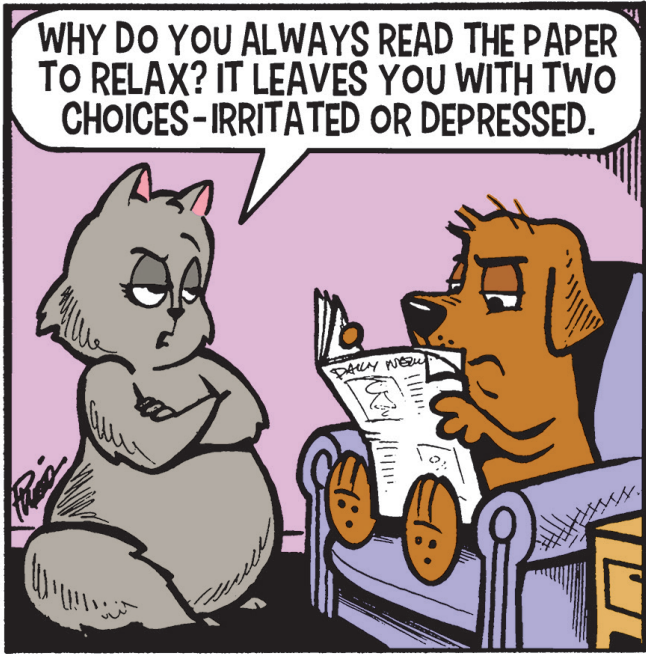
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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 10 of 79

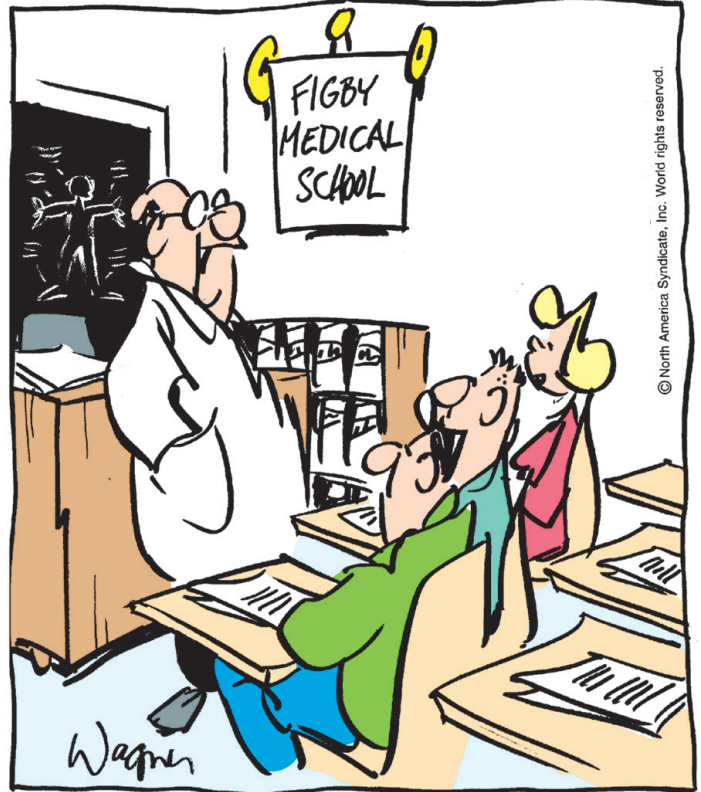
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{Wagner}

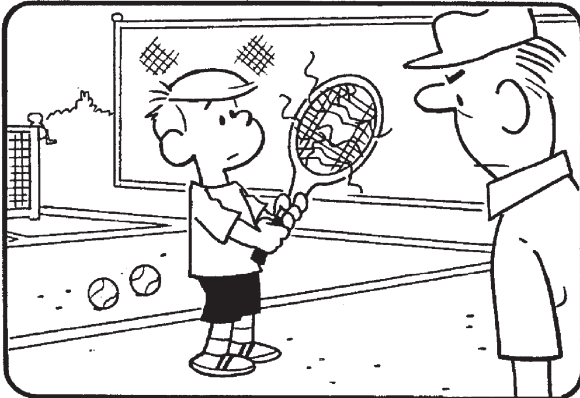


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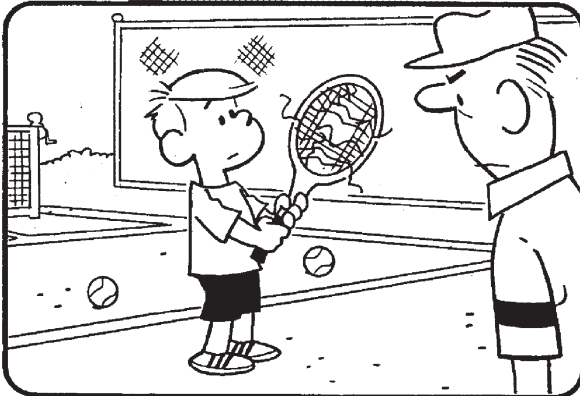
"In three years you'll be opening offices, so start saving your magazines."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. String is missing. 2. Ball is moved. 3. Sleeve is different. 4. Hedge is smaller. 5. Sneakers are different. 6. Socks are missing.

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- If you've lost a zipper pull, you can create a temporary one with a paperclip.
- Remove all of the air from a plastic storage bag with a drinking straw. Slip the straw into the bag and close as much as possible. Then suck any air out through the straw, and quickly pull out and close in a single motion. Your leftovers will stay fresh longer, and foods may stack better in the freezer.
- And speaking of straws, did you know you can use them to curl your hair? Wind sections of damp hair around a plastic straw and secure the ends with a bobby pin. Dry in the sun or use a hair dryer on low heat. Remove and spritz with hair spray.
- Here's an oldie but a goodie! Iced coffee is at its best when brewed with twice the usual amount of ground coffee, because the coffee is diluted

by the melting ice cubes. Or use regular-strength brewed ice coffee and serve over coffee ice cubes. They're easy to prepare: Pour cool brewed coffee into ice-cube trays and freeze.

- Lemon juice can bring out the flavor of mushrooms. I keep a little spray bottle to keep lemon juice accessible in the kitchen. I find it's good for all kinds of things, like avocados and apples. I spray the cut side to keep them from browning. It's also great for salad greens. — *T.T. in New Jersey*

- Make your own camping lamp: Strap a headlamp to a full gallon jug of water. It fills the tent with a soft light, and you can still drink the water!

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 12 of 79



Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



COIN GAME!

PLACE 15 coins (or buttons, nails, etc.) on a table. Two players now take turns removing one, two or three coins at a time. The player who is forced to remove the last coin from the table loses.

HOW MANY doggies are in the window? Also, when is a dog's tail not a tail?
Twenty. When it's a waggin' (wagon).

TRICKY BILLS! When Mr. Jones looked in his wallet, he found that he had just six bills that added up exactly to \$63. None were \$1 bills. What were the denominations of these six bills? P.S.: It's tricky.



He had one \$50 bill, one \$5 bill and four \$2 bills.

ANAGRAM FUN! Fill in the two grids, using the clues below. You'll see that the same letters are used in each pair.

1. Ignore someone.
2. Upholstered seat.
3. Location or direction.
4. Stolen goods.

GRID A

S			
	O		
		F	
			T

GRID B

B			
	A		
		L	
			L

1. Small bread rolls.
2. Clumsy people.
3. A matted fabric.
4. A hammer is one.

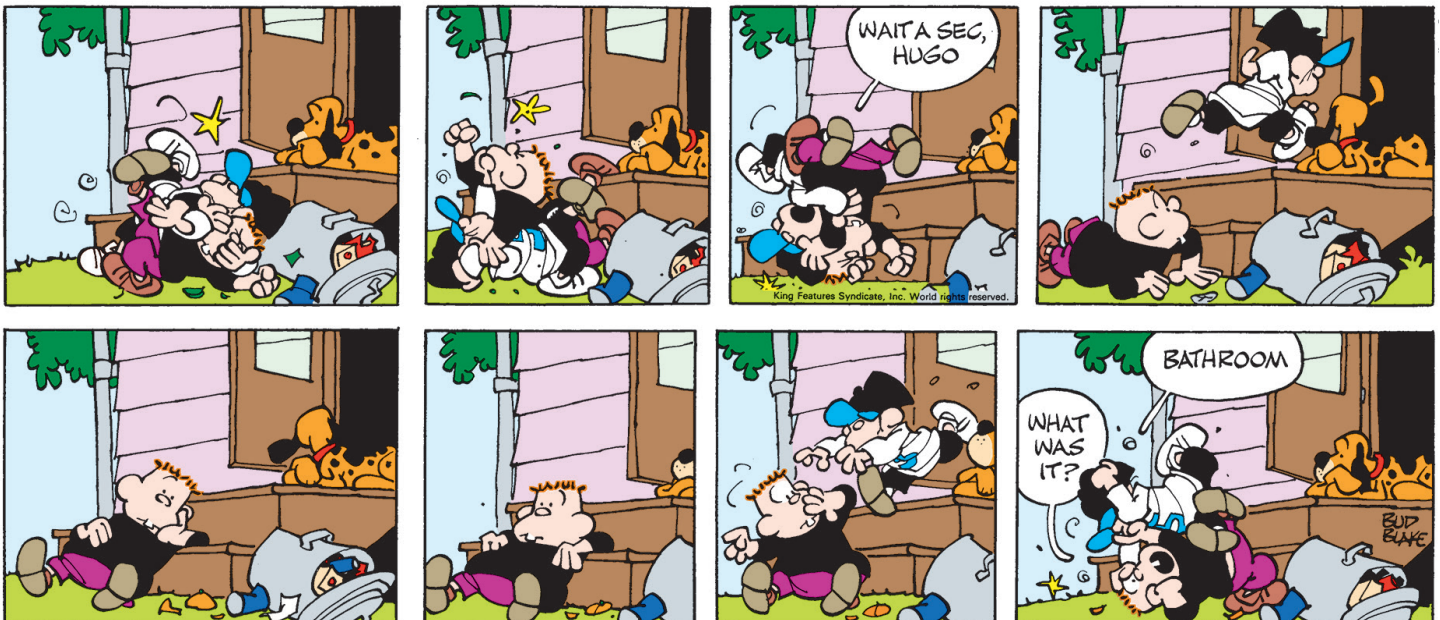
1. Snub-buns. 2. Sofa-cats. 3. Left-fell. 4. Loot-tool.

Illustrated by David Coulson

SECRET STRATEGY: When it's your turn, try to remove enough coins so that there are 13, nine or five coins left on the table. This will give you a sure win. Also, if you make a rule that the person who won the last game gets to start the next game, you will be unbeatable since you will always remove two coins, leaving 13 on the board, a winning number.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 13 of 79

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Mattress option
- 5 NASCAR advertiser
- 8 Wild guess
- 12 Supervisor
- 14 "Yes — ?"
- 15 Accidentally
- 16 Late July babies
- 17 Since Jan. 1
- 18 12-year-olds, e.g.
- 20 Bjorn Borg, for one
- 23 Salon request
- 24 Actress Elisabeth
- 25 Act of contrition
- 28 Knight's address

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		

- 29 Persnickety
- 30 Fez, e.g.
- 32 Woo
- 34 City district
- 35 BMW rival
- 36 Follows
- 37 Mississippi city
- 40 Venus, to Serena
- 41 Mine, in Montreal
- 42 Astaire specialty
- 47 Scepters
- 48 Valuable volume

- 49 Make a sweater
- 50 "Rah!"
- 51 Not busy
- 10 Soon, poetically
- 11 Employer
- 13 Fill fully
- 19 Fay of "King Kong"
- 20 Snake's warning
- 21 Spinning sound
- 22 Modern money
- 23 Joe of "GoodFellas"
- 25 Talking heads' opinions
- 26 Spiced tea
- 27 British noble
- 29 Ersatz
- 31 Pro Bowl stats
- 33 Zedong follower
- 34 Sushi condiment
- 36 Ocean motion
- 37 Fir coat
- 38 "— a roll!"
- 39 California city
- 40 Agile
- 43 Motorist's org.
- 44 Silent assent (Abbr.)
- 45 Army rank (Abbr.)
- 46 Scrape (out)

DOWN

- 1 Watch chain
- 2 Wall climber
- 3 Fun and games
- 4 Dr. Jekyll's alter ego
- 5 Fax
- 6 Sleuth
- 7 Sham
- 8 Grave
- 9 Genealogy chart

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 14 of 79

— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

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

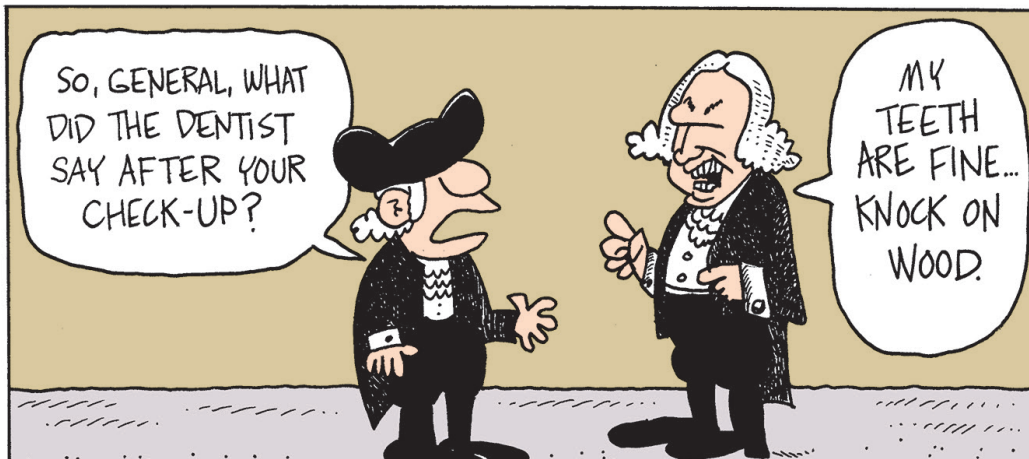
LAFF - A - DAY



"Well, what I'd like to know is, what's holding up the delivery?"

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

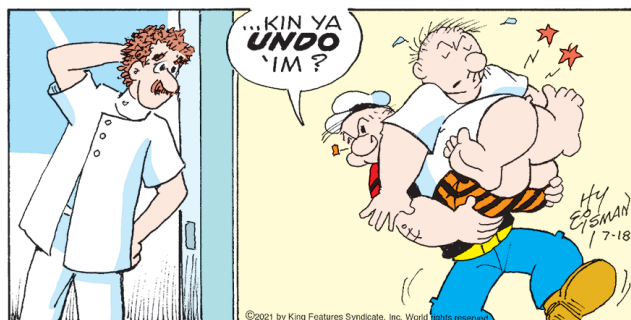
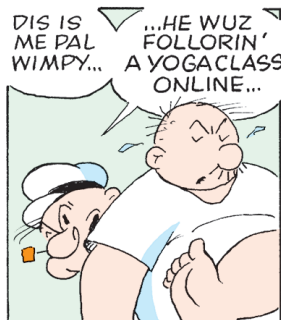
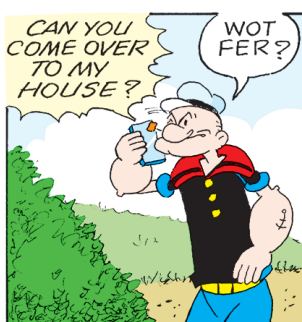
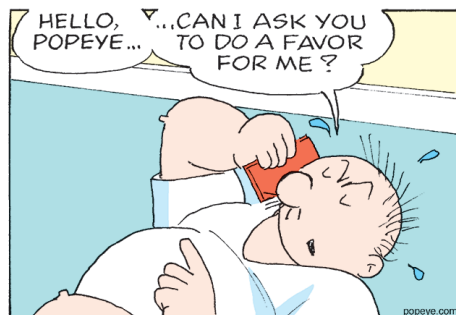
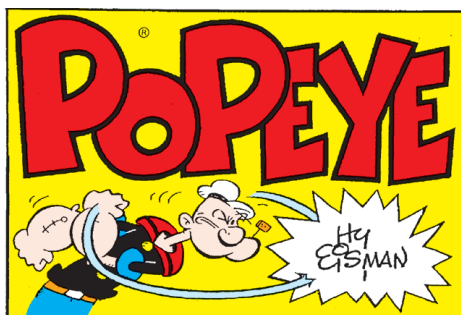


GEORGE WASHINGTON GOES TO THE DENTIST.

KOPERVAS

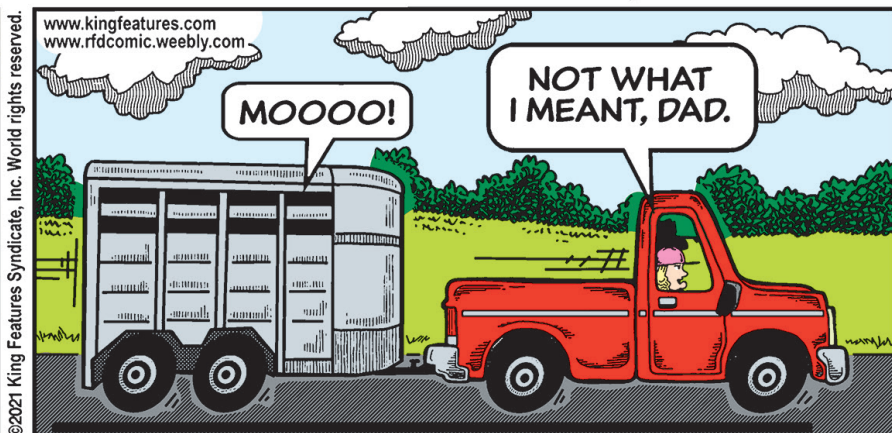
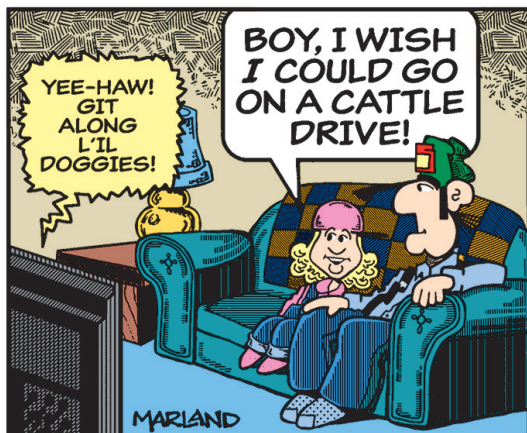
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 15 of 79



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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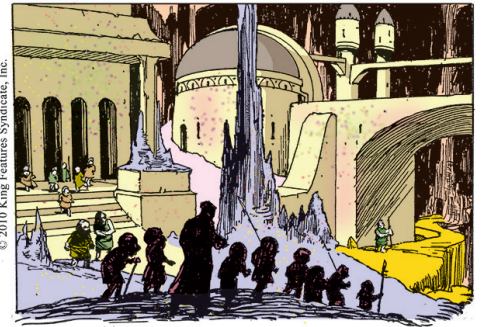
Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 16 of 79

Hal Foster's
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

SILBUG TELLS OF THE ARRIVAL OF "HE": "THE STRANGER CAME FROM THE SURFACE, FROM CAMELOT..."



"... THE WORLD ABOVE IS A WICKED PLACE!" HE CLAIMED. HE TOLD US OF BRUTAL PERSECUTIONS, AND HOW HE WAS DRIVEN INTO HIDING ...



"... WHERE HE FOUND AN ANCIENT TOME DETAILING OUR EXISTENCE. HE CAME WITH OPEN HANDS, AND WE PROVIDED HIM SANCTUARY. WOE UNTO US FOR THAT MISTAKE!"



"WITH HIS CHARISMA AND DECEIT, HE ENTHRALLED A WEAK-MINDED FACTION THAT YEARNED FOR THE PAST. HE STOKED THEIR FEARS AND GREED ...

"... CONVINCING THEM THE SURFACE COULD BE RECONQUERED! THE RAIDS HE LED HAVE CAUSED YOU GREAT SUFFERING ...



"... AND WE SUFFER AS WELL. IT CANNOT BE TOLERATED. WE HAVE MOVED AGAINST THE INSURRECTION ...



"... BUT WE LEAVE THE FOUL HUMAN-NAMED HORRIDUS - TO YOU!" HOW WELL DOES VAL REMEMBER THAT TERRIBLE NAME!



NEXT:
Alpha's peril

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

More and More Scams Aimed at Seniors

Most scams keep repeating year after year. After all, the scammers are making big money doing those Nigerian grandson/auto-warranty scams, so why would they drop them?

However, new ones keep popping up.

If you shop online, beware of accidentally typing in the wrong name. Scammers have created websites with actual information from real store websites, but with a slightly different name. If you shop at a fake store and put in your credit card, the scammers will have immediate access to it.

If you learned how to do Zoom or other online conferences to talk to your family, beware any emails or messages you get about your Zoom. Scammers have set up thousands of Zoom-related internet links for the sole purpose of getting you to click on one they send you. The instant you do, malware (malicious software) is loaded into your computer. From that point all your personal data is at risk.

Ignore those emails or messages. If there's a problem with your Zoom, go straight to the Zoom site and check it from there.

In a sign of the times, there are fake COVID contact tracers that ask for personal information and Social Security numbers. Hang up if they call you.

A big problem is that often we don't report the scams. We're embarrassed, or we're afraid the scammers will retaliate, or we just don't know where to report it. If nothing else, you can call the police. If the scam happened on the Internet, contact the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.ic3.gov). The center has logged over 6 million complaint calls — a big portion from those over age 60.

Scammers are everywhere, and it's up to us to stop them in their tracks by being wary of phone calls, emails and the internet.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 18 of 79

1. True or false: Motorboat racing was a medal sport contested at the 1908 Summer Olympics in London.

2. What country won Olympic gold medals in baseball in 1992, '96 and 2004?

3. Name the East German female swimmer who won four gold medals at the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal and was later found to have been administered steroids by team doctors.

4. Who was head coach of the U.S. Olympic men's basketball team that managed to win only a bronze medal at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens?

5. What martial-arts arena in Tokyo was built for the 1964 Summer Olympics and has hosted musical acts such as the Beatles, ABBA, Bob Dylan and Eric Clapton?

6. Name the U.S. female gymnast who suffered an ankle injury and was carried to the medal podium by coach



by Ryan A. Berenz

Bela Karolyi at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

7. What was the name of the E! reality TV show starring U.S. Olympic swimmer Ryan Lochte that aired briefly in 2013?

Answers

1. True.
2. Cuba.
3. Kornelia Ender.
4. Larry Brown.
5. The Budokan.
6. Kerri Strug.
7. "What Would Ryan Lochte Do?"

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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Grieving Cats Unite After Losing Brothers

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I wanted to share a tale of two cats. One is "Bean," a chocolate Burmese. Bean had a brother, "Coco." I purchased the two of them when they were kittens. Sadly, Coco passed away at age 3 from cancer. Bean grieved for a very long time.

A few months ago, I met someone in an online group who also had two Burmese cats, and one of them passed away. The surviving cat, "Storm," was inconsolable. Like Bean, she roamed her house day and night, meowing for her brother to reappear.

Storm's owner had health issues and was looking to place her in a new home. I had a feeling that together we could help both of these grieving cats. But cats, especially adult cats, often do not get along — especially when

one is introduced into the other's home. However, both cats were fixed, which helps reduce territorialism and aggression, among other problems. We both agreed to a two-week trial; if the cats were too stressed out or fought, then it was a no-go.

Fortunately, after a cautious sniffing-out period during their introduction, Bean and Storm snuggled right up together. They have been buddies ever since. Neither of them goes meowing around at night. Bean and Storm are a new family, and they couldn't be happier. Thought I would share! — *Dana A., via email*

DEAR DANA: Thank you for a heart-warming story! You did the right thing by setting up a trial period, because cats that don't like each other may escalate aggression with each encounter, and the trauma is bad for both. But it sounds like Bean and Storm have settled in nicely. Congratulations!

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

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Prior to becoming America's 38th president, Gerald Ford had a side gig as a model. In 1942, shortly after joining the Navy, he landed an uncredited spot on the cover of Cosmopolitan in his uniform.

* Scotland has 421 words for snow.

* Coca-Cola can remove blood stains. Pour a whole can into your wash, along with the blood-stained clothing and your usual detergent, then run a normal cycle. The laundry will come out stain-free.

* "Albert Einstein" is an anagram for "ten elite brains." Hmm, seems fitting to us.

* Sales data gathered by the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council indicates a strong link between the number of hot dogs and sausages sold at Major League Baseball stadiums and their team's ability to win games.

* Your nose is always visible to you, but your brain ignores it through a process called Unconscious Selective Attention.

* "Prison Inside Me" is a hotel of sorts in South Korea where people pay to be locked away in solitary confinement for 24 hours. "Jail mates" wear matching uniforms, sleep on the floor in 54-square-foot cells and are forbidden to speak to each other. Meals are minimal -- a steamed sweet potato and banana shake for dinner and rice porridge for breakfast. Like any good getaway, the prison stay comes with a souvenir: a certificate of parole upon completing one's stint in solitary confinement!

* Who says there's no such thing as truth in advertising? Nebraska's recent advertising campaign slogan, complete with T-shirts and coffee mugs, was "Nebraska: Honestly, it's not for everyone."

* Tickling has been divided into two types. Knismesis refers to "light featherlike" tickling, and gargalesis refers to "harder laughter-inducing" tickling.

Thought for the Day: "There's something beautiful about keeping certain aspects of your life hidden. Maybe people and clouds are beautiful because you can't see everything." -- Kamenashi Kazuya

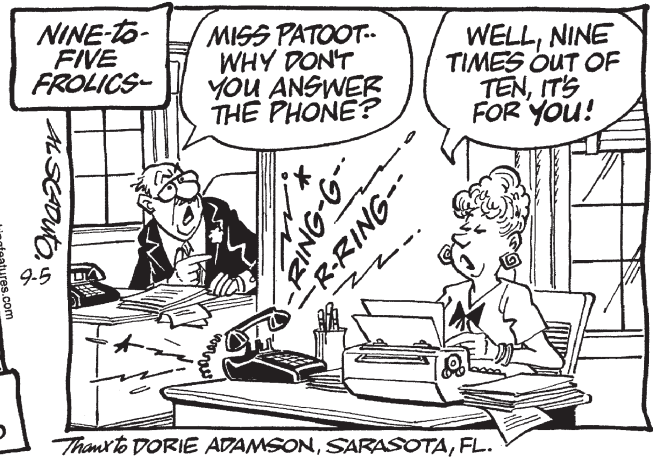
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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 21 of 79

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO



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The Garden Bug

Start in summer for fall harvest

Source:
www.reneegarden.com

- Beets
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Chard
- Fennel
- Kale
- Leeks
- Lettuce
- Pak Choi
- Peas
- Radishes
- Scallions
- Spinach

- Brenda Weaver



by Freddy Groves

OIG Holds the VA Accountable

The Office of Inspector General for the Department of Veterans Affairs has been busy. Despite COVID, the OIG managed to keep working, and it has checked in with its congressionally required six-month report. The eye automatically zips to the bottom line: The dollar impact from its efforts during the past six months amounts to \$1,923,417,054.

You don't need to count the commas; that's 1.9 billion dollars it identified in one way or another. For every dollar in the OIG budget, it got back \$21 in return.

During the six months, the OIG made 109 arrests, issued 652 administrative sanctions, put out 124 publications, talked to 14,129 hotline contacts and made 389 recommendations to the VA.

The biggest category in that \$1.9 billion is "Fines, Penalties, Forfeitures, Restitution and Civil Judgments," which brought in a cool \$755 million.

The OIG put out some excellent reports during that time as well. Here are two:

— The VBA (Veterans Benefits Admin) didn't test the skills of claims processors from 2016 to 2019, even though it's a congressionally mandated requirement. Not only did the VBA not provide additional training to many of those who failed the tests, it didn't even bother to give skills tests to 4,700 of the 10,800 people who are processing claims.

— VA health care had no way to track patients who had received various medical implants, such as cornea or dental. That means if there was a problem or a recall, there was no system in place to find those veterans. Of 10,000 purchases of implant material, 2,900 purchases were either miscategorized or not even put in the system, making them impossible to track. For 18 months, 45% weren't tracked and \$1.1 million in material (714 items) could not be located. Nearly 300 unrecorded items were found in storage.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 23 of 79

#454 in a series Covid-19 Updates: by Marie Miller

I'm back a day sooner than usual; that's because there's been a whole lot to say just lately, which is a fairly tragic thing at this point in the proceedings. I wasn't really looking to ramp up my work this summer; I was actually hoping to taper off. Oh, well.

With 34,391,317 reported cases and 610,414 reported deaths, we're up to a 14-day new-case average of 51,209, an increase by 172 percent in two weeks, which is simply shocking. A month ago, we were at 11,669, so we've more than quadrupled in that time. The most pessimistic projections have us approaching our all-time highs over 200,000 new cases per day by mid-October; I'm really hoping those are wrong. Remember, all of this is after highly effective vaccines have been available for over seven months and in sufficient quantity to vaccinate everyone eligible for weeks. Average hospitalizations are at 29,528, which is a 57 percent increase; and deaths are at 267, a 19 percent increase. These aren't just cases; they're cases with serious consequences. Eight states and territories are classified at unchecked spread with another 17 at escalating spread; that's just about half of them in real trouble.

I'm sort of knocked over at how fast this thing has blown up. Every state is showing a seven-day new-case average higher than a week ago. The problem is especially great in low-vaccination states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, where new-case rates are more than 200 percent larger over two weeks. Missouri and Arkansas ICUs are filling up. Ninety-one million Americans—over a quarter of us—live in a county classified as having a high transmission rate. We haven't added 500,000 fully-vaccinated people to our total on any day since July 5. Guess what the vaccination rates look like in the counties where those 91 million people live.

The unvaccinated place all of us at risk: Dr. Leana Wen, visiting professor of Health Policy and Management at George Washington University, explained to Anderson Cooper, "If there's all kinds of virus around you, if you're in a community with a lot of virus, then because these vaccines are not 100%, it is going to impact you." You see, vaccination cannot completely protect you from other people's choices. Dr. Celine Gounder, who was a member of the Biden administration's transition advisory board, explained to CNN that the Delta variant is dangerously transmissible: "At the beginning of the pandemic, the CDC said that a close contact was somebody that you're indoors with unmasked for 15 minutes or more. The equivalent of that with the Delta variant is not 15 minutes, it's one second." We talked about this issue a few days ago; any unprotected contact is too much contact.

On July 24, 2020, one year ago today, we were at 4,122,100 reported cases and 145,376 reported deaths in the US. We were on a run of consecutive worst days: Our 25 worst days of the pandemic to date had been the past 25 days. A map of the worst states from back then would look a whole lot like a map of the worst states today. We were trying to convince people to protect themselves and others by wearing masks in public places, much as we are now trying to persuade them to protect themselves and others by being vaccinated—not really having any luck with that either, honestly. When I look back at all the things we didn't know then that we know now, it is really disheartening to recognize that, despite the remarkable scientific progress, as a society we don't seem to have learned much at all: We're still simply unwilling to do important things to get ahead of this virus. We want the virus gone, and we want that without having to give up anything to get it. Good luck with that, folks.

Worldwide, we were up to 15,665,350 cases and 638,169 cases reported. There were a record number of daily new cases at over 284,000, and almost 10,000 deaths were reported in a day. New-case leaders were the US, Brazil, India, and South Africa. Countries reporting the most deaths were Peru, Brazil, the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 24 of 79

US, Mexico, and India. There weren't many safe places back then, much like today.

Hottest of hot spots these days: Florida. It accounts for 20 percent—that's one in five—of new cases we're seeing. That's pretty horrifying for just one state out of 50. There are hospitals in the state with higher patient loads than at any point during the pandemic thus far. The Jacksonville University of Florida hospitals' case load has increased tenfold in five weeks; this is more cases than they've seen at any time in the pandemic, including last summer's and last winter's catastrophic surges. In reporting from Baptist Medical Center in Jacksonville, CNN reported that, of their 349 Covid-19 patients, 74 were in ICU and 72 of those were on ventilators. Patients were running younger, 44 percent of them 40 or younger; and they were having longer stays. Of the 60 new admissions the day of the report, 57 were eligible for vaccination, but only one had received it. A nurse reported that patients being intubated (placed on ventilators) often asked for vaccine so they could avoid the need for ventilation. Sadly, that's not how it works. Hospitals report that staffs are stretched to the limit, especially after what they've been through in the past 18 months. Add Texas and Missouri to Florida, and you've accounted for 40 percent of new cases.

Alabama has more than doubled its caseload this month; it has 213 patients in ICUs compared with 79 on July 1. On Friday, 22 children including an infant were hospitalized in the state. Just 34 percent of Alabama residents have been vaccinated.

Missouri's in deep trouble—4th worst in the nation at the moment. We've talked about the maxed-out hospitals in Springfield, one of the hardest-hit areas of the state, running more Covid-19 units than they needed at the height of the pandemic. Health care institutions are reporting they are under "great strain" and hospitals are at maximum capacity. Hospital staff are exhausted. The city of Springfield has cancelled its annual Birthplace of Route 66 festival to prevent worsening a bad situation. Folks will still have entertainment options though: The Ozark Empire Fair is set to start on Thursday, right on schedule. In a county with a 35 percent vaccination rate, one that is under a declared state of emergency, "summer's biggest party," as they bill themselves, is ready to go; last year 70,000 tickets were sold. I presume the Darwin Award presentations are part of the closing ceremonies. This should be fun.

We have a spate of cases in children at summer camps. Thirty-one of 550 campers at a New York camp have tested positive, 125 people at a church camp in Texas are positive, Kansas has several outbreaks associated with camps, and Illinois has over 80 cases. Most of these are in young children, and there isn't much in the way of severe illness; but I am concerned about the transmission potential in these localities.

We have new modeling from the COVID-19 Scenario Modeling Hub, a consortium working with the CDC to track this virus; it projects increasing deaths throughout the summer and into the fall, peaking in October. The model which produces an ensemble projection, combining several mathematical models from different teams, shows deaths tripling by then. The range of possible outcomes, varying with vaccination rates and the actual transmissibility rate of the Delta variant, is from 60,000 new cases and 850 deaths per day to 240,000 cases and 4000 deaths per day with the virus burning through susceptibles and tapering off to maybe 300 deaths per day by January. Even the low end looks awful; the high end competes with our worst days last winter. Until now, most experts were saying things are unlikely to get as bad as last winter was; this projection says they might get close. I so did not—do not—want to see this. With schools starting and no one being careful, this very pessimistic projection is discouraging, reflecting the effects of careless behaviors combined with Delta's transmissibility and, I would add, cooling weather.

I've been reading a lot about so-called breakthrough infections, that is, infections that occur in fully vaccinated people. We knew we'd have these; the vaccines weren't—any of them—100 percent effective in preventing infection in the clinical trials. You may have noticed, however, that lately a whole lot of people are hitting the news with positive tests—Olympic athletes, Major League Baseball players, White House

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 25 of 79

aides, etc. The question arises: Should we vaccinated folks be worried? Is this a bad sign?

The short answer is no. The people who know things are not freaking out. At all. The director of the Yale Institute for Global Health, Saad Omer, told NPR, "I haven't seen any signals in the U.S. indicating that [breakthrough infections] are occurring at the levels that would give us concern that the effectiveness is going down. It is not surprising to see a substantial number of cases in the vaccinated when the vaccination rate is high." After all, if some percentage of vaccinated folks are going to get infected, then more vaccinated people is going to mean more infected vaccinated people. There are a couple of things here to consider.

Let's think about who's hitting the news. Not you or me. Why? Well, I've never even had a Covid-19 test. Not at any point in this pandemic did I have reason to suspect I was infected, and so I've never had a test. If I had an asymptomatic infection, we'd never know it. If I had a mild one, we'd probably never know that either; as a vaccinated person, I'd think I just had a summer cold—not running to the doctor for that. The folks turning up with many of these infections are people who are getting tested all the time because of safety protocols around their professional activities. For the most part, they haven't had any symptoms either, and if it weren't for the rules for regular testing of Olympians or MLB players or people in contact with the President, they'd never know they were infected either. In fact, a whole lot of experts dispute whether we should even call these asymptomatic/mild cases in vaccinated people breakthrough infections at all. Breakthroughs imply people getting sick—and most of these folks aren't sick. It appears that in vaccinated people the virus might only rarely make its way from the upper respiratory tract where it enters to the lower respiratory tract (lungs) and other organs where it can cause real trouble. We think the delivery of vaccine in the arm, which means we're going to generate immune responses in lymph nodes and organs near the chest—where the lungs hang out, places your defenses in precisely the body location where they can do the most good soonest. We've seen fewer than 5500 hospitalizations and deaths in the 162 million fully vaccinated people in the US; that's 0.003% of vaccinated people, pretty miniscule. One of the country's premier vaccine experts, Dr. Paul Offit, director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, told NPR that the important thing is "the vaccine is still doing what it is designed to do—keep people out of the hospital and out of the morgue." That is the point of the vaccines, isn't it? It is to me, a person who has zero interest in spending time in either place. The CDC doesn't even recommend routine testing of asymptomatic vaccinated people because the diagnosis of asymptomatic infections is a fairly pointless activity.

Additionally, the numbers of viruses found in fully vaccinated people who do become infected, either without symptoms or with only mild ones, have been extremely small, so small that we don't think these folks represent any significant transmission risk. Actually, the diagnostic tests can't tell when they find virus in your specimen whether that virus is active and capable of replicating or inactivated and incapable of replicating—dead, for all intents and purposes. There's a strong suspicion that much of what's being detected in these asymptomatic, fully-vaccinated people is virus that the immune system has already knocked off—virus that isn't capable of causing any trouble in the host or anyone else. No one's willing to say a fully-vaccinated person is incapable of transmitting virus, but the consensus is pretty clear that transmission is highly unlikely. For the record, there is a large transmission study underway right now aimed at nailing down just what the transmission risk is; I'll report when I see data.

Hospitals are reporting that the fully-vaccinated folks who are coming in with Covid-19 mostly fall into two categories. These are (1) immunocompromised or elderly people who likely didn't have a robust immune response to the vaccine or (2) milder cases than generally seen in unvaccinated patients. While there have been some severe disease and some deaths in the fully-vaccinated, the likelihood of those outcomes in a previously-healthy person who is not of advanced age is pretty damned small.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 26 of 79

One more thing we're seeing has to do with long Covid, that set of lingering symptoms, some of them disabling, that are turning up in people for months and months after their infection has resolved. The risk of this developing appears to be massively diminished in the vaccinated person, so even if you would become infected, it may be we can take that particular bad outcome off the table too.

Bottom line: These vaccines work. If you're fully-vaccinated, that's not a license to be reckless, but it's a good reason to relax a bit. We've talked about just what precautions a vaccinated person should take as community transmission rises around them, and I'm keeping an eye on my region's transmission rate for sure; but it's way too soon to panic. If you're vaccinated, it's difficult to overstate how much safer you are now than you were last year at this time; you are the beneficiary of a modern miracle. Take some time to appreciate that.

We talked a while back about the emergence of yet another variant, C.37 or Lambda, first identified in Peru. It's taken over in Peru and been seen in fair numbers in neighboring countries, including Argentina, Chile, and Ecuador. We don't know much about it yet, although it has mutations in common with some other worrisome variants. There are eight mutations of interest, seven of them in the spike (S) protein, which is the business end of the virus when it comes to infecting host cells. Preliminary lab tests indicate that, while vaccines are somewhat less effective against Lambda than against the D614G variant that predominated until late winter when B.1.1.1.7 or Alpha, first identified in the UK, became dominant, they are still able to neutralize the variant. That indicates the vaccines will hold against this one; we won't know how this translates to the real world until the variant becomes more common, something that is just not happening at the moment. It does appear to bind more tightly to host cells, which might increase its transmissibility, but again, we need more real-world experience to know much. There is no evidence it is going to outcompete Delta or that it's going to be a bigger problem than Delta; we're going to need more experience with it to know much more. So far, no one's getting too excited; there isn't any evidence at the moment it's going to be a bigger problem than Delta. Nonetheless, we should note that the first case associated with Lambda has been identified in Texas after a specimen from April was identified as Lambda, earlier than we'd thought. The WHO says this is a variant of interest; the CDC hasn't elevated it to that status yet and doesn't appear to be poised to do so. There have been fewer than 700 cases in the US to date; it has been spotted in some 29 countries so far.

One way to spread misinformation about vaccines is to take the data from Israel's hugely successful vaccination effort and twist it to say the opposite of what it actually says. Here's how you do that: Produce a screaming headline that says, "Almost half the cases of Covid-19 in Israel are vaccinated!!!" The nice thing about this plan is that it does not require making anything up; there actually are almost as many vaccinated people being diagnosed with Covid-19 in Israel as there are unvaccinated people being diagnosed. Which sounds bad, right?

Well, no. Not if you decide to tell the whole truth and present these facts as they actually are. Here are the data and some basic math. Israel has about nine million people, 85 percent of them vaccinated; that's 7.65 million vaccinated Israelis. That leaves 15 percent, or 1.35 million people, unvaccinated. The infection rate in vaccinated people has been two percent—153,000 people. The infection rate in unvaccinated people has been 13 percent—176,000 people. See that? Nearly half of the new infections are, indeed, vaccinated.

This is not evidence the vaccines don't work; on the contrary, it is solid evidence they do. When vaccinated people outnumber unvaccinated ones almost six to one and yet fewer than half of infections occur in this huge group, that's a sure sign your vaccines are pretty damned sparky, don't you think? Further, please note that the percentage of infected people who became critically ill was 4.06 before we had vaccines and is now 1.59 percent even with this nasty variant going around, it's hard to make the case that vaccines

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 27 of 79

don't drive down this important marker. I've been suspicious of screaming headlines for some time now; when you see one, do some digging. Screaming headlines often have something to hide; they're hoping the screaming distracts you from checking that out.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices met Thursday to discuss a number of issues. One is booster doses for immunocompromised individuals. As long as vaccines are being administered under emergency use authorization (EUA), they are only permitted for specified use; that would be two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines and a single dose of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Now we have growing evidence that an additional dose can result in a significantly improved response in those who are immunocompromised; these folks comprise about three percent of the population in the US and include organ transplant recipients, people receiving cancer therapies, and people with immunologic deficiencies. Many of them had a very weak response or none at all to the approved vaccination regimen, which left them unprotected.

One study in France using a third dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine reported organ transplant patients showing 4 percent response after dose #1, 40 percent after dose #2, and 68 percent after dose #3. Of people who showed no response after dose #2, 44 percent did show a response after dose #3. That's pretty important news. Thing is, that third dose cannot be recommended by the ACIP until the vaccine receives its biologic license (so-called "full approval") or the EUA is amended to specify a third dose for certain patients. Another option available would be for a physician to seek an investigational new drug application, an FDA program called expanded access or compassionate use. Some patients have sought additional doses themselves; but there are some concerns about unregulated self-experimentation by these patients. It would be far better to have them receiving doses under an approved use.

The panel also reviewed information about Guillain-Barre syndrome in recipients of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine. There have been about 100 such cases with one death, most of them in older men; most patients fully recover. Nothing here caused the Committee to consider amending the vaccine's EUA.

Something I think helps to put these sorts of risks into perspective is information also presented at the meeting with the following summary: For every million doses of this vaccine given to women 18 to 29 (a group more prone to the rare blood clotting disorder we've discussed), 700 hospitalizations due to Covid-19 were prevented. Against that, we have one case of Guillain-Barre and four to five cases of blood clots. In older men, more prone to Guillain-Barre, for every million doses given, 11,800 hospitalizations were prevented. This is against seven to eight cases of Guillain-Barre and zero cases of blood clots. No wonder then, is it, that the Committee concluded the benefit far outweighs the risk? Who doesn't like those odds?

I have one piece of new news on vaccination. Early on, we were recommending you separate this vaccination by at least two weeks from any other vaccinations you might be receiving. That guidance is no longer current; time and experience have resolved any minor concerns (and they were very minor) about this issue. It is now considered safe to receive another vaccine at the same doctor's visit with the Covid-19 vaccines.

This last is just too much: An Alabama doctor, Brytney Cobia, posted this on Facebook: "I've made a LOT of progress encouraging people to get vaccinated lately!!! Do you want to know how? I'm admitting young healthy people to the hospital with very serious COVID infections. One of the last things they do before they're intubated [placed on a mechanical ventilator] is beg me for the vaccine. I hold their hand and tell them that I'm sorry, but it's too late. A few days later when I call time of death I hug their family members and I tell them the best way to honor their loved one is to go get vaccinated . . . They cry. And they tell me they didn't know. They thought it was a hoax. They thought it was political . . . they thought it was 'just the flu.' But they were wrong. And they wish they could go back. But they can't." I've said for

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 28 of 79

a long while now that the only way I see this getting better is for every one of the deniers to lose someone close to them. I wish I'd been wrong. But I can't go back either. I'm sort of surprised I haven't been punching holes into any walls around here.

That's it for the night. I hope it will be several days until we talk again, but I am not hopeful. Take care. I'll be back.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 29 of 79



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



Ready, Set, Code!

Some of my favorite memories growing up was when school closed for a snow day. But watching the snow pile up outside while waiting for news from the Pierre school district was agonizing as a young kid.

Thanks to Samyok Nepal, a student from Brookings High School, he and his fellow classmates do not have to wait with the same anticipation.

That's because Samyok designed Bobcat Notify, an app to alert students of snow days.

Samyok won last year's Congressional App Challenge for South Dakota. I was truly impressed by the innovative ideas and caliber of app designs we received from students like Samyok during our first annual competition.

This week, my office launched our second annual App Challenge, which is open to all middle and high school students. You don't have to be an expert coder to join the competition – we are looking for students of all skill levels, regardless of coding experience.

The App Challenge is a fun opportunity for young people to learn coding and pique their interest in pursuing a STEM-related career.

STEM is a rapidly growing field that pays well. But more importantly, our collective success in STEM is imperative to our prosperity as a nation in the future. For the United States to keep its competitive edge over China, we must focus on bridging the skills gap and encouraging more young people to get involved in STEM.

As someone who comes from a background in telecommunications, I am passionate about inspiring the next generation of innovators and I look forward to seeing the array of talent and creativity from students across South Dakota.

Students interested in participating must submit their app through the Congressional App Challenge website by November 1st.

Ready, set, code!

Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 30 of 79

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Great Places

In the past when Americans were planning their vacations, their top destinations were always beaches and big cities. For the first time in decades, that's changing. Now, the American people want to visit the great outdoors. They want to see beautiful parks and small towns that remind them how life used to be. Well, South Dakota has that in spades.

It's no wonder that South Dakota is No. 1 in America in year-over-year tourism. Our state record for visitations was set in 2019, and we're on pace to blow that number out of the water. People are looking for freedom and fresh air. And word has gotten around that South Dakota is the place to get it.

Given that tourism is our state's 2nd largest industry, this is tremendous news for our economy. Visitor spending so far this year is 9% higher than 2019, our record-setting year. And that visitor spending leads to higher tax revenues for our state, helping drive our record surplus announced earlier this month.

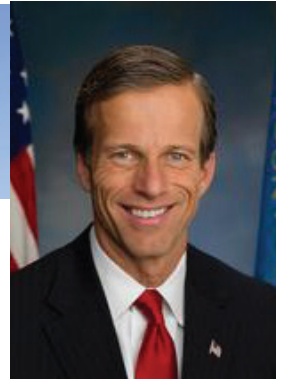
What's really remarkable is how many folks are taking road trips to South Dakota. In fact, even though airport arrivals are down 24% compared to 2019, we're still on pace to shatter visitation records, meaning that more folks are driving here than ever before. We love to see license plates from all across the country decorating our roads!

As South Dakotans, it can be easy to forget that these beautiful national treasures are right in our own backyard. Don't forget to take some time and enjoy them with your family. We have beautiful summers here, but the summer is already halfway gone. So take in the fresh air. Catch a baseball game. Visit a state park. Celebrate the great places that make South Dakota special. If you can't go on a full family vacation, visit some of the natural beauty that's not too far from home – we have it in every corner of our state. Summer is a fantastic time to make memories together.

I'm sure that many of you have friends and family visiting our state, maybe for the first time. Show them around. Share our state's breathtaking landscapes with them. Make a day trip to Mount Rushmore. These folks are coming to South Dakota to make memories. I'm glad that they have such wonderful South Dakotans to share those memories with.

Above all, remember to be happy. We woke up this morning in the United States of America. Better yet, we woke up in South Dakota, the freest state in the Land of the Free. As record-breaking visitors continue to roll into our state, remember to greet them with smiling faces. After all, "great faces" isn't just about Mount Rushmore; it's about the fantastic people that make our state so special.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Spending Spree at South Dakotans' Expense

If you've noticed the cost of everyday items going up lately, you aren't imagining it. Inflation, which describes consumers' purchasing power and the price of goods, grew in June to its highest level in 13 years. As a result, American families are – literally – paying the price. In South Dakota and across the country, families are seeing increases in rent, grocery bills, and gas prices – the list goes on. Unfortunately, this is a direct result of many of the policies coming out of Washington, D.C.

Most students learn the concept of supply and demand early in their education. Perhaps even on the kindergarten playground if the number of kids ever exceeded the number of toys. When demand is high and supply can't keep up, it causes tension. This is a natural occurrence on any playground, or in any economy. However, the inflation we're seeing today isn't a reaction to the natural pendulum of supply and demand.

In the last six months, the economy has been flooded with trillions of federal government dollars. This money is driving demand to a significantly high level – throwing off the balance of our economy and driving prices up for Americans.

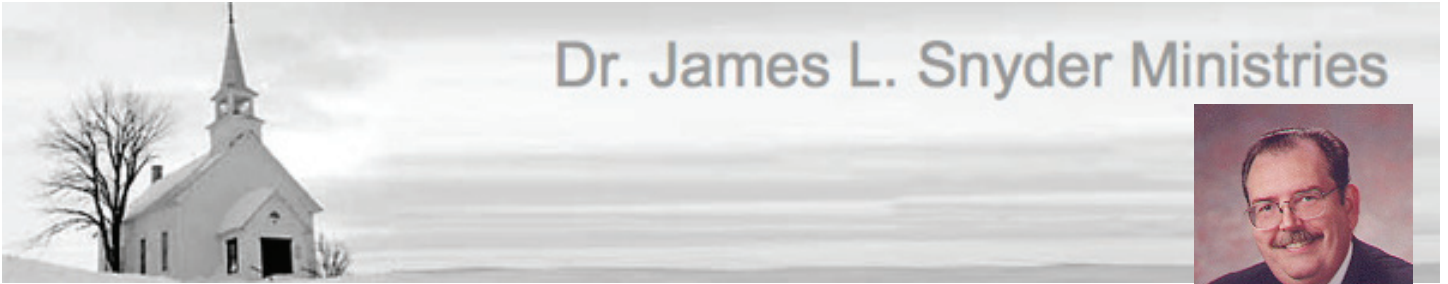
So, how did we get here? Senate Democrats' first order of business after gaining the majority was using the coronavirus pandemic as an excuse to pass a massive "relief" bill that was filled with unnecessary government handouts. Republicans, and many respected economists, warned that this massive spending plan could overstimulate the economy, but Democrats plowed ahead anyway. Flash forward to today, and it's no surprise that their flood of unnecessary federal spending is causing problems in the economy.

With inflation on the rise, Democrats are now preparing to double down on that strategy. Despite passing a largely unnecessary nearly \$2 trillion bill just four months ago, Democrats now want to spend another \$3.5 trillion in reckless spending. One estimate suggests that the Democrats' new proposal is likely to be closer to \$5 trillion or \$5.5 trillion. That's an inconceivably large amount of money. To put that number in perspective, the entire federal budget for 2019 was less than \$4.5 trillion. Consider that for a moment. Some members of Congress are just casually tossing out a new spending bill that might very well exceed the ENTIRE federal budget for all of 2019.

South Dakotans are smart, commonsense people. They know that dollars and cents don't grow on trees and that the grocery store clerk won't take monopoly money to pay for this week's food. They know what it means to live within a budget and the consequences of living irresponsibly outside of one. Unfortunately, it seems that many of my colleagues in Washington either don't know these fundamental truths or they're simply unwilling to accept them. I'm open to working with Republicans and Democrats to find solutions to today's problems, but by unnecessarily adding trillions of dollars to our national debt, we're only creating new challenges for future generations.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 32 of 79



I Ain't 16 Anymore

I've had so many birthdays in my life that I really don't know how old I am. All I know is that I'm one year older than I was last year. I would not be able to remember when my life began if it wasn't for paperwork..

To many people, numbers are very important, but in my opinion, a number is just a number.

As I look forward to another birthday, I would like to go back to being 16 again. Those were the good old days, as they say.

When I was 16, I was rather oblivious of things that were happening in the world. We didn't have TV back then and only got a TV when President J. F. Kennedy was assassinated. Dad had to get a TV to keep up with what was going on.

I had no internet, computer, cell phone, video games or anything of the like. So in all actuality, I was on my own.

One thing that really impressed me about being 16 was that I could get a driver's license and drive a car. The disappointing aspect about this was, I didn't have enough money to buy a car and so had to borrow my father's car when it was convenient for him. Oh boy, those were the days.

At 16, I believed I had become a certified adult. I was at the stage now where nobody could tell me what to do. I was my own boss.

At least I thought I was my own boss. However, I still was in high school, and for some reason, my teachers thought they were in charge of the class. How little did they know?

It took being sent to the principal's office five times before realizing I was not really in charge of my class.

I also began to realize that being in charge of your life is very expensive. Before I was 16, my parents paid for everything for me. But now that I'm 16, that income stream dried up.

I remember my father saying to me, "Son, you're 16 now, and you are in charge of your life."

My smile flashed all over my face, I was now set free, and I can do whatever I wanted to do.

My father wasn't quite done with me yet, "Now that you are 16, you're going to have to pay for your things."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 33 of 79

At the time, I didn't know what he meant, but I shook my head energetically and smiled, and was now ready to go out into the world and be my own boss. I was so anxious to get started in this lifestyle of being in control.

The next day as I was ready to go to school, I stopped and asked my father, "Dad, I need some money for lunch today."

My father looked at me and said, "I thought you were in control of your life?"

"Yes, dad, I'm in control of my life; I'm my own boss."

"Then," my father said, "that means you have to pay for your own lunch. If you're in charge, that means you have to pay for what you have."

He turned around and walked away, and I stood there glaring at him. I did not know that being in charge meant I had to pay for everything. He should've explained that to me a little more clearly.

One Saturday, I needed to borrow my father's car to go to a baseball game. "Dad, can I borrow your car so I can go to my baseball game this afternoon?"

"You sure can," my father said, "and by the way, the car is low on gas, so you'll have to put gas in the car."

I began to have different feelings about being in charge of my life. I had no idea that my life was so expensive. Now, I had to get a job so that I could pay for everything and be my own boss.

It took me a long time to realize how great my life was before I turned 16. If I would have known that, I think I would've lived more extravagantly on my dad's credit card.

After celebrating my 16th birthday, I cooled down a little bit to realize that life really is hard, and getting old is not for sissies. Plus, it's very costly.

Before I was 16, I thought everything was free, I could do whatever I please, and there would be no accountability.

Turning 16 turned my life completely around.

Another thing I experienced when I turned 16 is that I did not know all that I thought I knew. When a person thinks they know everything, they don't know exactly what they don't know.

One of the most important lessons I have learned since I turned 16 was that it is essential to know what you don't know. If you think you know everything, you're missing out on a lot of life.

Right after turning 16, I ran across what has become my life verse from the Bible. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Looking back, I can see that it serves no purpose not to trust in the Lord. However, I experience things that are beyond my experience and understanding, and that's when God steps in.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 34 of 79

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Are the new SST jets friendlier to the environment than the SSTs of the 1970s?

—P. Barnes, Midlothian, TX



Nearly 20 years have passed since the last flight of the Concorde, the first supersonic passenger-carrying commercial airplane (or supersonic transport, SST). The aircraft cruised the Queen of England and the ultra-wealthy across the seas at Mach 2 speed, or 1,350 mph, while soaring at an altitude of 60,000 feet. In 1996, the Concorde achieved its fastest flight from New York to London in under three hours.

Now a new wave of supersonic flight may be on the horizon with the recent partnership between United Airlines and Denver-based Boom Supersonic. In June 2021, United Airlines announced plans to purchase 15 of Boom Supersonic's first commercial supersonic jet, the Overture. Boom plans to engineer the Overture to fly up to 88 passengers at a speed of Mach 1.7, or 1,300 mph, at 60,000 feet. Most flight times will be cut nearly in half: Traveling from Paris to Montreal will only take three hours and 45 minutes instead of the usual eight and a half hours; a trip from San Francisco to Tokyo take just six hours rather than the usual 10 hours and 15 minutes.

Boom and United plan a modern, economically-viable, ecologically-sustainable version of the old Concorde, which was "a ludicrously expensive environmental disaster," according to the International Council on Clean Transportation. "It helps to remember that we're talking literally about 1960s technology," Boom Supersonic's Founder Blake Scholl told CNN Travel. "So much has changed."

In collaboration with Prometheus Fuels, a California-based company, Boom plans to design a 100 percent carbon-neutral plane powered by sustainable alternative fuels. The company claims that Prometheus' technology is able to economically remove CO2 from the air and use renewable, clean electricity from solar and wind to turn it into jet fuel. After successfully running their XB-1 test engines with a blend of more than 80 percent sustainable aviation fuel, Boom has confidence that sustainable fuels can safely be used in flight. If all goes as planned, the Overture may be flying passengers as soon as 2029.

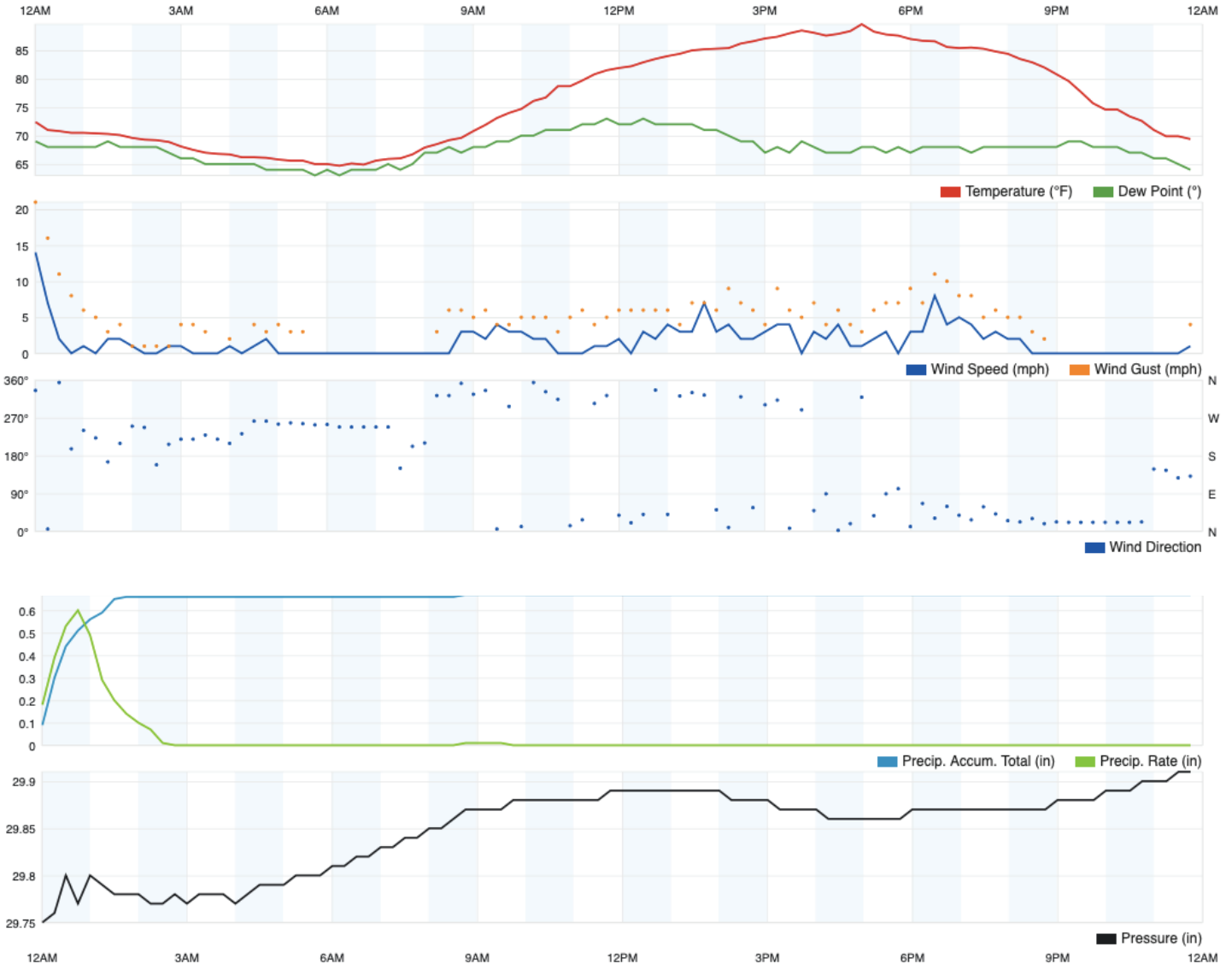
Virgin Galactic is also throwing its hat into the ring of supersonic commercial air travel. In August of 2020, the company unveiled plans to collaborate with Rolls Royce in developing sustainable commercial high-speed aircraft capable of an astonishing Mach 3, or approximately 2,300 mph. The smaller-scale aircraft will hold 9-19 passengers and utilize state-of-the-art sustainable aviation fuel and "other sustainable technologies and techniques."

Aerion Supersonic, which publicized plans last year to build a \$375 million manufacturing facility at Florida's Orlando Melbourne International Airport, also expressed its commitment to having carbon neutral emissions and designing their aircraft to run on 100 percent sustainable aviation fuels. However, due to financial challenges, the company announced in May 2021 that it will not be able to move forward with the facility at this time.

Groton Daily Independent






Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 35 of 79

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 36 of 79

Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Hot	Chance T-storms	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 93 °F	Low: 66 °F	High: 98 °F	Low: 66 °F	High: 100 °F



Tonight:
*Areas Smoke, Mostly Clear
Pleasant With Lows 50s to 60s*

Early Week Outlook:
Hot And Mainly Dry

Sunday:
*Isolated Afternoon/Evening
Thunderstorms, Hot
Highs 86-102°*

Monday:
*Mostly Sunny, Hot With
Isolated Storms East
Highs 89-105°*



Other than smoke it should be mostly clear overnight, and mild. Hot temperatures should return for Sunday, and those hot temperatures will last through most of next week. There will be occasional thunderstorm chances through Monday. #sdwx #mnwx

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 37 of 79

Today in Weather History

July 25, 1961: A thunderstorm started late in the evening on the 25th and went into the early morning hours of the 26th. A sizeable area suffered 50 to 100 percent loss of crops resulting from hail over the following counties, Bison, Perkins, Faulk, Sully, and western Hand. Corn was stripped of leaves and broken off. Oats and wheat were flattened. High winds with recorded gusts of 75 to 80 miles per hour cause numerous power failures and damaged trees in Pierre.

July 25, 1972: Unofficial rainfall amounts of 8 inches caused flash flooding in Ferney and surrounding area in Brown County. Water, over two feet depth was reported in a parking area. Basements were flooded, and foundations were damaged. The torrential rains caused extensive damage to crops in the area.

July 25, 1984: Severe thunderstorms caused considerable damage to the Pierre area. Winds were gusting to 83 mph at the Pierre airport, where thirteen planes, as well as several hangars, were destroyed. In town, a home and three businesses lost their roofs, and a trailer home was destroyed. Rains of four inches in thirty minutes produced flash flooding with some streets closed for some time. Some basements were reported to have 6 to 8 inches of water in them. At Dupree, high winds caused extensive damage to the grandstand roof at the fairgrounds. Along the entire path of the thunderstorms, hail and high winds broke windows, damaged cars, downed trees, damaged crops, and caused power outages.

July 25, 1993: Lake Kampeska, near Watertown, reached near record level at 37 inches over full mark due to runoff from heavy rains in previous days. Dozens of homes and two businesses were flooded out. About 100,000 sandbags were distributed to help prevent more flood damage to lakeside property owners.

July 25, 2000: A powerful F4 tornado hit the city of Granite Falls in Minnesota. The tornado first touched down in rural parts of the county west-northwest of Granite Falls. The tornado struck the city at 6:10 pm. After tearing through the residential sections of town, the tornado lifted at approximately 6:25 PM after being on the ground for over nine miles. The tornado caused one fatality and injured more than a dozen.

1891 - The mercury hit 109 degrees at Los Angeles, CA, marking the peak of a torrid heat wave. (David Ludlum)

1936: Lincoln, Nebraska saw an all-time high temperature of 115 degrees. The low only dropped to 91 degrees and the average temperature was 103. Many people spent the night sleeping outside to escape the heat.

1956: The Andrea Doria sank in dense fog near Nantucket Lightship, Massachusetts. The Swedish-American liner, Stockholm, hit the ship forty-five miles off the coast of Massachusetts. Fifty-two persons drowned or were killed by the impact.

1986 - Tremendous hailstones pounded parts of South Dakota damaging crops, buildings and vehicles. Hail piled two feet deep at Black Hawk and northern Rapid City. Hail an inch and a quarter in diameter fell for 85 minutes near Miller and Huron, piling up to depths of two feet. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Sixteen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Beckley, WV, equalled their all-time record high of 91 degrees, established just the previous day. It marked their fourth day in a row of 90 degree heat, after hitting 90 degrees just twice in the previous 25 years of records. The water temperature of Lake Erie at Buffalo, NY, reached 79 degrees, the warmest reading in 52 years of records. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from central Kansas to western Kentucky and southern Illinois during the day. Thunderstorms produced tennis ball size hail at Union, MO, and winds gusts to 65 mph at Sedalia, MO. Five cities in Washington and Oregon reported record high temperatures for the date. Medford, OR, hit 107 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Early afternoon thunderstorms over west central Missouri drenched the town of Ferguson with four inches of rain. Early evening thunderstorms in Pennsylvania produced more than two inches of rain north of Avella in one hour. (The National Weather Summary)

2005: The citizens of Sand Point, Alaska saw a rare tornado touchdown on two uninhabited islands. Sand Point is part of the Aleutian Chain and is located about 570 miles southwest of Anchorage.

Groton Daily Independent

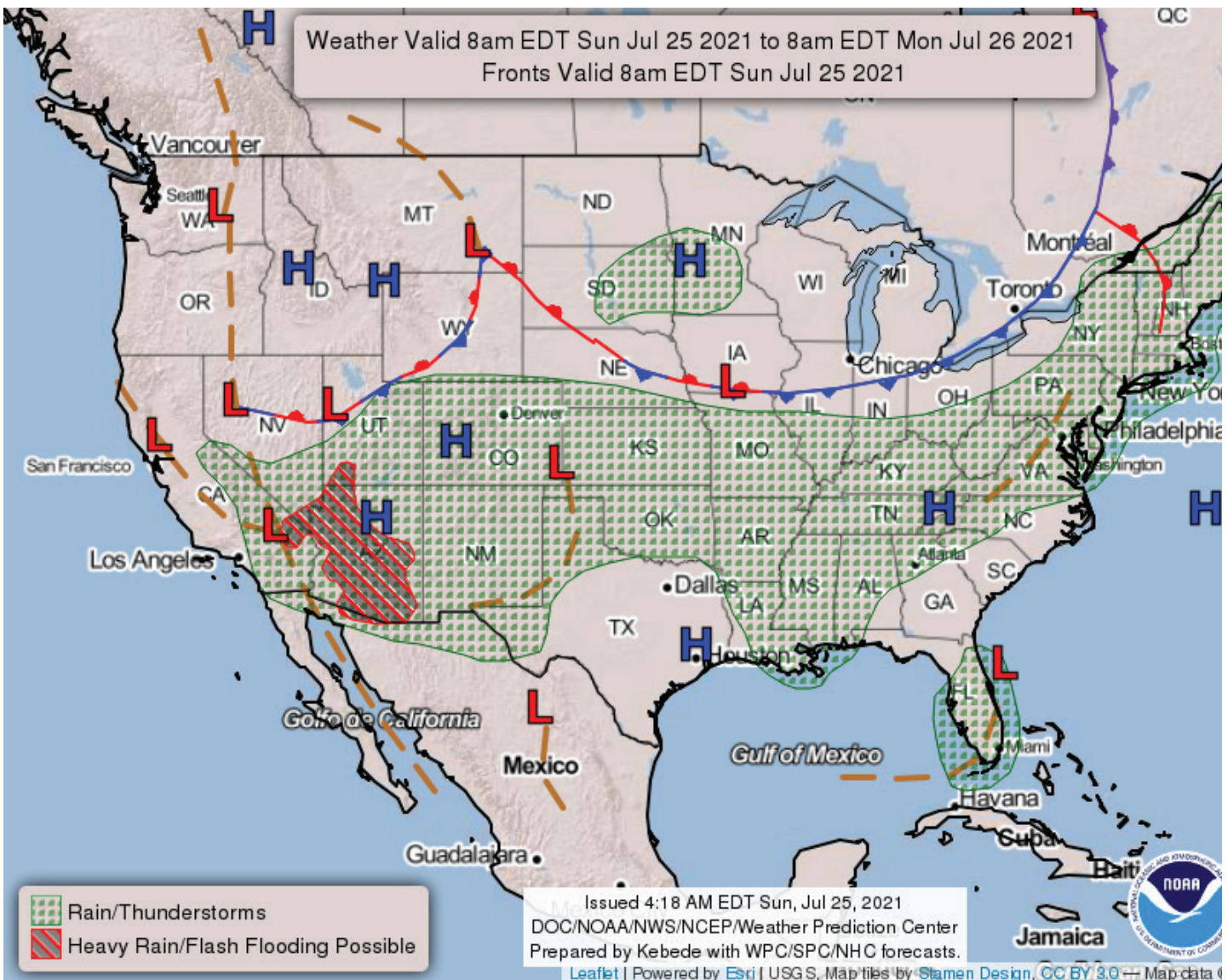
Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 38 of 79

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 90 °F at 5:00 PM
Low Temp: 65 °F at 6:16 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 12:00 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 111° in 1931
Record Low: 44° in 1911
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July.: 2.52
Precip to date in July.: 2.42
Average Precip to date: 13.53
Precip Year to Date: 7.17
Sunset Tonight: 9:10 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:11 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 39 of 79



FAITHFUL HEARTS AND RIGHT LIVING

Throughout Scripture the "heart" is used as the center of a person's being. It describes the heart as the personality or inner life or character of a person 257 times. It states that the heart is the center of a person's emotional state or consciousness 166 times. It presents the heart as the source of intellectual activities 204 times and this includes what we pay attention to, reflect on, or think about during our quiet moments. It's what makes sense to us as we consider the things that cross our paths or what enters our minds. It also speaks of the heart as the source that gives us purpose or direction in life 195 times.

We must never overlook the importance of "the heart."

Certainly the author of Psalm 78 had this in mind. As he reflected on the trials and tragedies of the Israelites, he called attention to the fact that the preceding generations did not put their trust in God and forgot the gracious gifts He gave them. He encouraged them to obey God's laws and not be like their forefathers.

And how were they to do this? What was his "prescription" for them? They were to have "hearts that were loyal to God and spirits that were faithful to Him."

Wisely, this psalmist gave a warning to his listeners. And, thankfully, God passed it on to us in His Word.

Someone once said to me, "Larry, learn from what sin has done in the lives of others. If you do, you will be blessed of God and able to enjoy the best He has to offer."

Surely this is the right moment for each of us to look deep within our "hearts" and be certain that God is in the very center and that we are loyal to Him!

Prayer: We are grateful, Father, for the warnings Your Word gives us. May You be at the center of our hearts as we seek to follow Your guidance each day. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: They would not be like their ancestors - a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him. Psalm 78:8

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 40 of 79

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

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

17-18-22-25-32

(seventeen, eighteen, twenty-two, twenty-five, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$21,000

Lotto America

07-08-12-25-31, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 2

(seven, eight, twelve, twenty-five, thirty-one; Star Ball: five; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.1 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$153 million

Powerball

01-04-11-59-67, Powerball: 10, Power Play: 2

(one, four, eleven, fifty-nine, sixty-seven; Powerball: ten; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$174 million

Longtime South Dakota GOP lawmaker David Lust dies at 53

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — David Lust, a longtime South Dakota lawmaker and former Republican House majority leader, has died. He was 53.

Lust died Friday morning of an apparent heart attack, his law office confirmed to the Argus Leader. Lust was a partner at the Rapid City firm Gunderson, Palmer, Nelson & Ashmore. The law firm did not immediately return a message Saturday from The Associated Press.

Lust served 11 years in the House, including four as the majority leader. He was first elected in 2006.

In 2011, he served his first of two terms as majority leader, helping newly elected Gov. Dennis Daugaard usher in a series of budget cuts following a sharp downturn in revenues.

“I’m very sorry and saddened to hear about his death because he was a very good man,” Daugaard said Friday.

Daugaard appointed Lust to fill a vacancy in the same district in 2016 after Rep. Dan Dryden died. Lust served three more years.

Lust grew up in Aberdeen. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Dartmouth College and his law degree from the University of South Dakota School of Law.

Lust is survived by his wife and four children.

Carbon-capture pipelines offer climate aid; activists wary

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two companies seeking to build thousands of miles of pipeline across the Midwest are promising the effort will aid rather than hinder the fight against climate change, though some environmental groups remain skeptical.

The pipelines would stretch from North Dakota to Illinois, potentially transforming the Corn Belt into one of the world’s largest corridors for a technology called carbon capture and storage.

Environmental activists and landowners have hindered other proposed pipelines in the region that pump oil, carrying carbon that was buried in the earth to engines or plants where it is burned and emitted. The new projects would essentially do the opposite by capturing carbon dioxide at ethanol refineries and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 42 of 79

transporting it to sites where it could be buried thousands of feet underground.

Both companies planning the pipelines appear eager to tout their environmental benefits. Their websites feature clear blue skies and images of green fields and describe how the projects could have the same climatic impact as removing millions of cars from the road every year.

However, some conservationists and landowners are already wary of the pipelines' environmental benefits and safety, raising the chances of another pitched battle as the projects seek construction permits.

"It seems like they are running a casino of risk and we are going to pay for it," said Carolyn Raffensperger, the director of the Science and Environmental Health Network, expressing fears about a leak that could put North Dakota landowners like herself at risk. "We need to think this through very carefully, and I do not see the players in place to do that."

The pipelines could fall into a longstanding divide among environmentalists. President Joe Biden and many Republicans are pushing a strategy for tackling climate change that offers a financial boon to industries that use carbon capture and storage to reduce their emissions. But others, such as Greenpeace and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, argue the focus should be completely on developing renewable energy sources and that carbon capture just prolongs dependence on fossil fuels.

Navigator CO2 Ventures, which is planning a pipeline that will stretch over 1,200 miles (1,931 kilometers) through Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota and Illinois, says it is offering "carbon capture solutions for a greener planet." While Summit Carbon Solutions, whose pipeline will connect refineries in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota to a sequestration site in North Dakota, says it plans to build the world's largest carbon capture and storage project. Both hope to start some operations by 2024.

"There's so much societal momentum that says this is something we want to do — should do, need to do — for the public's benefit," said Matt Vining, the CEO of Navigator CO2 Ventures. "My project and many others will get done and should get done."

Supporters say the pipelines are a much-needed win for both agricultural businesses and the environment. The two projects are expected to run into the billions of dollars, spurring construction jobs. And they advance a technology crucial to achieving a 2050 goal of net-zero carbon dioxide emissions — in which every gram of emissions is accounted for by providing a way to eventually suck it back out of the atmosphere.

"All sides win. You significantly reduce carbon emissions, but you can also maintain those industries that are the lifeblood of different regions of the country," said Brad Crabtree, who oversees carbon management policy at the Great Plains Institute, a Minnesota-based organization that works with energy companies to develop environmental sustainability.

Crabtree, who also directs a group called Carbon Capture Coalition, sees it as a way to bridge partisan divides as the country addresses climate change. As evidence, he points to one high-profile Republican backer — North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum — who is pushing a plan to make the state carbon-neutral by 2030, "through innovation not regulation."

The federal government set off the scurry of pipeline plans by increasing, by 2026, tax credits to \$50 for every metric ton of carbon dioxide a company sequesters. California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard has sweetened the deal by requiring that distributors in that state buy only ethanol with a low carbon emissions impact; companies that produce such ethanol can get a higher price.

While the practice of storing carbon dioxide in rock formations has been around for almost 50 years, developing technology that captures carbon emissions has proven to be expensive and struggled to gain widespread use.

Ethanol refineries could represent the low-hanging fruit that helps push the technology forward into widespread use. Plants such as corn are natural sponges of carbon dioxide, absorbing the gas and storing carbon as they grow through the spring and summer. When those crops ferment into ethanol, which is eventually mixed with gasoline, it produces a steady, easily-captured stream of carbon dioxide.

"These early plants are relatively easy and that's a good place to start," said Greg Nemet, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who specializes in the development of climate-friendly energy technology. "As that gets shown and proven, you get some transportation networks, then it gets easier

to do the harder stuff later.”

Achieving that harder stuff — sucking carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere or catching emissions at power plants — will almost certainly be crucial to beating back global temperature increases. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reached that conclusion in 2018 as it laid out a path to halting temperature increases to 1.5 C (2.7 F).

Despite concerns from Raffensperger and others about potential leaks from the pipelines or storage sites, the Environmental Protection Agency has concluded that storing carbon dioxide is safe as long as companies do it carefully. It is injected in a liquefied state into porous rock formations, where it eventually dissolves or hardens into minerals.

Crabtree said there has not been a single human fatality or serious injury in the United States from transporting or storing captured carbon dioxide. He thinks that as long as companies act responsibly, landowners will be convinced the pipelines are safe and can benefit from them.

But Raffensperger still has a range of concerns, including whether a technology that was developed by oil and coal companies can be trusted to make a transformative difference in curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Raffensperger’s organization joined over 500 other environmental organizations in an open letter to Biden denouncing carbon capture and storage as a climate solution.

“We don’t need to fix fossil fuels; we need to ditch them,” the group wrote in a Washington Post ad. “Instead of capturing carbon to pump it back underground, we should keep fossil fuels in the ground in the first place.”

Olympics Latest: Gymnast pays homage to Black Lives Matter

The Latest on the Tokyo Olympics, which are taking place under heavy restrictions after a year’s delay because of the coronavirus pandemic:

Costa Rican gymnast Luciana Alvarado ended her floor routine in Olympic qualifying on one knee, her head back and her right fist thrust straight into the air.

The 18-year-old said the closing of her routine was choreographed in homage to the Black Lives Matter movement that spread around the world after George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis last summer. Alvarado said Friday after she performed the same move at training that she hoped to highlight the importance of equal rights on a global stage, and champion treating all with respect and dignity.

“Because we’re all the same,” she said, “and we’re all beautiful and amazing.”

The International Olympic Committee has implemented rules to try to limit protest actions by athletes. But Alvarado’s gesture, incorporated into her artistic routine, is unlikely to trigger repercussions.

Sunday’s routine will be her only turn on the Olympic stage: Alvarado scored a 12.166 on the floor and will not qualify to move forward to finals.

MORE ON THE TOKYO GAMES:

- Powerhouse U.S. swim team shines with 6 medals
- U.S. women’s gymnastics team off to a rocky start
- Japanese skateboarder wins gold and surfers ride modest waves as new sports debut
- Iranian refugee fails in gold medal taekwondo bid, could still win bronze

Johnny Hooper has returned to his mother’s homeland for his Olympic debut and had one of the biggest U.S. goals in a 15-13 victory over Japan.

The win came on the first day of the men’s water polo tournament at the Tokyo Games.

Hooper scored from deep with the U.S. clinging to a one-goal lead in the final minute to help close out the win.

Hooper’s mother was born in Kumakura and his grandmother lives in Japan. But they weren’t able to watch the game in person because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 44 of 79

Defending gold medalist China has lost its opening match of the women's volleyball tournament for the second straight Olympics.

Turkey jumped out quickly and won the match in Pool B 25-21, 25-14, 25-14.

The Turkish women are appearing in the Olympics for the second time ever, having failed to make it out of pool play in their other appearance in London in 2012. They sprinted out to celebrate as a team after completing the upset.

The Chinese are once again led by 2016 MVP Zhu Ting and coach Lang Ping. They are following a similar pattern to five years ago when they lost their opening match to the Netherlands and two others in pool play before finding a groove in the knockout round.

MEDAL ALERT

Li Fabin of China has added Olympic gold to his world title in the men's 61-kilogram weightlifting category.

Li lifted a total 313 kilograms and was assured of victory when Eko Yuli Irawan of Indonesia failed twice on what would have been a world record 177kg clean and jerk. Li missed his own record shot at 178kg.

He earlier added a quirky touch by standing on one leg during his 166kg clean and jerk in a rarely-seen style known as the flamingo stance.

Irawan won the silver with a total 302kg. Igor Son of Kazakhstan lifted a total 294kg for bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Cyclist Anna Kiesenhofer of Austria pulled off one of the biggest upsets in the history of the Olympic road race, making an early breakaway stick as the powerhouse Dutch team gave chase to win the gold at the Tokyo Games on Sunday.

The heavily favored Dutch team, featuring the past two Olympic champions, nearly brought back Kiesenhofer on the final circuits at Fuji International Speedway. But the time difference proved too much and they were left racing for silver and bronze.

Annemiek van Vleuten bounced back from an early crash to escape a reduced pack in the closing kilometers to salvage a silver for the Netherlands. Elisa Longo Borghini of Italy won a sprint for the bronze medal.

The U.S. women's gymnastics team's bid for a third straight Olympic title is off to a rocky start.

The four-woman group led by Olympic champion Simone Biles finished second to Russia during qualifying.

That's the first time the Americans have failed to lead at the end of any major event in more than a decade.

Biles topped the all-round with a total of 57.731 points but lacked her usual precision. The 24-year-old made significant mistakes on three events. Russia's team score of 171.629 was more than a full point ahead of the U.S., though both teams will start from scratch in the finals.

MEDAL ALERT

A contingent led by An San has captured South Korea's ninth straight women's archery team gold medal at the Tokyo Games.

The country hasn't lost since the women's team event was added to the Olympic program at the 1988 Seoul Games.

An is fresh off a win in the Olympic debut of the mixed team competition. She combined with Kang Chae Young and Jang Minhee to beat the Russian Olympic Committee by a final score of 6-0 in tricky wind conditions at Yumenoshima Park Archery Field.

Jang secured the win with a "9" on her final arrow. The Russian Olympic Committee was represented by Svetlana Gomboeva, Elena Osipova and Ksenia Perova. Gomboeva suffered a scare in the ranking round Friday, when she collapsed due to the extreme heat.

The bronze medal went to Germany after a 5-1 win over Belarus.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 45 of 79

Iranian refugee Kimia Alizadeh has fallen short in her bid for a historic taekwondo gold medal, losing in the semifinals after three consecutive stirring victories in the women's 57-kilogram division.

Alizadeh lost 10-3 to Russian Tatiana Minina, endangering Alizadeh's bid to win the Refugee Olympic Team's first-ever medal. Alizadeh still could win bronze in the evening session at the Makuhari Messe convention center.

Alizadeh also won bronze as a teenager in Rio de Janeiro, claiming the first Olympic medal for an Iranian woman. She defected from Iran to Germany early last year, citing institutional sexism and disappointment at being used as a propaganda tool.

Alizadeh seemed to be on a charmed run in Tokyo: She beat fellow Iranian Nahid Kiyani Chandeh in her opening bout before shocking Britain's two-time Olympic champion, Jade Jones. Alizadeh knocked off China's Zhou Lijun to reach her first Olympic semifinal, but she fought tentatively and struggled to score on Minina, a three-time European champion.

Spanish golfer Jon Rahm has tested positive for COVID-19 for the second time in two months and been knocked out of the Olympics only a few hours after American golfer Bryson DeChambeau met the same fate.

The back-to-back coronavirus shockers came on the second full day of action in Tokyo and put a damper on the golf tournament. The sport is scheduled to begin Thursday and will be without the last two U.S. Open champions.

DeChambeau won in 2020 at Winged Foot. Rahm took the title last month at Torrey Pines in a comeback of sorts. He was only two weeks removed from building a six-shot lead after the third round of the Memorial only to be told he had tested positive for COVID-19 and had to withdraw.

A volunteer has collapsed during the medal ceremony at Asaka Shooting Range at the Tokyo Olympics. The woman went down shortly after the Star Spangled Banner played for 10-meter air rifle gold medalist William Shaner. He and the other medalists were posing for pictures.

The Olympic music kept playing as staff and medical personnel raced to the woman's side. One volunteer waved papers to cool her off and she was placed on a stretcher after a few minutes.

Paramedics arrived at the venue's medical center with a stretcher, but left after a few minutes as workers inside turned the woman on her side and talked to her.

Intense heat and humidity have taken a toll already during the Tokyo Olympics, particularly at outside venues. The Asaka Shooting Range is air conditioned, but still muggy inside.

With tropical weather forecast to approach Tokyo within days, Olympics organizers say they're talking with individual sports about changing event programs.

Tokyo Olympics sports director Mikako Kotani says they're "closely discussing" issues around the severe weather forecast.

Rowing already cleared its schedule for Monday and Tuesday, moving some events forward to the weekend and others back to Wednesday.

Kotani says in translated comments if other sports governing bodies "propose to us that we should change the schedule in advance then we will consider that option."

Kotani says organizers are getting minute-by-minute updates from their weather information center. Athletes in some sports are currently dealing with high temperatures and humidity.

Tokyo Olympic organizers say there have been early transport problems getting athletes to their venues on time.

IOC spokesman Mark Adams acknowledged: "There are always teething problems and this is a very serious (one)."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 46 of 79

Officials from the IOC and Tokyo's local organizing committee were asked Sunday about athletes taking a taxi to their training site because of a late bus.

Tokyo spokesman Masa Takaya they are "aware that transport is experiencing some issues including delays" and that buses should always be on standby to meet demand.

Takaya says: "We are trying to do everything we can."

MEDAL ALERT

William Shaner has won gold men's 10-meter air rifle, adding to the United States' second-day haul at the Tokyo Olympics.

The Americans were shut out on the first day, but won six medals in swimming on Day 2.

The 20-year-old Shaner qualified third and was steady in the finals at his first Olympics, finishing with an Olympic-record 251.6 points. Sheng Lihao, a Chinese 16-year-old with little international experience, took silver and countryman Yang Haoran earned bronze.

Shaner was one of the top youth shooters in the country and has already had a decorated career at the University of Kentucky, finishing second at the NCAA individual championships and team gold in consecutive seasons. He also was a first-team All-American as a freshman.

MEDAL ALERT

China has captured the first diving gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics.

Shi Tingmao and Wang Han romped to victory in the women's 3-meter synchronized springboard event with 326.40 points, starting what is expected to be another dominating performance by Chinese divers at these games. They have won 37 of 48 gold medals at the last seven Olympics.

Jennifer Abel and Melissa Citrini-Beaulieu of Canada took the silver at 300.78. The bronze went to Germany's Lena Hentschel and Tina Punzel with 284.97.

The Chinese women have not lost an Olympic diving event since 2004. This is their fifth straight victory in the synchronized springboard, their only loss coming when the event debuted at the 2000 Sydney Games.

Shi won her second straight gold in the synchro. She teamed with Wu Minxia to capture gold in Rio de Janeiro five years ago.

The United States duo of Alison Gibson and Krysta Palmer finished last in the eight-team field.

The IOC is urging Olympic medalists to curb their hugs and keep masks on while on the podium.

Medalists in some swimming events Sunday morning were hugging, sharing the podium top step for photographs and taking their masks off for a time.

Those are potential breaches of rules protecting the Olympics from COVID-19 infections.

IOC spokesman Mark Adams says "we feel for the athletes (but) there are things that unfortunately we have had to make stricter."

Adams adds "we would urge and ask everyone to obey the rules."

Tokyo organizers have reported 127 games-related COVID-19 cases, including 14 athletes, in Japan this month.

Olympic rowing faces more delays and schedule changes as weather forecasts predict high winds and strong gusts at the Sea Forest Waterway.

Officials say the expected weather could create unrowable conditions and have rescheduled several events to Wednesday or later. A similar forecast for Monday had forced the Games to move that day's events to Sunday.

Delayed events include the finals for the men's and women's four. They will now race on Wednesday. The semifinals for men's and women's single sculls have been moved from Wednesday to Thursday.

Naomi Osaka made quick work of her first match in nearly two months.

The Japanese superstar who lit the Olympic cauldron eased past 52nd-ranked Zheng Saisai of China 6-1,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 47 of 79

6-4 in the first round of the tennis tournament at the Tokyo Games.

It was Osaka's first match since she withdrew from the French Open and sat out Wimbledon to take a mental health break while revealing she has dealt with depression.

Osaka's match was originally scheduled to open the tournament on Saturday but then was moved to Sunday before her starring role in Friday's opening ceremony.

MEDAL ALERT

Japan's Yuto Horigome has won the first-ever skateboarding competition at the Olympic Games, taking gold in men's street in the city where he learned to skate as a kid and where his sport is often frowned upon.

The first ever skateboarding silver went to Brazilian Kelvin Hoefler, who used to sleep with his board when he fell in love with skating as a kid.

American skater Jagger Eaton took bronze, the Arizonan adapting best among the Americans to the heat at the Ariake Urban Sports Park in Tokyo.

One of skateboarding's biggest stars, Nyjah Huston from the U.S., fell repeatedly trying to land tricks and placed 7th in the eight-man final.

EXPLAINER: How team of refugee athletes made it to Olympics

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The Refugee Olympic Team was created by the International Olympic Committee for the 2016 Olympics to allow athletes to keep competing even if they have been forced to leave their home countries. It had 10 athletes at the Rio de Janeiro Games and is set to include 29 athletes this time in Tokyo.

Here's a closer look.

WHO'S ON THE TEAM?

There are 29 athletes competing in 12 sports, including a medalist at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games who left Iran citing institutional sexism.

The team selected by the International Olympic Committee June 8 was drawn from 55 athletes who fled their home countries and got scholarships to train for the games in a new home country.

The 29 athletes — a rise from 10 in the inaugural refugee team at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics — are also originally from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Congo, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela.

They will compete in swimming, athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, judo, karate, shooting, taekwondo, weightlifting, and wrestling.

Kimia Alizadeh won a bronze medal in taekwondo for Iran in 2016 but moved to Germany last year, saying she was subjected to sexism from officials and objected to wearing the mandatory headscarf. Now competing as a refugee, she rebuilt her career after injuries and qualified for Tokyo, where she beat an opponent representing Iran in her opening bout.

The team is being managed in Tokyo by officials from the IOC and the United Nations' Geneva-based refugee agency, the UNHCR. There's also a refugee team at the Paralympics.

HOW WAS IT FOUNDED?

When the IOC announced the refugee team in March 2016, the war in Syria was causing millions of people to leave the country in the largest displacement crisis since World War II.

The IOC encouraged national Olympic officials to reach out to displaced athletes around the world and selected 10 athletes from of a pool of 43 candidates for Rio.

The first to compete was Syrian swimmer Yusra Mardini, who won her heat. After fleeing Syria the year before, she had used her swimming skills to keep an overcrowded inflatable dinghy moving on the dangerous crossing from Turkey to Greece after the boat started taking on water. Mardini competed again in Tokyo.

CEREMONIAL ROLE

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 48 of 79

IOC president Thomas Bach takes great pride in the refugee team and praised the athletes in the opening ceremony in Tokyo. Cameroon-born weightlifter Cyrille Tchatchet was selected as one of six people to carry the Olympic flag during the ceremony. He stayed in Britain after competing at the 2014 Commonwealth Games and also works in mental health nursing.

QUOTABLE: "Surviving war, persecution and the anxiety of exile already makes them extraordinary people, but the fact that they now also excel as athletes on the world stage fills me with immense pride." — UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi.

"Dear refugee athletes: With your talent and human spirit, you are demonstrating what an enrichment refugees are for society. You had to flee from your homes because of violence, hunger or just because you were different. Today, we welcome you with open arms and offer you a peaceful home. Welcome to our Olympic community." — IOC president Thomas Bach, speaking at the opening ceremony.

Typhoon In-fa hits China's east coast, canceling flights

BEIJING (AP) — Typhoon In-fa hit China's east coast south of Shanghai on Sunday after people living near the sea were evacuated, airline flights and trains were canceled and the public was ordered to stay indoors.

The typhoon made landfall in Zhoushan in Zhejiang province, state TV reported, citing the national weather agency. It forecast rainfall of 10-14 inches (250-350 millimeters).

"People should not willingly go outdoors," the bureau said.

The typhoon earlier dumped rain on Taiwan and knocked down tree branches, but no deaths or injuries were reported.

About 330,000 residents of Fengxian District on Shanghai's southern edge were evacuated after wind speeds off shore reached 60 mph (100 kph), the newspaper China Daily reported.

Hundreds of flights at Shanghai Pudong and Shanghai Hongqiao airports were canceled and more were expected to be canceled on Monday, state TV reported. Shanghai closed parks and the riverfront Bund district, a popular tourist area.

The international airport in Hangzhou, southwest of Shanghai, also canceled flights.

Train service to Ningbo, a port city south of Shanghai, was suspended, according to state TV. The Zhoushan Bridge that connects islands near Ningbo was closed, as were schools, markets and businesses in Zhejiang province.

On Saturday, large container ships were moved from Yangshan Port in Shanghai, one of the world's busiest shipping centers. State TV said a ship lock in Nantong, which abuts Shanghai to the north, stopped releasing vessels into the Yangtze River.

Tunisian teen wins surprise Olympic swimming gold

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Nobody was watching Ahmed Hafnaoui in lane eight of the Olympic pool.

All eyes were on the Tunisian teenager at the finish.

Hafnaoui was the stunning winner of the 400-meter freestyle at the Tokyo Games on Sunday, beating a field of faster and older swimmers. The 18-year-old finished in 3 minutes, 43.26 seconds, punctuating his victory with loud yelling that echoed in the mostly empty 15,000-seat arena.

"I believe when I touched the wall and I saw myself first," he said. "I was so surprised."

Australia's Jack McLoughlin earned silver and American Kieran Smith took bronze. The top three were separated by less than a second after the eight-lap race.

"When I hit the water, I was just thinking about the medal, not the time," Hafnaoui said.

He squeaked into the final by 14-hundredths of a second, landing him in the far outside lane. The fastest qualifiers were in the middle of the pool, without the ability to track Hafnaoui during the race.

Asked what he knew about Hafnaoui, Smith said, "Absolutely nothing."

Hafnaoui made sure he'll be remembered with a performance that boosted his resume considerably.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 49 of 79

He joined Ous Mellouli as the only Tunisians to win a gold in swimming. Mellouli won the 1,500 freestyle at the 2008 Beijing Games, one of his three career Olympic medals. He reached out with a good-luck message to the teenager before the race.

"I wish to be like him one day," Hafnaoui said.

The teen who trains in the capital of Tunis is the North Africa country's fourth Olympic gold medalist. He's the second-youngest athlete from an African nation to win a swimming gold; Joan Harrison of South Africa was 16 when she won the 100 backstroke at the 1952 Helsinki Games.

Standing on the podium, his coach furiously pumping his arms in triumph in the stands, the moment was overwhelming for Hafnaoui.

"I was in tears because when I see the flag of my country and I hear the anthem in the background, it was great," he said. "I'm so proud of it. I dedicate it to all the Tunisian people."

Hafnaoui began swimming at age 6 when his father enrolled him in a swim club. His limited international experience includes an eighth-place finish in the 400 free at the 2018 Youth Olympics.

"The best people are the ones who can come up and swim their best times at the Olympic Games," McLoughlin said.

Hafnaoui has another chance to pull off a surprise when he competes in the 800 free on Thursday. Next year, he said he plans to attend college in the U.S.

AP Interview: Premier: Iraq doesn't need US combat troops

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's prime minister says his country no longer requires American combat troops to fight the Islamic State group, but a formal time frame for their redeployment will depend on the outcome of talks with U.S. officials this week.

Mustafa al-Kadhimi said Iraq will still ask for U.S. training and military intelligence gathering. His comments came in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press ahead of a planned trip to Washington, where he's slated to meet with President Joe Biden on Monday for a fourth round of strategic talks.

"There is no need for any foreign combat forces on Iraqi soil," said al-Kadhimi, falling short of announcing a deadline for a U.S. troop departure. Iraq's security forces and army are capable of defending the country without U.S.-led coalition troops, he said.

But al-Kadhimi said any withdrawal schedule would be based on the needs of Iraqi forces, who have shown themselves capable in the last year of conducting independent anti-IS missions.

"The war against IS and the readiness of our forces requires a special timetable, and this depends on the negotiations that we will conduct in Washington," he said.

The U.S. and Iraq agreed in April that the U.S. transition to a train-and-advise mission meant the U.S. combat role would end but they didn't settle on a timetable for completing that transition. In Monday's meeting at the White House, the two leaders are expected to specify a timeline, possibly by the end of this year.

The U.S. troop presence has stood at about 2,500 since late last year when former President Donald Trump ordered a reduction from 3,000.

The U.S. mission of training and advising Iraqi forces has its most recent origins in former President Barack Obama's decision in 2014 to send troops back to Iraq. The move was made in response to the Islamic State group's takeover of large portions of western and northern Iraq and a collapse of Iraqi security forces that appeared to threaten Baghdad. Obama had fully withdrawn U.S. forces from Iraq in 2011, eight years after the U.S. invasion.

"What we want from the U.S. presence in Iraq is to support our forces in training and developing their efficiency and capabilities, and in security cooperation," al-Kadhimi said.

The Washington trip comes as the premier's administration has faced one setback after another, seriously undermining public confidence. Ongoing missile attacks by militia groups have underscored the limits of

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 50 of 79

the state to prevent them and a series of devastating hospital fires amid soaring coronavirus cases have left dozens dead.

Meanwhile, early federal elections, in line with a promise al-Kadhimi made when he assumed office, are less than three months away.

Chief on the agenda in Washington, however, is the future of American-led coalition forces in Iraq.

Iraq declared victory over IS in late 2017 after a ruinous and bloody war. The continued presence of American troops has become a polarizing issue among Iraq's political class since the U.S.-directed drone strike that killed powerful Iranian general Qassim Soleimani and Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis on Iraqi soil last year.

To quell the threat of widespread instability following the targeted killings, the U.S. and Iraq have held at least three rounds of strategic talks centering on Iraq's military needs in the ongoing fight against IS and to formalize a timeline for withdrawal.

Four years since their territorial defeat, IS militants are still able to launch attacks in the capital and roam the country's rugged northern region. Last week, a suicide bomber killed 30 people in a busy Baghdad marketplace. That attack was later claimed by IS.

Al-Kadhimi has faced significant pressure from mainly Shiite political parties to announce a timeline for a U.S. troop withdrawal. Ongoing rocket and, more recently, drone attacks targeting the American military presence have also heaped pressure on the government. They are widely believed to be perpetrated by Iran-aligned Iraqi militia groups.

An announcement that combat troops will withdraw might serve to placate Shiite parties but will have little impact on the ground: The coalition's combat mission ended effectively in November when the Pentagon reduced U.S. troops in the country to 2,500, according to Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein. Shiite parties have said they do not object to trainers or advisors who may remain as part of the coalition.

U.S. and coalition officials have maintained that U.S. troops are no longer accompanying Iraqi forces on ground missions and that coalition assistance is limited to intelligence gathering and surveillance and the deployment of advanced military technologies. Iraqi military officials have stressed they still need this support going forward.

"Iraq has a set of American weapons that need maintenance and training. We will ask the American side to continue to support our forces and develop our capabilities," al-Kadhimi said.

Al-Kadhimi assumed power as a consensus candidate following months of political jockeying between rival parliamentary blocs. The blocs were firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's coalition on one side and paramilitary commander and former minister Hadi al-Ameri's Fatah group on the other.

The stakes were high: Al-Kadhimi's predecessor had resigned facing pressure from historic mass anti-government protests. At least 600 people were killed as Iraqi forces used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse crowds.

Al-Kadhimi presented himself as a champion of protester demands and set a lofty agenda: He promised to hold early elections, now scheduled for Oct. 10, and to bring to account the killers of activists, including whoever killed prominent commentator Hisham al-Hashimi outside his home last summer.

The arrest of an Interior Ministry employee in the shooting death of al-Hashimi fell short, many said, because it did not reveal which group ordered the killing.

Critics say al-Kadhimi has not gone far enough. This is partly because the very conditions that facilitated his rise to the premiership have also served as his chief limitation in parliament.

Political opposition watered down ambitious economic reforms that targeted Iraq's bloated public sector when the country faced a disastrous financial crisis after falling oil prices. Without a party backing him in parliament, and with rival parties vying to control ministries and other state institutions, al-Kadhimi's government has appeared weak.

Repeated standoffs with Iran-backed militia groups following the arrests of militiamen suspected of launching attacks against the U.S. Embassy and U.S. troops have further tarnished the government's credibility.

Activists whose cries for elections once resonated in the squares of the capital now say they will boycott the October polls, distrustful that the political establishment could ever produce free and fair elections.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 51 of 79

A U.N. monitoring mission has been established in hopes of boosting voter turnout. But protesters have taken to the streets recently and expressed outrage over the rise in killings of prominent activists and journalists. Even al-Kadhimi conceded certain forces were actively seeking to undermine the polls.

"We are in a sensitive situation. We need to calm the political situation until we reach the elections," he said.

Al-Kadhimi has managed to prove his mettle in one arena: That of regional mediator. Iraq's friendly relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran have brought both regional foes to the negotiation table for at least two rounds of talks in Baghdad.

"Iraq has succeeded in gaining the trust of these countries, and accordingly, it is working toward the stability of the region."

Europe's summer tourism outlook dimmed by variants, rules

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Chaos and confusion over travel rules and measures to contain new virus outbreaks are contributing to another cruel summer for Europe's battered tourism industry.

Popular destination countries are grappling with surging COVID-19 variants, but the patchwork and last-minute nature of the efforts as the peak season gets underway threatens to derail another summer.

In France, the world's most visited country, visitors to cultural and tourist sites were confronted this week with a new requirement for a special COVID-19 pass.

To get the pass, which comes in paper or digital form, people must prove they're either fully vaccinated or recently recovered from an infection, or produce a negative virus test. Use of the pass could extend next month to restaurants and cafes.

Italy said Thursday that people will need a similar pass to access museums and movie theaters, dine inside restaurants and cafes, and get into pools, casinos and a range of other venues.

At the Eiffel Tower, unprepared tourists lined up for quick virus tests so they could get the pass to visit the Paris landmark. Johnny Nielsen, visiting from Denmark with his wife and two children, questioned the usefulness of the French rules.

"If I get tested now, I can go but then I (could) get corona in the queue right here," Nielsen said, though he added they wouldn't change their plans because of it.

Juan Truque, a tourist from Miami, said he wasn't vaccinated but took a test so he could travel to France via Spain with his mother.

"Now they are forcing you to wear masks and to do similar kind of things that are impositions to you. To me, they are violations to your freedom," he said.

Europe's vital travel and tourism industry is desperate to make up after a disastrous 2020. International tourist arrivals to Europe last year plunged by nearly 70%, and for the first five months of this year, they're down 85%, according to U.N. World Tourism Organization figures.

American, Japanese and Chinese travelers aren't confident it will be possible to visit and move freely within Europe, the European Travel Commission said. International arrivals are forecast to remain at nearly half their 2019 level this year, though domestic demand will help make up the shortfall.

The U.K.'s statistics office suspended its monthly international passenger data, because it said there aren't enough people arriving "to provide robust estimates."

The United States this week upgraded its travel warning for Britain to the highest level. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advised Americans to avoid traveling to the country because of the risk of contracting COVID-19 variants, while the U.S. State Department raised its alert level to "do not travel" from the previous less severe "reconsider travel" advisory.

The recommendations are constantly under review and not binding, although they may affect group tours and insurance rates. Britain's warning has fluctuated several times this year already.

Some countries are showing signs of a rebound, however.

Spain, the world's second-most visited country, received 3.2 million tourists from January to May — a

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 52 of 79

tenth of the amount in the same period of 2019. But visits surged in June with 2.3 million arrivals, the best monthly figure since the start of the pandemic, although still only 75% of the figure from two years ago.

Spain's secretary of state for tourism, Fernando Valdés, credited the European Union's deployment in June of its digital COVID-19 vaccine passport for having a "a positive impact" on foreign arrivals. That, and the U.K. move to allow nonessential travel, "allowed us to start the 2021 summer season in the best conditions," he said.

The EU app allows the bloc's residents to show they've been vaccinated, tested negative or recovered from the virus.

In Greece, where COVID-19 infections are also rising sharply, authorities have openly expressed concern that slowing vaccination rates could hurt the struggling tourism industry, a mainstay of the economy. Authorities have tightened restrictions for unvaccinated tourists and residents, banning their entry to all indoor dining and entertainment venues.

Development Minister Adonis Georgiadis urged the travel industry to put on a brave face.

"It's very important that we do not give the impression that we have lost control of the pandemic," Georgiadis said last week.

Some countries sparked chaos with last-minute changes to entry rules.

Denmark's decision to upgrade Britain to its "red" list of countries with tighter travel restrictions threw London resident Richard Moorby's vacation plans into disarray.

Moorby originally planned to go to Copenhagen in August to meet up with his Danish wife and their two children visiting his in-laws — like they did last summer. But under current rules Moorby wouldn't have been able to travel separately because he's not Danish. They planned instead to travel together, which they thought would be allowed even after the change — but they missed the announcement's fine print prohibiting non-Danes from "red list" countries including the U.K. from visiting without a worthy purpose, which doesn't include tourism.

"It was going to be a bit of a non-holiday anyway," Moorby said. But "it went from, 'We'd have a nice holiday in Denmark,' to 'well, maybe I can just about get there,' to 'I can't even travel!'"

Meanwhile, the U.K. government unexpectedly announced that travelers coming from France would still have to self-isolate for up to 10 days because of worries about the beta variant, frustrating travelers and angering the tourism industry and French government.

Emma and Ben Heywood, the British owners of adventure travel company Undiscovered Montenegro, said booking inquiries are surging after the U.K. government said in the same announcement it would stop advising against travel to countries on its "amber list" and dropped the self-isolation rule for returning travelers.

The couple said bookings last summer plunged to 10% of their usual level but now they're at 30% and rising fast. Montenegro has a relatively low infection rate and relaxed entry requirements.

"It's so hard keeping everybody up to date with what's required to go where, with so many countries and so many different rules involved," said Ben Heywood.

"It's a total minefield. Half the emails I'm fielding now are people saying, 'We definitely want to come. What do we need to do?'"

Powerhouse US swim team shines with 6 medals, 1st US gold

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Chase Kalisz got things rolling, claiming the first U.S. gold at the Olympic pool.

By the time the morning was done, the powerhouse team had a whole bunch of medals.

Six of them in all, quite a start Sunday for the Americans in the post-Michael Phelps era.

"I'm happy to be here and kick the U.S. off," said Kalisz, who won the 400-meter individual medley.

There was room for others to shine, as well.

Host Japan won a swimming gold, Tunisia claimed a surprising spot atop the medal podium, and the mighty Australian women set the first world record of the competition in the 4x100 freestyle relay.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 53 of 79

The Americans certainly had no complaints about their opening-day performance. In Phelps record-setting career, which encompassed five Summer Games, they never won six medals in the first session of finals.

"A pretty good start for the U.S.," said Kieran Smith, who in his first major international meet snagged a bronze in the men's 400 freestyle. "We executed today. I'm really proud of us."

The Aussies, who hope to challenge America's dominance in the pool, picked up three medals Sunday. The free relay was never in doubt, not with a dynamic quartet that included sisters Bronte and Cate Campbell swimming the leadoff and anchor legs, respectively, joined by Meg Harris and Emma McKeon.

McKeon blew away the field on the third leg and Cate Campbell touched in 3 minutes, 29.69 seconds. At the medal ceremony, the sisters touchingly draped their medals around each other's neck.

The silver went to Canada in 3:32.78, while the Americans capped their morning with one more medal to surpass their best first-day haul from the Phelps era (five in both 2004 and 2008).

With Simone Manuel anchoring the relay, they touched just behind their rivals to the north in 3:32.81.

Kalisz was the first U.S. medal winner of the Tokyo Games, and Jay Litherland — who was born in Osaka — made it a 1-2 finish for the Americans by rallying on the freestyle leg to claim the silver. Brendon Smith of Australia earned the bronze.

In the 400 free, 18-year-old Tunisian Ahmed Hafnaoui was the stunning winner from lane eight, his victory punctuated with loud screams that could be heard throughout the largely empty arena.

"I was surprised with myself," said Hafnaoui, who joined Ous Mellouli as a gold medalist from the north African country. "I couldn't believe it until I touched the wall and saw the 1 (on the scoreboard)."

Hafnaoui finished in 3:43.26, followed by Australia's Jack McLoughlin and Kieran Smith. The top three were separated by less than a second after eight laps of the pool.

The U.S. women did their part, too.

Japan's Yui Ohashi won gold in the women's 400 IM with an electric breaststroke leg, but two Americans were right in her wake. Emma Weyant earned the silver, while the bronze went to Hali Flickinger.

"After we saw (Kalisz and Litherland go 1-2), we kind of looked at each other and said, 'It's our turn,'" Weyant said. "I think that really got our team going."

Kalisz, a protégé and former training partner of Phelps, touched first in 4:09.42. Litherland was next in 4:10.28, just one-tenth of a second ahead of Brendon Smith.

Kalisz flexed his muscles and then climbed atop the lane rope, splashing the water while a contingent of his teammates cheered him from the stands at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

"U-S-A! U-S-A!" they chanted.

Kalisz was the silver medalist in the grueling event at the Rio Games five years ago. Now, at age 27, he's the best in the world at using all four strokes.

"That one was the most special type of pain," Kalisz said. "I had vowed that I was going to make that hurt as much as possible and give my absolute best to accomplish this."

Litherland came over to give the winner a hug, having ensured the Americans got off to the best possible start at the pool.

"To come back and do this with Chase means a lot," said Litherland, who finished fifth in the 400 IM at Rio.

After putting on their medals during a masked-up victory ceremony, Kalisz and Litherland walked around the deck arm-in-arm.

No social distancing for them.

The Americans seized their chance after Japanese star Daiya Seto stunningly failed to advance to the final, having finished ninth in the preliminaries after making a tactical error attempting to save his energy for the medal race.

The finals were held in the morning Tokyo time rather than their usual evening slot, a nod to U.S. television network NBC, which wanted to show the finals live in prime time back in America.

That was the same format used at the 2008 Beijing Games, where Phelps won a record eight gold medals. He retired after Rio, having captured 23 gold medals overall, but the Americans still have plenty of

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 54 of 79

star power for the post-Phelps era.

Ohashi helped to make up for Seto's flop in the men's IM. She pulled away in the breast to win in 4:32.08.

Weyant gave chase in the freestyle leg but settled for silver in 4:32.76. Flickinger was third in 4:34.90, while Hungarian great Katinka Hosszu, the defending champion, faded to fifth.

The only people in the stands of the 15,000-seat arena were media, VIPs, officials and swimmers who weren't competing Sunday. It was an eerily quiet atmosphere at times, though many ignored requests by Japanese organizers to refrain for any sort of cheering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

There was a drum in the stands, as well as a few horns to spice things up.

In a striking touch before the first race, the loudspeakers blared the song "Pompeii" by the British band Bastille, which includes the lyrics, "But if you close your eyes, does it almost feel like nothing changed at all?"

In the pool, it was business as usual. But it certainly felt like plenty had changed in an Olympics that were delayed a year by a worldwide pandemic and are finally being staged under tight restrictions that included a ban on all fans.

The Americans had no complaints.

Even with Phelps looking down from a broadcast seat, they are off to a dynamic start at the Olympic pool.

California's largest fire torches homes as blazes lash West

Associated Press undefined

INDIAN FALLS, Calif. (AP) — Flames racing through rugged terrain in Northern California destroyed multiple homes Saturday as the state's largest wildfire intensified and numerous other blazes battered the U.S. West.

The Dixie fire, which started July 14, had already leveled over a dozen houses and other structures when it tore through the tiny community of Indian Falls after dark.

An updated damage estimate was not immediately available, though fire officials said the blaze has charred more than 181,000 acres (73,200 hectares) in Plumas and Butte counties and was 20% contained.

The fire was burning in a remote area with limited access, hampering firefighters' efforts as it charged eastward, fire officials said. It has prompted evacuation orders in several small communities and along the west shore of Lake Almanor, a popular area getaway.

Meanwhile, the nation's largest wildfire, southern Oregon's Bootleg fire, was nearly halfway surrounded Saturday as more than 2,200 crew members worked to corral it in the heat and wind, fire officials said. The growth of the sprawling blaze had slowed, but thousands of homes remained threatened on its eastern side, authorities said.

"This fire is resistant to stopping at dozer lines," Jim Hanson, fire behavior analyst, said in a news release from the Oregon Department of Forestry. "With the critically dry weather and fuels we are experiencing, firefighters are having to constantly reevaluate their control lines and look for contingency options."

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom has declared a state of emergency for four northern counties because of wildfires that he said were causing "conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property." The proclamation opened the way for more state support.

Such conditions are often from a combination of unusual random, short-term and natural weather patterns heightened by long-term, human-caused climate change. Global warming has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years.

On Saturday, fire crews from California and Utah headed to Montana, Gov. Greg Gianforte announced. Five firefighters were injured Thursday when swirling winds blew flames back on them as they worked on the Devil's Creek fire burning in rough, steep terrain near the rural town of Jordan, in the northeast part of the state.

They remained hospitalized Friday. Bureau of Land Management spokesperson Mark Jacobsen declined to release the extent of their injuries, and attempts to learn their conditions Saturday were unsuccessful. Three of the firefighters are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crew members from North Dakota, and the other two are U.S. Forest Service firefighters from New Mexico.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 55 of 79

Another high-priority blaze, the Alder Creek fire in southwest Montana, had charred over 6,800 acres (2,750 hectares) and was 10% contained Saturday night. It was threatening nearly 240 homes.

Elsewhere in California, the Tamarack fire south of Lake Tahoe continued to burn through timber and chaparral and threatened communities on both sides of the California-Nevada state line. The fire, sparked by lightning July 4 in Alpine County, has destroyed at least 10 buildings.

Heavy smoke from that blaze and the Dixie fire lowered visibility and may at times ground aircraft providing support for fire crews. The air quality south of Lake Tahoe and across the state line into Nevada deteriorated to very unhealthy levels.

In north-central Washington, firefighters battled two blazes in Okanogan County that threatened hundreds of homes and again caused hazardous air quality conditions Saturday. And in northern Idaho, east of Spokane, Washington, a small fire near the Silverwood Theme Park prompted evacuations Friday evening at the park and in the surrounding area. The theme park was back open on Saturday with the fire half contained.

Although hot weather with afternoon winds posed a continued threat of spreading blazes, weekend forecasts also called for a chance of scattered thunderstorms in California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and other states. However, forecasters said some could be dry thunderstorms that produce little rain but a lot of lightning, which can spark new blazes.

More than 85 large wildfires were burning around the country, most of them in Western states, and they had burned over 1.4 million acres (2,135 square miles, or more than 553,000 hectares).

AP FACT CHECK: Trump is relentless in election fabrications

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — In mid-May, partisan investigators hired by Arizona state lawmakers backed off their allegation that the state's most populous county had destroyed its 2020 election database. Confronted with proof that the data still existed, they admitted everything was there.

Two months later, the tale lives on. At an event Saturday, former President Donald Trump presented the debunked allegation as a key piece of evidence that the state's electoral votes were stolen from him in 2020.

It was one of a number of fabricated and familiar stories Trump told the crowd in his relentless effort to deny the well-established legitimacy of his defeat at the hands of President Joe Biden.

Over nearly two hours, Trump revisited his touchstones of grievance, leveling allegations of fraud that election officials and judges have systematically refuted or brushed aside. It was Trump's most explicit effort to insert himself into the widely discredited Arizona audit as he tries to increase the pressure on other states to embark on similar efforts.

He spoke of untold thousands of dead people voting — no such phenomenon surfaced in postelection audits. He alleged 168,000 Arizona ballots were fraudulent — there is no support for that.

A look at his remarks in Phoenix:

TRUMP: "Unbelievably, the auditors have testified that the master database for the election management system, I'm sorry to tell you, has been deleted.... Meaning the main database for all of the election-related data in Maricopa for 2020 has been illegally erased. It's been erased."

THE FACTS: Wholly false. The database was never deleted.

At first, auditors hired by Republican state senators sympathetic to Trump reported that a database directory was deleted from an election management server. The official Twitter account tied to the audit said the deletion amounted to "spoliation of evidence."

The Republican-dominated Maricopa County Board of Supervisors responded by calling the auditors incompetent and threatening to file a defamation lawsuit. Board Chairman Jack Sellers said the auditors "can't find the files because they don't know what they're doing." Maricopa County Recorder Stephen Richer, a Republican who took over the elections office after defeating a Democrat, called the allegation "unhinged."

The next day, Ben Cotton, founder of a digital forensics firm working on the audit, confirmed he had

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 56 of 79

recovered all of the files. "I have the information I need," he acknowledged, and the auditors deleted their tweet.

TRUMP: "There were 18,000 people who voted in Arizona in 2020 who were then purged from the rolls immediately after the election."

THE FACTS: This didn't happen. His insinuation that people were stricken from the rolls because they voted for him is baseless.

Actually, 13,320 voters were removed from the rolls in the two months after the election, not 18,000 right away, and there were routine reasons why.

Voting rolls are updated constantly as people move, die, get convicted of felonies or have their voting rights revoked because of incapacitation. Trump was repeating a claim made by Doug Logan, CEO of Cyber Ninjas, the inexperienced firm leading the state Senate Republicans' audit of the 2020 election.

Maricopa County officials said their analysis of the data shows 7,916 voters were removed from the rolls because they moved out of the county or died between Nov. 3, which was Election Day, and Jan. 2. An additional 5,404 people were removed for other reasons, including felony convictions, incapacitation or the voters' own request to cancel their registration.

The county has about 2.6 million registered voters.

Overall, Biden won Arizona by 10,457 votes out of 3.4 million cast. That's vastly more than the number of votes where fraud is truly suspected.

County election officials only 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. No one has been convicted. No person's vote was found to have been counted twice.

Wildfires blasting through West draw states to lend support

By NATHAN HOWARD Associated Press

BLY, Ore. (AP) — Out-of-state crews headed to Montana Saturday to battle a blaze that injured five firefighters as the U.S. West struggled with a series of fires that have ravaged rural lands and destroyed homes.

Progress was being made on the nation's largest blaze, the Bootleg Fire in Oregon, but less than half of it was contained, fire officials said. The growth of the sprawling fire had slowed, but increased fire activity was expected Saturday, and thousands of homes remained threatened on its eastern side, authorities said.

"This fire is resistant to stopping at dozer lines," Jim Hanson, fire behavior analyst, said Saturday in a news release from the Oregon Department of Forestry. "With the critically dry weather and fuels we are experiencing, firefighters are having to constantly reevaluate their control lines and look for contingency options."

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom on Friday declared a state of emergency for four northern counties because of wildfires that he said were causing "conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property." The proclamation opens the way for more state support.

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In California, the Tamarack Fire south of Lake Tahoe continued to burn through timber and chaparral and threatened communities on both sides of the California-Nevada state line. The fire, sparked by lightning July 4 in Alpine County, has destroyed at least 10 buildings.

In Butte County, California, the Dixie Fire continued to burn in rugged and remote terrain, hampering

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 57 of 79

firefighters' efforts to contain the blaze as it grows eastward, becoming the state's largest wildfire so far this year.

Heavy smoke from both huge fires lowered visibility and may at times ground aircraft providing support for fire crews. The air quality south of Lake Tahoe and across the state line into Nevada deteriorated to very unhealthy levels.

In north-central Washington, firefighters battled two blazes in Okanogan County that threatened hundreds of homes and again caused hazardous air quality conditions Saturday. And in northern Idaho, east of Spokane, Washington, a small fire near the Silverwood Theme Park prompted evacuations Friday evening at the park and in the surrounding area. The theme park was back open on Saturday with the fire half contained.

Although hot weather with afternoon winds posed a continued threat of spreading blazes, weekend forecasts also called for a chance of scattered thunderstorms in California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and other states. However, forecasters said some could be dry thunderstorms that produce little rain but a lot of lightning, which can spark new blazes.

More than 85 large wildfires were burning around the country, most of them in Western states, and they had burned over 1.4 million acres (2,135 square miles, or more than 553,000 hectares).

Jackie Mason, comic who perfected amused outrage, dies at 93

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jackie Mason, a rabbi-turned-comedian whose feisty brand of standup comedy led him to Catskills nightclubs, West Coast talk shows and Broadway stages, has died. He was 93.

Mason died Saturday at 6 p.m. ET at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan after being hospitalized for over two weeks, the celebrity lawyer Raoul Felder told The Associated Press.

The irascible Mason was known for his sharp wit and piercing social commentary, often about being Jewish, men and women and his own inadequacies. His typical style was amused outrage.

"Eighty percent of married men cheat in America. The rest cheat in Europe," he once joked. Another Mason line was: "Politics doesn't make strange bedfellows, marriage does." About himself, he once said: "I was so self-conscious, every time football players went into a huddle; I thought they were talking about me."

His death was mourned far and wide, from fellow comedian Gilbert Gottfried, who called him "one of the best," to Fox News Channel personality Sean Hannity, who hailed Mason as "irreverent, iconoclastic, funny, smart and a great American patriot." Henry Winkler tweeted: "Now you get to make heaven laugh."

Mason was born Jacob Maza, the son of a rabbi. His three brothers became rabbis. So did Mason, who at one time had congregations in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Comedy eventually proved to be a more persistent calling than God.

"A person has to feel emotionally barren or empty or frustrated in order to become a comedian," he told The Associated Press in 1987. "I don't think people who feel comfortable or happy are motivated to become comedians. You're searching for something and you're willing to pay a high price to get that attention."

Mason started in show business as a social director at a resort in the Catskills. He was the guy who got everybody up to play Simon Says, quiz games or shuffleboard. He told jokes, too. After one season, he was playing clubs throughout the Catskills for better money.

"Nobody else knew me, but in the mountains, I was a hit," Mason recalled.

In 1961, the pint-sized comic got a big break, an appearance on Steve Allen's weekly television variety show. His success brought him to "The Ed Sullivan Show" and other programs.

He was banned for two years from the "Sullivan" show when he allegedly gave the host the finger when Sullivan signaled to him to wrap up his act during an appearance on Oct. 18, 1964.

Mason's act even carried him to Broadway, where he put on several one-man shows, including "Freshly Squeezed" in 2005, "Love Thy Neighbor" in 1996 and "The World According to Me" in 1988, for which he received a special Tony Award.

"I feel like Ronald Reagan tonight," Mason joked on Tony night. "He was an actor all his life, knew noth-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 58 of 79

ing about politics and became president of the United States. I'm an ex-rabbi who knew nothing about acting and I'm getting a Tony Award."

Mason called himself an observer who watched people and learned. From those observations he said he got his jokes and then tried them out on friends. "I'd rather make a fool of myself in front of two people for nothing than a thousand people who paid for a ticket," he told the AP.

His humor could leap from computers and designer coffee to then-Sen. John Kerry, former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Donald Trump. He was able to articulate the average Joe's anger, making the indignities of life seem funny and maybe just a little bit more bearable.

"I very rarely write anything down. I just think about life a lot and try to put it into phrases that will get a joke," he said. "I never do a joke that has a point that I don't believe in. To me, the message and the joke is the same."

On TV, Mason was a reliable presence, usually with a cameo on such shows as "30 Rock" or "The Simpsons" or as a reliable guest on late night chat shows. He performed in front of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and his show "Fearless" played London's West End in 2012.

He portrayed a Jewish ex-pajama salesman in love with an Irish-Catholic widow portrayed by Lynn Redgrave in a series called "Chicken Soup" in 1989 but it didn't last. During the O.J. Simpson murder trial, the British Broadcasting Corp.'s Scottish service hired Mason as a weekly commentator. He was in "Caddyshack II," a notorious flop.

Mason's humor sometimes went too far, as when he touched off a controversy in New York while campaigning for GOP mayoral candidate Rudolph Giuliani against Democrat David Dinkins, who was Black. Mason had to apologize after saying, among other things, that Jews would vote for Dinkins out of guilt.

Felder, his longtime friend, told the AP that Mason had a Talmudic outlook on life: "That whatever you would say to him, he would start an argument with you."

He is survived by his wife, producer Jyll Rosenfeld, and a daughter, Sheba.

EXPLAINER: The Olympic soccer team that doesn't quite exist

By ROB HARRIS AP Global Soccer Writer

TOKYO (AP) — It was Caroline Weir's hesitancy about a seemingly innocuous question that piqued curiosity about the British soccer team at the Olympics: Would she sing Britain's national anthem "God Save the Queen" in Japan?

"Just for certain reasons," she pondered, "it's something I have to think about."

Certain reasons — like the question of her nationality. The 26-year-old midfielder, a Scot, faced an awkward decision after agreeing to represent what is known as "Team GB" for the first time. Representing her country previously has only meant singing "Flower of Scotland" before kickoff.

The dilemma helps explain the challenges Britons face over their national identities — particularly for a proud Scot like Weir — and in forming unified sports teams.

If it wasn't for the Olympics, Weir would never be playing soccer for Britain. Instead, as she did at the 2019 Women's World Cup, she'd represent the saltire of Scotland — a nation with its own legal system and church.

Now consider this: "Team GB" did not technically even qualify for Olympic soccer. That place was earned by the England team. Even when an Olympics spot has been available to Britain, it has been sacrificed upon the altars of internal squabbling and the politics of world soccer.

Where did all this complexity come from? The intricate history of the British Empire, mainly.

WHAT IS BRITAIN, EXACTLY?

The fractious journey of Britain's Olympic soccer team encapsulates the interlinking and colliding sense of belonging in modern Britain, where devolving power from the government in London to Scotland, Wales and Ireland has separated national identities.

To truly understand the conflicted sense of national affiliation requires unpacking the construction of the country. Is it Britain or the United Kingdom?

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 59 of 79

The soccer players carried passports stating "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland" to enter Japan for these Olympics. But Britain only incorporates England, Wales and Scotland. It's why people in Northern Ireland can feel piqued and neglected by the use of "Team GB" as the country's Olympic brand.

The construct of Great Britain stems from the 18th-century Act of Union, which united Scotland with England. The broader United Kingdom to incorporate all four of the home nations — initially with the entire island of Ireland — came with the unifying act of 1801.

But even a "Team UK" wouldn't cover all eligible athletes. The British Olympic Association's jurisdiction covers not only the nearby Isle of Man and Channel Islands but also lands known as the British Overseas Territories, including the Falkland Islands in the southern Atlantic Ocean.

When soccer and rugby started to formalize more from the 1870s, there were no international opponents yet. So any games that would now be considered international fixtures saw Englishmen play against their Scottish counterparts in the two different codes of football.

It established the system in place today that established England and Scotland — as well as Northern Ireland and Wales — as separate entities in world sport.

PLAYING SEPARATELY

At a soccer World Cup, there can be teams competing as England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (if they qualify, as they all did in 1958). But a Britain team? No go. To confuse matters more, in rugby, Ireland plays as a united team despite the partition of 1921.

In the Olympics' early years, Britain was represented in soccer by purely English amateur men in teams run by the English Football Association that won three golds in the early 1900s. The World Cup was first staged by FIFA in 1930.

How is this related to team GB? Because Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland worried that if they joined it, they'd give up their individual identities — that their independence within FIFA as separate playing nations would be jeopardized.

Ultimately, having not qualified anyway since 1960, the English FA stopped entering after failing to reach the 1972 Olympics because it no longer ran an amateur team. When the qualification route for the Olympics changed, in 1992, Britain sacrificed its places when performances by England or Scotland met the threshold for a spot at the Games.

GAME CHANGER

It was only London hosting the 2012 Olympics that brought the British soccer team back into existence. And for the first time, there would be a women's team as well.

The path was not smooth. There was initial resistance by the federations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which had been warned by FIFA they risked their independent status by participating in a British team.

"If this is the case, then why the hell do they have four associations and four votes and their own vice presidency?" FIFA's president at the time, Sepp Blatter, asked in 2008.

But in a public row that ran through the buildup to the 2012 Olympics, Blatter eventually offered assurances that the autonomy of the home nations would be protected and their status not eroded in the world game even if they let players compete.

While the men's team of mostly players under the age of 23 due to Olympic regulations only saw English and Welsh selected, the women's squad was all-English apart from three Scots. Both teams reached the quarterfinals.

While the unified British team was agreed as a one-off for 2012, there was a desire in England for it to return for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. But some, particularly Scotland, found it difficult to trust Blatter's assurances about their FIFA status. So despite the women qualifying by virtue of England's semifinals appearance at the 2015 World Cup, the Olympic place was sacrificed.

TEAM RE-FORMS

After reaching another Women's World Cup semifinals in 2019, England did not want to miss another

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 60 of 79

Olympics that could help the women's game grow. And unlike at Rio, a combined team was given the clearance by the other home nations.

Last week, the Scotland women's team did congratulate Kim Little for being appointed a co-captain of the British team, a duty shared with Steph Houghton of England and Sophie Ingle of Wales to reflect the combined contribution of three of the British nations. But @ScotlandNT made no reference to a British team featuring Little and Weir opening in Japan with a 2-0 win over Chile, nor the 1-0 victory over the host nation on Saturday.

"The fact there are Scots and Sophie Ingle in the squad," Weir said, "hopefully that will unite the home nations and everyone can get behind us."

Yet even if that happens, the soccer team that only exists sometimes still faces an uncertain future. Even if Britain wins gold at the Tokyo Games, there's no guarantee when — or even if — Team GB will play again.

Unvaccinated snow leopard at San Diego Zoo catches COVID-19

Associated Press undefined

SAN DIEGO (AP) — An unvaccinated snow leopard at the San Diego Zoo has contracted COVID-19.

Caretakers noticed that Ramil, a 9-year-old male snow leopard, had a cough and runny nose on Thursday. Later, two separate tests of his stool confirmed the presence of the coronavirus, the zoo said in a statement Friday.

Ramil is not showing additional symptoms, the zoo said, but because he shares an enclosure with a female snow leopard and two Amur leopards, the staff assumes they have been exposed. As a result, the animals were quarantined and their exhibit was closed.

It's unclear how Ramil got infected.

In January, a troop of eight gorillas at the zoo's sister facility, San Diego Zoo Safari Park, contracted COVID-19 from a keeper who had the virus but showed no symptoms.

The gorilla troop, which has since recovered, became the first known example of the virus infecting apes.

The case prompted the zoo to request an experimental COVID-19 vaccine for animals for emergency use. The vaccine from Zoetis, animal health company that was once part of Pfizer, was administered to species most at risk of contracting COVID-19, including several primates and big cats.

However, Ramil had not been vaccinated before his infection.

There is no vaccine mandate for the staff, but unvaccinated employees are required to wear masks at all times, the zoo said.

Residents say flood-hit German towns got little warning

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

AHRWEILER, Germany (AP) — Like other residents of his town in Germany, Wolfgang Huste knew a flood was coming. What nobody told him, he says, was how bad it would be.

The 66-year-old antiquarian bookseller from Ahrweiler said the first serious warning to evacuate or move to higher floors of buildings close to the Ahr River came through loudspeaker announcements around 8 p.m. on July 14. Huste then heard a short emergency siren blast and church bells ringing, followed by silence.

"It was spooky, like in a horror film," he said.

Huste rushed to rescue his car from an underground garage. By the time he parked it on the street, the water stood knee height. Five minutes later, safely indoors, he saw his vehicle floating down the street. He estimates the losses in his store, where books dating back to the early 1500s were destroyed, at more than 200,000 euros (\$235,000).

"The warning time was far too short," Huste said.

With the confirmed death toll from last week's floods in Germany and neighboring countries passing 210, almost 150 people still missing and the economic cost expected to run into the billions, many have asked why the emergency systems designed to warn people of impending disaster didn't work.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 61 of 79

Sirens in some towns failed when the electricity was cut. In other locations, there were no sirens at all; volunteer firefighters had to knock on people's doors to tell them what to do. The German weekly Der Spiegel reported that in one suburb of Wuppertal, north of Cologne, people were warned by a monk ringing a bell.

Huste acknowledged that few could have predicted the speed with which the water would rise and rip through towns. But he pointed across the valley to a building that houses Germany's Federal Office for Civil Protection, where first responders from across the country train for possible disasters.

"In practice, as we just saw, it didn't work, let's say, as well as it should," Huste said. "What the state should have done, it didn't do. At least not until much later."

German authorities did receive early warnings from the European Flood Awareness System. These made their way through official channels, putting firefighters on heightened alert as well as smartphone users who had installed disaster warning apps, but such apps aren't widely used.

Local officials responsible for triggering disaster alarms in the Ahr valley on the first night of flooding have kept a low profile since the deluge. At least 132 people were killed in the Ahr valley alone.

Authorities in Germany's Rhineland-Palatinate state took charge of the disaster response in the wake of the floods, but they declined to comment on what mistakes might have been made on the night the disaster struck.

"People are looking at a life in ruins here. Some have lost relatives, there were many dead," said Thomas Linnertz, the state official now coordinating the disaster response. "I can understand the anger very well. But on the other hand, I have to say again: This was an event that nobody could have predicted."

The head of Germany's federal disaster agency BKK, Armin Schuster, acknowledged to public broadcaster ARD that "things didn't work as well as they could have."

His agency is trying to determine how many sirens were removed after the end of the Cold War. Germany also plans to adopt a system known as 'cell broadcast' that can send alerts to all cellphones in a particular area.

In the town of Sinzig, Heiko Lemke recalled how firefighters came knocking on doors at 2 a.m., long after the floods had caused severe damage upriver in Ahrweiler.

Despite a heavy flood in 2016, nobody had expected the waters of the Ahr River to rise as high as they did in his community, Lemke said.

"They were evacuating people," he said. "We were totally confused because we thought that wasn't possible."

Within 20 minutes, water had flooded the ground floor of his family's house, but they decided it was too dangerous to venture out, he said.

"We wouldn't have managed to make it around the corner," said his wife, Daniela Lemke.

Twelve residents of a nearby assisted living facility for people with disabilities drowned in the flood. Police are probing whether staff at the facility could have done more to save the residents, but so far there is no suggestion that authorities could face a criminal investigation for failing to issue timely warnings.

Experts say such floods will become more frequent and severe due to climate change, and countries will need to adapt, including by revising calculations about future flood risks, improving warning systems and preparing people for similar disasters.

Now that he knows about the flood risk, Heiko Lemke hopes all those things will happen.

"But maybe it would be even better to leave," he added.

French protesters reject virus passes, vaccine mandate

By PATRICK HERMANSEN and BOUBKAR BENZEBAT

PARIS (AP) — Some 160,000 people, including far-right activists and members of France's yellow vest movement, protested Saturday across the country against a bill requiring everyone to have a special virus pass to enter restaurants and mandating COVID-19 vaccinations for all health care workers.

Similar protests were held in neighboring Italy.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 62 of 79

Police fired water cannons and tear gas on rowdy protesters in Paris, although most gatherings were orderly.

Legislators in France's Senate were debating the virus bill Saturday after the lower house of parliament approved it on Friday, as virus infections are spiking and hospitalizations are rising. The French government wants to speed up vaccinations to protect vulnerable people and hospitals, and avoid any new lockdown.

Most French adults are fully vaccinated and multiple polls indicate a majority of French people support the new measures. But not everyone.

Protesters chanting "Liberty! Liberty!" gathered at Bastille plaza and marched through eastern Paris in one of several demonstrations Saturday around France. Thousands also joined a gathering across the Seine River from the Eiffel Tower organized by a former top official in Marine Le Pen's anti-immigration party.

While most protesters were calm, tensions erupted on the margins of the Bastille march. Riot police sprayed tear gas on marchers after someone threw a chair at an officer. Other projectiles were also thrown. Later some protesters moved to the Arc de Triomphe and police used water cannon to disperse them.

Marchers included far-right politicians and activists as well as others angry at President Emmanuel Macron. They were upset over a French "health pass" that is now required to enter museums, movie theaters and tourist sites. The bill under debate would expand the pass requirement to all restaurants and bars in France and some other venues.

To get the pass, people need to be fully vaccinated, have a recent negative test or have proof they recently recovered from the virus.

French lawmakers are divided over how far to go in imposing health passes or mandatory vaccinations but infections are rising quickly. More than 111,000 people with the virus have died in France, and the country is now seeing about 20,000 new infections a day, up from just a few thousand a day in early July.

More than 2 billion people worldwide have been vaccinated and information about COVID-19 vaccines is now widely available, but many protesters said they felt they were being rushed into something they're not ready to do.

Céline Augen, a secretary at a doctor's office, is prepared to lose her job under the new measure because she doesn't want to get vaccinated.

Ayoub Bouglia, an engineer, said, "We need to wait a little bit before the French people can decide ... I think a part of France is always going to be unwilling and that blackmail and threats won't work."

In Italy, thousands of protesters gathered in Rome, Milan, Verona and other cities Saturday, protesting the government's decision to require a "Green Pass" to access indoor dining, local fairs, stadiums, cinemas and other gathering places.

In the northern city of Verona, several thousand people marched down the main shopping street, chanting "No Green Pass!" and "Freedom!" They included families with young children, medical doctors who said they are risking their jobs not to get vaccinated and people who likened the Green Pass decision to decisions by fascist dictatorships.

The demonstrations proceeded peacefully and dissipated into summer evening crowds.

Despite the vocal opposition, Italy's new requirement, effective Aug. 3, has led to a boom in vaccine appointments in Italy, where so far nearly half of the eligible population is fully vaccinated.

Prosecutors air more claims in R. Kelly case; 1 involves boy

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal prosecutors in R. Kelly's sex trafficking case say he had sexual contact with an underage boy in addition to girls, and the government wants jurors in his upcoming sex trafficking trial to hear those claims.

Prosecutors aired a wide-ranging raft of additional allegations — but not new charges — against the R&B star in a court filing Friday. Jury selection is due to start Aug. 9 in a New York federal court for Kelly, who denies ever abusing anyone.

A message was sent Saturday to his lawyers about the additional allegations.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 63 of 79

The Grammy Award-winning singer is charged with leading what prosecutors call a criminal enterprise of managers, bodyguards and other employees who allegedly helped him recruit women and girls for sex and pornography and to exercise a lot of control over them.

The charges involve six different women and girls, who aren't named in court filings.

Now, prosecutors would also like jurors to hear about more than a dozen other people whom the government alleges that Kelly sexually or physically abused, threatened or otherwise mistreated.

Among them, the government says, was a 17-year-old boy and aspiring musician whom Kelly met at a McDonald's in December 2006 and later invited to his Chicago studio. After asking the boy what he would do to make it in the music business, Kelly propositioned and had sexual contact with him while he was still underage, according to prosecutors' court filing.

And when Kelly was about to go on trial on child pornography charges in Chicago in 2008, the same youth told the singer he had access to a juror, and Kelly asked him to contact the juror and vouch he was a "good guy," prosecutors wrote.

The filing doesn't say whether the youth did so. Kelly was acquitted in that case.

The boy also introduced Kelly to a 16- or 17-year-old male friend, with whom prosecutors say the singer began a sexual relationship several years later. Kelly also filmed the two youths in sexual encounters with other people, including some of Kelly's girlfriends, according to the filing.

Prosecutors wrote that the accounts of the boys and others would help show that the actual charges "were not isolated events and were part of a larger pattern."

The multiplatinum-selling singer, born Robert Sylvester Kelly, is known for work including the 1996 hit "I Believe I Can Fly" and the cult classic "Trapped in the Closet," a multi-part tale of sexual betrayal and intrigue.

Kelly's sex life has drawn scrutiny since the 1990s, and he currently is also facing sex-related charges in Illinois and Minnesota. He has pleaded not guilty.

Health care for older immigrants sees momentum among states

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Most mornings, 62-year-old Maria Elena Estamilla wakes up with pelvic pain and dread that she faces the same fate as her mother and grandmother: fatal cervical cancer.

The Chicago woman's last full medical exam was in 2015 and she sees no options for care as a Mexican immigrant without permission to live in the U.S. She's not eligible for Medicare, Medicaid or Affordable Care Act coverage. As a child care worker, she didn't have employer coverage. She can't afford private insurance.

But things may soon change.

Illinois is among a handful of Democratic-run states extending health insurance coverage to adult immigrants in the country illegally, including seniors. The state, which became the first to offer a Medicaid-like program for older immigrants last year, used a new budget to expand the program. California followed suit, including coverage for those 50 and over in the latest budget. And Oregon's governor signed a plan this week offering benefits to low-income immigrants over 19. New York advocates are banking on the momentum to do the same.

Supporters say the trend is crucial during a coronavirus pandemic that has left immigrants, who are disproportionately essential workers, more vulnerable to COVID-19 and as federal remedies, like an immigration overhaul or "public option" health insurance, face tough political odds. While opponents question the cost and using taxpayer funding, experts believe it will ultimately save money and address looming issues with an aging immigrant population.

"This program can't come any faster for me because of the pain and discomfort I feel," Estamilla said. "I'm very scared."

Immigrants, both with legal status and without, are more likely to be uninsured than citizens.

Among those under 65, roughly 46% of immigrants in the country illegally don't have insurance, compared with about 25% of immigrants with legal status. About 9% of citizens are uninsured, according to

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 64 of 79

a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis in July, which didn't include data for those over 65.

Barriers include cost and limited options. For instance, green card holders must wait five years for Medicaid eligibility.

When it comes to using public benefits, there are also concerns about repercussions like deportation. A Trump administration rule denying green cards to immigrants who used public benefits had a chilling effect. Use of food stamps declined 37% among noncitizens from 2016 to 2019, according to a Migration Policy Institute study in December.

Esther Corpuz, CEO of Alivio Health Center, said enrolling people in services remains difficult even after the Biden administration scrapped the "public charge" rule. Alivio runs Chicago-area clinics serving 50,000 patients, mainly immigrants without legal status.

"There still is that fear if they sign up for some kind of governmental benefit ... that will be used against them in the future," she said.

In recent years, about half a dozen states have focused on health coverage for immigrant children and young adults without legal status. Illinois, California, Oregon are among those covering children. Last year, California began offering public insurance for all low-income residents under 26.

But focusing on older immigrants is becoming more urgent, experts say.

Immigrants are more likely to remain in the U.S. compared with two decades ago, according to Arturo Vargas Bustamante, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles' Fielding School of Public Health. According to a July study he co-wrote, immigrants' median age increased from 37 to 45 between 2000 and 2018.

Without action, America faces a health care crisis as immigrants age, Bustamante said, adding that offering insurance will save money by reducing reliance on emergency rooms.

Leaders in Illinois and California say their solution is inching toward coverage for all, which also makes the high cost more politically palatable.

"Look at what immigrants do for our economy," Democratic Illinois House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch said. "Including them in our health insurance, it keeps them healthy and allows them to go to work and compete and be able to contribute."

The state dedicated \$36 million of its recent \$42 billion budget to expand coverage from those 65 and older to those 55 and older, including immigrants with legal status who don't yet qualify for other help and those in the country illegally. More than 5,100 people have applied since December. Supporters estimate at least 12,000 will be eligible when the expansion kicks in next year.

California will spend \$1.3 billion for a Medicaid expansion starting in 2022 that covers expenses for roughly 235,000 low-income immigrants 50 and older who are in the country illegally.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's office said the state's expansion will cover eligible low-income immigrant adults regardless of status, but health officials can narrow criteria to fit spending limits set by lawmakers. Up to 80,000 people could enroll.

Republicans have criticized supporting noncitizens, while fiscal watchdogs question using state taxpayer funds.

Susan Shelley of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association said California's Medicaid program already faces complaints it doesn't pay doctors enough to provide proper care and an expensive expansion won't help.

"It's an overpromise, and it's not addressing the priorities of the people already on the program," she said.

But backers say such programs also benefit citizens. Among the estimated 11 million immigrants without legal status, roughly 22% over 15 are married to a U.S. citizen or green card holder, according to a Migration Policy Institute report in February.

Some also call it a moral issue, especially during the pandemic. The World Health Organization urged countries to pay health care costs for all migrants and refugees.

"Any inhabitant of the U.S. has the right to have their basic health care needs met," said Lawrence Gostin, director of the WHO Collaborating Center on Public Health Law and Human Rights at Georgetown University. "It's a matter of ethics and the international right to health."

The newly insured feel the difference.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 65 of 79

In Chicago, Eugenia Rodriguez cares for her 84-year-old mother, Francisca Perez, who has a heart condition and rheumatoid arthritis.

She hasn't been eligible for insurance after overstaying a visitor visa from Mexico. Rodriguez used to check on her mom every few hours. Since getting insurance in Illinois, her mother has proper medications. "Now, I can sleep at night," Rodriguez said.

Rep. Luria's pro-Navy, centrist identity may get Jan. 6 test

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — When members of Congress head home to connect with their constituents, some hit tractor pulls. Others might stop by mom-and-pop stores. For Democratic Rep. Elaine Luria, whose Virginia district includes the world's largest naval base, a recent swing included boarding an amphibious assault ship for a NATO ceremony and a speech by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"The congresswoman right here in front of me asks tough questions all the time, pins my ears against the wall on many, many topics," Gen. Mark Milley told a recent audience of dignitaries aboard the USS Kearsarge, a reference to Luria's grilling him on military readiness during committee meetings.

Luria's next round of tough queries will concern a topic that is potentially even more sensitive for the military: why veterans were disproportionately involved in the Jan. 6 insurrection. A 20-year naval veteran and nuclear-trained surface warfare officer who commanded 400 crewmembers in the Persian Gulf, Luria is joining House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's special committee to investigate the mob attack on the U.S. Capitol.

"I bring some additional perspective," Luria, 45, said in an interview from Naval Station Norfolk, where the Kearsarge and about 75 other ships are docked. She may end up being the lone member with military experience on the panel after most Republicans said they'd boycott following Pelosi's objecting to the appointment of two GOP lawmakers, including a Navy veteran.

Luria noted the high number of online misinformation campaigns that targeted veterans and said many participants have since spoken about how politically and socially marginalized they felt.

"As long as we have a very large group of people in this country who feel like the only way for their voice to be heard is to show up and be violent, then there's a risk of this happening again," Luria said.

According to George Washington University's Program on Extremism, 55 of the 547 people charged federally in connection with the insurrection, or 10%, have military experience — compared with a bit less than 7% of the population at large who are veterans. One of the most serious cases involves members of the Oath Keepers, an extremist group that recruits current and former members of the military and law enforcement, as well as first responders.

The attack has begun a military reckoning. The House Veterans Affairs Committee, on which Luria heads a subcommittee, has investigated recruitment of current and former military personnel by extremists. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin took the unusual step of ordering a militarywide "stand down" to allow troops time to discuss extremism that could be growing within their ranks.

"I think the military is a bureaucratic behemoth, so anything that happens, they're not going to turn on a dime," said Carolyn Gallaher, a professor of international service at American University in Washington who studies right-wing paramilitaries. "There are definitely people trying to do something. It's going to depend on how powerful they are and how well they're going to be able to get the levers of the military bureaucracy to do what they want to do."

A deeper investigation of Jan. 6's events would seem a natural fit for Luria, whose district has 40% of its economy tied directly or indirectly to the Navy or the Defense Department. But the assignment could carry serious political risks for Luria's chief congressional identity besides champion of all things Navy and national security — that of a centrist who has worked to bolster her bipartisan credentials and policy pursuits across the ideological spectrum.

"I think of myself as really moderate. I spent 20 years in the Navy. Didn't think much about political party. I voted for the guy in '16 who I ran against in '18," said Luria, referring to Republican Scott Taylor, a former Navy SEAL whose seat she won two cycles ago, then held in a 2020 rematch.

Many Republicans are dismissing the Jan. 6 committee as a political ploy, meaning the Democrats involved

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 66 of 79

will face pressure to promote larger objectives pushed by their party's leadership.

That may make staying moderate tough and mark a departure for Luria, who passed several pieces of legislation under former President Donald Trump, including providing tax relief to Gold Star families. But she also helped lead 2019 calls from House Democrats with national security backgrounds for an inquiry that helped Trump's first impeachment come to fruition.

Luria is a cosponsor of progressive-championed efforts to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. She also has been outspokenly pro-Israel, even as her party's left wing has criticized that country over the recent conflict in Gaza.

And she was the only House Democrat to oppose repealing Congress' 2002 authorization for use of military force in Iraq. Luria says she opposes a repeal of a similar authorization for military force in Afghanistan, saying there hasn't been enough discussion on what Congress should replace them with. She argues that is dangerous given the ongoing threat of foreign terrorism.

Proud House moderates are rare in an age where redistricting has reduced the number of seats whose territories aren't hyper-ideological in favor of one party or the other. Luria's 2nd Congressional District ranks No. 217 on the nonpartisan Cook Political Report's partisan voting index, making it the median between the most-Republican and most-Democratic House seats in the nation — effectively the country's swingiest swing district.

Including Virginia's most populous city, Virginia Beach, as well as the rural Eastern Shore, Luria's district voted for Trump in 2016 but shifted blue last November, as Joe Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate since 1964 to carry Virginia Beach.

Luria nonetheless may face a tough reelection test as Democrats cling to their six-seat House majority. Taylor, the former congressman who lost to Luria, said such a long military career gives her ideological cover.

"If you're a veteran and you're a Democrat, you might be given a little more the benefit of the doubt. Like, you're not going to be super far left," Taylor said. "Never mind how you vote."

During a Virginia Beach town hall hours after the Milley event, Luria was asked about the possibility the Capitol insurrection was a dry run for a larger attack. She cited the Jan. 6 committee, saying, "This is too important not to do anything."

"I think we need to do this in an unbiased and nonpartisan way," Luria said.

Luria has likened being on the Jan. 6 committee to her serving on an aircraft carrier launching simultaneous airstrikes on foreign terrorist targets in Iraq and Afghanistan, noting that then, "I didn't turn to the sailor next to me operating a nuclear reactor and say: 'Are you a Democrat? Are you a Republican?'"

She concedes that won't stop critics from making her participation a potential line of 2022 attack, but shrugs off the possibility as common in today's Congress.

"You can't, like, help a preschool plant a tree," she joked, "and not have somebody criticize it."

States scale back virus reporting just as cases surge

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Several states scaled back their reporting of COVID-19 statistics this month just as cases across the country started to skyrocket, depriving the public of real-time information on outbreaks, cases, hospitalizations and deaths in their communities.

The shift to weekly instead of daily reporting in Florida, Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota marked a notable shift during a pandemic in which coronavirus dashboards have become a staple for Americans closely tracking case counts and trends to navigate a crisis that has killed more than 600,000 people in the U.S.

In Nebraska, the state actually stopped reporting on the virus altogether for two weeks after Gov. Pete Ricketts declared an end to the official virus emergency, forcing news reporters to file public records requests or turn to national websites that track state data to learn about COVID statistics. The state backed tracked two weeks later and came up with a weekly site that provides some basic numbers.

Other governments have gone the other direction and released more information, with Washington, D.C.,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 67 of 79

this week adding a dashboard on breakthrough cases to show the number of residents who contracted the virus after getting vaccines. Many states have recently gone to reporting virus numbers only on weekdays.

When Florida changed the frequency of its virus reporting earlier this month, officials said it made sense given the decreasing number of cases and the increasing number of people being vaccinated.

Cases started soaring soon after, and Florida earlier this week made up up one-fifth of the country's new coronavirus infections. As a result, Florida's weekly releases — typically done on Friday afternoons — have consequences for the country's understanding of the current summer surge, with no statewide COVID stats coming out of the virus hotspot for six days a week.

In Florida's last two weekly reports, the number of new cases shot up from 23,000 to 45,000 and then 73,000 on Friday, an average of more than 10,000 day. Hospitals are starting to run out of space in parts of the state.

With cases rising, Democrats and other critics have urged state officials and Gov. Ron DeSantis to resume daily outbreak updates.

"There was absolutely no reason to eliminate the daily updates beyond an effort to pretend like there are no updates," said state Rep. Anna Eskamani, a Democrat from the Orlando area.

The trend of reducing data reporting has alarmed infectious disease specialists who believe that more information is better during a pandemic. People have come to rely on state virus dashboards to help make decisions about whether to attend large gatherings or wear masks in public, and understanding the level of risk in the community affects how people respond to virus restrictions and calls to get vaccinated.

"We know that showing the data to others actually is important because the actions that businesses take, the actions that schools take, the actions that civic leaders take, the actions that community leaders take, the actions that each of us individually take are all influenced by our perception of what the risk is out there," said Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, who leads the department of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California, San Francisco.

But reporting the numbers on a weekly basis still allows people to see the overall trends while smoothing out some of the day-to-day variations that come from the way cases are reported and not the actual number of new cases. And experts have long advised that it makes sense to pay more attention to the seven-day rolling average of new cases because the numbers can vary widely from one day to the next.

And Florida health officials say that they have not curtailed the sharing of data with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Maintaining daily updates on the virus does require significant resources for states. For instance, Kansas went to reporting virus numbers three times a week in May because the state health department said providing daily statistics consumed too much time for its already overwhelmed staff.

In Nebraska, officials decided that continuing to update the virus dashboard daily wasn't the best use of state resources now partly because there had been a steady decline in the number of views of the website indicating less interest in the numbers, spokeswoman Olga Dack said. The state could return to providing daily updates if the governor's office decided that was needed, she said.

"Now that Nebraska is back to normal, some of the staff that has been dedicated to the dashboard has been able to focus on some of the other important issues," Dack said.

State health departments have a long history of providing the public regular updates on other diseases like flu and West Nile, but those viruses have none of the political baggage associated with COVID-19.

In Florida, a former health department employee was fired last year after publicly suggesting that managers wanted her to manipulate information on coronavirus statistics to paint a rosier picture. The employee, Rebekah Jones, did not allege any tampering with data, but her comments sowed doubts about the reliability of the metrics.

Infectious disease specialist Dr. David Brett-Major said that for many people, national websites such as the one run by the CDC can be a good source of data on the latest state trends and weekly updates could be OK. The World Health Organization often uses weekly updates, but he said they do that for practical data management reasons, not political ones.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 68 of 79

He said the message Nebraska sent when it ended its dashboard that the state emergency was over and conditions were returning to normal was troubling.

"The main problem is that it reflects a disinterest in pandemic risk management," said Brett-Major, with the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha.

Janet Hamilton, executive director of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, said part of the problem is that public health officials generally don't have sophisticated data systems so it is more labor intensive to produce the daily dashboards. Even though public health agencies have money for operations at a time when pandemic government spending is flush, they haven't necessarily had the chance to upgrade.

"It would be great if daily reporting could be made widely available, but public health would have to be funded better to do that and right now that is just not the case," said Hamilton.

And even in states where virus numbers aren't being reported publicly every day health officials are still looking at the latest data, Hamilton said.

But at a time when the delta variant is, in the words of the CDC director, "spreading with incredible efficiency," Bibbins-Domingo said it is important that everyone can see the latest trends and understand the risks.

"Even if we know that they are available to decisionmakers on a daily basis, there is considerable value to providing the data to the public," she said.

Olympics Latest: US men get off to fast start in volleyball

TOKYO (AP) — The Latest on the Tokyo Olympics, which are taking place under heavy restrictions after a year's delay because of the coronavirus pandemic:

After a long wait to get on the court, the U.S. men's volleyball team made quick work of France in its Olympic opener.

The U.S. didn't take the court until 11 p.m. local time in the final match of the opening day of pool play but set the tone early by scoring the first five points of the match. The Americans won the match 25-18, 25-18, 25-22, as they try to build on their bronze medal performance in 2016.

The other winners in the opening day of men's competition were defending champion Brazil, Italy, the Russians, Japan and Iran.

Beach volleyball player Phil Dalhausser has had a rough start to the Tokyo Games.

The four-time Olympian and 2008 gold medalist has been in modified quarantine because he is considered a close contact of Taylor Crabb, the U.S. beach volleyball player who withdrew after testing positive for COVID-19. Dalhausser sat near Crabb on a flight from Los Angeles to San Francisco before heading over to Japan.

Dalhausser and teammate Nick Lucena practiced together only twice from the time they arrived in Tokyo until their opening match on Saturday.

The Americans lost to defending bronze medalists Robert Meeuwssen and Alexander Brouwer of the Netherlands. The Dutch won 21-17, 21-18 at the Shiokaze Park venue.

Wang Fan and Xia Xinyi of China beat Heather Bansley and Brandie Wilkerson of Canada 18-21, 21-15, 15-11 earlier.

One of the medal favorites lost its first match of pool play in the men's Olympic volleyball tournament.

Poland came into the Tokyo Games as one of the top contenders in the men's bracket led by Wilfredo Leon but fell in the first match to Iran in five sets. The Iranians made their Olympic debut in 2016 when they made it to the quarterfinals and now have a big win to start this year's tournament after pulling out the final set 23-21.

The loss isn't too detrimental to Poland's medal hopes because four of the six teams in Pool A able to advance to the quarterfinals. The last two men's gold medalists struggled in pool play with Brazil need-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 69 of 79

ing a win in its final match in 2016 to advance to the knockout round and Russia finishing third in 2012.

MEDAL ALERT

Panipak Wongpattanakit of Thailand and Vito Dell'Aquila of Italy have won the first two gold medals of the Olympic taekwondo competition in Tokyo.

Wongpattanakit won her first gold in dramatic fashion in the women's 49-kilogram final, scoring two points on a body kick inside the final 10 seconds for an 11-10 victory over 17-year-old Adriana Cerezo of Spain. Wongpattanakit's gold is only the 10th in Thailand's entire Olympic history.

Dell'Aquila defeated Mohamed Khalil Jendoubi of Tunisia 16-12 in the men's 58-kilogram final to claim his first Olympic medal. The final was another thriller that was tied 10-10 with about 15 seconds left before Dell'Aquila won with a flurry of scoring strikes.

Chinese veteran Wu Jingyu's bid to become the first three-time Olympic taekwondo champion ended in the quarterfinals with a 33-2 loss to Cerezo.

Taekwondo's four-day tournament continues Sunday with British star Jade Jones' attempt to succeed where Wu failed by winning her own third consecutive gold medal.

MEDAL ALERT

Aron Szilagyi of Hungary has become the first Olympic fencer to win three individual sabre gold medals after beating Luigi Samele 15-7 in the men's final at the Tokyo Games.

Szilagyi used his fast reflexes to build an early 7-1 lead and held off a brief comeback from his Italian opponent before closing out the win.

Szilagyi won gold at the 2012 London Games and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. His only loss in the Olympic individual tournament came in the third round in 2008.

Samele reached the final after a remarkable win in the semifinals. He came back from 12-6 down to beat Kim Junghwan of South Korea 15-12.

Kim took bronze with a 15-11 win over Sandro Bazadze of Georgia.

MEDAL ALERT

Sun Yiwen of China has beaten five-time Olympian Ana Maria Popescu of Romania 11-10 in overtime to win gold in the women's épée fencing competition.

Popescu leveled the score at 10-10 with three seconds remaining to go to overtime but Sun soon scored the winning point in the deciding period.

Sun completed her set of Olympic medals after winning individual bronze and team silver at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. Popescu has yet to win an individual gold medal at any of her five Olympic appearances despite often being among the favorites. She won team gold in 2016.

Katrina Lehis of Estonia took the bronze by beating Russian fencer Aizanat Murtazaeva 15-8. Lehis was trailing 4-3 in the second period before winning the next five points to take a lead she never gave up.

Members of the U.S. swimming team cheered and chanted from the stands for U.S. first lady Jill Biden, who sat across the pool and waved as swimming kicked off.

Without fans in the 15,000-seat Tokyo Aquatics Centre on Saturday, masked teams had ample room to spread out in socially distanced seats above the deck. The U.S. contingent waved tiny American flags and pounded red-white-and-blue Thunderstix, while the Germans spread their large-sized flag over two rows of seats.

Waiting for the session to begin, the Americans chanted "Dr. Biden, Dr. Biden" and clapped.

None of the usual electricity that typically courses through the Olympic pool was present. Teams shouted the names of their swimmers during the race, when the sound of water splashing was easily heard and music blasted.

Earlier in the day, Biden watched a 3-on-3 basketball game with French President Emmanuel Macron

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 70 of 79

and hosted a softball watch party at the U.S. ambassador's residence.

Naohisa Takato has won Japan's first gold medal at its home Olympics, beating Taiwan's Yang Yung-wei in the men's 60-kilogram judo final.

Kosovo's Distria Krasniqi beat Japan's Funa Tonaki in the women's 48-kilogram final less than an hour before Takato made sure his team wouldn't have a double heartbreak on the opening day of competition in its beloved homegrown martial art.

Takato won his final three bouts in sudden-death golden score, but took the final a bit anticlimactically after Yang committed too many fouls.

The charismatic Takato's success — and Tonaki's heartbreaking, last-minute defeat — could provide a much-needed jolt of excitement for a nation still feeling profoundly ambivalent about these Olympics and discouraged by the scandals and coronavirus setbacks surrounding them.

Distria Krasniqi of Kosovo beat Funa Tonaki in the women's 48-kilogram Olympic judo final, depriving host Japan of its first gold medal in its home Olympics and winning Kosovo's second-ever Olympic medal.

Krasniqi won on a throw with 20 seconds left, scoring a waza-ari and claiming a title that moved her to tears moments later.

Although Krasniqi was the top seed, she was severely challenged by the 4-foot-10 Tonaki, who beat a series of difficult opponents to reach the final.

Tonaki fell agonizingly short of claiming a gold medal in Japan's beloved, homegrown martial art. Her success would have provided a much-needed jolt of positivity for a nation still feeling profoundly ambivalent about these Olympics and discouraged by the scandals and coronavirus setbacks surrounding them.

MEDAL ALERT

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French President Emmanuel Macron and U.S. first lady Jill Biden have attended a 3-on-3 Olympic basketball game in Tokyo.

The two sat near one another as the French women's team played the U.S. The U.S. won 17-10.

The 3-on-3 Olympic basketball tournament is making its debut at this Olympics.

Macron and Biden both attended the opening ceremony for the Games on Friday night.

Earlier Saturday, Biden attended a watch party at the U.S. ambassador's residence for embassy staff to watch the United States vs. Mexico women's softball game. The U.S. won 2-0.

She said she was excited to watch the game and apologized for not being able to offer food or drink due to COVID protocols. She also thanked foreign service officers and their families for their service.

Russian weightlifting leader Maxim Agapitov has beaten the IOC in court to win back his right to attend the Tokyo Olympics despite his own doping ban 27 years ago.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport says it upheld Agapitov's appeal to regain his games accreditation, which the International Olympic Committee took away this month.

The IOC had decided Agapitov should "not have a personal history linked to any anti-doping rule viola-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 71 of 79

tion" in order to stay at the Olympics representing the International Weightlifting Federation.

CAS says its three-judge panel decided it was "clearly disproportionate" to punish someone for a violation at any point in their athletic career.

Agapitov's doping case was in 1994, before he became a world champion. He's now president of the Russian weightlifting federation and an executive board member of the troubled IWF.

The International Surfing Association has confirmed a last-minute alternate: Carlos Munoz, who will surf for Costa Rica as the sport makes its Olympic debut.

Munoz replaces Frederico Morais of Portugal, who announced Friday that he had tested positive for COVID-19 and would not travel to Japan while he quarantines at home.

Munoz's confirmation comes at the very last minute possible, as the association had set the 3 p.m. Saturday Tokyo time as the deadline for alternates to be approved.

Surfers qualify by name as individuals via world tournament rankings, though each country can only have two surfers per gender.

The first alternate for Morais' spot was Italian Angelo Bonomelli, who won't participate, though the association did not say why. Munoz was the next male surfer eligible.

The eight-day shortboard surfing competition period begins Sunday at Tsurigasaki beach.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and French President Emmanuel Macron have met in Tokyo as the Olympics get underway.

They welcomed the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics as "a powerful symbol of global unity" for a victory over COVID-19, according to a joint statement released by the Japanese foreign ministry.

Macron attended the opening ceremony of the pandemic-delayed Olympics to represent France, the host nation for 2024.

They've also agreed to share Japan's experiences for the 2024 games, which will be held in Paris.

Japan has struggled to balance virus measures and preparation for the Olympics amid growing public concern about the health risks of holding the games.

Suga and Macron also agreed to cooperate in a wide range of areas including defense, climate change and the economy.

MEDAL ALERT

Ecuador won its first cycling medal as Richard Carapaz took gold in the Olympic road race.

Embracing his nickname of "The Locomotive," Carapaz rode away from American breakaway buddy Brandon McNulty as they approached the finish at Fuji International Speedway.

He slapped his handlebars in celebration as he crossed the line, where he was greeted by one of the few crowds allowed at the Olympics.

The chasing group rounded the corner in sight of him at the finish line, then played a game of cat-and-mouse for the other two medals. Belgian star Wout van Aert wound up edging Tour de France champion Tadej Pogacar of Slovenia in a photo finish.

MEDAL ALERT

An San and teenager Kim Je Deok have paired up to lead South Korea to a gold medal in the Olympic debut of archery's mixed team event at the Tokyo Games.

On a sizzling Saturday at the Yumenoshima Park Archery Field, they held off Gabriela Schloesser and Steve Wijler of the Netherlands by a tally of 5-3 to bring home yet another archery gold for South Korea. The country has now captured 14 of 17 gold medals in archery team competitions since the current format was introduced to the Olympics in 1988.

What's more, it was the 24th Olympic gold medal for South Korea's archery program, matching short track speed skating for most by the country in a particular sport.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 72 of 79

Alejandra Valencia and Luis Alvarez combined for Mexico and knocked off Yasemin Anagoz and Mete Gazoz of Turkey to earn the bronze medal.

Heat and humidity are quickly becoming a major issue for players at the Olympic tennis tournament in Tokyo.

The temperature soared to 91 degrees F (33 degrees C) and the heat index made it feel like 100 F (38 C).

French Open finalist Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova says she wasn't feeling great, although she still routed Sara Errani of Italy 6-0, 6-1.

Mona Barthel struggled with 10 double-faults in a loss to Iga Swiatek as a searing sun made it nearly impossible to see the ball once she tossed it.

Second-seeded Daniil Medvedev, who also competes for ROC at the Tokyo Games, called it "some of the worst" heat he has played in after eliminating Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan.

"I'm not going to lie. But you have to play," Medvedev said. "That's the Olympics, you go for the medal. You are not here to cry about the heat."

Medvedev suggested that organizers move all matches to the evening to avoid the heat of the day.

Novak Djokovic's bid for a Golden Slam is alive and well following a routine 6-2, 6-2 win over 139th-ranked Hugo Dellien of Bolivia in the opening round of the Tokyo tennis tournament.

The top-ranked Serb is attempting to become the first man to win all four major tennis tournaments and an Olympic singles gold medal in the same year.

Steffi Graf was the only tennis player to accomplish the Golden Slam in 1988.

Djokovic's next opponent will be 48th-ranked Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany.

Struff eliminated Thiago Monteiro of Brazil 6-3, 6-4.

The youngest table tennis player in Olympics history is out of the Tokyo Games.

Hend Zaza of Syria lost in straight sets to Liu Jia, a 39-year-old from Austria, in a preliminary match Saturday.

The 12-year-old told Olympics.com that she was pleased with her performance and learned from the loss — and she's hoping for another shot at the next Olympics, in Paris.

Zaza is from Hama, which has been heavily damaged by war.

She is the youngest athlete at the Tokyo Games.

MEDAL ALERT

Javad Foroughi has become the oldest Iranian athlete to win an Olympic medal, earning gold in men's 10-meter air pistol.

Foroughi set an Olympic record with 244.8 points, finishing 6.9 ahead of silver medalist Damir Mikec of Serbia. China's Pang Wei, the 2008 gold medalist, took bronze.

The 41-year-old Foroughi surpasses Iranian weightlifter Mahmoud Namdjou, who was 38 when he took bronze at the 1956 Melbourne Games.

Foroughi, ranked fourth in the world, qualified fifth and immediately jumped to the lead in the finals with a series of shots in the 10-ring. He led Mikec by 4.2 points entering the final two shots and celebrated by waving his towel before kneeling on it to pray.

MEDAL ALERT

Hou Zhihui has won China's second gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics with a commanding showing in the women's 49-kilogram weightlifting category.

Hou lifted a total 210kg, 3kg short of her world record, to take gold ahead of Indian lifter Chanu Saikhom Mirabai on 202. It was India's first Olympic silver in weightlifting.

Indonesia took bronze as Windy Cantika Aisah lifted a total of 194kg.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 73 of 79

Jourdan Delacruz of the United States was third after the snatch portion of the contest but failed on all three or her lifts in the clean and jerk.

Two-time Olympic champion Kohei Uchimura's Olympic career is over.

The 32-year-old Japanese gymnast, considered by many the greatest of all time, fell during qualifying on high bar and will not advance to the event finals.

Uchimura, the 2012 and 2016 all-around gold medalist, was midway through his set when he peeled off while doing a complicated connection. He picked himself up and finished his routine, drilling his dismount.

His score of 13.866 placed him outside of the top eight, meaning he will not make the finals. Uchimura competed as an individual, meaning he will not be part of the team final on Monday.

Uchimura waved to the judges and received a round of applause inside the largely empty Ariake Gymnastics Centre before quickly exiting the competition floor.

Tokyo organizers say the total of Olympics-related COVID-19 cases in Japan is now 127, with one athlete added to the tally.

German cyclist Simon Geschke's positive test was announced Friday, one day ahead before the men's road race. That's a signature event on the first full day of competition at any Summer Games.

Athletes account for 14 of the 127 cases in Japan since July 1. Among the new positive tests are 14 games contractors who live in Japan.

Dutch team officials said Saturday that rower Finn Florijn tested positive for COVID-19 and is out of the Games. Two other Dutch athletes previously tested positive. Florijn's positive test won't show up in the official tally of cases until Sunday.

China has sprinted to the lead in men's gymnastics qualifying, putting on a clinic inside the nearly empty Ariake Gymnastics Centre as it aims to return to the top of the sport.

China total of 262.061 — fueled by four brilliant sets on parallel bars — edged out Russia's 261.945 in the first of three qualifying subdivisions.

China is attempting to bounce back after slipping to bronze in Rio de Janeiro five years ago and coming in second to the Russians at the 2019 world championships.

Reigning world champion Nikita Nagornyy of Russia has grabbed the early lead in all-around qualifying, putting together a steady 87.897, just ahead of China's Xiao Ruoteng and Sun Wei.

Russian Artur Dalaloyan also assured himself of a spot in next week's all-around finals with a total of 85.597, remarkable considering that Dalaloyan is competing on a surgically repaired left Achilles torn at the European championships in April.

The French Olympic Committee says some of the medical and support staff for its men's basketball team have been forced into quarantine at the Tokyo Games because a passenger aboard their flight to Japan tested positive for the coronavirus.

The committee didn't say how many staff members are affected as possible contact cases. It said they have been in isolation since July 19, unable to work with the athletes. It said all of the staff members' tests so far have been negative.

Dutch team officials say rower Finn Florijn has tested positive for COVID-19 and is out of the Games. The other members of the team who are considered close contacts can stay, but will need to adjust to separate transportation and eating and sleeping arrangements.

The 21-year-old son of former Olympic gold medalist rower Ronald Florijn was competing in single sculls and had finished fourth in his heat on Friday. He was scheduled to row again Saturday in the repechage before positive test results late Friday ended his Games.

"I was hopeful to improve in the rematch. Now it's over in an instant. I can't really say much more about

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 74 of 79

it," Florijn said.

Florijn is the fourth member of the Dutch team or staff to test positive for COVID-19. The team said earlier this week that taekwondo athlete Reshmie Oogink and a rowing team staff member tested positive and skateboarder Candy Jacobs announced on Instagram that she had tested positive.

Chef de Mission of TeamNL Pieter van den Hoogenband says the team is doing everything it can to curb more positive tests.

The ban on fans for the Summer Olympics does not extend past Tokyo, and that means thousands of cycling fans have turned up at Fuji International Speedway to await the finish of the men's road race.

The facility built in the 1960s but extensively renovated over the years has a grandstand capacity of 22,000 people. And with 50 percent capacity limitations due to COVID-19, that means up to 11,000 will be able to see the finish.

Their eagerness to see the Olympics after a year delay was clear by the way fans turned out early Saturday. They showed up nearly seven hours before riders were expected to reach the finishing circuits, and the layout of the speedway meant they would be spending all that time in the sun on a steamy day two hours southwest of Tokyo.

MEDAL ALERT

China's Yang Qian has won the first gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics in women's 10-meter air rifle.

Yang overtook Anastasiia Galashina when the Russian missed the center two rings for an 8.9 on her final shot.

Yang had a 9.8 on her final shot and finished with an Olympic record 251.8. Galashina finished at 251.1. Switzerland's Nina Christen took bronze.

An Algerian judo athlete will be sent home from the Tokyo Olympics after he withdrew from the competition to avoid potentially facing an Israeli opponent.

Fethi Nourine and his coach, Amar Benikhlef, told Algerian media they were withdrawing to avoid a possible second-round matchup with Israel's Tohar Butbul in the men's 73 kg division on Monday. Nourine was to face Sudan's Mohamed Abdalrasool in the opening round, with the winner facing Butbul, the fifth seed.

The International Judo Federation's executive committee has temporarily suspended Nourine and Benikhlef, who are likely to face sanctions beyond the Olympics, which began Saturday. The Algerian Olympic committee then withdrew both men's accreditation and made plans to send them home.

The IJF said Nourine's position was "in total opposition to the philosophy of the International Judo Federation. The IJF has a strict non-discrimination policy, promoting solidarity as a key principle, reinforced by the values of judo."

Nourine and Benikhlef attribute their stance to their political support for Palestinians.

Two Georgian tennis players have been barred from the Tokyo Olympics after officials in their home country told them they were entered for the Games but never actually sent the paperwork.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled that it had to turn away doubles players Oksana Kalashnikova and Ekaterine Gorgodze because they were never formally entered for the games, even though Georgia's Olympic committee "informed the applicants that their application had been submitted."

Without a formal entry for the Olympics, the court ruled that the "consequence, however unfortunate for the two athletes, can only be the dismissal of their petition."

Australia is without cyclist Rohan Dennis for the men's Olympic road race, though it's not because of a positive test for COVID-19.

Dennis chose to skip the race, which is taking place on a brutal course through searing heat that hardly suits his skillset, so that he can focus instead on next week's time trial.

Dennis, who has won stages in each of the three Grand Tours, is also one of the best in the world in

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 75 of 79

the race against the clock. He's a two-time time trial world champion, helped Australia win team pursuit silver at the 2012 London Games and is a former world hour-record holder.

He was in medal contention at the Rio Games in the time trial, but he had a mechanical issue that required a bike change and took him out of the running.

The entire Spanish cycling team has been cleared for the men's road race hours before the start, ending a stressful period of limbo following a positive COVID-19 test involving a team masseuse.

Alejandro Valverde, Gorka Izagirre, Ion Izagirre, Omar Fraile and Jesus Herrada were considered close contacts of the masseuse, but all returned negative test results that allowed them to make the start at Musashinonomori Park on Saturday.

Spain has one of the strongest teams in the men's road race, which will finish at Fuji International Speedway. Valverde, Fraile and Ion Izagirre in particular have skillsets that are perfectly suited for the mountainous course.

The very first match of the Olympic beach volleyball tournament has been canceled because a Czech player tested positive for COVID-19.

Markéta Sluková tested positive earlier this week, knocking her and partner Barbora Hermannova out of the Tokyo Games.

The Czechs were supposed to be playing a team from the host country that would have been making its Olympic debut. Instead, the Japanese pair of Megumi Murakami and Miki Ishii earned the victory by default.

Sluková is one of at least three members of the Czech team who have tested positive since their arrival in Japan, including men's beach volleyball player Ondřej Perušič.

The team has said it's investigating if the outbreak of COVID-19 is linked to its charter flight to Tokyo.

German cyclist Simon Geschke has been ruled out of the men's road race after testing positive for the coronavirus.

The German team says Geschke initially tested positive Friday and his result was confirmed by another test later in the day.

Germany says fellow riders Nikias Arndt and Maximilian Schachmann are cleared to race Saturday. The fourth rider on the team, Emanuel Buchmann, was Geschke's roommate and was waiting overnight on the result of another PCR test for the virus. Team staff tested negative.

Geschke was a stage winner on the Tour de France in 2015.

The German road race team is living in a hotel and not in the Olympic Village.

Geschke says he followed the hygiene rules at the Olympics. He adds that "I feel fine physically but emotionally it's a really terrible day for me."

US rebounds from opening loss with 6-1 win over New Zealand

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

SAITAMA, Japan (AP) — After a stunning loss in the opener, the U.S. women's soccer team vowed to be ruthless against New Zealand.

And they rebounded in a big way.

The Americans cruised to a 6-1 rout of New Zealand in front of First Lady Jill Biden at the Tokyo Olympics on Saturday.

With the United States leading 2-0 at the break, Biden arrived in time to watch the team put the game away in the second half at Saitama Stadium.

The United States was blanked by Sweden 3-0 in the opener. It was the team's first loss since January 2019 and snapped a 44-game unbeaten streak. The Americans had not been held scoreless since 2017.

But the Americans vowed to regain control of the tournament. Defender Kelley O'Hara said the United States needed to be "ruthless" against New Zealand.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 76 of 79

"Sweden was a very good team and we didn't play our best, and when you do that up against a top opponent, they're going to punish you. So that wasn't our best performance," Crystal Dunn said. "I think we came into Game 2 knowing that we don't go from being a really great team two days ago to not being a great team anymore."

Rose Lavelle scored off a well-placed pass from Tobin Heath in the ninth minute to give the United States an early lead — and the team's first goal of the Olympics. Despite the lack of goals, the Americans dominated the half, unlike their out-of-sorts start against the Swedes.

Lindsey Horan scored with a header in the final moments of the half to put the United States up 2-0 at the break. It was Horan's 23rd international goal and it came on her milestone 100th appearance for the national team.

Horan called it surreal: Her 100th cap while the First Lady looked on in an otherwise empty stadium.

"I think my approach going into this game — obviously it's in the back of your head that you're getting your 100th cap — but I didn't want that to be a factor today, Horan said. "I think we wanted to get the job done and my focus was doing whatever I possibly could to help the team win. I'm happy to get a goal and yeah, it's nice to have a fan in the stands, too."

It could have been worse for New Zealand but the United States had four disallowed goals, all for offside, in the first half.

An own-goal by Abby Erceg extended the U.S. lead to 3-0 in the 64th minute. New Zealand avoided the shutout with Betsy Hassett's goal in the 72nd.

Christen Press, who came in as a second-half substitute, scored from the center of the box in the 80th off a feed from Julie Ertz, before Alex Morgan scored in the final minutes of regulation. Another New Zealand own-goal closed out the game in stoppage time.

"Look, from our perspective I thought we had a terrific 80 minutes and unfortunately the last 10 minutes kind of let us down a little bit on the scoreline," New Zealand coach Tom Sermanni said. "From an effort perspective, you can't fault the players, they gave blood sweat and tears on the field tonight to come up against a very good team."

U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski made five changes to the starting lineup he used against Sweden, giving Carli Lloyd the start over Morgan, Megan Rapinoe for Press, Ertz for Samewis, Emily Sonnett for O'Hara, and Tiarna Davidson for captain Becky Sauerbrunn.

The United States, the reigning World Cup champion, has been to every Olympics since women's soccer joined the event in 1996. The world's top-ranked team has five gold medals, more than any other nation.

The U.S. also lost the first match of the 2008 Beijing Games, falling to Norway 2-0, but went on to win the gold.

Their nemesis at the Olympics has been Sweden, which booted the Americans from the Rio de Janeiro Games in the quarterfinals five years ago.

"I think we were a little bit more composed, a little bit more patient on the ball this game, and we know it's going to be challenging chasing that gold medal," Dunn said. "So we're not taking anything for granted."

New Zealand lost to Australia 2-1 in its opening match and the Ferns' chances of reaching the knockout round grew slim with Saturday's loss.

New Zealand had not played any matches since March 2020 because of coronavirus restrictions.

UK's summer getaway takes off but nothing like pre-COVID

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — With all British schools now closed for the summer, airports and airlines were looking a tad more normal on Saturday, although the number of families heading off for warmer climes remains way down from before the coronavirus pandemic.

This weekend traditionally marks the great summer getaway from Britain, with airports jam-packed with excitable children and their anxious parents heading off mostly to the popular beach resorts of southern Europe, from Portugal's Algarve coast in the west to the sun-soaked island nation of Cyprus to the east.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 77 of 79

However, with travel to and from many popular destinations facing varying and often confusing quarantine and testing requirements, it's clear that many British families think it's all too much hassle and have opted again to holiday within the U.K.

For the second year running, it's all about the "staycation."

What's not to like about fish and chips and a game of crazy golf by the seaside or enjoying a marshmallow over a campfire at the Latitude music festival in eastern England that is being attended this weekend by some 40,000 people?

Still, the numbers venturing abroad are certainly on the rise, partly as a result of the U.K.'s rapid rollout of coronavirus vaccines that has seen nearly 70% of the adult population receive the requisite two doses and over 87% get at least one dose.

The British government, which has been operating a traffic-light system for overseas travel, recently tweaked its rules to make it simpler for fully-vaccinated individuals and their families to travel. Now, anyone arriving back in England from "amber" list destinations — including Greece, Spain and the United States — are exempt from the government's 10-day quarantine requirement subject to testing requirements.

Although France is on the "amber" list, anyone returning from there to England still has to quarantine for 10 days amid concerns over the beta variant first identified in South Africa.

Industry leaders said the changes have helped buoy up the travel sector, one of the worst affected during the pandemic, as well as many destinations in Europe that rely heavily on British tourists.

Airports and airlines across the U.K. are enjoying their busiest weekend of the year so far. London's Heathrow Airport said it was expecting about 129,000 passengers on Saturday and Sunday. Though welcome, that's about half the number it saw two years ago.

"We look forward to welcoming back even more passengers as vaccination rates climb in the U.K. and abroad," said CEO John Holland-Kaye.

Gatwick, Britain's No. 2 airport, was expecting between 25,000 to 27,000 passengers a day over the weekend. Again that's far lower than the equivalent weekend in pre-COVID times, when it could see around 100,000 travellers a day.

Holiday company Tui said it has almost double the number of passengers traveling Friday to Sunday compared with last weekend. It will be resuming flights to a series of destinations including the Greek islands of Kefalonia and Skiathos, and Marrakech in Morocco.

For most people in Britain, though, getting on those flights will have to wait. There's always next year.

Beware of budget gimmicks in push for massive spending deals

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators fashioning a pair of colossal bills that would deliver more than \$4 trillion for infrastructure, health care, environment and other initiatives insist they will fully pay for both plans.

Will they?

In a Washington ritual as reliable as panic-buying when light snow is forecast, both parties have long relied on toothless budget gimmicks to help finance their priorities. The contrivances let lawmakers claim they are being fiscally responsible while inflicting little pain on voters and contributors with tax increases or spending cuts.

Here's how they may do it again:

THE PRICE TAG

For political and procedural reasons, Congress' Democratic leaders are slicing President Joe Biden's domestic spending agenda into two bills. One is bipartisan effort providing about \$1 trillion for roads, broadband and other public works projects. Bargainers hope to clinch a final deal and unveil this coming week.

The other bill would aim \$3.5 trillion at expanding Medicare coverage, slowing climate change and providing free prekindergarten and community college. This expansive package, which would also fatten tax credits for children and health care and help immigrants become citizens, is a Democrats-only push expected to take months and draw unanimous Republican opposition.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 78 of 79

With Washington already projected to spend \$63 trillion over the coming decade, an additional \$4 trillion would be just a 6% boost. Even so, finding \$4 trillion in tax increases or spending cuts to pay its costs would be prohibitively painful for politicians.

GETTING REAL

Some of the savings proposals are legitimate.

To pay for much of the \$3.5 trillion package, Democrats led by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore., want to increase taxes on the wealthy, big corporations and companies earning income abroad.

Raising more would be tough. Lawmakers are boxed in between Biden's pledge to not raise taxes on people earning less than \$400,000 annually and GOP opposition to unraveling President Donald Trump's big 2017 tax cut. "It's the perfect storm for not doing anything real on the revenue side," said William Hoagland, a former top Republican Senate aide.

Also real are proposals to beef up the IRS budget so it can collect more unpaid taxes and, perhaps, to claim the bills themselves would generate more government revenue by stimulating economic activity.

But either could go too far.

PICKING THE UMPIRES

No one doubts that a more muscular IRS would pry more taxes out of scofflaws. Bolstering programs that help people stay healthy, get educated and move goods more efficiently undoubtedly help the economy hum.

The question, though, is exactly how much federal revenue those two ideas would yield. Government agencies and outside analysts have widely divergent views, especially for forecasting legislation's impact on economic growth.

Lawmakers eager to claim they have fully financed their proposals could gravitate to the highest plausible numbers they can find, to critics' chagrin.

"In basketball, you don't get to choose your own ref," said Marc Goldwein, senior policy director at the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

DUELING IRS NUMBERS

The Congressional Budget Office, lawmakers' nonpartisan accountant, estimated last year that Congress could collect \$61 billion more in taxes over the next decade by giving the IRS an additional \$20 billion.

Others are more generous, which could help Democrats eager to finance their \$3.5 trillion proposal.

The Penn Wharton Budget Model, a nonpartisan research group, projected that Biden's proposed \$79 billion boost for the IRS would produce \$480 billion more revenue. The Treasury Department pegged the revenue increase under Biden's plan at \$779 billion.

AN OLD, UNRELIABLE FRIEND

Documents show the bipartisan infrastructure proposal and Democrats' separate \$3.5 trillion measure may both claim savings from long-term economic growth the bills would supposedly spur.

That concept is called dynamic scoring, and Republicans have long embraced it to paint their tax cuts as cost-free. That's not happened.

"The tax cuts will pay for themselves," Steven Mnuchin, Trump's Treasury secretary, said repeatedly about the 2017 tax law. Instead, The CBO estimated that even including increased economic activity, that measure will drive up federal deficits by \$1.9 trillion over a decade.

Democrats have long mocked dynamic scoring as a Republican ruse for claiming savings that may never materialize to hide the true cost of their tax-cutting agenda. Among its most virulent critics has been Senate Budget Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., who in 2015 called it "voodoo economics." Sanders' office declined comment for this story.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 25, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 018 ~ 79 of 79

Yet Democrats argue that if tax cuts can spawn economic growth, so can fortifying productive programs such as education and transportation. That's legitimate if you don't put "so much spin on the ball that you're basically closing a budget gap with magical thinking," said Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii.

Citing past GOP support for dynamic scoring, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., said, "Maybe on this topic I would just say, 'Welcome to the team.'"

The CBO has provided some dynamic scoring estimates but cautioned that the projections are uncertain.

REPEALING A GHOST REGULATION

Both bills' negotiators are ready to claim savings by assuming Biden will repeal Trump administration regulations on drug rebates. The CBO projected those rules would cost the government \$177 billion over a decade, so blocking them would reduce expected spending.

But Trump's rule has never been implemented. With Washington running record-setting budget deficits annually, claiming savings by repealing the rule and using that money to finance spending bills would be like a deeply indebted family canceling a \$50,000 vacation and using those "savings" to buy something else.

OTHER QUESTION MARKS

Senate Democrats say some proposed tax credits and spending in their \$3.5 trillion bill may last less than the measure's full 10 years. That would constrain the legislation's price tag.

Both parties have a history of putting early expiration dates on programs that, like some of these, are so popular that a future Congress will likely renew them. Republicans did that with much of President George W. Bush's 2001 tax cut, which was mostly extended.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget says the full 10-year cost of the policies in Democrats' \$3.5 trillion plan is \$5 trillion.

Other questionable proposals include selling oil from the government's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which inevitably gets refilled, sometimes at higher cost, and taking credit for proceeds from the federal auction of 5G spectrum airwaves, which is happening anyway.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, July 25, the 206th day of 2021. There are 159 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 25, 2000, a New York-bound Air France Concorde crashed outside Paris shortly after takeoff, killing all 109 people on board and four people on the ground; it was the first-ever crash of the supersonic jet.

On this date:

In 1866, Ulysses S. Grant was named General of the Army of the United States, the first officer to hold the rank.

In 1898, the United States invaded Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War.

In 1943, Benito Mussolini was dismissed as premier of Italy by King Victor Emmanuel III, and placed under arrest. (However, Mussolini was later rescued by the Nazis, and re-asserted his authority.)

In 1946, the United States detonated an atomic bomb near Bikini Atoll in the Pacific in the first underwater test of the device.

In 1952, Puerto Rico became a self-governing commonwealth of the United States.

In 1956, the Italian liner SS Andrea Doria collided with the Swedish passenger ship Stockholm off the New England coast late at night and began sinking; 51 people — 46 from the Andrea Doria, five from the Stockholm — were killed. (The Andrea Doria capsized and sank the following morning.)

In 1961, in a televised address on the Berlin Crisis, President John F. Kennedy announced a series of steps aimed at bolstering the military in the face of Soviet demands that Western powers withdraw from the German city's western sector.