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“One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood.”

-Seneca

Chicken Soup
for the Soul



High School Fall Sports Meeting!!
August 3rd from 6-7pm in the Arena!

Service Notice: Doris Zoellner

Funeral Services for Doris Zoellner, 92, of Groton will be 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 4th at the Groton United Methodist Church. Pastor Brandon Dunham will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the funeral chapel on Tuesday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Doris passed away July 29, 2021 at her home in Groton.





HOW HIRING!

Day shift and night shift assemblers!

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

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

Britton



TRUSS PROS
A Division of US



**Precision
Wall Systems**
A Division of US

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, August 1, 2021

Communion in Worship

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

Sunday, August 8, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Aug. 1, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship/Communion

Monday, July 25, 2021

6:30 a.m.: Bible Study

VBS runs Monday through Thursday 6:30-8:30pm

Sunday, Aug. 8, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30pm Groton

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

Weekday

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

Sat 10am Newman Center

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Each morning before Weekday Mass at 7:15am

Tues 3:45pm Turton

Confessions:

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

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

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Aug. 1, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study

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

11 a.m.: Zion's Worship with communion

Sunday, Aug. 8, 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

State B American Legion Baseball Tournament

Big Stone City Struggles To Find Groove Against Vermillion

Big Stone City Post 229 couldn't keep up with Vermillion Post 1 and fell 14-0 on Saturday.

One bright spot for Big Stone City Post 229 was a single by Hunter Merritt in the first inning.

Jake Jensen pitched Vermillion Post 1 to victory. The hurler lasted three innings, allowing two hits and zero runs while striking out four and walking zero. Ben Burbach and Clayton Sorenson entered the game out of the bullpen and helped to close out the game in relief.

Deaven Boots took the loss for Big Stone City Post 229. Boots lasted three innings, allowing nine hits and nine runs while striking out one.

Alex Meyer, Merritt, Carter Lee, and Dru Boots all had one hit to lead Big Stone City Post 229.

Vermillion Post 1 racked up 13 hits. Timothy Tracy, Jensen, Dylan Thelen, Connor Saunders, and Jacob Chaussee all collected multiple hits for Vermillion Post 1. Tracy led Vermillion Post 1 with three hits in four at bats. Vermillion Post 1 stole nine bases during the game as two players stole more than one. Willis Robertson led the way with two. Vermillion Post 1 didn't commit a single error in the field. Tracy had the most chances in the field with eight.

Groton Grabs Lead In Fifth Inning To Defeat Winner/Colome

Groton Post 39 took the lead late and defeated Winner/Colome Post 169 4-2 on Saturday. The game was tied at two with Groton Post 39 batting in the bottom of the fifth when Alex Morris singled on a 3-1 count, scoring one run.

In the second inning, Winner/Colome Post 169 got their offense started. Charley Pravecek drove in one when Pravecek singled.

Chandler Larson took the win for Groton Post 39. The pitcher allowed five hits and two runs over seven innings, striking out eight and walking one.

Kameron Meiners took the loss for Winner/Colome Post 169. The hurler went four innings, allowing four runs on six hits, striking out one and walking one.

Groton Post 39 tallied seven hits. Morris and Tate Larson all managed multiple hits for Groton Post 39. Larson and Morris each collected two hits to lead Groton Post 39.

Aiden Barfuss led Winner/Colome Post 169 with two hits in three at bats.

Tabor Claims Lead In Sixth Inning To Defeat Redfield

Tabor Post 183 took the lead late and defeated Redfield Post 92 5-3 on Saturday. With two outs in the bottom of the sixth Trent Herrboldt singled on a 3-2 count, scoring one run.

Tabor Post 183 captured the lead in the first inning. Tabor Post 183 scored one run when Kaleb Kubal doubled.

Redfield Post 92 evened things up at three in the top of the fifth inning when Cooper Hainy singled on a 0-1 count, scoring one run.

Nolan Carda led the Tabor Post 183 to victory on the hill. The pitcher allowed five hits and three runs over six innings, striking out one. Herrboldt threw one inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Keaton Rohlf took the loss for Redfield Post 92. The hurler lasted four innings, allowing six hits and four runs.

Tabor Post 183 tallied eight hits in the game. Kubal and Carda all had multiple hits for Tabor Post 183. Kubal went 3-for-3 at the plate to lead Tabor Post 183 in hits.

Hainy led Redfield Post 92 with three hits in four at bats.

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Lake Norden/Badger Can't Catch Up To Madison

Lake Norden/Badger Post 260 watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in a 9-2 loss to Madison Post 25 on Saturday. Madison Post 25 scored on a single by Sam Olson and a groundout by Colby Vostad in the first inning.

The Lake Norden/Badger Post 260 struggled to put runs on the board and had a tough time defensively containing Madison Post 25, giving up nine runs.

Madison Post 25 got things started in the first inning. Olson singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring two runs.

Riley Kearin was credited with the victory for Madison Post 25. The fireballer went six innings, allowing two runs on two hits and striking out four. Peyton Wolf threw one inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Jackson Noem took the loss for Lake Norden/Badger Post 260. The hurler went six innings, allowing seven runs on seven hits and striking out six.

Noem led Lake Norden/Badger Post 260 with two hits in four at bats.

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Today's Schedule

Note: Game times are approximate. After the first game, each succeeding game will start 30 minutes after the previous game has ended.

Sun, Aug 01

12:00PM CDT Start

Groton Post 39

@ Redfield Post 92

Sun, Aug 01

2:30PM CDT Start

Vermillion Post 1

@ Lake Norden/Badger Post 260

Sun, Aug 01

5:00PM CDT Start

Madison Post 25

@ Tabor Post 183

JAMES VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS 64TH ANNUAL MEETING

**Thursday, August 5th at 9am
Groton Area High School**

Registration begins at 8:30am in the old gym.

All members who register for the meeting will receive a **\$20 credit** on their JVT account.

\$500, \$250 (2) and \$100 (2) JVT credits to be given away!



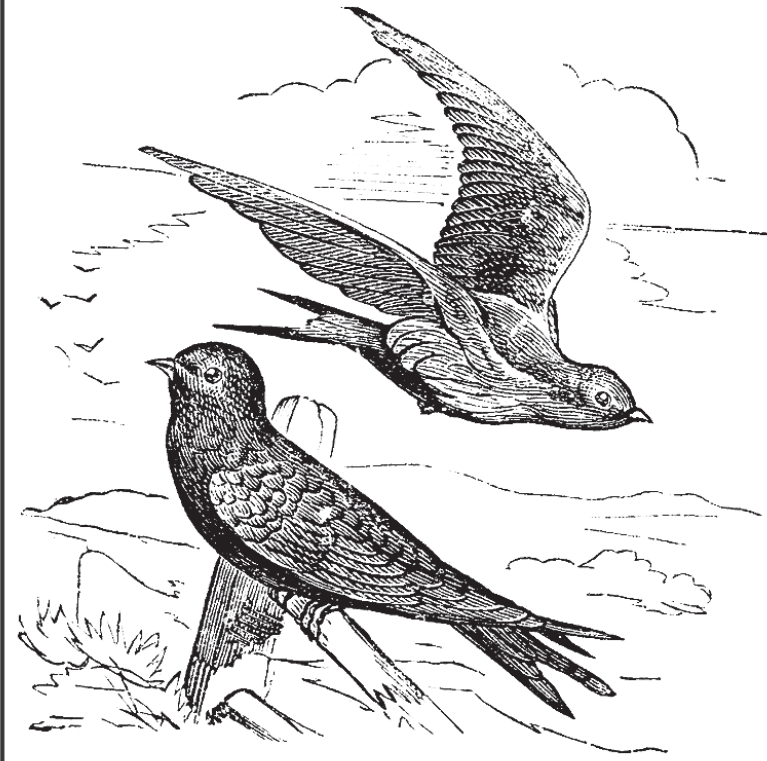
**JAMES
VALLEY**
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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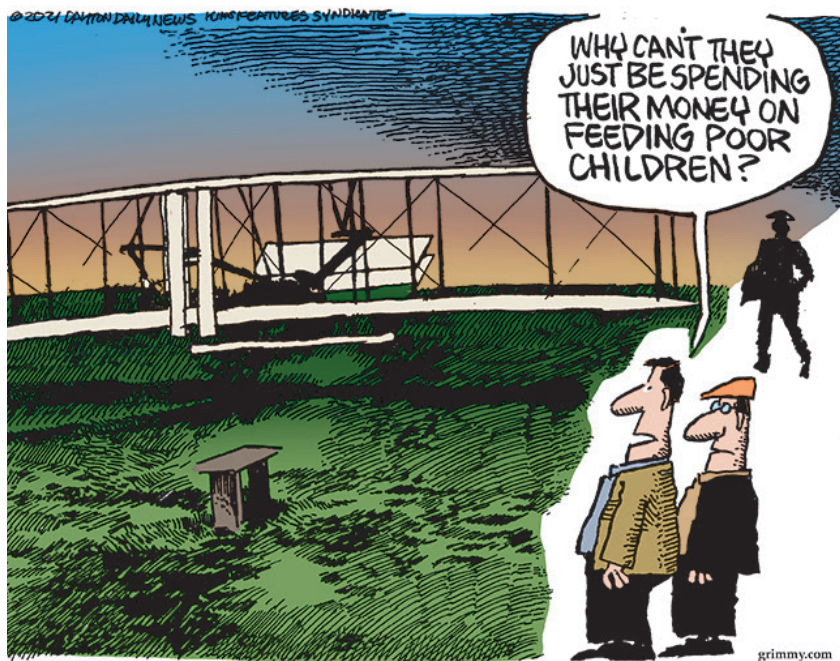
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

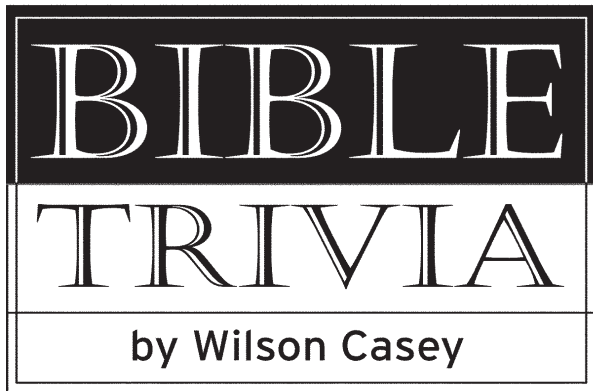


*Do not revile the king
even in your thoughts,
or curse the rich
in your bedroom,
because a bird in the sky
may carry your words,
and a bird on the wing
may report what you say.*

🌀 ECCLESIASTES 10:20 🌀

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

2. Who used the excuse, "My family is poor, and I am the least in my father's house"? *Aaron, David, Gideon, Jeroboam*

3. With what kind of leaves did Adam and Eve attempt to cover their nakedness? *Sycamore, Fig, Palm, Grape*

4. From Judges 7, with how many men did Gideon defeat the Midianites? *3, 30, 300, 3000*

5. Who was the mother of Ishmael? *Tabitha, Hagar, Ruth, Mary*

6. What was the homeland of Job? *Thyatira, Ur, Corinth, Uz*

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Gideon; 3) Fig; 4) 300; 5) Hagar; 6) Uz

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

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Southwestern Pasta Salad

What could be better than gathering together with family and friends, and celebrating with food, fellowship and fun? Take this layered pasta salad to the next "potluck" and be sure to enjoy yourself!

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

1/4 cup fat-free Ranch dressing

2 cups finely shredded lettuce

1 cup chopped fresh tomato

1/4 cup chopped green onion

1/4 cup chopped green bell pepper

3/4 cup fat-free mayonnaise

1/2 cup chunky salsa

3/4 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese

1. In a medium bowl, combine rotini pasta and Ranch dressing. In an 8-by-8-inch dish, layer lettuce, rotini pasta, tomato, onion and green pepper.

2. In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise and salsa; evenly spread dressing mixture over vegetables. Sprinkle Cheddar cheese evenly over top.

3. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Divide into 6 servings.

* Each serving equals: 143 calories, 3g fat, 7g protein, 22g carb., 465mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1 Vegetable, 1/2 Meat.

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FLASH GORDON

By JIM KEEFE
7-25

AS THE STORM BUILDS IN FEROCITY, A LONE FIGURE SLOWLY SUCSUMBS TO THE ELEMENTS, THE WORDS CRACKLING THROUGH HER COMMUNICATOR ONLY SERVING TO HELP WEAKEN HER RESOLVE.



WHY DID TENGSI DESERT THE SEARCH PARTY, CAPTAIN?

THE LIZARD-MEN ARE HER TRIBE'S MOST FEARED NATURAL ENEMIES, MISS ARDEN.

SHE MUST HAVE GOTTEN SPOOKED.

"SPOOKED."

NOT A WORD YOU'D USE TO DESCRIBE A LIFETIME TORTURED BY MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

HER BABY SISTER HAD CALLED THEM SLITHERS.

AND AS THE WIND HOWLS ABOUT HER, TENGSI CAN HEAR HER SISTER SCREAMING JUST AS SHE DID THAT HORRIBLE NIGHT... SCREAMING AS SHE WAS TAKEN AWAY.



ONLY A CHILD HERSELF, TENGSI HAD FLED... A MOMENT THAT HAS TORN AWAY AT HER SOUL EVER SINCE.

FLASH IS GONE.

KRACKLE!

TENGSI HAD SAID SHE'D FOLLOW HIM ANYWHERE, CAPTAIN.

HOW COULD SHE HAVE JUST... CHOKED & RUN AWAY?

TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

IF TROUBLE SHOTS MAKE UP A HIGH PROPORTION OF YOUR PLAY, IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO PRACTICE THEM OCCASIONALLY.

HERE'S THE TECHNIQUE YOU'LL MOSTLY NEED.

OPEN YOUR STANCE AND CLUBFACE. SET THE BALL FORWARD. PICK THE CLUB UP QUICKLY WITH AN EARLY WRIST BREAK, THEN HIT SHARPLY DOWN WITH YOUR RIGHT HAND.

THIS WILL PRODUCE A HIGH-FLYING SHOT THAT WILL LAND SOFTLY AND STOP QUICKLY.



Studies Don't Support CBD Oil for Depression

DEAR DR. ROACH: My son is taking hemp-based CBD oil for depression. He purchased this at a health food store. His doctor prescribed pills that he was unable to tolerate due to suicidal thoughts. He is unable to go outside when taking CBD. We would like to know if it will show up in a drug test as part of a job interview. Should he be taking it? -- D.

ANSWER: There are animal studies and some preliminary data suggesting that cannabidiol, a nonpsychoactive substance found in cannabis, might be effective for anxiety and depressive disorders. I hope that CBD will be proven to be a useful treatment for depression, as what we have now

certainly isn't perfect. However, there are not yet high-quality studies supporting this use. The fact that your son can't go out while taking the CBD suggests to me that it may not be effective. While the pills he had previously cannot be used, there are many treatments available for depression that have better safety and effectiveness data than CBD.

Most forensic drug testing uses THC and its metabolites, so if what your son is taking is truly CBD, then it should not be identified during testing as THC. There is a chance that the "CBD oil" he purchased has THC in it: In one study, 57% of CBD oils sold were found to have measurable THC, which would show up on a drug test. Unfortunately, 25% of the oils contained no CBD at all.

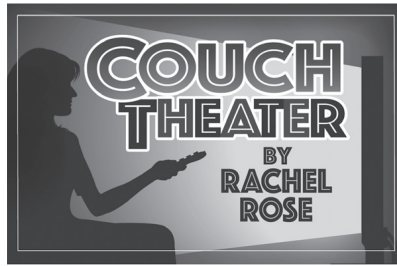
I remain convinced that these drugs, THC and CBD, need to be properly studied, and when found to be useful, tested for purity and content in the same way as pharmaceuticals.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I've been taking an ACE inhibitor and a calcium channel blocker for the past four months for high blood pressure as advised by my cardiologist. In my blood test a month ago, my vitamin D level was at 16. I'm also taking weekly vitamin B12 as advised by my neurologist. Can I take vitamin D2 (50,000 IU) as a weekly dose for six weeks to overcome vitamin D deficiency, or would it interfere with blood calcium balance? -- B.S.

ANSWER: Vitamin D will not interfere with the action of your ACE inhibitor or calcium channel blocker. Vitamin D usually has a very small (if any) effect on blood calcium levels, as these are tightly regulated through multiple means, especially the parathyroid hormone level and the kidneys.

I see many people who are given a six-week course of high-dose vitamin D2, such as the 50,000 units weekly for six weeks you were prescribed. I do not prescribe it that way, since many people wrongly feel that this will "cure" their low vitamin D, and they stop monitoring it after the course of treatment. Many people have inadequate vitamin D levels, and although there is some disagreement about what levels need to be treated, yours is in the range where everyone agrees treatment is necessary. For those who need it, ongoing supplementation of vitamin D is necessary, whether through pills, diet or sun exposure. For most people with a level as low as yours, oral supplementation is by far the most effective and safest treatment. I prefer 1,000-2,000 IU of vitamin D3 daily as a starting point for supplementation in most.

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



We Are Lady Parts — Occasionally you find a show with a plot that's both ridiculously silly AND socially relevant. This time, that plot revolves around a group of four Muslim women who start a punk band and need their first gig ... and a lead guitarist. As expected, shenanigans begin with guitarist auditions, until the perfect musician joins this sisterhood of hash anthems sour girl power. The band and the series are about representation and being heard, but this show is absolutely a comedy, and a lot of the jokes are at that perfect level of humor and uncomfortableness. It's the show you didn't realize you needed right now. (Peacock)

Myth & Mogul: John DeLorean — Before Doc Brown turned one into a time machine in "Back to the Future," the DeLorean sports car was the brainchild of a brilliant automotive engineer. Driven, greedy and larger than life, John DeLorean left the big-name car manufacturers and set out on his own to create a legendary driving machine, and he was not above using lies and deceit to reach his goal. Through interviews with his family, former co-workers and industry insiders, plus extensive media clips, this three-part docuseries follows the rise and fall of the creator of a 1980s icon. (Netflix)

Lost in Oz, Season 1 — An Amazon Studios original 3D animated children's series, "Lost in Oz" is a modernized take on the adventures of Dorothy Gale II and her pup, Toto, as they try to find their way home from Oz (and other locales where they find themselves stuck). Much more action-driven than the 1939 "Oz" movie, this updated continuation also adds some new friends to Dorothy's gang. Though

geared toward kids, the series is really fun to watch, with highly detailed scenery, and is smart enough to keep adults engaged, too. (Prime Video)

Romy and Michele's High School Reunion (R) — This week's in-case-you-missed-it must-watch movie is full of '90s fashion, best-friend hijinks and choreographed dance routines. Mira Sorvino and Lisa Kudrow star as Romy and Michele, high-school best friends taking a road trip to their graduating class's 10-year reunion. Intent on appearing successful, they concoct life stories that they hope will finally make them cool to the popular crowd.



Paramount+

Scene from "We Are Lady Parts"

But in a predictable twist, the popular crowd has its own lies to share. The hysterical supporting cast includes Janeane Garofalo, Camryn Manheim and Alan Cumming as fellow classmates who prove that no one's life is what others assume it to be. (Hulu)

Cesar Millan: Better Human Better Dog, Season 1 — A new series by long-time NatGeo fixture Cesar Millan arrives just in time for all those folks who adopted puppies during the pandemic, and who now realize they skipped the training period of dog ownership. The dog whisperer's current offering again involves home visits to desperate dog owners who don't know what else to do with their misbehaving mutts. Millan's ultimate goal is creating calm and confident pet parents who discover tranquility through training. (Disney+)

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1. Which single artist released "Hold Tight" as a dance cover in 1977?

2. Name the singer-songwriter who released "All by Myself."

3. What was the first Jackson Five song to top the charts?

4. Which Beatle released "Got My Mind Set on You" as a single?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Sometimes a love won't let go, Hard as I try I know it shows, Everybody's telling me you'll be over her eventually."

Answers

1. Vicki Sue Robinson. The song only reached No. 67 on the Billboard chart, but went to No. 2 on the

dance chart.

2. Eric Carmen, in 1976. The verse is said to be based on Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. It's not the only Rachmaninoff music that Carmen used as the basis for a song.

3. "I Want You Back," in 1970. It was first performed on "The Hollywood Palace" TV show in late 1969. Michael Jackson was 11 years old at the time.

4. George Harrison, in 1987.

5. "Who's Holding Donna Now," by DeBarge, in 1985. The song shot to No. 1 on the Adult contemporary chart, as did their first top 10 release, "Rhythm of the Night." DeBarge was made up of family members, mostly siblings.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



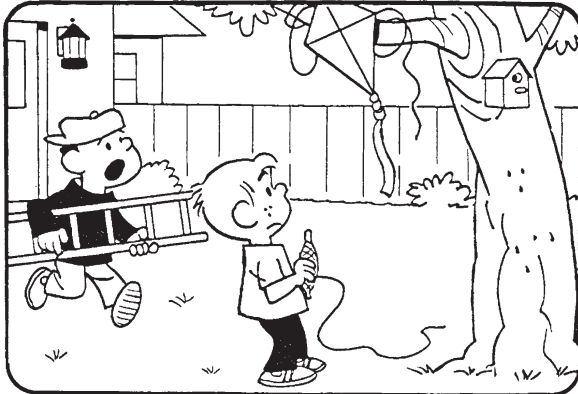
GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by} Wagner



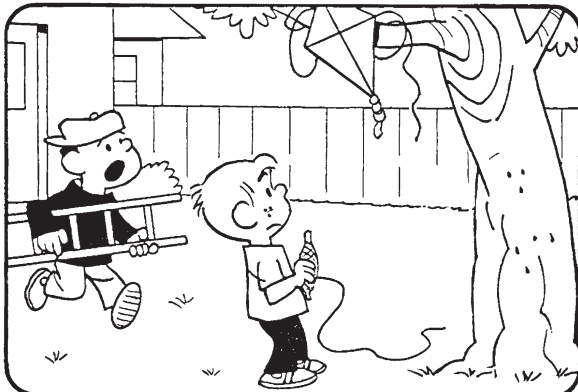
"Everyone's a critic!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Light fixture is missing. 2. Ladder is shorter. 3. Body is slimmer. 4. Kite tail is shorter. 5. Bush is missing. 6. Bird house is missing.

New! 24 HOCUS FOCUS puzzles \$3.50 • 24 Volumes • Order at: rbmamall.com



- Coffee filters make wonderful glass cleaners. They leave behind no streaks and no residual lint.

- Berries are in season, and there's no greater time to stock up. But don't feel like you have to make jam out of all the berries. Freeze in a single layer and transfer to a freezer-safe bag or container. Later they can be popped into muffins and quick breads, as well as eaten straight out of the bag for a delicious treat.

- “Do you love burgers? Here's a great thing our family does that saves money and is very handy: When ground beef goes on sale, we buy a large quantity and premake many burger patties, seasoned and shaped just as we like them. Then we separate them with butcher's paper cut into squares. We put them in stacks, and then into empty bread bags

to store in the freezer. When we are getting ready to cook out, the patties don't have to be all the way defrosted, just put on the grill and cooked up!” — *A.J. in Florida*

- Okra, which is at its peak July through September, makes an excellent stew thickener. But it's quite yummy on the grill as well, brushed with olive oil and lightly seasoned. Just be sure you don't wash it until you are ready to use it. There's a natural protective coating on it, and if you wash it off, it'll get slimy.

- Old socks can be fitted around the head of an old mop or Swiffer base. Spray with cleaner and clean away. When you are done, remove the sock and launder.

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

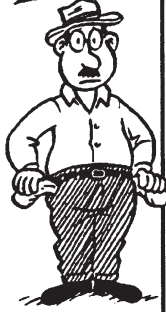
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RIDDLE CARD

1. What kin is the door to the doormat?
2. Where is a good place to go when you're broke?
3. What question must be answered "Yes"?
4. What was the best bet ever made?
5. What do you lose every time you stand up?



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Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

Illustrated by David Coulson

1.	E						D
2.		E					D
3.			E			D	
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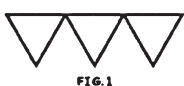


FIND THE BIG WORDS!

Using the definitions and the anagrams below, you must find the eight eight-letter words that fit into the framework pictured on the left.

For each definition, the letters in the two anagram words must be unscrambled and used to form the word asked for.

Answers: 1. Just a step father. 2. Go to work. 3. "What does Y-E-E-S spell?" 4. The alphabet. 5. Your lap.



A TRIANGULAR WAGER! Lay out 9 sticks on the table, as shown in Fig. 1, and bet your friends that they can't move 3 of the sticks to new positions and create 5 triangles.



Answer: Place them as shown in Fig. 2. You now have 4 small triangles and 1 large one.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Type of invitation.
2. A great summertime drink.
3. He guards and herds animals.
4. A great place for a race.
5. Wrongdoings.
6. An ill-mannered act.
7. Every car has one.
8. A sturdy blue cloth.

ANAGRAM:

- drag + even
- dome + lean
- hogs + deep
- weed + pays
- dims + seed
- dens + sure
- tore + dome
- gear + dune

LINK-UPS! Here's a list of 12 short words, divided into two columns. Turn them into six longer words by linking them together. To do this, draw a line from one word in the left column to one word in the right.

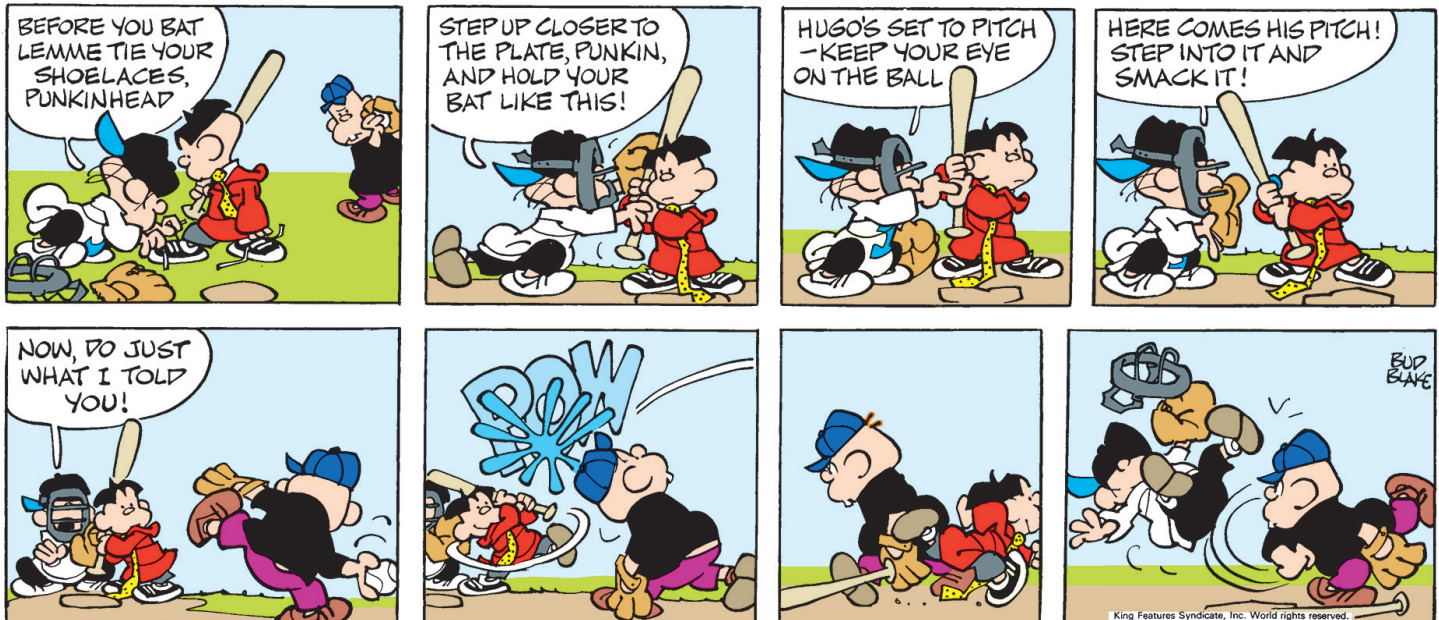
1. MIL	ELL
2. NET	BLD
3. OUTS	LED
4. RAM	DISH
5. MAD	HER
6. PAL	AGES

Answers: Milages, nether, outsell, rambled, maddish, palled.

Answers: 1. Engraved. 2. Lemonade. 3. Sheepdog. 4. Speedway. 5. Misdeeds. 6. Rudeness. 7. Odometer. 8. Dungaree.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Glitz partner
- 5 Body powder
- 9 Use a straw
- 12 Andean land
- 13 Jannings of old films
- 14 Travail
- 15 Former Cubs slugger
- 17 Tolkien creature
- 18 Porgy's love
- 19 Witherspoon of "Wild"
- 21 Inventor Nikola
- 24 Pugilist's weapon
- 25 Yard tool
- 26 "CSI" procedures

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
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15				16						17		
			18					19	20			
21	22	23					24					
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33			34						35			
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38	39					40	41					
42				43	44					45	46	47
48				49					50			
51				52					53			

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 30 Egg (Pref.) | one | 7 Fleur-de- — | Martinez |
| 31 Topped with froth | 48 Mine material | 8 Gem's feature | 29 Beheld |
| 32 Picnic dessert | 49 Sunrise direction | 9 Ideal place on a tennis racket | 31 Heeded dental advice |
| 33 Like ghost towns | 50 Counterfeit | 10 Charged bits | 34 Feedbag morsel |
| 35 Dog's treasure | 51 Petrol | 11 Seeger or Sampras | 35 Obstreperous |
| 36 Cambodia neighbor | 52 Obligation | 16 Verily | 37 Flamenco cheer |
| 37 "What the Butler Saw" playwright | 53 Meditative practice | 20 Jargon suffix | 38 Online journal |
| 38 Ink stains | DOWN | 21 Walked (on) | 39 Turkish money |
| 40 Onetime "This Old House" host Bob | 1 Family docs | 22 Roof overhang | 40 Expansive |
| 42 Back talk | 2 Grazing land | 23 Aspen attractions | 41 — -bitty |
| 43 "Georgia on My Mind," for | 3 Branch | 24 Notoriety | 44 Greek cross |
| | 4 Speak unclearly | 26 "— you're told!" | 45 Discoverer's call |
| | 5 Dick Tracy's love | 27 Rebel Turner | 46 Pester |
| | 6 Hebrew prophet | 28 Ex-Yankee | 47 "Today" rival, briefly |

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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LAFF - A - DAY



"Hi. You probably don't remember me..."

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

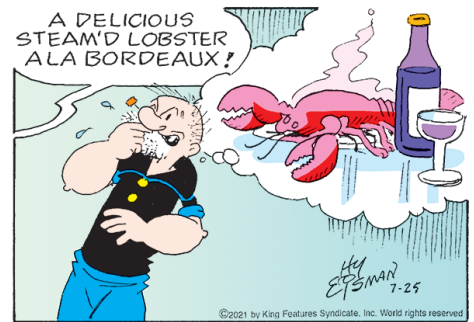
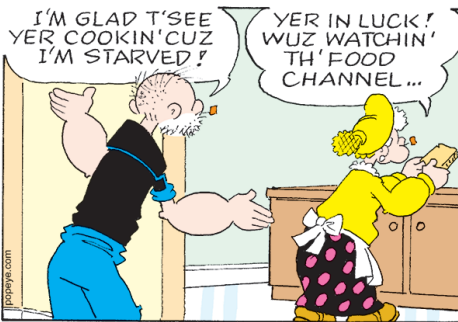
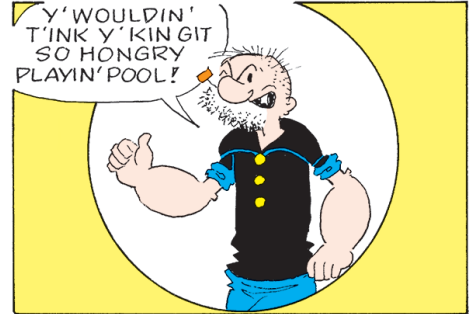
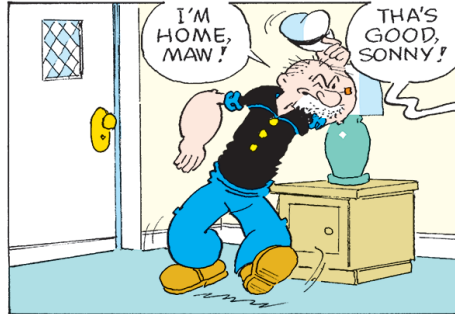
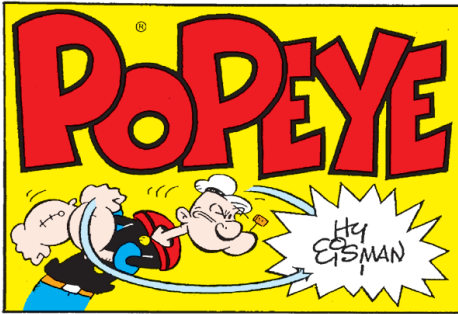


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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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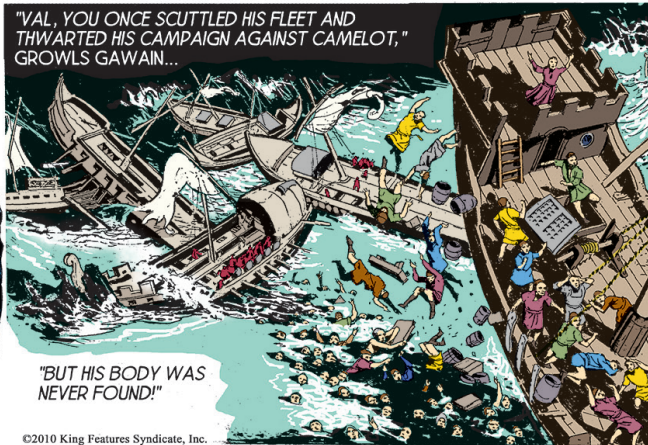
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Hal Foster's
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

HORRIDUS! THE VILLAIN WHO ONCE BLACKMAILED THE WORLD IS ALSO BEHIND ALETA'S KIDNAPPING.



"VAL, YOU ONCE SCUTTLED HIS FLEET AND THWARTED HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST CAMELOT," GROWLS GAWAIN...

"BUT HIS BODY WAS NEVER FOUND!"

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SILBUG INTERRUPTS: "TRUTHFULLY, WE CARE NOTHING FOR YOUR SURFACE SQUABBLES. OUR CONCERN LIES WITH THE REBELLION HE HAS CONJURED DOWN HERE."



"HIS FOLLOWERS' ABDUCTION OF YOUR WOMEN WAS THE FINAL STRAW. WE TOOK ACTION - HORRIDUS' MINIONS WERE AMBUSHED UPON THEIR RETURN TO THIS HAVEN."



"OUR ATTACK BROKE HIS ARMY'S SPINE. UNFORTUNATELY, HORRIDUS HIMSELF, SURROUNDED BY HIS PERSONAL GUARD, ESCAPED WITH TWO CAPTIVES."

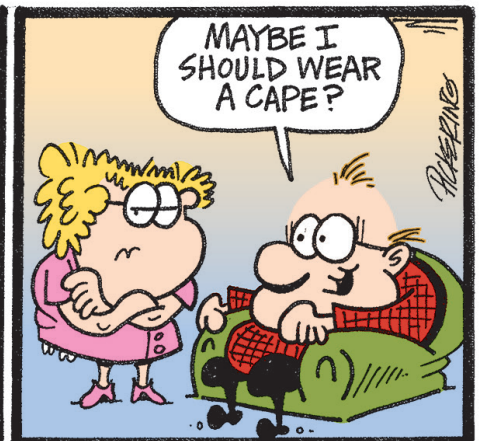
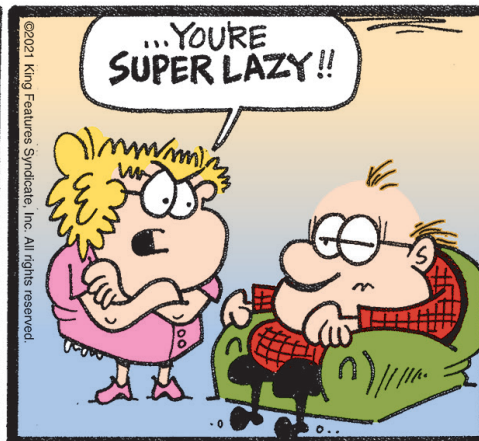
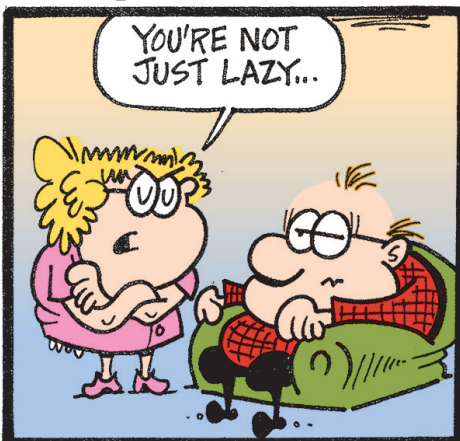
"AND THIS IS WHY YOU HAVE BEEN ALLOWED IN. WE WOULD PREFER TO LEAVE THE HUMAN MISCREANT TO HUMAN JUSTICE..."

NEXT:
End
game

Gianni
5-30-10

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Save Money With Phone Plans, Price Matching

With the price of everything going up, we need to save our dollars every place we can. Here are two ideas:

PHONE PLANS — If you want to save money on your cellphone plan or the cost of a new phone, there are a dozen or so providers that offer reduced-rate plans for seniors. Some offer a new phone, some will let you use your existing phone and many will let you keep your current phone number. Most offer unlimited talk and text, but prices will vary based on download speeds and data caps. Most also don't require a contract, but if part of the deal is to buy a new phone from them, you might run into a penalty if you cancel before the phone is paid for.

Call around to the phone service providers in your area and ask about senior plans. Be sure to look at their websites to check out the phones. You might need larger buttons or other special features. Better yet, if they have a store near you, go look at the phones in per-

son. Don't let yourself be talked into a long contract that you don't want.

PRICE MATCHING — This is a good way to get deals on things you want if you hunt for bargains. Some stores make it their policy to match lower prices found elsewhere. You'll need to have proof, however, meaning they'll need to see the current price on the competitor's website. Your best bet is to call and ask whether they'll look online right from their store, or if it's enough for you to print out the competitor's online ad. It's mostly the bigger chains that have these policies, but even a local store might be willing to price match just to get your business.

Remember to ask for your senior discount everywhere you go!

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1. In a 2004 ESPN special called “Utilityman: The Quest for Cooperstown,” comedians Randy and Jason Sklar campaigned to get what player into the National Baseball Hall of Fame?

2. Pro Football Hall of Famer Steve Atwater was a hard-hitting safety for the Denver Broncos from 1989-98, but he played his final season in 1999 with what team?

3. In November 2014, what 47-year-old goaltending coach for the Buffalo Sabres suited up as an emergency backup netminder?

4. What Ohio State Buckeyes men’s basketball player was named Big Ten Co-Player of the Year in 1999 and won the Frances Pomeroy Naismith Award (for the best shorter-than-average player)

5. In 2001, the Baltimore Ravens were featured in the first season of what long-running HBO documenta-



ry series?

6. In roller derby, the players who score points and wear stars on their helmets are known as what?

7. “You got a beat-up glove, a home-made bat and a brand-new pair of shoes” are lyrics to what 1985 song by John Fogerty?

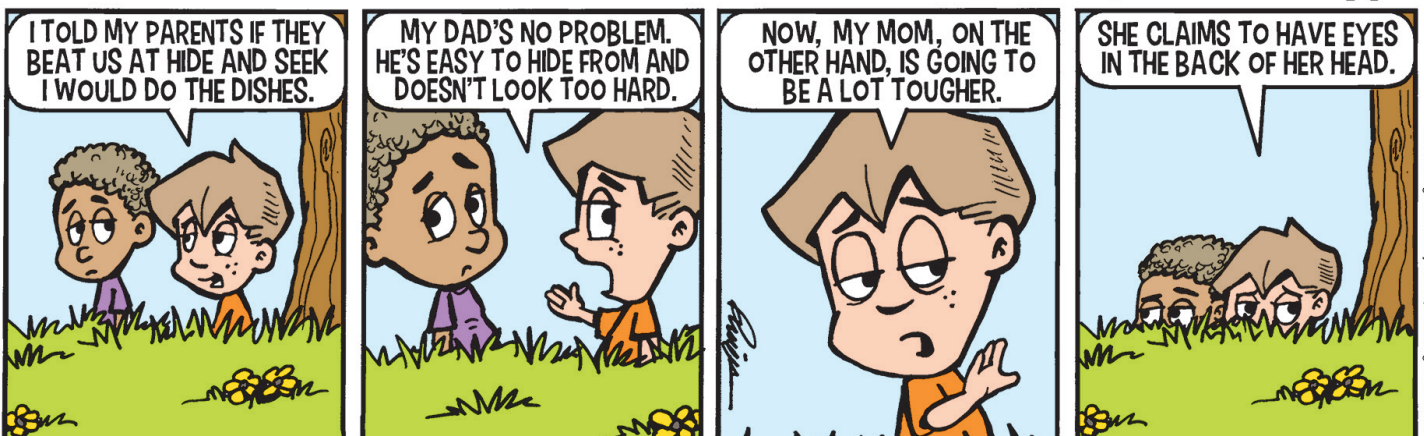
Answers

1. Jose Oquendo.
2. The New York Jets.
3. Arturs Irbe.
4. Scoonie Penn.
5. “Hard Knocks.”
6. The jammers.
7. “Centerfield.”

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Are Dog Treats Bad for Fido's Health?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I use dog treats to train my 18-month-old puppy, "Jif." At the dog park, an owner said that using treats is bad and that Jif will eventually get fat. That's hard to believe, as he is really energetic. He only responds when he knows there is a treat after each command. What do you say? — *Lee in Alexandria, Virginia*

DEAR LEE: Ah, to treat or not to treat! That's a big issue for many pet owners. Ultimately, you are in charge of Jif's training and health. Unsolicited advice from other dog owners is only a little helpful, at best.

I've interviewed and observed champion breeders and trainers, and one thing I've noted over the years is that some dogs get a treat at every turn, for seemingly every move they make.

Other dogs do fine with a treat at the end of their routine. And backstage, when show dogs are being groomed, primped and prepped? They're getting treat after treat. These are champion dogs in top shape.

Things to note with using treats:

- Treats help build a positive association with specific commands or actions.
- The pros use treats that are as healthy as possible: no byproducts, no preservatives. They're often homemade.
- Treats are cut into very small pieces. They can be given more frequently without adding too many calories.
- Dog treats don't replace meals. Make sure your puppy is fed on time each day with the recommended amount of food for his age and weight.

It's possible to replace some of Jif's treats with other positive associations. Praise, attention, a favorite toy — things that bring him joy. Build that anticipation of reward in different ways. Check out a few training books, or work with a dog trainer on new ways to reward Jif.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* The oleander is the official flower of the city of Hiroshima. It was the first to bloom again after the explosion of the atomic bomb in 1945.

* The Greek name for the mosquito is "anoph-eles," which means "good for nothing."

* The earliest written record that mentions the practice of medicine is Hammurabi's Code from the 18th century BC in Mesopotamia, which includes information for physicians about payments for successful treatments and punishments for medical failures. For example, payment was better for

curing the wealthy, but failing to do so could result in the loss of a hand.

* Live next door to a lottery winner? You might want to use caution while shopping: A 2016 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia found that you're more likely to go bankrupt thanks to trying to keep up with your neighbor's new spending habits.

* Charlton Heston was cast as Moses in the 1956 blockbuster movie "The Ten Commandments" partly because he resembled Michelangelo's famous statue of Moses.

* Calvin Graham was just 12 years old when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy following the attack on Pearl Harbor. He won a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart before the Navy found out how old he was (courtesy of his mother) and discharged him two days before his 13th birthday.

* Rocky Road ice cream was originally marketed during the Great Depression as a metaphor for coping with the economic crash.

* The term "coccyx" (more familiarly known as your tailbone) is derived from the Greek word kokkux, or "cuckoo," because its curved shape resembles the bird's beak.

* Benjamin Franklin introduced tofu to America in 1770.

Thought for the Day: "The life given us, by nature, is short, but the memory of a well-spent life is eternal." -- Marcus Tullius Cicero

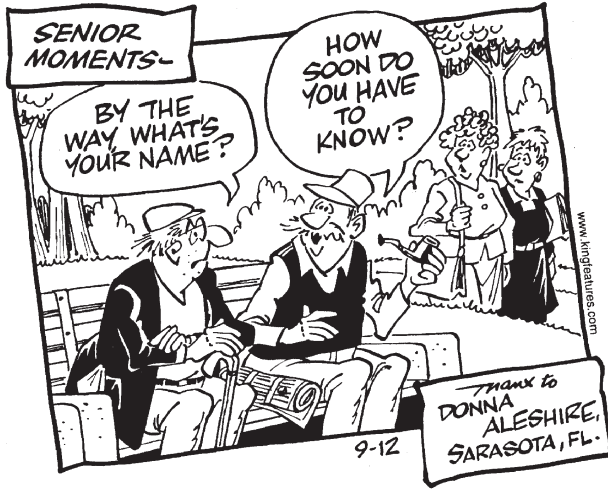
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO





Daisy fleabane



Often dismissed as weeds, these plants provide nectar and pollen for bees, flies, wasps and butterflies. Some insects, and animals such as deer, rabbits, groundhogs and livestock may feed on the entire plant. Daisy fleabane grows best in fields, along roadsides and around waste areas and helps to reduce soil erosion. - Brenda Weaver

Source: www.illinoiswildflowers.info

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

VA Grants to Help Homeless Veterans

More than 260 non-profit community programs across the country received portions of \$418 million in grants for the Support Services for Veteran Families program. Last year alone the Department of Veterans Affairs served 77,590 veterans and their 19,919 children in the program.

The SSVF program runs in all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, District of Columbia and Guam. Its main focus is homelessness and getting veterans and their families into permanent housing. The SSVF partners with community programs with all manner of help: case management, VA benefits, health care, child care, daily living services, legal assistance, transportation, financial planning, counseling and much more. In some cases, there are time-limited payments to landlords, utilities and moving companies if that helps a vet-

eran and family to stay in or get to permanent housing.

To learn more about the SSVF program, go online to www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf. There's a list of SSVF providers by state for programs all across the country, plus contact information and phone numbers. You also can call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AIDVET (1-877-424-3838).

The best website is www.va.gov/homeless, where you can click on Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRCs). That page also has a chat link. If you're in crisis, call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. Additionally, you can call your closest VA medical center. If you have no other options (no phone, no internet, are homeless or are at imminent risk for it), just go. Just show up at the medical center. If you are not yet homeless, contact them in advance, due to COVID restrictions.

One thing to keep in mind: These grants given to community programs are not bottomless buckets. Funding can and does run out, and there isn't more until the next disbursement. If you need help, apply now. Make your calls, get put on lists.

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

We're on more frequent reports yet because there is, unfortunately, way too much news to hold an additional day. It would be good if this lets up, but I am not hopeful. When we last talked, just three days ago, we were looking at a seven-day daily new-case average of 62,000 and change; we're now at 78,357; that's a nearly 26 percent increase in three days, and this is worse than anything we saw last summer, back when there were no vaccines at all. Thing is, when we were over 75,000 daily new cases last summer, we were on the way down from a surge; now we're still on the way up with no idea how high we will go. I can't really explain just how bad this is. Fifty-five percent of us live in a county with high transmission, and another 28 percent live in a county with substantial transmission; that's around 274 million of us in all, and it's 25 million more than two days ago. We're in real trouble here. We're at 40,626 hospitalizations, a 16.5 percent increase. And deaths are still hanging in there at a relatively lower number with a daily average today of 308, just over a six percent increase in three days. I'm still worried that this number's going to start really climbing, but I do think the vaccination rate we have in the country will hold this down to some degree. I guess we'll see whether I'm right about that. We're not near the deaths rate we were seeing last summer at this time; however we should note that nearly all of those 300 people per day who are dying wouldn't have to be dying at all. The vast majority of them were unvaccinated, and their deaths were preventable. That's a lot of unnecessary funerals in my book.

I've been asked when I think this surge will peak. I have two things to say about this: One is that I'm not the kind of expert who can make a useful prediction about that; I'm really not a person who's entitled to an opinion at all, just your friendly local explainer. The other is that, among those who are entitled to an opinion, there is a growing consensus that we're a long way from a peak; most of them think this is going to continue worsening for some weeks. Jeffrey Shaman, epidemiologist at Columbia University where a modeling team is working on questions like this one, reports their most recent model sees a peak in four to five weeks, coming in at a daily new-case average over 140,000. That's pretty horrifying. Worse, the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), a highly respected modeling program, has us peaking sooner—in a couple of weeks—but looking at around 300,000 daily new cases. They have deaths at around 1500 daily by the middle of September. Something that might account for the differences between these models is that we have two things happening in conjunction: the relaxation of restrictions and the rise of Delta. That is a devastating one-two punch, and we're not doing very well with it. What's more, unless we do something to mitigate the path we're on, we may see a new and larger surge in late fall and into the winter. At that point, David Dowdy, epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, says there are sufficiently vulnerable populations across the country for this surge to just continue in a series of waves with the risk to unvaccinated people much like it was last November. He figures if the pattern holds, there will be as much as a fivefold increase in new infections with numbers looking like January's. And if a new variant emerges, then all bets are off. I don't even want to think about it. On the plus side, maybe the communities where the virus is rampaging may become saturated with infected people, and this might tamp down growth in cases. If vaccinations continue to increase, that might help too. Who knows?

We have 49 states showing a surge in cases with 35 having a seven-day new-case average increase of at least 50 percent. Over the past week, case rates are 9.3 per 100,000 residents in states with more than half their residents vaccinated and 23.7 per 100,000—well over twice as high—in states with fewer than half vaccinated. Hospitalization rates are 4.9 per 100,000 in states with over half their residents vaccinated and 14.4—again, well over twice as high—in states with fewer than half their residents vaccinated. Death rates check in at 55 per million and 129 per million. Can't say that's a big surprise.

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On Saturday, Florida set a new one-day new-case record for the pandemic, almost 27 percent more than on Friday; that's a huge one-day increase. We should not be seeing record-setting numbers at all eight months after vaccines became available, but many things that shouldn't be happening are happening these days. Even as case rates have soared, Florida's kept up with about one-fifth of those. Vaccinations aren't as terrible in Florida as they've been in many states with surges, but the state has stubbornly refused to do any sort of mitigation, which can result in these surges even when vaccinations aren't as low as they are in other places. We can neither vaccinate nor mitigate our way out of this; it's going to take both. Hospitalizations are nearing last year's peaks, and that means real trouble for places that aren't really doing either. A contact of mine who is in health care in the state reports a dire situation in hospitals: She tells me she has patients requiring particular treatment who have to wait for someone to get worse and go on a vent or die and free up equipment to open up a spot for the needed treatment. I can't even imagine what it feels like to do this for months and months just to see another surge to deal with.

The word from Mississippi health officials is that they have an "astounding" increase in cases. They've gone from 11 daily new cases per 100,000 residents to 45 in 10 days. Hospitals are filling up—over 300 patients in ICUs or on ventilators and patients being treated in emergency departments because no rooms are available. Deaths have risen 51 percent this month. I'd call that astounding too were it not for the fact that this was perfectly predictable: Mississippi has the lowest vaccination rate in the nation. State epidemiologist, Dr. Paul Byers, was asked where in the state the outbreaks are worst. He replied, "We are covered up with outbreaks." Sigh.

Louisiana has a worst-in-the-nation 82 daily new cases per 100,000 residents. Of courses, it also has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country at 37 percent. Hospitals are under significant stress. The state's largest health care system, Ochsner, is a case in point with 700 percent more Covid-19 patients than a month ago and 75 percent more than a week ago. Four-fifths of them are unvaccinated. Hospitals do not have the staff to handle the surge. The largest medical center in Louisiana, Our Lady of the Lake, is closing down wards to free up staff for Covid-19 patients. Of their 140 Covid-19 patients on Thursday, 30 had been admitted in the past day, half were under 50, and 11 were children. A physician at Our Lady of the Lake, Dr. Christopher Thomas, told CNN the hospital is admitting one Covid-19 patient per hour. He told them, "If you look at our ICU patients this morning, 97% are unvaccinated and the average age is 48." Same story we've been hearing everywhere else: younger and sicker. Some are bitterly regretful they did not get vaccinated; others accuse the nurses of lying to them about their diagnoses because they're convinced all they have is a cold. Thomas added, "We're becoming victims of the unvaccinated at the current pace. We currently are overwhelming our bed capacity. We're creating burnout for our teams. And honestly, we're beginning to impact the rest of the health care of the community." I'm thinking vaccination has long passed the point of being a "personal decision."

In Missouri there are 114 counties. All but six are classified as high community transmission. Hospitalizations in the state have more than doubled in the past couple of months; the number of people in ICU has tripled. Numbers on ventilators are increasing. The number dying is increasing too. Just about all of them are unvaccinated. Staffing's an issue here too.

Georgia has tripled its case rate in two weeks, and Texas is the latest entrant in the we're-out-of-hospital-beds sweepstakes. There are so-called Trauma Service Areas (TSAs) in Texas, primarily one north of Houston and east of Austin, showing up with zero ICU beds available; the TSA around Laredo had just one ICU bed. At least seven other TSAs have fewer than 10 ICU beds available. Meanwhile, there are health-care networks in Florida on "black" status, which means all non-emergency procedures must be rescheduled. As is true everywhere else, the overwhelming majority (upwards of 90 percent) of the Covid-19 patients clogging these places up are, predictably, unvaccinated. The vaccinated who are hospitalized are largely people with compromising conditions which made their vaccinations less effective. If folks start to die

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because they need health care and the hospitals don't have room or staff to care for them, maybe we can finally lay to rest the fiction that the unvaccinated aren't hurting anyone but themselves. I am very afraid we're going to have the opportunity to see how that works out.

We have seen an uptick in vaccinations in the last few weeks. The daily average in the last week has been 382,106 people initiating vaccination; this represents a 35 percent increase over the previous week. A half-million initiated vaccination on Friday, and another half-million received a second dose. Close to five million people in the US have become fully vaccinated in the past two weeks; it appears doubts are starting to give way to the lived experience of friends and neighbors landing in hospitals and morgues. 'Bout time, I'd say. This is certainly not the three million per day we were averaging in the spring, but an increase is an increase. What's more, while vaccinations are increasing across the country, states with the highest number of cases are showing the largest increase in vaccination rates. Mississippi has had triple the number coming in for a first dose as they had July 1; Louisiana nearly quadrupled their first dose numbers; and Missouri almost doubled its numbers. Alabama doubled its seven-day average doses over three weeks. Arkansas has doubled its average doses. I think we can guess what's behind that, but they're still all far behind the rest of the country—which is far behind where it should be. Colonel Robert Ator, head of the Arkansas vaccination program, said, "People are scared." Good. When you're lagging terrible and your hospitals have a glut of patients, you probably want to kick it in gear. I hope folks continue to be inspired to get vaccinated; we all need that to happen.

There are people in Missouri who have asked to receive their vaccination in privacy, have even showed up in disguise, so that their friends and neighbors don't discover they've been vaccinated. They're worried about backlash. In a state with only 41 percent vaccinated, we should take whatever we can get, but I have to point out how twisted it is for the "Freedom first!" people to be denying their friends the freedom to openly be vaccinated so that those friends have to do it in secret. I guess freedom is for me, but not for thee, huh? Considering we have 49 states showing at least a 10 percent increase in new cases, it seems short-sighted to make it tough for folks to be vaccinated, even if you personally don't want to.

Cases are increasing around the world, including in some places that were looking a lot like they had the virus licked. The increase has been largely driven by B.1.617.2 or Delta, the variant first identified in India, and also reflects low vaccination rates in many parts of the world. Unlike in the US, most unvaccinated people around the world have no access yet to vaccines and don't look to have access any time soon. Deaths are soaring in Africa, one of the least-vaccinated parts of the world. We're pushing the 200 million mark worldwide with no sign of relief in sight and wasting vaccine here in the US.

Another change in guidance that came Tuesday from the CDC regards testing. We talked about changes in masking guidance last time we talked. The rule on testing has been that fully vaccinated people do not need to be tested after an exposure to virus as long as they are not experiencing symptoms; the new rule says they wear a mask in public indoor spaces after exposure and get tested three to five days after the exposure. If the test is positive, they should isolate at home for 10 days.

Now that we have this new masking guidance which says fully vaccinated people should mask in public indoor settings when they are in an area of "substantial" or "high" transmission, it may be helpful to take a look at just what is meant by these designations since they have a whole lot to do with your risk of infection whether you're vaccinated or unvaccinated. These classification are generally applied to counties within a state. Here you go:

- "Low transmission" is no more than 10 new cases per 100,000 residents OR a test positivity rate of less than 5 percent.
- "Moderate transmission" is 10 to 50 cases per 100,000 OR a positivity rate of five to eight percent.
- "Substantial transmission" is 50 to 100 new cases per 100,000 OR a positivity rate of eight to 10 percent.

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—"High transmission" is 100 or more cases per 100,000 OR a positivity rate of 10 percent or more.

Forty-eight percent of us live in high transmission counties; another 23 percent live in substantial transmission counties. That 71 percent comes to almost 237 million Americans; just under two months ago, that was 15.4 percent or 51 million. You can find a heat map at the following link on the CDC's web site. Scroll down the page a bit for the map or enter your county and state name to access data. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>.

There are some issues with these definitions. One is that the definitions are based on new-case rates per 100,000; in counties with 100,000 or fewer residents, a few cases can skew the data significantly. Figure if your county has 5000 residents as my county does, just three new cases are going to put your new-case rate at 60 new cases per 100,000, which is substantial transmission. Just one family gets sick, and you're going to look very bad on this metric even if no one else in the county gets sick at all. This is not to say that tracking per capita new cases is a bad idea: It's not. But we want to recognize that the information conveyed is going to vary widely by what else we know.

The FDA has extended the permissible shelf life of Janssen/Johnson & Johnson's vaccine to six months from four and a half. The decision was retroactive to batches which have expired but are within the six-month period provided they were stored properly. This is helpful; it is incredibly wasteful to have to discard vaccine when so many in the world are waiting for it—and dying as they wait.

Here's another piece of good vaccine news to do with the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine: That plant in Baltimore which was closed over contamination concerns some four months ago has just received permission to reopen. The FDA inspectors were there again this week, and their report was finally a good one. This is critical to meeting supply goals in Europe and around the world. Now that someone other than the US is leading the way on vaccination, most or all of the production will be exported to places that actually want vaccine. The plant is supposed to be able to produce a billion doses per year, but will need to proceed to full capacity in stages. It is important to note, however, that with this one-dose vaccine, a billion doses puts a nice dent in the world's demand. I hope things go smoothly from here.

For the record, AstraZeneca announced on Thursday that they've now released a billion doses of the vaccine they developed and produce in cooperation with Oxford University. Because the company has promised to sell the vaccine at cost, it is expected to play a significant role in meeting global demand despite some hesitancy to use it in some places. This is the adenovirus-vectored DNA vaccine that first was rumored to be ineffective in over-65 people, a rumor which was not true. When that cleared up, the rare blood clotting disorder showed up in some recipients; this was a real, not a rumored, thing. Cases were quite rare and, importantly, mostly treatable and self-limiting. Regulators in Europe have determined the potential benefit outweighs the potential risk, and the vaccine remains in use; but it is not highly in demand in much of Europe. I'm not sure what uptake is in other countries at this time; but with the bodies piling up, I'm going to guess that, at some point, folks may be more willing to take a chance on this. AstraZeneca also announced they are preparing a Biologics License Application for the FDA's consideration and plan to submit it yet this year. While there is no particular need for an additional vaccine in the US, the fact is that FDA approval carries some weight around the world, so there are countries which will accept an FDA-approved vaccine rather than submit a vaccine to an additional regulatory process. That makes this a good move for the company, even if they don't expect sales here.

There's another new variant on the horizon: B.1.621, which turned up first in Colombia. Because it is not yet a variant of concern or even a variant of interest, it doesn't have a Greek letter designation yet. We don't know much about it yet—transmissibility, severity and lethality, or immune escape ability. With so much unknown, the only reason we're even talking about it is that it's showing up more and more

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frequently in South Florida, likely as a consequence of frequent travel between Colombia and Florida. If it's going to be a problem, we should know soon; the best test for a new variant is encountering an immunologically naïve population; that would be most states in the US, frankly. There is another handful of new variants being monitored; we'll hear about them if any of them looks to be problematic.

The CDC's ensemble forecast from Wednesday projects an increase in hospitalizations and deaths over the next month. There are up to 633,000 deaths predicted by August 21; the previous forecast predicted up to 625,000 deaths by August 14.

If you needed another reason we need to get folks vaccinated, here's one: A survey of deer populations in four states, Michigan, Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania, showed a third of the animals surveyed have been exposed to this virus as indicated by positive antibody tests. As far as I know, these findings have not been made available to the public yet, so I'm working from a summary here; but this is relevant information. We knew deer could become infected with this coronavirus, which is what apparently prompted the survey, but I don't think anyone really expected these kinds of numbers. We're not too sure how they were exposed, but people have a fair amount of contact with deer, and it could spread among them once a few are infected. It doesn't look as though anyone's too worried about risks to the deer at this point; there doesn't appear to be any evidence of a dangerous respiratory infection going through the wild populations at the moment. The concern here is that deer could become—maybe already have become—a reservoir of infection from which it could travel back to humans, perhaps after some nifty new mutations make it even more dangerous than it is right now. We should care about this, even if we're not terribly interested in deer.

The FDA has expanded the emergency use authorization (EUA) for Regeneron's monoclonal antibody therapy to use as a preventive for those who have been exposed and for those who are not likely to produce an effective immune response and are at high risk of exposure in institutional settings. You will recall monoclonal antibodies are highly purified laboratory-made antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This biologic already had EUA for therapeutic use in Covid-19 patients; this addition makes it available to those who are not yet ill. While the agency made the point that this is not going to serve as a substitute for vaccination, it does provide some protection to unvaccinated people who are exposed.

I have a fairly lengthy Update underway to deal with a new piece of misinformation. I think it is important, but it would make today's post unpalatably long; this one approaches (maybe passes) that point now. I'll probably post the new one as a stand-alone piece in the next day or two without any other news. We'll see how matters develop. In the meanwhile, keep yourself safe. We'll talk soon.

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Iron Warrior give \$2,500 to Schinkel/Kulm

The Iron Warriors poker run was held Saturday, starting and ending in Groton. The Iron Warriors is made up of fire fighters and police officers. A check for \$2,500 was given to Jasmine Schinkel in memory of Casey Kulm. Kulm was also a firefighter. The Schinkel/Kulm family members are pictured in the green shirts as the bike riders gathered behind for a photo opp. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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



Mental Health Matters

In a country where every year there are more than forty thousand suicides and sixty thousand drug overdose deaths, mental health matters.

Our nation has overlooked mental health for too long. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for South Dakotans, which is heartbreaking, unacceptable, and why we must do more.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated the underinvestment in mental healthcare in our country. According to a study by the Centers for Disease Control, during the height of the pandemic, anxiety and depression symptoms were three to four times higher than the year prior.

Every time our nation faces a tragedy, debate starts over about the need to invest in mental health in order to prevent future tragedy – but action has yet to come at a federal level.

That's why this week, I introduced the Supporting Underserved Populations by Placing Our Resources in Trusts (SUPPORT) for Mental Health Act along with Representative Kim Schrier, M.D. Our bipartisan bill will allow states to utilize already appropriated unused COVID-19 relief funds to create trusts to support state-based mental and behavioral health services.

Recently, I visited the Link, a new community triage center in Sioux Falls. The Link offers free support services for people living with mental health and substance abuse challenges. I saw firsthand how crucial of an asset this center is to Sioux Falls and surrounding communities.

The trust established by the state through the SUPPORT for Mental Health Act would be able to provide financial support to the Link and similar facilities across South Dakota.

Additionally, these trusts could be used to help fund services such as suicide prevention, crisis counseling, inpatient and outpatient programs.

With an estimated \$1 trillion in COVID-19 relief still left unspent, this straightforward, common-sense approach will begin a serious investment in mental health resources for people across South Dakota and the United States.

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

A Border in Crisis Needs Solutions and Action

America is the land of opportunity. We're a nation where anyone can make anything of themselves if they work hard and play by the rules. But when those rules are abandoned – when we lose respect for our Constitution and the rule of law – that's when the system breaks. And that's exactly what is taking place at our Southern border. Rule of law has collapsed, putting our border in crisis and risking our national security.

I recently sent 48 South Dakota National Guard troops – all volunteers – to support Texas in its efforts to secure our Southern border. This past week, I visited those troops and surveyed their observation posts. I got a briefing from them and from Border Patrol. I saw what they're seeing, and they told me what they need. And I gained a greater understanding of how unsustainable the situation is at the US-Mexico border.

Coyotes are smuggling people into our country. They know that if their group has a child under 7, they will be let into this country, turned over to a non-governmental organization, and relocated to someplace within our nation. They're smuggling people into our nation – and they're using these migrants as pawns to distract from the cartel's aggressive drug smuggling operation. That is fundamentally contrary to everything for which this nation stands.

Here are some alarming numbers from the Border Patrol's most recent dispatches:

More than 20,000 immigrants were stopped in a single week just in the Rio Grande Valley zone where our National Guard is deployed;

Fentanyl seizures are up 455% compared to last year; and

Meth seizures are up 85%.

And that's just what Border Patrol is catching; imagine how much more is slipping through.

Those drugs don't stop at the border. They're being sent to our communities throughout the country. In South Dakota, the cartels bring these drugs to our cities, towns, and to some of our tribal reservations.

South Dakota has worked diligently to fight the drug epidemic in our state, and as a result, we were one of only two states in America to reduce the number of deaths from drug overdose last year. New Hampshire saw a small decline; South Dakota's overdose deaths decreased by almost 16 percent. I'm not going to let the tremendous progress we've made collapse because the Biden Administration refuses to secure our border.

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What's worse is the bureaucracy of DC politics is stalled while more and more of these migrants die while attempting to cross the border. We can and should do better. Unfortunately, the reports I received this week indicate the politics of DC are likely to make this border crisis worse.

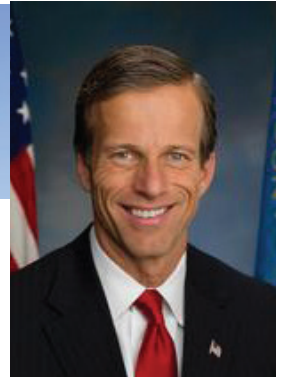
If President Biden won't step up and do his job, then Republican governors will continue to do what they can to address the border crisis. We're evaluating options to extend the deployment of the troops already at the border and asking Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to fund those extended engagements. We'll be sending an additional 125 troops there later this year as part of a 9-12 month federal deployment. And we will continue to evaluate how else we can help in this important effort.

Our nation is one of opportunity. We welcome people to come into our country, but they have to do it legally. We are a nation of laws. If we lose respect for those laws, we lose the foundation of our country. And I refuse to let that happen.

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John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



We're Here to Help

When it comes to legislating, it's my job to be a voice for you in Washington. What you might not realize, though, is that I can also help you interact with federal agencies and overcome certain challenges you might be experiencing – from working through concerns with a Department of Agriculture rule that could affect your farm to helping you receive a payment you're owed from a government agency. I know how frustrating it can be when you feel like the person on the other end of the phone isn't listening, and that's where I can help.

I've recently been hearing from an increasing number of South Dakotans who are experiencing tremendous delays in processing their passport applications. If you've wondered if it was normal to take 15-plus weeks to complete the process, the answer is no. In cases like this, when folks are struggling to get their passport in a timely manner, or if they need one expedited because of unforeseen travel or other unique circumstances, my office can step in and try to solve the problem. At the very least, we can help work the phones for you.

The passport backlog has ballooned to an unprecedented level, with more than 2 million Americans expecting 12-to-18-week delays – nearly three times longer than the typical processing time of four to six weeks. My office is doing everything we can to help South Dakotans get their passports renewed in time. We are talking with these agencies daily to help speed the process along, and I'm keeping pressure on the responsible agencies in Washington to get this corrected.

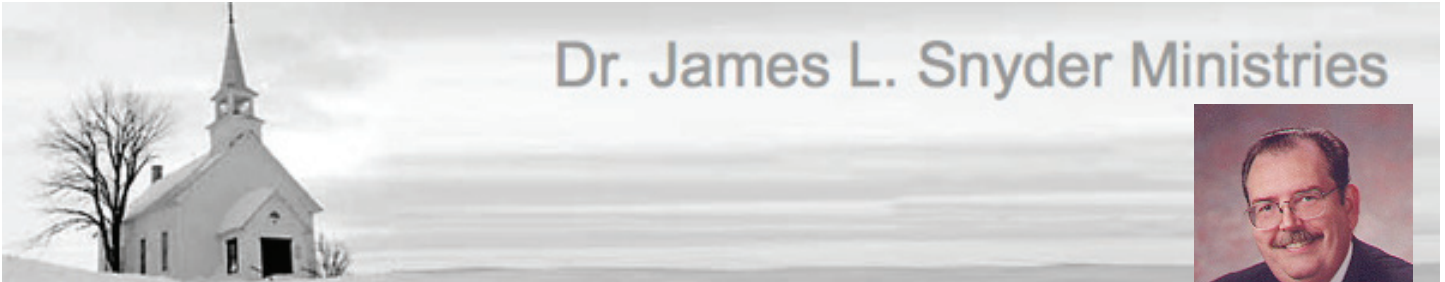
My office can help with far more than passports. Whatever roadblocks you're facing with federal government agencies, we can be a resource to help you navigate the federal bureaucracy and even act as liaison on your behalf, if necessary.

We've helped South Dakota veterans resolve issues with health benefits, long-overdue medals or awards, or other benefits they're due for their brave service to our country. For a small fee, you can request to have a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol building on a specific date in honor of a milestone event, like a birthday or an anniversary, and after it's flown, we'll mail it to you with a certificate commemorating its flight. We can help seniors who are having trouble receiving their Social Security benefits, students who are trying to enter one of the military academies, and the list goes on.

Bottom line, if you need help with a federal agency or any of the other services I can provide, please reach out. You can call, email, or write any of my offices in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, Rapid City, or Washington, D.C. Or stop by in person to say hello. We're here to help.

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Don't Judge a Person by Their Cover-up

Have you ever had one of those Déjà vu moments? The other week I was in the shopping mall to pick up some items for the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. She shops so much that I have to help her on occasion.

On this occasion, I was walking down the mall and stopped dead in my tracks. Coming at me was someone that looked like my old aunt Elsie. She had the same hairdo, wearing the same clothes, and I was shocked because aunt Elsie died over 20 years ago.

I did have a moment of temptation that I wanted to go up and ask her if she was aunt Elsie. I feared that she would answer me, "Yes, and what's that to you?"

That would have convinced me that it was indeed aunt Elsie.

I just let her walk by and tried not even to glance in her direction.

Aunt Elsie was one of the relatives in my family that goes way back. Once you met her, you would never forget her for shore. She was one of those kinds of people.

What you thought of her the first time you met her was not who she really was.

At first, you thought she was a sweet, darling older lady. She did have an infectious smile when you first met her. But believe me, first impressions sometimes are the opposite of reality.

I suppose everybody has an aunt like aunt Elsie. She has taught me one thing: don't judge people by their cover up. They may not be who you think they are. And such was aunt Elsie.

She was always trying to bring everything to focus on her.

If you went to a family picnic, the whole conversation had to be focused on her. No matter what anybody was saying, she would interrupt them and say something about herself that she wanted people to know. It didn't matter if what she was saying was true or not, just that she was getting the attention she wanted.

She always wanted people to think that she was a lot sicker than she actually was.

As soon as she would walk into a crowd, she would begin coughing and then blow her nose. That little act would draw attention to her, attention she wanted. It didn't matter to her if the attention was good, bad, or indifferent. What mattered to her was the attention.

She wanted people to think she had some physical problems, and often she would walk very slowly with her distinctive limp. Sometimes she would use a cane and go struggling along, which usually got the attention she wanted.

When she was struggling along like that, people would open doors, smile at her, and give her a good greeting.

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She would say, "Thank you so much. I really need all the help I can get."

They would think they were doing a good deed for the day, but the only thing they were doing was playing up to her narcissism. I must say she was an excellent actress and nobody knew it.

One day she asked if I could take her to the mall to do some shopping.

When she asked me this, I thought this was my opportunity to determine what was going on with her.

"Oh," I said enthusiastically, "I'd be glad to take you to the mall."

We got to the mall, I helped her out of the car and helped her as she limped up to the door for the shopping mall.

When she got in, I said, "Aunt Elsie, can you take care of yourself? I need to go to the other end of the mall and pick up some items."

She looked at me with one of her sad looks and said, "Okay, but don't be long. I don't have that much energy today."

As we went our separate ways, I noticed that she was limping along as she usually did. So I thought I would follow her without notice.

I was hiding and watching her and noticed she stopped, looked back to see if I was anywhere in sight, and then strutted off like she was a teenager. No limping at all.

"Aha," I said to myself. I was right. She's been playing us all these years and doing an excellent job of it.

I smiled very gingerly and went and got an item, so she knew I wasn't fooling with her.

When I met her, she was limping along carrying a bag, and when she saw me, she said, "Could you please carry my bag for me? It's just too heavy for me to carry."

I smiled and said, "Oh, aunt Elsie, I would be glad to carry that bag for you. I know it must be a great burden for you to carry in your condition."

As I took the bag from her, she smiled, nodded her head, and we went out to the car, and I took her home.

I've kept this secret all my life because I had something on and Elsie and she didn't know it.

I thought of the Scripture that encourages me. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Even though I know what I know, my job is to encourage someone like aunt Elsie and try to give them what they need at the time.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: How is Artificial Intelligence being used for conservation?

-- Katy P., Chevy Chase, MD

You would never think that computers and Artificial Intelligence (AI) could help humans save nature, but in fact these tools may be key to whether or not we can halt global warming in time let alone solve many other vexing environmental problems. For many underfunded conservation groups, hiring enough staff can become too costly. Humans are also prone to making more sloppy errors and inaccuracies in calculations. AI can serve as a more efficient, reliable and affordable way to capture and analyze information for conservation purposes.

AI tools are extremely precise in the more statistical and analytical elements of conservation, whether it's detecting complex patterns or making mathematical calculations. For example, interactions between predators and prey can be modeled using game theory with AI tools. Analytics—with the help of machines—can then calculate where predators are most likely to strike and predict where prey will roam.

Certain problems also require real-time results that people cannot produce in a timely manner, such as tracking the locations of illegal wildlife traffickers to protect endangered wildlife. AI tools can produce results effectively without distraction and not experience any performance deterioration due to fatigue.

While some may be concerned that AI requires advanced software engineers to manage, it is actually now more accessible than ever. As long as the AI software to conduct conservation research tasks is set up correctly, researchers believe that anyone can easily utilize it with point-and-click tools.

Of course, AI is not a simple solution. Researchers predict that the training data required for AI machines to generate results can range up to hundreds of thousands of examples and details. Though AI can process data at much higher rates than humans, humans still have to monitor it to ensure accuracy.

For example, AI software processing images or audio recordings can produce false positives that will require trained analysts to remove manually. In spite of this disadvantage, scientists do not believe that the AI program always has to be perfectly accurate. "We just have to know exactly how accurate it is," says conservation biologist Marc Travers.

Although the future of AI in environmental conservation appears promising, it cannot completely replace humans. The modern climate crisis is truly a crisis of lifestyle, with which mankind has turned nature into its very own factory. To heal that split and mold a harmonic, mutually beneficial balance between nature and mankind, humans need to be in the thick of it. Like Peter Ersts, a software developer at the American Museum of Natural History's Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, says, "We can't fully replace people yet, and nor should we."

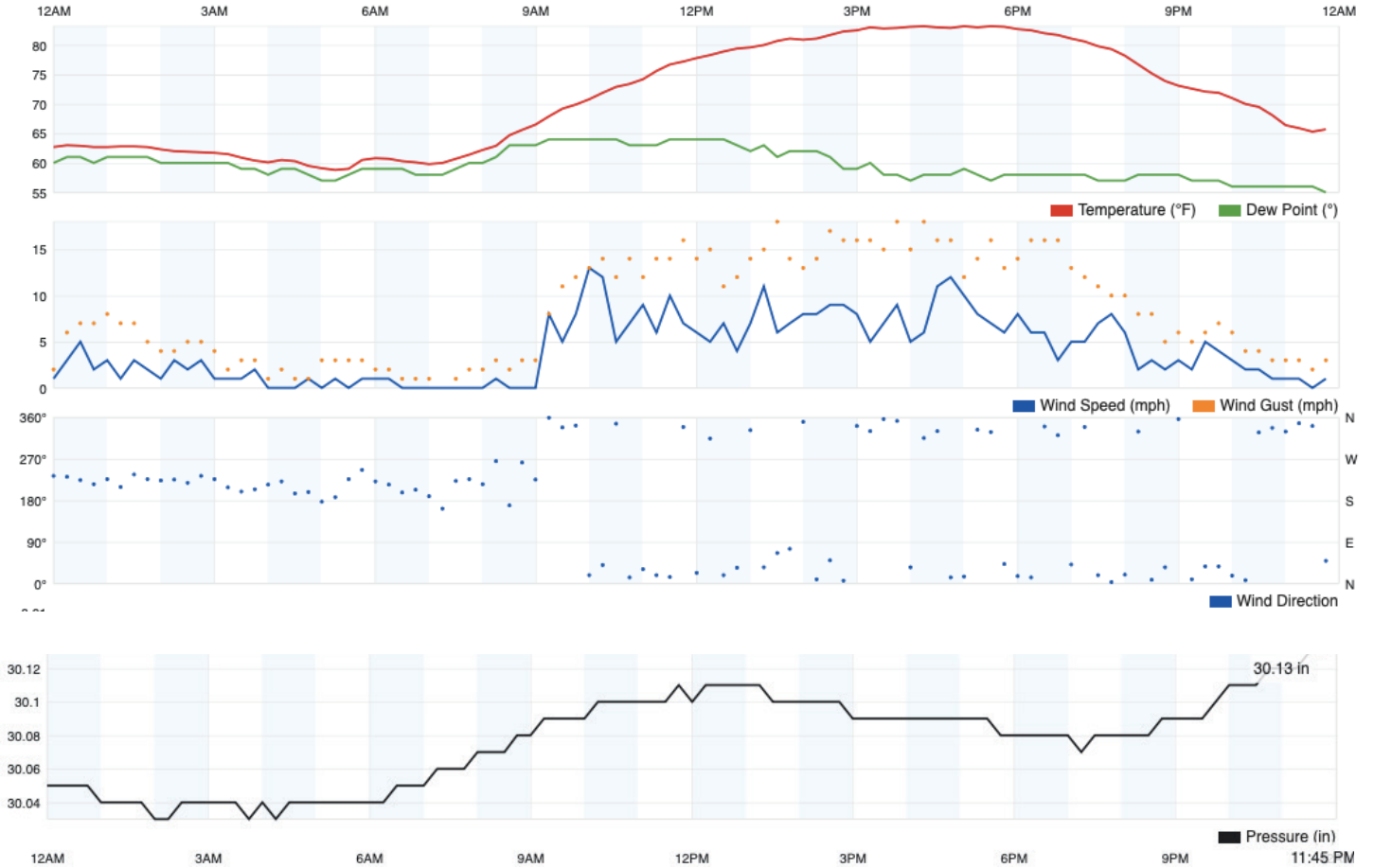


Environmentalists are increasingly turning to Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help collect & analyze data that would otherwise overwhelm us. Credit: Sarah Winstead, Pexels.com.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Areas Smoke

High: 82 °F

Tonight



Areas Smoke

Low: 54 °F

Monday



Areas Smoke

High: 87 °F

Monday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 59 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 89 °F

Today

Sun, August 1st 78-88°

High pressure will remain in control of today's weather giving the area partly cloudy skies and dry conditions. Areas of smoke at the surface and aloft could reduce visibilities at times.

3-Day Outlook

Mon	Tue	Wed	Quiet and relatively comfortable weather until late Wed when a few t-storms may build into central SD (20% chance).
82-92°	85-95°	83-93°	

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 8/1/2021 4:01 AM Central

A mix of sun and clouds can be expected around the region the next couple days thanks to high pressure remaining in control. Seasonal temperatures are expected through mid-week. Wildfire smoke could once again impact visibilities at times for the next few days.

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Today in Weather History

August 1, 1978: A severe thunderstorm developed in west-central Beadle County during the afternoon hours and moved southeast. High winds near 80 mph and hail up to golf ball size pelted several counties along the storm path. Hail piled up to six inches deep and up to three feet in ditches. Hail remained visible in some areas up to thirty-six hours after the storm passed. Approximately 480,000 acres of crops were severely damaged or destroyed. Damage to crops and personal property were estimated to be nearly four million dollars.

August 1, 2000: A severe thunderstorm produced large hail up to golf ball size and damaging winds estimated at 90 to 110 mph across northeastern Wyoming and western South Dakota during the evening hours. The northern foothills of the Black Hills and the communities of Spearfish and Sturgis received the brunt of the storm. Considerable F0 and F1 wind damage (90 to 110 mph) occurred in and around Spearfish. The strong winds blew down trees, business and road signs, and damaged tents for the 60th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, destroying vendor merchandise and mobile homes.

1954 - Mount Rainier in Washington State was still covered with sixteen inches of snow at the 5500 foot level following a big snow season. (David Ludlum)

1983: During the early afternoon hours, a strong microburst swept across Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. Although the base anemometer was not calibrated at extreme wind speeds, the peak gust hit 149 mph. It was reported that Air Force One, with President Reagan on board, landed less than 10 minutes before the peak gust.

1985 - A nearly stationary thunderstorm deluged Cheyenne, WY, with rain and hail. Six inches of rain fell in six hours producing the most damaging flash flood of record for the state. Two to five feet of hail covered the ground following the storm, which claimed twelve lives, and caused 65 million dollars property damage. (Storm Data)

1986 - A powerful thunderstorm produced 100 mph winds and large hail in eastern Kansas and southwestern Missouri causing 71 million dollars damage, and injuring nineteen persons. It was one of the worst thunderstorms of record for Kansas. Crops were mowed to the ground in places and roofs blown off buildings along its path, 150 miles long and 30 miles wide, from near Abilene to southeast of Pittsburg. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Record heat gripped parts of the Midwest. A dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Lincoln, NE, with a reading of 105 degrees, Moline, IL, with an afternoon high of 103 degrees, and Burlington, IA, with a reading of 102 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Two dozen cities in the Upper Midwest reported record high temperatures for the date, including La Crosse WI with a reading of 105 degrees. Highs of 103 degrees at Milwaukee, WI, and South Bend, IN, were records for the month of August. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Hurricane Chantal made landfall along the Upper Texas coast about sunrise. Chantal deluged parts of Galveston Island and southeastern Texas with 8 to 12 inches of rain. Unofficial totals ranged up to twenty inches. Winds gusted to 82 mph at Galveston, and reached 76 mph in the Houston area. Tides were 5 to 7 feet high. The hurricane claimed two lives, and caused 100 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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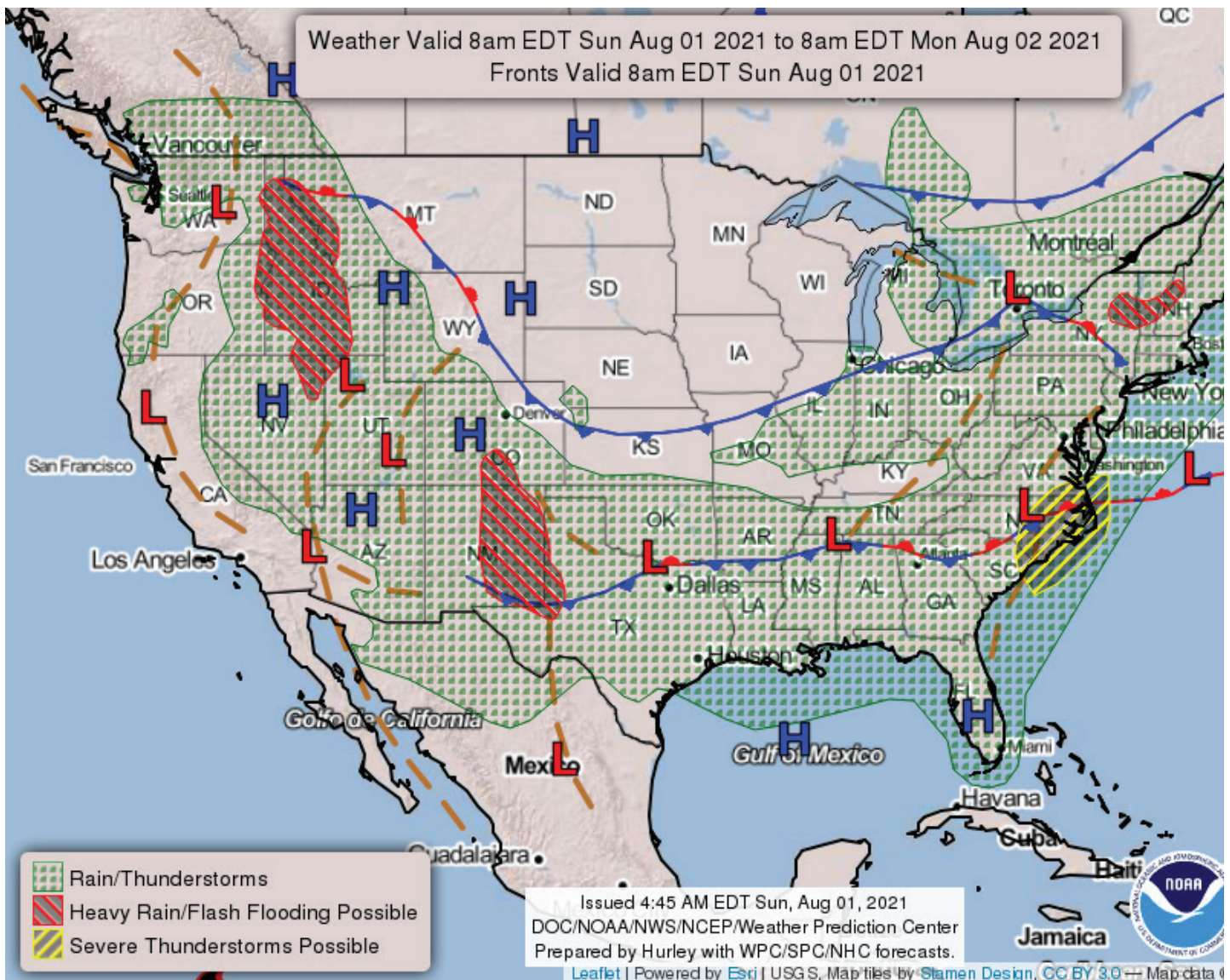
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 83.2 °F at 4:15 PM
Low Temp: 58.8 °F at 5:15 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 3:45 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 111° in 1900
Record Low: 44° in 1948
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July.: 3.09
Precip to date in July.: 2.52
Average Precip to date: 14.10
Precip Year to Date: 7.27
Sunset Tonight: 9:01 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:19 a.m.



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REVIVE US!

Many lament the spiritual decline in our nation. We see a culture in decline and the rising tide of secularism. We know that our God is powerful – that He can dominate the lives of those who profess to love Him – if they will only allow Him. He is willing and able. But we must become willing and available if we want renewal and revival. The responsibility is on us. The possibility is with Him.

God's children in all ages come close to, and then turn away from, Him. It's as though at some point in time God becomes a liability, a burden, an interferer in the lives of those who profess Him as Lord. He seems to get in the way of, or He keeps them from, enjoying the things in life that bring delight and pleasure to so many.

But this God, our God, is willing and waiting on those who are also willing to "call on His name." And that just may be the problem.

In Scripture, name always refers to the nature or the character or the identity of the person. And, when we think of the name of God, we must always associate His Name with holiness, purity, righteousness, sacrifice, justice, mercy, grace, love and compassion.

The writer of Psalm 80 asks, will You "revive us," or "quicken us" and "restore us that we may be saved." Surely, God will do this because He wants to do this for His Name's sake. But we cannot expect Him to do this unless we are willing to identify with His character, repent, and become as He is. If we want revival, it must begin with each of us!

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to recognize that each of us is responsible to You to repent if we want revival. It is not about others, but about each of us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. Psalm 80:18b, 19

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2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
08/13/2021 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)
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes
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

04-06-21-22-35

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

Estimated jackpot: \$29,000

Lotto America

14-19-34-35-38, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 2

(fourteen, nineteen, thirty-four, thirty-five, thirty-eight; Star Ball: nine; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.2 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$179 million

Powerball

01-21-22-34-47, Powerball: 4, Power Play: 2

(one, twenty-one, twenty-two, thirty-four, forty-seven; Powerball: four; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$199 million

Yankton native plays key role in ending Afghanistan mission

By RANDY DOCKENDORF Yankton Press and Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — When he closed down the largest military base in Afghanistan, Derek Thompson found the task reminded him of his Yankton hometown.

A U.S. Army major, Thompson commanded the mission during the past year that ultimately ended operations of the Bagram Air Base. It marked one of the largest undertakings in the withdrawal of the United States from Afghan soil after 20 years in the nation.

So how did the battle-torn Afghan terrain remind Thompson of his peaceful hometown of 15,000 residents on the banks of the Missouri River?

"Bagram was 40 miles north of Kabul (the capital). Size-wise, the base was 30 square miles. When I took over, we had 15,000 people on the base, he said. "It's as if you were to take Yankton, pick it up and set it down in Afghanistan, and you put two big air strips in the middle of it. I was the operations officer and completely in charge of shutting it down in six months. It would be like totally evacuating Yankton and everything in it."

The coalition forces have been stationed in the South Asian nation for 20 years, since shortly after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Earlier this year, President Joe Biden announced the U.S. and its allies would withdraw from Afghanistan.

"We left a small contingent of about 600 to guard the embassy in Kabul," Thompson said. "That was the number when I left, and where it is right now is between 600 and 650."

Thompson arrived in Afghanistan in early June 2020 and returned home in late June 2021. He has completed the shutdown mission and recently visited Yankton with his wife, Jennifer (Sommer), and their 7-year-old son, Kohen.

Thompson had enrolled in the ROTC program at Wyoming and began his military career following his college graduation in 2008. He served in Iraq from 2010-11, an experience that prepared him for his later assignment in Afghanistan, the Yankton Press and Dakotan reported.

"When I arrived in Iraq, it was later in the war and they were shutting down operations in Iraq," he said. "I was a lieutenant in the First Infantry Division and part of the mission, so I've been through the shutdown of operations in two different countries."

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The Iraqi withdrawal proved logistically easy because troops and equipment could be driven to nearby Kuwait or Jordan. Cargo was taken to seaports to be flown or shipped home.

After returning from Iraq, Thompson's military career hit the fast track. He took required courses for U.S. Army captains and then served with two special operations units.

After serving as a recruiter for a three-state area, he became a trainer of units for overseas deployment. He was then selected for a year-long course required of Army majors, taught at the U.S. Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia.

After the year of study, he was selected as one of 100 Army officers to attend the School of Advanced Military Studies. Those selected took a yearlong, in-depth leadership and planning course.

"When I was at that course, I learned I was one of the 10 of us selected to go to Afghanistan. Our mission was to reduce our footprint in that nation," he said. "When I got (overseas), we had heard rumors that we were shutting down Afghanistan, and I had seen tweets that we were going to shut it down, but nothing official."

Thompson's title was United States Forces Afghanistan Planner, reporting to Generals Austin Scott Miller and James Mattis at the time. The mission became more challenging with the pandemic and a border shutdown, but Thompson credited the teamwork of multiple government agencies.

He had completed a 2013 mission to Afghanistan, which familiarized him with the nation.

Thompson gained an additional reminder of the global significance of his mission when he met ABC News reporter Martha Raddatz, who serves as chief global affairs correspondent for the network.

"Before Bagram shut down, she interviewed General Miller on what it was like on the ground," Thompson said. "She was very personable and very interested in the individual soldier, where they were from and why they joined. She tried to relate to everybody. If you didn't see her on TV, you wouldn't know she was this big-time ABC reporter."

Thompson surprised Raddatz by knowing about "The Long Road Home," an eight-part television miniseries based on her book. She told the story about the soldiers and their families affected by a 2004 ambush on U.S. troops at Baghdad during the Iraq War. The attack lasted hours and killed eight troops while injuring more than 65 others.

During Raddatz's visit to Afghanistan, Thompson and others sought to tell the story of their successful mission.

From June-December 2020, the goal remained reducing personnel and equipment in Afghanistan, Thompson said. The work included not only the U.S. military but also America's coalition partners from NATO and the civilian contractors from across the globe.

"When I was there, we had 25,000 contractors from 95 countries spread out across about 20 bases in Afghanistan," he said. "We had contractors for all aspects of everyday life, from food service to private security to IT satellites. They filled so many categories."

Thompson ran into obstacles trying to step down the number of people, including civilians, in the midst of a pandemic. He told of Ugandan contractors who came down with COVID, requiring him to coordinate efforts with the Joint Chief of Staffs, the Pentagon and the State Department to return the Ugandans home.

The pandemic changed how the missions were run, with restricted travel between bases. Vaccinations became available in January, making everyday operations easier. Because of COVID, two-week leaves were canceled for all personnel, meaning Thompson worked 12 1/2 months straight of 14-18 hour days, seven days a week.

However, he described it as part of the mission, and he was grateful for social media allowing contact with his family.

With the incoming Biden administration last January, Thompson gained a sense that his mission could change and accelerate.

"In January 2021, we started to get more indication that we were going to shut down the country, but nothing official. I took on the role of Bagram Air Field operations officer and leadership planner. I was the Number 2 in charge of Bagram Air Base and worked for the commander of the air field," Thompson said.

"From January until April, we were planning for a shutdown but didn't have any type of end date. There

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weren't any official orders from the White House or national level of leadership. But then in April, President Biden went on national television and announced we would be out by September. The official order was that we were going to close down, and we started planning to shut down by September."

However, a week later the shutdown timeline started changing. The deadline was moved up to July 22 and then to the end of June.

"From the time President Biden announced we were going to (exit the country), it was roughly 82 days to close down the Bagram Air Field. We had to redeploy 15,000 people, about \$500 million of equipment to retrograde out of there and 1,500 tons of equipment that went out on large transport aircraft," Thompson said.

"We also had to destroy a bunch of sensitive equipment because, financially, it made more sense to destroy it than fly it back. We gave a bunch of equipment to our Afghan allies. When we shut down, those were the big things."

Thompson described much of his time as dedicated to "reverse city engineering," in which his troops disassembled state-of-the-art power, water treatment and wastewater plants. At the same time, the contractors who had worked with those operations had now exited or were preparing to leave the country.

"How do we still provide those basic life services and standard of living while reducing our footprint, of moving equipment and personnel and maintaining the security of everyone on the Bagram Air Field?" he asked.

"I had to credit the course I took in Kansas the year before I deployed to Afghanistan. That planning course covered all about different ways to plan for contingencies that you don't expect."

However, Thompson wasn't caught off-guard by the changed timeline. He had already planned a contingency for shutting down operations.

"I did what I needed to do," he said. "When it came to that time frame, I wasn't starting from scratch."

As part of the withdrawal process, Thompson oversaw 1,500 tons of equipment that needed to be moved out, inspected, weighed, washed, strapped down and transported, usually from Bagram to Kuwait or Qatar using up to 20 cargo planes a day to take out equipment.

Sensitive equipment with classified or other secret information was wiped clean and placed into an industrial level shredder, Thompson said.

"We weren't just looking at the Taliban," he said. "When we leave, we anticipate Pakistani intelligence services will come in, and we know the Russians and Chinese have a vested interest."

As he closed out Bagram, the Germans and Italians were shutting down other major bases.

With his sensitive mission, Thompson's plans usually went to his two immediate levels of superiors. However, some of his plans went to the U.S. Defense Secretary and even President Biden's office.

"When you're shutting down our largest base in Afghanistan, any type of product I created could end up at the strategic national level," Thompson explained.

In addition, he worked on Bagram security matters with NATO partners that included Polish, Bosnian, Georgian, Bulgarian, Romanian and Czech troops. While NATO has existed since World War II, Afghanistan marked the only major conflict where a majority of NATO member nations was involved at the same time, he added.

"It was one of the most enjoyable aspects of my job, working with my European allies. We had the cultural exchange, and I learned how they handled problems," he said. "It was truly teamwork that came from our diverse backgrounds. We wanted everyone to be secure. Our motto was, 'We go in together, through it together and get out together.'"

While Thompson encountered little enemy fire, he noticed movement as the U.S. and allies shut down bases in Afghanistan.

"The Taliban consciously didn't attack the U.S. or NATO because we would end up staying longer," he said. "But they attacked our Afghan allies and took over district centers, which are like our county seats or regionally important cities."

Besides the remaining embassy troops, the U.S. provides air power and coverage, Thompson said. "(The

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Afghans) are on their own now. They are being supported as best we can, but we're not in the country," he said.

The question remains about any plan for helping Afghans, such as interpreters and contractors, who helped the coalition and now want to escape their country for fear of their safety, Thompson said.

"Their life is in danger unless we get them out, but they have to be vetted, screened and receive special immigration visas. With COVID, the processing of those visas is like anything else in the world. It slows down (the process)," he said. "It all takes time, but we're working against time as the Taliban starts moving in across Afghanistan. Their lives are in danger, day to day."

Thompson looks back with amazement at what was accomplished during his time at Bagram.

"I reduced and closed down the biggest base in Afghanistan. I was part of history, especially when you start reading or seeing stories on national television, like CNN other networks. They're talking about what I planned and executed," he said.

"My name isn't attached to any of that, but that's OK. It truly was a team effort by everybody. We had civilian contractors who had been there for 10-plus year who didn't believe until the end we were shutting down. After all, we had been there 20 years."

For perspective, Thompson noted he was in high school when 9/11 occurred, and some of the current Afghan troops weren't even born at the time.

His next assignment will make him executive officer of a chemical battalion which normally consists of about 450 people. "I'll be the Number Two person. My job is really the equivalent of a chief of staff handling the daily operations of the battalion," he said.

Whatever the future holds, Thompson said he has been forever impacted by the past year.

"We did a lot of things right, and we did a lot of things wrong, but you learn from all of them," he said. "Down the road, others may look at what we did and apply it."

Law enforcement preparing for 81st annual Sturgis bike rally

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Law enforcement agencies are preparing for the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and are on alert for increased outlaw gang activity.

The weeklong event that begins Friday is in its 81st year, and some believe that may mean a larger Hells Angels presence than usual.

The number "81" is metonym, and shorthand for Hells Angels, with H being the 8th letter of the alphabet, and A the first.

Meade County Sheriff Ron Merwin tells KOTA-TV law enforcement is aware of the significance.

"I would suspect that we're going to have at least the normal number of Hells Angels around here," Merwin said. "We might have a few more than normal. My suspicion is they might have some activities here because of the 81st."

Merwin said that although the biker crowd is largely respectful to law enforcement, they're preparing for any confrontation that may occur.

"I think one thing kind of leads to another, and trouble finds them," Merwin said. "But I don't suspect that they come here openly looking for it. They just don't back down from it either."

Israeli premier blames Iran for tanker attack; Tehran denies

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Israel's prime minister Sunday directly blamed Iran for a drone attack on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman that killed two people, making a veiled threat to retaliate as Tehran denied being involved in the assault.

The comments by Premier Naftali Bennett and Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh come after the strike Thursday night on the oil tanker Mercer Street. The attack marked the first-known fatal attack after years of assaults on commercial shipping in the region linked to tensions with Iran over its tattered nuclear deal.

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While no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, Iran and its militia allies have used so-called "suicide" drones in attacks previously.

"The Iranians who attacked with unmanned aircraft the Mercer Street intended to harm an Israeli target," Bennett said at the start of Israel's weekly Cabinet meeting. "Instead, their piratical act caused the deaths of a British citizen and a Romanian citizen."

He warned: "We know, at any rate, know how to convey the message to Iran in our own way."

On Sunday, Khatibzadeh described the allegation Iran carried out the attack as "baseless" during his last news conference as the Foreign Ministry's spokesman.

"It's not the first time that the Zionist regime occupying Jerusalem has made such empty accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran," Khatibzadeh said. "Wherever this regime has gone, it has taken instability, terror and violence with it."

He added: "Whoever sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind."

Khatibzadeh spoke around an hour after Iran's outgoing president acknowledged that his government at times "did not tell part of the truth" to the public during his term.

The American nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and the guided missile destroyer USS Mitscher were escorting the Mercer Street as it headed to a safe port, the U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet said in a statement early Saturday. It said Navy explosive experts believe a drone attacked the vessel.

The drone attack blasted a hole through the top of the oil tanker's bridge, where the captain and crew command the vessel, a U.S. official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity as an investigation into the attack still was ongoing.

The Mercer Street is managed by London-based Zodiac Maritime, part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group. The firm said the attack killed two crew members, one from the United Kingdom and the other from Romania. It did not name them, nor did it describe what happened in the assault. It said it believed no other crew members on board were harmed.

British maritime security firm Ambrey said the attack on the Mercer Street had killed one of its team members on board the vessel.

From Jerusalem, Bennett offered condolences to both the United Kingdom and Romania for the killing of their citizens. He said Israeli intelligence had evidence linking Iran to the attack, but did not offer it.

"Iran is the one who carried out the attack against the ship," he said. "Iran's aggressive behavior is dangerous not only for Israel, but harms global interests in the freedom of navigation and international trade."

Bennett took over as premier in June after a coalition deal unseated Israel's long-serving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu is suspected of launching a series of attacks targeting Iran, including explosions at the country's main enrichment site and the killing of a prominent military nuclear scientist.

However, Bennett as well has made hawkish comments in the past about needing to attack "the head of the octopus" in Tehran as opposed to Iran's regional militias like Hezbollah in Lebanon. The attack on the Mercer Street marks the first during his time as prime minister and analysts suggest he could seek a major attack in retaliation.

"Israel may wish to deliver a resounding blow; that's the spirit of political sources' comments in Jerusalem," wrote Amos Harel, a longtime military analyst for the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. "This blow will be aimed at ending things without a tit-for-tat that could escalate. But as usual, events also depend on the other side."

Olympics Latest: Max Whitlock wins gold in pommel horse

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:

MEDAL ALERT

Max Whitlock of Britain defended his Olympic title in pommel horse.

Whitlock led off the eight-man final and posted a score of 15,583 points. That is the highest of any male

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or female gymnast on any event so far at the Tokyo Games.

His competitors didn't really come close to catching him.

Lee Chih Kai of Taiwan took silver to earn the first-ever medal for his country in gymnastics.

Kazuma Kaya of Japan took the bronze to earn a second medal to go with the silver he won in the team competition.

MEDAL ALERT

Fifth-ranked Alexander Zverev of Germany has won the gold medal in men's singles at the Olympics.

Zverev beat Karen Khachanov of the Russian Olympic Committee 6-3, 6-1 for the biggest title of his career.

It follows a comeback victory for Zverev over top-ranked Novak Djokovic in the semifinals.

IOC president Thomas Bach watched his fellow German win the title.

MEDAL ALERT

Brazilian gymnast Rebeca Andrade has added a gold medal on vault to go with the silver she earned in the all-around.

Andrade put together a pair of soaring vaults to post an average of 15.083. The medals Andrade has won in Tokyo are the first and second ever for Brazil in gymnastics at the Games.

American MyKayla Skinner, who entered the competition after defending Olympic champion Simone Biles pulled out to focus on her mental health, captured the silver. The 24-year-old was an alternate on the 2016 U.S. Olympic team then spent three years at the University of Utah before returning to elite competition in 2019.

Yeo Seojeong of Korea took the bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Anne-Marie Rindom of Denmark has won gold in the women's one-person dinghy laser sailing event at Enoshima Yacht Harbor.

Rindom finished seventh in the medal race, but clinched gold with 78 points total.

It's the first gold medal for Rindom, who won bronze in the same event in 2016.

Sweden's Josefin Olsson crossed the finish line first but took silver with 81 points. Marit Bouwmeester of the Netherlands had to return to the start at the beginning of the race, but managed to win bronze. She won silver in London in 2012 and gold in Rio in 2016.

MEDAL ALERT

Australian Matt Wearn has won gold in the men's one-person laser sailing event at the Tokyo Olympics. He finished second in the medal race, scoring four points, which was enough for the win. Australians also won gold in the event in 2012 and 2016.

Jean Baptiste Bernaz of France won the medal race at Enoshima Yacht Harbor, but his total score of 92 meant that he finished sixth overall.

Wearn scored a total of 53 points overall, while Croatia's Tonci Stipanovic took silver with 82. Stipanovic also won the silver medal in laser men in Rio in 2016.

Hermann Tomasgaard scored 85 to clinch the bronze, giving Norway its first medal in sailing since 2004.

A group of about 10 people has been protesting across the street from the tennis venue where the men's singles gold-medal match is being played.

The group is chanting in English with megaphones saying "No more Olympics" and "Stop playing games. Cancel the Olympics."

One protester held a sign that said, "Stop playing the Games. People are suffering and dying! Save lives, not the Olympics!"

The chants could be heard inside the Center Court stadium where Alexander Zverev of Germany is playing Karen Khachanov of ROC. Play was not interrupted.

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Police were intervening and moving the group away from the venue.

MEDAL ALERT

Artem Dolgopyat won Israel's first-ever Olympic medal in artistic gymnastics. Dolgopyat captured gold in the men's floor exercise by edging Rayderley Zapata of Spain on a tiebreak.

Dolgopyat and Zapata were both awarded a score of 14.933 during the event finals. They both had matching execution scores during their routines. Dolgopyat earned the gold because his set was slightly more difficult than Zapata's.

Xiao Ruoteng of China earned the bronze for his third medal in Tokyo. Xiao took silver in the men's all-around and won a bronze during the team event last week.

The gold medal is just the second for Israel in any Olympic event. Gal Fridman won a gold in men's sailboard at the 2004 Athens Games.

The president of the Russian Olympic Committee says his team's medals are the "best answer" to critics who questioned why Russian athletes were allowed to compete following doping scandals.

Stanislav Pozdnyakov says critics "supposed that as a matter of fact our athletes can't compete without doping", but that Russian athletes in Tokyo "proved the opposite not just with words but with their deeds and results."

Russia is competing under the name of the ROC in Tokyo after a ruling which barred its name, flag and anthem from the Olympics and other major sports events. That followed a legal battle when the World Anti-Doping Agency said data from the drug-testing laboratory in Moscow had been tampered with.

Russian athletes have won 38 medals in Tokyo, 11 of them gold.

MEDAL ALERT

The top-seeded Czech team of Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova has won gold in women's doubles at the Tokyo Games.

The Czechs beat the Swiss team of Belinda Bencic and Viktorija Golubic 7-5, 6-1.

Bencic won gold in singles a day earlier by beating Czech player Marketa Vondroušová.

Laura Pigossi and Luisa Stefani of Brazil took the bronze in doubles.

Tokyo Olympic organizers say they're investigating an outdoor drinking party involving multiple athletes at the village where they're staying.

Games chief executive Toshiro Muto says athletes and other team officials were drinking alcohol at the park within the village late on Friday.

The 11,000 Olympic athletes were warned before the games that drinking alcohol in groups was a breach of the so-called playbook rules to protect against COVID-19 infections. They can drink alone in their rooms.

In the most serious cases of breaking rules, athletes can be removed from the village and have their Olympic credential taken.

Muto says in translated comments "we are investigating the situation and based on the result we are to take appropriate action."

He says police arrived at the village after Friday's incident, though he was unaware of their response.

MEDAL ALERT

Xander Schauffele has won the Olympic gold medal in golf in a tense finish.

Schauffele was tied for the lead with Rory Sabbatini of Slovakia with two holes to play.

The American made birdie from 6 feet on the 17th hole to regain the lead. Then after a bad tee shot that forced him to play short of the water, he hit wedge to 4 feet and made the par to win.

Sabbatini set an Olympic record with a 61 and won the silver. Hideki Matsuyama missed a 12-foot birdie putt on the last hole that would have secured him the bronze. He was in a seven-man playoff for the final

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medal.

MEDAL ALERT

China's Shi Tingmao has captured her second straight gold medal in women's 3-meter springboard diving at the Tokyo Olympics.

Shi romped to an easy win over teammate Wang Han with 383.50 points. Wang took the silver in 348.75, while American Krysta Palmer grabbed the bronze in 343.75.

Shi and Wang also teamed up win the 3-meter synchro event.

Shi has now won four gold medals in her career, the latest in a long line of dominant Chinese divers.

The country is headed toward another Olympic rout with four golds and two silvers in the first five diving events.

The Americans are also having plenty of success in Tokyo with three medals.

Palmer became the first U.S. woman to take a springboard medal since Kelly McCormick's bronze at the 1988 Seoul Games. It had been 21 years since the American women's last individual diving medal: Laura Wilkinson's platform gold at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Korean shooter Song Jong-Ho has been disqualified from men's 25-meter rapid fire pistol for failing velocity testing at a post-competition check.

Song finished the first of two qualifying rounds in 22nd, but was red flagged after a chronograph measurement determined the average velocity of his ammunition was under 250 meters per second.

Under International Shooting Sport Federation rules, testing officers fire three cartridges from each athlete's gun and record the muzzle velocity of each one. Testing below 250 meters per second six times leads to a disqualification.

The Swiss Olympic team says a horse named Jet Set had to be euthanized after a leg injury in the team eventing competition.

The horse ridden by Robin Godel tore a ligament in its right foreleg landing a jump toward the end of the cross-country course.

The seriousness of the injury meant Jet Set was euthanized soon after.

The Swiss team says the accident was not the fault of Godel or the design of the Seaforest Cross Country Course.

The team will continue in Monday's final jumping section of the eventing competition with the replacement Eveline Bodenmüller riding Violine de la Brasserie.

Another American team is out at the Olympic beach volleyball tournament.

A Qatari pair that is ranked No. 1 in the world beat Nick Lucena and 2008 gold medalist Phil Dalhausser 14-21, 21-19, 15-11 on Sunday in the first round of knockout play.

The Americans reached the quarterfinals in Rio de Janeiro before losing to the eventual champions, Brazilians Alison and Bruno Oscar Schmidt.

Dalhausser and Lucena went 2-1 in round-robin play, losing only to a Dutch team that won the world championships in 2013. That left them with a tough matchup against Cherif Samba and Ahmed Tijan, who cruised through the preliminaries without losing a set.

The Americans scored four straight points in the first set to turn a 6-5 edge into a five-point lead and cruised to a 21-14 lead.

The U.S. women's team of Sarah Sponcil and Kelly Claes also lost in three sets on Sunday after winning the first set.

Tokyo Olympics organizers say they have banished six people, including two silver medalists from the country of Georgia, for breaking rules designed to protect against COVID-19 cases.

Toshiro Muto, the games chief executive, says it was a "clear and serious violation" of the so-called

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playbooks of health and safety rules for two Georgian judokas to go sight-seeing.

Vazha Margvelashvili and Lasha Shavdatuashvili were seen near Tokyo Tower on Tuesday, after their events were finished.

Muto says the Georgian embassy in Tokyo has apologized for the incident.

The other four were accredited contractors from Britain and the United States arrested for allegedly using cocaine before the Olympics opened.

Muto says there have been eight cases of games credentials being temporarily suspended.

In four cases, organizers collected a "signed pledge" from people suspected of breaking rules. Ten strict warnings were issued, Muto says.

MEDAL ALERT

Australia's Logan Martin capped quite a show in BMX freestyle's Olympic debut, putting together a sterling first run to win gold at the Tokyo Games.

Britain's Charlotte Worthington started the high-flying act by winning women's gold and Martin followed with an equally-impressive performance.

The 27-year-old two-time world champion posted a 93.3 in his first ride and watched as the other eight riders failed to catch him. Martin went for a victory lap after the final rider made his second run, but cut it short after a hard landing on a jump.

Venezuela's Daniel Dhers secured silver with a 92.05 on his second run and Britain's Declan Brooks had a second-run 90.8 to take bronze.

Simone Biles will not defend her Olympic gold medal on floor exercise.

USA Gymnastics says the six-time Olympic medalist has opted not to compete on floor.

She won gold in the event in Rio de Janeiro and placed second in qualifying last week. Jennifer Gadirova of Britain will replace Biles in Monday's finals.

USA Gymnastics says Biles has not decided whether to participate in Tuesday's balance beam final.

Biles is dealing with a mental block that in gymnastics is referred to as "the twisties." She is having trouble figuring out where her body is in relation to the ground when in the air.

MEDAL ALERT

Gong Lijiao of China has won her first Olympic gold medal in the shot put with a personal best of 20.58 meters.

The reigning two-time world champion produced two efforts over 20 meters on her last two attempts at the Olympic Stadium to cement her victory ahead of Raven Saunders of the United States, who took the silver medal with 19.79.

Veteran Valerie Adams of New Zealand won a bronze medal in her fifth and likely last Olympics. The 36-year-old Adams is a two-time Olympic champion and in Tokyo became the first woman to qualify for five Olympic finals in the shot.

MEDAL ALERT

American Caeleb Dressel has won his fifth gold medal of the Tokyo Games, finishing off one of the great performances in Olympic history.

Dressel swam the butterfly leg as the Americans set a world record in the 4x100-meter medley relay with a time of 3 minutes, 26.78 seconds. That eclipses the mark of 3:27.28 they set at the 2009 Rome world championships in rubberized suits.

Ryan Murphy, Michael Andrew and Zach Apple joined Dressel on the winning team. That ensured the Americans closed out the swimming competition with another gold in a race they've never lost at the Olympics.

Earlier in the session, Dressel won the 50 freestyle for his third individual title of the games. He also

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won two golds on the relays.

MEDAL ALERT

Emma McKeon has claimed her historic seventh swimming medal at the Tokyo Olympics with Australia's victory in the women's 4x100 medley relay.

The 27-year-old from Brisbane becomes the first female swimmer to win seven medals at a single games. The only men to do it are Michael Phelps, Mark Spitz and Matt Biondi.

Capping a brilliant performance by the entire Aussie women's team, McKeon followed her victory in the 50-freestyle earlier in the session to take the butterfly leg on the relay. Cate Campbell closed strong on the freestyle, touching in an Olympic record of 3 minutes, 51.60 seconds to edge the two-time defending champion Americans.

Kaylee McKeown and Chelsea Hodges started things off for the winning Australian team.

Abbey Weitzeil touched in 3:51.73 to give the United States a silver. She anchored a team that also included teenagers Regan Smith, Lydia Jacoby and Torri Huske.

The bronze went to Canada in 3:52.60.

MEDAL ALERT

Britain's Charlotte Worthington put on a show in BMX freestyle's Olympic debut, landing the first 360 backflip in women's competition to knock off American Hannah Roberts at the Tokyo Olympics.

Roberts, a three-time world champion at 19, set the bar in her opening run, landing a backflip with a tailspin for a 96.1.

Worthington crashed on her first run, but pulled out all the stops in her second. The 25-year-old added a front flip to her 360 backflip and closed with another backflip for a 97.5.

Roberts, the top seed, had a chance to top the Brit, but landed hard off an early jump and waved off the rest of her second run.

Switzerland's Nikita Ducarroz took bronze with an 89.2 in her second run.

MEDAL ALERT

American Bobby Finke has won gold in the grueling men's 1,500-meter freestyle race.

The American won his second gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics with another strong finishing kick.

Just as he did in winning the 800-meter freestyle, Finke stayed closed throughout the 30-lap race and turned on the speed at the end. He touched in 14 minutes, 39.65 seconds.

Ukraine's Mykhailo Romanchuk took the silver in 14:40.66, while the bronze went to Germany's Florian Wellbrock in 14:40.91. Italy's Gregorio Paltrinieri faded to fourth in 14:45.01.

The top four were close nearly the entire race, often separated by less than a second at the turns. But that was right where Finke needed to be. After his closing lap in the 800, he knew he had the speed at the end to beat everyone else.

Finke has been perhaps the biggest American surprise at the pool. Relatively unknown before the U.S. trials, he became the first American male to win the 1,500 since Mike O'Brien at the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

MEDAL ALERT

Australia's Emma McKeon has claimed the gold medal in the women's 50-meter freestyle at the Tokyo Olympics.

It is the sixth medal of the games for the Aussie star, who has one more chance to make it seven in the 4x100 medley relay.

McKeon completed a sweep of the 50- and 100-meter freestyle with an Olympic-record time of 23.81 seconds. The silver went to Sweden's Sarah Sjöström in 24.07, while defending Olympic champion Pernille Blume of Denmark settled for bronze this time in 24.21.

American Abbey Weitzeil finished last in the eight-woman field.

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MEDAL ALERT

American Caeleb Dressel has won his fourth swimming gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics with a victory in the 50-meter freestyle.

Dressel cruised to a relatively easy victory in the frenetic dash from one end of the pool to the other, touching in an Olympic record of 21.07 seconds.

France's Florent Manaudou repeated as the Olympic silver medalist in 21.55, while Brazil's Bruno Fratus claimed the bronze in 21.57 -- edging out American Michael Andrew for the final spot on the podium.

Dressel has one more shot at a gold in the 4x100 medley relay, an event the United States has never lost at the Olympics. He'll swim the butterfly leg in a race that caps nine days of swimming competition at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

If Dressel claims a fifth victory, he would join Americans Michael Phelps, Mark Spitz and Matt Biondi, as well as East Germany's Kristin Otto, as the only swimmers to win as many as five golds at a single Olympics. Phelps did it three times.

Katie Ledecky is bidding farewell to the Tokyo Games after claiming four medals, two of them gold.

The American swimming star went on Twitter to post her thanks to the people of Tokyo and everyone who gave her "tremendous support this week and over the years!" Even though the stands were largely empty at the Olympic pool because of the coronavirus pandemic, Ledecky says she "could hear you all!"

Ledecky wasn't quite as successful as at the 2016 Rio Olympics, where she swept her three individual events and also won a gold and a silver in the relays.

But she did win gold in her two longest events, the 800- and 1,500-meter freestyle, in addition to swimming a brilliant anchor leg that almost pulled out a gold for the United States in the 4x200 free relay.

Along the way, Ledecky became the first female swimmer to win six individual golds in her career, the first woman to win the 800 free at three straight Olympics, and one of just five American female swimmers to earn 10 career medals.

At age 24, Ledecky has no plans to stop swimming.

UPSET ALERT

Americans Sarah Sponcil and Kelly Claes are out of the beach volleyball tournament after a three-set loss to Canada in the knockout round opener.

Heather Bansley and Brandie Wilkerson beat the U.S. 22-24, 21-18, 15-13 at the Shiokaze Park venue. Americans Phil Dalhausser and Nick Lucena are set to meet Qatar in the afternoon session.

Claes and Sponcil entered the games as the hottest team in the world, winning the last two events of the pandemic-extended qualifying period to grab the second U.S. spot in Tokyo. In the process, they knocked out five-time Olympian Kerri Walsh Jennings.

Epic swims: Dressel, McKeon take place among Olympic greats

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Caeleb Dressel finished off his gold rush at the Tokyo Olympics with two more dazzling swims. The guy who dreads all the attention won't be able to escape it now.

He's one of the greatest Olympians ever.

"I'm really glad to be done," said the tattooed, 24-year-old Floridian, who captured his fourth and fifth gold medals of the Tokyo Games on Sunday.

Australia's Emma McKeon put her own remarkable stamp on the record book with a staggering haul of hardware.

McKeon won two more golds and became the first female swimmer — and second woman in any sport — to claim seven medals at one Olympics. Four of them were gold, the other three bronze.

"It's going to take a little bit to sink in," said McKeon, a 27-year-old from Brisbane. "I'm very proud of

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myself.”

Dressel was perfect in the events he had a chance in, capping off his stunning week in the final race at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre by putting the Americans ahead to stay in the 4x100 medley relay on their way to a world record.

He doesn't plan to savor his triumph for long — which is right on par for a guy who said a day earlier “the sport was a lot more fun when no one knew my name.”

They certainly know it now.

“I give myself a pat on the back and then I just want to go home, put it away and move forward,” Dressel said.

In his first race Sunday, he cruised to a relatively easy victory in the 50 freestyle. By the time Dressel was done, he had entered an elite club of swimmers who won at least five gold medals at one games.

Michael Phelps did it three times, of course, highlighted by his record eight golds at the 2008 Beijing Games.

There's also Mark Spitz (seven golds in 1972), East German Kristin Otto (six golds in 1988) and Matt Biondi (five golds, also in '88).

Make room for Dressel, who made it look so easy.

It wasn't.

“It's not the most enjoyable process, but it is worth it,” he said. “I'm pretty over swimming at the moment.”

Many of the retired swimming greats come up again to provide some perspective on McKeon's performance in Tokyo.

Phelps, Spitz and Biondi are the only male swimmers to capture seven medals overall at an Olympics.

The only other woman to win seven — in any sport — was Soviet gymnast Maria Gorokhovskaya, who claimed two golds and five silvers at the 1952 Helsinki Games.

Mirroring Dressel's final day, McKeon won the 50 free and took the butterfly leg on the Aussies' winning effort in the women's 4x100 medley relay.

The only event Dressel failed to win all week was the new 4x100 mixed medley relay, though that was no fault on his own.

In a race featuring two men and two women, the Americans tried a different lineup than everyone else, which left Dressel more than 8 seconds behind when he took over on the anchor leg.

Not even Dressel could make up such a daunting deficit.

Otherwise, his time in Tokyo was perfect.

A win in the 4x100 free relay. A world record in the 100 butterfly. A victory in the 100 freestyle.

The last morning at the pool started with another romp in the 50 free — Dressel's third individual title of the games.

After diving in, he used his dolphin-like underwater technique to pop out of the water with the clear lead, just as he always does. In a race usually decided by a few hundredths of a second, he touched a half-body length ahead of the field in an Olympic record of 21.07 seconds.

When he saw his time and, more important, the “1” beside his name, he splashed the water and flexed his bulging arms.

France's Florent Manaudou repeated as the Olympic silver medalist in 21.55, followed by Brazil's Bruno Fratus in 21.57.

At the age of 32, Fratus felt like a winner. He missed out on a medal at the 2012 London Olympics by just two-hundredths of a second, and came up short again five years ago in his home country.

“I got myself an Olympic medal,” Fratus said. “Nine years late, in my opinion, but I got it. I can have some peace of mind.”

In the men's medley — a race the Americans have never lost at the Olympics —the U.S. was trailing two other teams when Dressel dived in for the butterfly.

Just like that, he blew by Britain and Italy with a blistering leg of 49.03, more than a second faster than anyone else.

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Zach Apple made the lead stand up on the freestyle to give the Americans a world record of 3 minutes, 26.78 seconds -- eclipsing the mark of 3:27.28 they set at the 2009 Rome world championships in rubberized suits.

Ryan Murphy and Michael Andrew joined Dressel and Apple to keep the unbeaten streak alive. Adam Peaty-led Britain took the silver (3:27.51) and Italy claimed the bronze (3:29.17).

McKeon completed her own sweep of the freestyle sprints, touching in an Olympic-record 23.81 to add the 50 title to her victory in the 100.

Sweden's Sarah Sjöström took the silver in 24.07, while 2016 gold medalist Pernille Blume of Denmark settled for bronze this time at 24.21.

In the medley relay, McKeon entered truly rarified territory. She took the butterfly leg before Cate Campbell rallied the Aussies to a victory over the two-time defending champion Americans.

"I don't know how she does it. I'm exhausted," said Kyle Chalmers, one of McKeon's teammates. "To win one gold medal or an Olympic medal, it's very, very special. We're lucky to have her on the team."

The Aussies' winning time was another Olympic record, 3:51.60. Abbey Weitzeil couldn't quite hold off Campbell, leaving the U.S. with a silver at 3:51.73. The bronze went to Canada (3:52.60).

In keeping with the theme of the day, Bobby Finke pulled off his own sweep in the two longest freestyle races.

With another strong finishing kick, Finke became the first American man in 37 years to win the 1,500 freestyle. He added to his victory in the 800 free, a new men's event at these games.

"I was confident in my ability to come home," said Finke, whose winning time was 14:39.65.

Relatively unknown before the U.S. Olympic trials, Finke made startling improvement in recent months. He benefitted as much as anyone from the games being pushed back a year by the pandemic.

No one was better at the end. After lingering close to the lead throughout, Finke blew away the field on the last of 30 laps, leaving Ukraine's Mykhailo Romanchuk (14:40.66) and Germany's Florian Wellbrock (14:40.91) in his wake.

"I came in not really expecting to get a medal or anything," Finke said, "and I come out of it with two golds."

Of course, big things were expected of Dressel.

He was one of the most-hyped stars coming into the games, billed as the successor to Phelps as the world's most dominant male swimmer.

When it was over, virtually every goal was realized.

"I'm proud of myself," Dressel said. "I feel like I reached what my potential was here at these games."

Incredible Raven: Saunders lends her voice to the Olympics

By EDDIE PELLIS and PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writers

TOKYO (AP) — The "Incredible Hulk" mask should not fool anybody. Raven Saunders has nothing to hide.

The face, and the voice, of the Tokyo Olympics, and all they're about, could very well be found in a 25-year-old American shot putter who, on Sunday, could be spotted wearing the green and red superhero face covering, sporting the purple and green hair, donning the neon-blue shades and winning a shiny silver medal.

Saunders is openly gay, has contemplated suicide, has seen poverty and depression ravage her Black community and others like it. She has often wondered if the Olympics, which make a grand point of celebrating diversity but often struggles to live up to that mission, have a spot for a person like her.

She has decided to claim her place either way. And in a space where Simone Biles, Naomi Osaka and other, better-known Olympians, have been speaking their truth, Saunders is more than willing to share hers, too.

"To be me. To not apologize," she said in a wide-ranging conversation after her second-place finish, when asked what her ultimate mission is. "To show younger people that no matter how many boxes they try to fit you in, you can be you and you can accept it. People tried to tell me not to do tattoos and piercings

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and all that. But look at me now, and I'm poppin'."

The Hulk mask that Saunders started wearing not so long ago has its roots in many things. Namely, it is a reminder that a woman who has bench pressed 480 pounds and squatted 700 pounds and won four NCAA titles is bound to look tough on the outside, but might be very different inside.

Even though she had already been to the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, and was in the midst of a career on an upward track, Saunders said in an Instagram post that on Jan. 26, 2018, she was on her way to "carrying (out) an attempt to end my life."

"If not for sending a text to an old therapist I would not be here (right now)," she said. "All these things weighing on me for 22 years, I was finally able to process it. I was finally able to separate Raven from 'The Hulk.'"

Saunders is one of around 180 out LGBTQ athletes competing at the Tokyo Olympics, according to the website Outsports, which estimates that's more than triple the number who competed in Brazil five years ago.

She recently told the website she came out to her mom in third grade. She was outed to classmates in sixth grade, and in ninth grade, she finally started becoming comfortable with who she was. By the time she got to college, Saunders was out.

It was never an easy road.

"I feel like the atmosphere around a lot of things, especially when you're doing so well, is 'Well, you have everything going for you so you don't have anything to worry about,'" Saunders said. "Whereas for me, it was like a whirlwind."

She used her platform Sunday to talk about mental health, especially in the Black community, where she saw depression and other symptoms go untreated and unspoken about for years. "The crazy house," is what she said some homes were called in the Black community where the symptoms were seen but not checked.

She said these days, some of her friends and classmates see therapists, where they wouldn't have done that a few years ago.

"It's OK to need people, and I feel like in our community, a lot of times through history, we haven't had access to the resources to be able to do that," she said.

Among those Saunders has leaned on recently are Gwen Berry, the outspoken hammer thrower with whom she crossed paths during her time at the University of Mississippi.

"Raven has been through hell and back," Berry said after advancing to the finals in her own competition. "I'm so happy to see her thrive and win. I'll tell you a little secret, about two months ago she called me on the phone crying. She's been through a lot. So I'm happy for her."

All these struggles are not nearly as fraught today as they were five, or three, or even one year ago. Mental health has been the prime topic of the Olympics, and along with her spot on the podium, Saunders seems more than ready to stake her claim in the heart of this conversation.

The more she's out there, the more she's finding that she is not alone.

"I really think my generation really don't care," Saunders said. "Shout out to all my Black people, shout out to all my LGBTQ community, shout out to everybody dealing with mental health. Because at the end of the day, we understand that it's bigger than us, and it's bigger than the powers that be."

Burkina Faso sees more child soldiers as jihadi attacks rise

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

DORI, Burkina Faso (AP) — Awoken by gunshots in the middle of the night, Fatima Amadou was shocked by what she saw among the attackers: children.

Guns slung over their small frames, the children chanted "Allahu akbar," as they surrounded her home in Solhan town in Burkina Faso's Sahel region. Some were so young they couldn't even pronounce the words, Arabic for "God is great," said the 43-year-old mother.

"When I saw the kids, what came to my mind was that (the adults) trained these kids to be assassins,

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and they came to kill my children," Amadou told The Associated Press by phone from Sebba town, where she now lives.

She and her family are among the lucky ones who survived the June attack, in which about 160 people were killed — the deadliest such assault since the once-peaceful West African nation was overrun by fighters linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State about five years ago. As that violence increases, so too does the recruitment of child soldiers.

The number of children recruited by armed groups in Burkina Faso rose at least five-fold so far this year, up from four documented cases in all of last year, according to information seen by the AP in an unpublished report by international aid and conflict experts.

At least 14 boys are being held in the capital, Ouagadougou, for alleged association with militant armed groups, some there since 2018, said Idrissa Sako, assistant to Burkina Faso's public prosecutor at the high court in the city.

Amadou said she saw about seven children with the fighters who surrounded her home during the Solhan attack. She did not see them kill anyone, but they helped burn down houses.

"We are alarmed by the presence of children with armed groups," said Sandra Lattouf, the representative for the United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, in the country.

The effects of the conflict on children — including their recruitment as soldiers but also attacks on schools and kids themselves — have become so concerning that this year Burkina Faso was added for the first time to the U.N.'s annual report on Children and Armed Conflict.

Aid groups say they are seeing more children with jihadi fighters at roadside checkpoints in the Sahel — an arid region that passes through Burkina Faso but stretches straight across the African continent just south of the Sahara. In recent years, the western Sahel has become an epicenter of jihadi violence.

During a recent trip to Dori, a town in the region where nearly 1,200 people fled after the attack on Solhan, the AP spoke with eight survivors, five of whom said they either heard or saw children partake in the violence.

"We heard them say, 'we good children have come to change Solhan in a better way,'" said Hama Amadou, a resident, who hid in his shop during the fighting. He said he also heard women directing the children, saying "kill him, kill him."

Burkina Faso's ill-equipped and undertrained army is struggling to stem the violence, which has killed thousands and displaced 1.3 million people since the jihadi attacks began.

Experts on child recruitment say that poverty pushes some kids toward armed groups. Sako, who works with the public prosecutor, said some children who wanted money to enroll in school joined because they were promised approximately \$18 if they killed someone. Others were promised gifts like motorbikes.

But civil society organizations also accuse army troops of contributing to the problem by committing abuses against civilians suspected of being jihadis.

"There are more security operations ... (so) there are more military abuses," said Maimouna Ba, head of operations for Women for the Dignity of the Sahel, a Dori-based advocacy group. "It is hard for a child to get up in the morning and see that their father was killed." As they get older, children may become angry and start asking why the state isn't helping them, she said.

The army denied these allegations, along with accusations that it was slow in responding to the attack in Solhan, but would not provide a detailed comment.

The deteriorating security is sparking unrest, with protests across the country demanding the government take stronger action. In response, President Roch Marc Christian Kabore fired his security and defense ministers, appointing himself minister of defense.

Amid this raft of problems, Burkina Faso must now also figure out what to do with the children accused of being affiliated with armed groups.

None of the boys being held in Ouagadougou has been put on trial, according to Sako. The government has not yet signed an agreement with the United Nations that would help it to treat such children as victims, not perpetrators, for instance, by moving them from prison to centers where they could receive

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psychological care.

"It is a real concern for us to find a permanent solution for children," said Sako.

Preventing further recruitment, meanwhile, means tackling economic hardship and all that comes with it, including helping kids who have left school to catch up on their lessons.

"Neglecting to act now will only lead to a more intractable crisis and greater instability in the months and years ahead, giving these armed groups the heartbreaking advantage they are so violently seeking," said Dr. Samantha Nutt, founder and president of War Child Canada and War Child USA.

For now, many parents, already struggling to feed, clothe and educate their kids, feel powerless to protect them.

"I'm really afraid for my child to be recruited by jihadis," said Isma Heella, a Dori resident and father to a 4-year-old boy. "We fear for our children and for ourselves as parents because we are not stronger than them."

Europe's vaccine passes reveal some pockets of resistance

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VERONA, Italy (AP) — Shouts of "Liberty!" have echoed through the streets and squares of Italy and France as thousands show their opposition to plans to require vaccination cards for normal social activities, such as dining indoors at restaurants, visiting museums or cheering in sports stadiums.

Leaders in both countries see the cards, dubbed the "Green Pass" in Italy and the "health pass" in France, as necessary to boost vaccination rates and persuade the undecided.

Italian Premier Mario Draghi likened the anti-vaccination message from some political leaders to "an appeal to die."

The looming requirement is working, with vaccination requests booming in both countries.

Still, there are pockets of resistance by those who see it as a violation of civil liberties or have concerns about vaccine safety. About 80,000 people protested in cities across Italy last weekend, while thousands have marched in Paris for the past three weekends, at times clashing with police.

European nations in general have made strides in their vaccination rates in recent months, with or without incentives. No country has made the shots mandatory, and campaigns to persuade the undecided are a patchwork.

Denmark pioneered vaccine passes with little resistance. Belgium will require a vaccine certificate to attend outdoor events with more than 1,500 people by mid-August and indoor events by September. Germany and Britain have so far resisted a blanket approach, while vaccinations are so popular in Spain that incentives are not deemed necessary.

In France and Italy, demonstrations against vaccine passes or virus restrictions in general are bringing together otherwise unlikely allies, often from the political extremes. They include far-right parties, campaigners for economic justice, families with small children, those against vaccines and those who fear them.

Many say vaccine pass requirements are a source of inequality that will further divide society, and they draw uneasy historic parallels.

"We are creating a great inequality between citizens," said one protester in Verona, who identified himself only as Simone because he said he feared for his livelihood. "We will have first-class citizens, who can access public services, the theater, social life, and second-class citizens, who cannot. This thing has led to apartheid and the Holocaust."

Some protesters in Italy and France have worn yellow Stars of David, like those the Nazis required Jews to wear during World War II.

Holocaust survivors call the comparison a distortion of history.

"They are madness, gestures in poor taste that intersect with ignorance," said Liliana Segre, a 90-year-old Holocaust survivor and Italian senator for life. "It is such a time of ignorance, of violence that is not even repressed any more, that has become ripe for these distortions."

Similar comparisons during protests in Britain have been widely condemned. One of the most prominent

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anti-lockdown activists, Piers Corbyn, brother of former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, was arrested earlier this year after distributing a leaflet making the comparison, depicting the Auschwitz concentration camp.

The French health pass is required at museums, movie theaters and tourist sites, and comes into effect for restaurants and trains on Aug. 9. To get it, people must be fully vaccinated, have a recent negative test, or proof they recently recovered from COVID-19.

Italy's requirements are less stringent. Just one vaccine dose is required, and it applies to outdoor dining, cinemas, stadiums, museums and other gathering places from Aug. 6. Expanding the requirement to long-distance transport is being considered. A negative test within 48 hours or proof of having recovered from the virus in the last six months also provide access.

Vaccine demand in Italy increased by as much as 200% in some regions after the government announced the Green Pass, according to the country's special commissioner for vaccinations.

In France, nearly 5 million got a first dose and more than 6 million got a second dose in the two weeks after President Emmanuel Macron announced that the virus passes would be expanded to restaurants and many other public venues. Before that, vaccination demand had been waning for weeks.

A full 15% of Italians remain resistant to the vaccine message: 7% identifying themselves as undecided, and 8% as anti-vaccine, according to a survey by SWG. The survey of 800 adults, conducted July 21-23, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The biggest reasons for hesitating or refusing to get vaccinated, cited by more than half of respondents, are fears of serious side effects and concerns that the vaccines have not been adequately tested. Another 25% said they don't trust doctors, 12% said they don't fear the virus, and 8% deny it exists.

This leaves some hard-to-penetrate segments of the population.

About 2 million Italians over 60 remain unvaccinated, despite being given precedence in the spring. Thousands remain unprotected in Lombardy alone, the epicenter of Italy's outbreak.

The city of Milan is dispatching mobile vans with vaccines and other supplies to a different neighborhood every day. They reach out to the reluctant with flyers and social media posts, vaccinating 100-150 people a day with the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Rosi De Filippis, 68, got the shot after pressure from a daughter.

"In any case, it became sort of mandatory," De Filippis said. "In the beginning, we didn't know everything we know today. So I decided to go ahead with it."

Businesses in Italy and France are grudgingly accepting the passes, amid concern over how private companies can enforce public policy. Denmark's experience suggests compliance gets easier with time -- and rising vaccination rates.

"The first couple months weren't good," recalls Sune Helmgaard, whose restaurant in Copenhagen serves hearty classic Danish fare. In the spring, vaccination rates were still low and customers couldn't always get tested in time.

But with more than 80% of eligible Danes having received at least one shot and more than 60% fully vaccinated, Helmgaard's business is back to pre-pandemic levels.

"People feel safer," he said, "so Danes are quite happy to show their pass."

EXPLAINER: The tech behind Tokyo Olympics' fast track

By PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The Jamaican sprinter and her Olympic-record time captured everyone's attention. What's under foot, though, might have been a factor when Elaine Thompson-Herah broke a 33-year-old Olympic record in the women's 100 meters.

It's shaping up as a fast track surface at Olympic Stadium. Runners are certainly on track to setting personal, Olympic and possibly even world-record times over the next week at the Tokyo Games.

The brick-red track is made by Mondo, a company that's been around since 1948 and has been the supplier for 12 Olympic Games. This particular surface, according to the company, features "three-dimensional

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rubber granules specifically designed with a selected polymeric system that are integrated in the top layer of MONDOTRACK WS that are added to the semi-vulcanized compound. The vulcanization process guarantees the molecular bond between the granules and the surrounding matter, creating a compact layer.”

Translation: It’s speedy.

“Feels like I’m walking on clouds,” U.S. 100-meter sprinter Ronnie Baker explained of the surface. “It’s really smooth out there. It’s a beautiful track. One of the nicest I’ve run on.”

IS IT REALLY THAT FAST?

Maybe. Sometimes, it’s just fast runners in tip-top shape who make it look fast. Only time will really tell. The track also has been baking in the Tokyo sun with little use, making it extra firm.

“Oh, it’s fast,” American 800-meter runner Clayton Murphy said. “Might take world records to win.”

WHEN WAS THE TRACK INSTALLED?

The track went in over four months, from August to November 2019. It hasn’t seen much action since the surface was put in. The athletes are breaking it in with style.

“You just feel it, man, you just feel it,” South African sprinter Akani Simbine said. “You know what fast tracks feel like. And for us, this track feels really quick and I am looking forward to running quick on it.”

WHY SO BOUNCY?

Mondo says on its website that the main objective was to “maximize the speed of athletes and improve their performance.” The top layer is vulcanized rubber to help with elasticity. There are also “air-filled cavities” in the lower layer, which assist with “shock absorption, energy storage and immediate kinetic response.”

More to the point: It helps racers fly down the track.

“Some tracks absorb your motion and your force,” American 400-meter hurdler and world-record holder Sydney McLaughlin said. “This one regenerates it and gives it back to you. You can definitely feel it.”

SO WHAT WORLD RECORDS MAY FALL?

Keep close watch on the men’s and women’s 400 hurdles. McLaughlin set the mark (51.90 seconds) on June 27 at the U.S. Olympic trials, breaking the record that had belonged to teammate Dalilah Muhammad. They will be the gold-medal favorites Wednesday — and may break the mark again.

Karsten Warholm of Norway recently broke the men’s 400 hurdles mark when he went 46.70. He eclipsed a record that had stood since 1992. Can he break it again?

“Maybe someone else will do it,” Warholm cracked. “I’ve done my job.”

GOTTA BE THE SHOES, TOO?

The other factor in these records could be the technological advances in the spikes. Nike’s Vaporfly model of shoe shook up the world of distance running a few years ago, with carbon-plated technology credited for helping runners shave minutes off their times. That sort of technology is moving its way into the spikes for sprinters.

Thompson-Herah also has a theory on fast times after running 10.61 seconds to break the Olympic mark of the late Florence Griffith Joyner. “My training,” she said. “Doesn’t matter the track or the shoes.”

Perfectly Impossible: Gymnasts wrestle with the imperfect

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Sunisa Lee’s gymnastics are stunning. They’re just not “perfect.” Not technically, anyway.

Thousands of hours of practice. Dozens upon dozens of competitions. And not once has a judge watched the new Olympic all-around champion do her thing — not even on uneven bars, where the 45-second set she plans doing in Sunday’s event finals is a free-flowing series of connections and releases that make it seem as if she is floating — and thought “that’s flawless.”

Lee is not alone. No elite gymnast — not even American star and six-time Olympic medalist Simone Biles — has received a perfect score since the sport moved off the “10” system to a new Code of Points in 2006. Scores are now a combination of the difficulty of the routine (which is open-ended) and the execution, which is based on a 10.0 scale.

In theory, “perfect” execution is possible. It’s just that no one has ever done it. A reality that long ago

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led Lee to make peace with the idea that a faultless routine is a myth, no matter how it may feel to her or how it may look to everyone other than the two people in blue blazers sitting at the judge's tables.

Instead, she shoots for what she considers her best, perhaps out of a sense of self-preservation more than anything. Her 15.400 on bars during the team final was the highest of the night by any athlete on any event and a spectacular display that helped the U.S. claim silver.

It also included 1.4 points of deductions, and she could sense them piling up even as her teammates roared encouragement. Hard to blame her for sounding relieved on Friday when talking about her impending switch to competing collegiately at Auburn.

"(I want to) kind of get away from this elite atmosphere just because it's so, like, crazy," Lee said.

It's a mental and physical grind. Gymnastics can wreak havoc on the body and cast doubt in the mind. Every single turn in every single rotation in every single practice every single day of your career can be tweaked.

"It's hard in that sense because it is such a sport where you're trying to reach perfection, but perfection is unattainable," said three-time Olympian Ellie Black of Canada. "I still struggle sometimes. It's not like you ever get something and it's easy for the rest of your life and the rest of your career."

For Lee, a release of sort awaits.

NCAA training is limited to 20 hours a week. The difficulty and length of routines are a step down from what Lee is used to and the 10-point scoring system remains very much alive.

A shot at drilling a routine and being rewarded for it awaits, even if Lee called it "weird to think about it."

Such is the delicate psychological dance between the world's best gymnasts and their sport. Lee has been competing under the international code for so long, she can't even fathom the idea of seeing a score flash that doesn't include being nitpicked to within an inch of its life.

It takes copious amounts of mental strength to thrive when nothing — from a technical standpoint anyway — is up to the ultimate standard, which puts it at odds with most other sports. Tom Brady can throw a 50-yard spiral for a touchdown. Steph Curry can swish a 3-pointer. Those moments don't exist in gymnastics.

Black believes the code of points makes up for it in other ways. The open-ended nature of the system allows for more creativity in putting together routines.

"That's the part of it that's kind of addicting," said Black, who qualified for the Olympic all-around final before an ankle injury forced her to sit out. "There's something new to try."

Besides, Black figures, "if you could just hit something perfectly, you'd probably lose some of that interest or motivation to keep going."

So Black — just like every other gymnast on the planet — searches for tiny moments of bliss. The stuck dismount. The mastery of a new skill. The smooth connection from one element to another.

Still, the inner voice — the one that can feel the wobble or sense the imperfect hand placement — can be tough to turn off. American Chellsie Memmel won a world all-around title in 2005 and was part of the silver-medal winning U.S. team in Beijing in 2008.

Mommel retired and went into coaching and judging before beginning returning to training during the pandemic. Even as her skills returned, turning the "judge" switch off was difficult. She records every routine then does a video review with her father Andy, who also serves as her coach. She loves the immediate feedback on what's going right and what's going wrong while trying to make a point to not be too hard on herself.

"You have to give yourself some leeway and not beat yourself up about it," said the 33-year-old Memmel, who competed at the U.S. championships in June. "You have to look at it like: 'OK, that was fine, but where can I make those improvements? What needs to be fixed?'"

Even if the fixing can feel relentless. Biles has come closer than anyone to cracking the code.

During the second day of the 2015 U.S. gymnastics championships, the then-18-year-old's Amanar vault drew an audible "oooooh" throughout the arena when her feet suction-cupped to the mat on her dismount.

It looked perfect. It felt perfect. It wasn't. She received a 9.9-E score. Asked later whether she knows

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where the deduction might have come from, she shrugged and laughingly suggested her toes were crossed.

It's that same vault — a roundoff/back handspring onto the table followed by 2 1/2 twists — that Biles bailed on during the first rotation of team finals in Tokyo after getting lost in the air. Her availability for the rest of the Games is in question. She already has pulled out of the all-around, uneven bars, vault and floor exercise finals. Maybe she returns for one final bow during the beam final on Tuesday, though time is running out for her bout with "the twisties," as she described them, to subside.

It's a phenomenon that occasionally plagues gymnasts regardless of skill level, even the greatest of all time. It also highlights the sport's own Sisyphean pursuit of an ultimate goal that can never be achieved.

Maybe that's not the point anyway.

"People need to understand we're not robots," said all-around silver medalist Rebeca Andrade of Brazil.

A concept Biles, Lee and all the others who gathered in Tokyo have long understood. If they were consumed with perfection, they would have bailed years ago.

Go out there. Do you what you can as well as you can for as long as you can. The battle after all, isn't with the judges. It's with yourself.

"I usually don't even try and think about the score," Lee said. "Because that's when I come out on top."

And what could be more perfect than that?

Schumer: Senators will 'get the job done' on infrastructure

By KEVIN FREKING and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unable to produce the final text of a nearly \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, the Senate wrapped up a rare Saturday session making little visible progress on the legislative package, but Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer vowed the work would get done.

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"The longer it takes to finish, the longer we will be here, but we're going to get the job done," he said.

The bipartisan plan calls for \$550 billion in new spending over five years above projected federal levels. A draft bill circulating Capitol Hill indicated it could have more than 2,500 pages when introduced. It's being financed from funding sources that might not pass muster with deficit hawks, including repurposing untapped COVID-19 relief aid and relying on projected future economic growth.

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"We may need the weekend, we may vote on several amendments, but with the cooperation of our Republican colleagues, I believe we can finish the bipartisan infrastructure bill in a matter of days," Schumer

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said Friday night.

But Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, predicted, "It's going to be a grind."

Earlier this week, 17 GOP senators joined all Democrats in voting to start the debate, launching what will be a dayslong process to consider the bill. That support largely held Friday during another procedural vote, with Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., again voting yes to nudge the process along.

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Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., said Saturday that negotiators were finalizing the last few pieces, but he had no predictions when it would be ready for senators to have amendments and debate. He said some lawmakers from both sides of the political aisle have panned the bill in some ways, but in the end, it would provide the kind of investment that lawmakers have talked about for years but have been unable to follow through on.

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The outcome with the bipartisan effort will set the stage for the next debate over Biden's much more ambitious \$3.5 trillion spending package, a strictly partisan pursuit of far-reaching programs and services including child care, tax breaks and health care that touch almost every corner of American life. Republicans strongly oppose that bill, which would require a simple majority, and may try to stop both.

Frustration as Biden, Congress allow eviction ban to expire

By LISA MASCARO, JOSH BOAK and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Anger and frustration mounted in Congress as a nationwide eviction moratorium expired at midnight Saturday — one Democratic lawmaker even camping outside the Capitol in protest as millions of Americans faced being forced from their homes.

Lawmakers said they were blindsided by President Joe Biden's inaction as the deadline neared, some furious that he called on Congress to provide a last-minute solution to protect renters. The rare division between the president and his party carried potential lasting political ramifications.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., the chair of the Financial Services Committee, said Saturday on CNN: "We thought that the White House was in charge."

Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., camped outside the Capitol, said: "I don't plan to leave before some type of change happens."

"We are only hours away from a fully preventable housing crisis," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., during a floor speech in a rare Saturday session as senators labored over an infrastructure package.

"We have the tools and we have the funding," Warren said. "What we need is the time."

More than 3.6 million Americans are at risk of eviction, some in a matter of days. The moratorium was put in place by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of the COVID-19 crisis when jobs shifted and many workers lost income.

The eviction ban was intended to prevent further virus spread by people put out on the streets and into

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shelters. Congress approved nearly \$47 billion in federal housing aid to the states during the pandemic, but it has been slow to make it into the hands of renters and landlords owed payments.

The day before the ban was set to expire, Biden called on local governments to "take all possible steps" to immediately disburse the funds.

"There can be no excuse for any state or locality not accelerating funds to landlords and tenants that have been hurt during this pandemic," he said in a statement late Friday.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi pointed Democratic House members in the same direction, urging them in a letter Saturday night to check into how the money already allocated has been distributed so far in their own states and localities. She said the Treasury Department, which transferred the funds earlier in the year, offered to brief lawmakers next week.

Biden set off the scramble by announcing Thursday he would allow the eviction ban to expire instead of challenging a recent Supreme Court ruling signaling this would be the last deadline.

The White House has been clear that Biden would have liked to extend the federal eviction moratorium because of the spread of the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus. But there were also concerns that challenging the court could lead to a ruling restricting the administration's ability to respond to future public health crises.

On a 5-4 vote in late June, the Supreme Court allowed the broad eviction ban to continue through the end of July. One of those in the majority, Justice Brett Kavanaugh, made clear he would block any additional extensions unless there was "clear and specific congressional authorization."

Biden, heeding the court's warning, called on Congress on Thursday to swiftly pass legislation to extend the date.

Racing to respond, Democrats strained to draft a bill and rally the votes. Pelosi implored colleagues to pass legislation extending the deadline, calling it a "moral imperative," to protect renters and also the landlords who are owed compensation.

Waters quickly produced a draft of a bill that would require the CDC to continue the ban through Dec. 31. At a hastily arranged hearing Friday morning to consider the bill she urged her colleagues to act.

But Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the top Republican on another panel handling the issue, said the Democrats' bill was rushed.

"This is not the way to legislate," she said.

Landlords, who have opposed the moratorium and challenged it repeatedly in court, are against any extension. They, too, are arguing for speeding up the distribution of rental assistance.

The National Apartment Association and several others this week filed a federal lawsuit asking for \$26 billion in damages because of the impact of the moratorium.

Despite behind-the-scenes wrangling throughout the day, Democratic lawmakers had questions and concerns and could not muster support to extend the ban.

Revising the emergency legislation to shorten the eviction deadline to Oct. 18, in line with federal COVID-19 guidelines, drew a few more lawmakers in support — but still not enough for passage.

House Democrats, leaders tried to simply approve an extension by consent, without a formal vote, but House Republicans objected.

Democratic lawmakers were livid at the prospect of evictions in the middle of a surging pandemic.

Bush, who experienced homelessness as a young mother of two in her 20s, said that, at the time, she was working in a low-wage job.

"I don't want anyone else to have to go through what I went through, ever," said Bush, now 45, wiping away tears during an interview at the Capitol, where dozens had joined her protest. "I don't care what the circumstances are and so I'm going to fight now that I'm in a position to be able to do something about it."

Waters said House leaders should have forced a vote and Biden should not have let the warnings from one justice on the Supreme Court prevent him from taking executive action to prevent evictions.

"The president should have moved on it," Waters said. She vowed to try to pass the bill again when lawmakers return from a recess.

By the end of March, 6.4 million American households were behind on their rent, according to the De-

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partment of Housing and Urban Development. As of July 5, roughly 3.6 million people in the U.S. said they faced eviction in the next two months, according to the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey.

Some places are likely to see spikes in evictions starting Monday, while other jurisdictions will see an increase in court filings that will lead to evictions over several months.

The administration is trying to keep renters in place through other means. It released more than \$1.5 billion in rental assistance in June, which helped nearly 300,000 households. The departments of Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs extended their foreclosure-related eviction moratoriums through the end of September on households living in federally insured, single-family homes late Friday, after Biden had asked them to do so.

Aides to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, the chair of the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, said the two were working on legislation to extend the moratorium and were asking Republicans not to block it.

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GLIMPSES: Up, up and away on Olympic trampolines

By The Associated Press undefined

TOKYO (AP) — You know those epic cutaways in movies and on TV that show long shots of Superman flying to the rescue, or taking off immediately after saving the day? That's what Associated Press photographer Ashley Landis' photos of trampoline events at the Tokyo Olympics evoke.

Athletes soar past lights and pop from dark backdrops as the trajectory of bounces catapults them through the air. It is, as British bronze medalize Bryony Page put it last week, "like driving your own roller coaster."

Trampoline competition, which ended Saturday, is an athletic solution to the question so many humans have asked for thousands of years: What if I could fly? Turns out you can, to an extent, with a lot of training and ability and commitment. The tradeoff: It can be perilous.

"Trampoline isn't a sport I thought of as dangerous, but after seeing athletes fly 30 feet in the air and then nearly fall off the trampoline, I have changed my mind," Landis says. "I don't know of another sport where the coach has to follow the athlete with a giant pillow in case they get slightly off center."

That was most apparent, she says, when Aliaksei Shostak of the United States flipped beautifully in the air, and then his right leg plunged to the ground between trampoline springs.

"Fortunately, he was not badly injured," Landis says. "It's a high-risk, artistic sport with very little room for error."

NHL to investigate claim Sharks' Kane bet on own games

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

The NHL said it will investigate an allegation made by Evander Kane's wife that the San Jose Sharks forward bet on his own games and has intentionally tried to lose for gambling profit.

The league said Saturday night on Twitter that it was made aware of the social media posts from the

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Instagram account of Anna Kane and plans to conduct a full investigation. Anna Kane wrote: "How does the NHL let a compulsive gambling addict still play when he's obviously throwing games to win money? Hmm maybe someone needs to address this."

She added: "Can someone ask (Commissioner) Gary Bettman how they let a player gamble on his own games? Bet and win with bookies on his own games?"

In a separate post, Anna Kane accused her husband of spending lavishly partying in Europe while asking her to sell her wedding ring to survive and wrote about not being able to afford baby formula for their child.

The NHL said: "The integrity of our game is paramount and the League takes these allegations very seriously."

A team spokesman wrote in an email to The Associated Press that: "The San Jose Sharks have been in contact today with the National Hockey League about the serious allegations made against Evander Kane. We support a full and transparent investigation into the situation to maintain the integrity of the game and consistency with our team values."

Kane's gambling history and finances have been public knowledge for some time. A Las Vegas Strip casino sued Kane in 2019, alleging he failed to repay a \$500,000 gambling debt racked up during a playoff series against the Golden Knights.

Since the Supreme Court paved the way for legalized sports gambling in the U.S. and more states have adopted it, the NHL has embraced the possibilities and made several partnerships with sportsbooks and other betting organizations.

Reached by email before the league's announcement, Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said only a statement would be coming. The league said it would not make any further comments at this time.

A message sent to Kane's agent was not immediately returned.

Kane, 29, is three seasons into a \$49 million, seven-year contract. He's with his third organization after being drafted by and debuting with Atlanta/Winnipeg and a stint in Buffalo. According to Capfriendly, which charts hockey salaries, he has made just under \$56 million during his NHL career.

Last season, he had 22 goals and 27 assists in 56 games.

At 46, African skateboarder finally wows mom at Tokyo Games

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — At age 46, the second-oldest skateboarder at the Tokyo Games is hoping to not have a heart attack and have mounds of fun. Should be no problem. Fun has been a life's work for Dallas Oberholzer.

"I have never had a real job. I have never applied for a job," he says. "My whole life has just been skateboarding. I am just hooked."

Skateboarding's young guns, with their endorsements and boards bearing their names, have bigger tricks and bigger Instagram followings than the grizzled South African with a salt-and-pepper beard. Oberholzer isn't expecting to beat them when they go wheel-to-wheel this week in Tokyo's huge purpose-built Olympic skate bowl.

But Oberholzer has big tales, woven from a nomadic existence on four squeaky polyurethane wheels. If skateboarding is the punk rock sport of the Games, disruptive and not taking itself too seriously, then Oberholzer is its Iggy Pop — raw, wild and worn, someone who can talk and talk and talk.

About, say, when he worked as a concert chauffeur, ferrying around Janet Jackson's dancers. Or his 16-month road trip, from Canada all the way to Argentina, after he graduated from university with a degree in marketing that he quickly realized he had no use for.

"Just a collection of experiences" is how he describes himself. Another description could be: A mascot for middle-aged people everywhere, flying the flag for Generation X against Gens Y and Z.

"I'm not going to win. I am not going to get a medal," he says. "But, like, I am legitimately the best guy in Africa. By default, the best guy in Africa goes to the Olympics."

"It's just unbelievably epic," he adds. "It's all expenses paid and it's going to be the best course I would have ever skated in my life."

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Only Rune Glifberg, a.k.a "the Danish Destroyer" and also 46, is older (by eight months) than Oberholzer among the 80 men and women competing in skateboarding's Olympic debut in Tokyo.

In the men's park competition on Thursday, Oberholzer and Glifberg — with their spiky shocks of grey-flecked hair — will face skaters less than half their age.

The women's event on Wednesday has even younger skaters: Kokona Hiraki of Japan is just 12. In the women's street event in Week 1, three young teens — 13, 13 and 16 — won gold, silver and bronze.

"I have got nothing to lose, nothing to prove. I know I am 46 and all I need to do is keep my cardio up so I can stay on my skateboard for 45 seconds," Oberholzer says. "I'm going to be the one smiling, bro. I hope. Or I will be having a mild heart attack."

Skating's age range is remarkably broad for an Olympic event and testifies to the sport's inclusivity. In July, skating pioneer Tony Hawk competed at the X Games at age 53, and was beaten by a 12-year-old, Gui Khury. The sport's coffee mug could read: "Skaters don't grow old, they just get new wheels."

"Skateboarding definitely makes you feel younger," says Glifberg. "It's not just a physical thing. It's a lot to do with style and grace and just the way that you present yourself on the board."

Whereas Gens Y and Z have had "how-to" videos on YouTube and Instagram to teach them tricks, Oberholzer and Glifberg had to find their own way.

Glifberg started right around the time that "Back to the Future" turned kids onto skating in 1985. For Oberholzer, it was a rented VHS copy of the 1986 movie "Thrashin," about skateboarding gangs, that "made all our eyeballs pop out."

Until then, his sport had been tennis.

"I remember just thinking to myself, 'I could play tennis and let the ball have all the fun or I could be the ball,'" he recalled. "And I'm like, 'I want to be the ball. I want to be the one flying around.'"

Anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela was still in jail when Oberholzer started riding buses into central Johannesburg in search of places to skate. Schooled, like other white South Africans, separately from Black kids, it was on his board that Oberholzer first started to meet and mingle with Black peers who also skated.

"It really helped me get over my apartheid upbringing," he says.

In turn, Oberholzer is giving back. He uses skateboarding to reach out to kids in tough neighborhoods, to keep them from drugs and gangs and help them develop skills. The Indigo Youth Movement he founded has built multiple skate parks and ramps.

But none of that has impressed his mum, Linda, quite like qualifying for the Olympics.

"My mom is finally happy with my life choices, bro. You know what a good feeling that is? It's taken that long for my mom to acknowledge what I do with my life," he says. "That's probably the best thing I'm taking out of this, is that my mom finally goes, 'Wow.'"

Turkey evacuates panicked tourists by boat from wildfires

By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Panicked tourists in Turkey hurried to the seashore to wait for rescue boats Saturday after being told to evacuate some hotels in the Aegean Sea resort of Bodrum due to the dangers posed by nearby wildfires, Turkish media reported.

Coast guard units led the operation and authorities asked private boats and yachts to assist in evacuation efforts from the sea as new wildfires erupted. A video showed plumes of smoke and fire enveloping a hill close to the seashore.

The death toll from wildfires raging in Turkey's Mediterranean towns rose to six Saturday after two forest workers were killed, the country's health minister said. Fires across Turkey since Wednesday have burned down forests and some settlements, encroaching on villages and tourist destinations and forcing people to evacuate.

The Russian news agency Sputnik said more than 100 Russian tourists had been evacuated from Bodrum and relocated to new hotels.

In one video of the Bodrum fire filmed from the sea, a man helping with the evacuations was stunned

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at the speed of the fire, saying "this is unbelievable, just unbelievable. How did this fire come (here) this fast in 5 minutes?" He was not named in the video.

The minister of agriculture and forestry, Bekir Pakdemirli, said Saturday that 91 of the 101 fires that broke out amid strong winds and scorching heat have been brought under control. Neighborhoods affected by the fire in five provinces were declared disaster zones.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited some affected areas Saturday, inspecting the damage from a helicopter.

Speaking from the town of Manavgat, Erdogan announced that the Turkish government would cover the rents for people affected by the fire and rebuild their homes. He said taxes, social security and credit payments would be postponed for those affected and small businesses would be offered credit with zero interest.

"We cannot do anything beyond wishing the mercy of God for the lives we have lost but we can replace everything that was burned," he said.

Erdogan said the number of planes fighting the fires had been increased from six to 13, including planes from Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran, and that thousands of Turkish personnel as well as dozens of helicopters and drones were assisting the firefighting efforts.

In a speech from Marmaris on Saturday night, Erdogan said one of the fires there had been started by children and other investigations were ongoing.

At least five people have died from the fires in Manavgat and one died in Marmaris. Both towns are Mediterranean tourist destinations. Tourism is an important source of revenue for Turkey, and business owners were hoping that this summer would be much better than last year, when pandemic travel restrictions caused tourism to plummet.

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said 400 people affected by the fires in Manavgat were treated at hospitals and released, while 10 others were still hospitalized for fire injuries. In Marmaris, 159 people were treated at the hospital and one person was still undergoing treatment for burns.

In southern Hatay province, flames jumped into populated areas but were later apparently brought under control.

Wildfires are common in Turkey's Mediterranean and Aegean regions during the arid summer months.

Meanwhile, a heat wave across southern Europe, fed by hot air from Africa, has led to wildfires across the Mediterranean, including in Italy and Greece.

Firefighters on the Italian island of Sicily on Saturday battled dozens of blazes fueled by high temperatures, prompting the region's governor to request assistance from Rome. Some 150 people trapped in two seaside areas in the city of Catania were evacuated late Friday by sea, where they were picked up by rubber dinghies and transferred to Coast Guard boats.

In western Greece, a wildfire that broke out Saturday forced the evacuation of four villages and people on a beach by the Fire Service, the Coast Guard and private boats.

The fire was in a mountain forest 30 kilometers (19 miles) east of Patras, Greece's third-largest city, Citizen Protection Minister Michalis Chrysochoidis said late Saturday. Aided by strong winds, the fire raced down the slopes and threatened seaside villages.

The Civil Protection Agency sent text messages to the residents of four villages — two in the mountains and two by the sea — to evacuate. Local media said some villagers refused to leave and were trying to fight the fire with garden hoses.

Temperatures in Greece and nearby countries in southeast Europe are expected to climb to 42 degrees Celsius (more than 107 Fahrenheit) Monday in many cities and towns.

China, India miss UN deadline to update emissions targets

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — China and India have missed a U.N. deadline to submit fresh plans for cutting their greenhouse gas emissions in time for the global body to include their pledges in a report for governments

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at this year's global climate summit, officials said Saturday.

The world's two most populous countries are among dozens that failed to provide an update on their targets for curbing the release of planet-warming gases to the U.N. climate change agency by July 31.

China is the country with the world's highest emissions, while India is third. The United States, which submitted its new target in April, is the second-biggest global emitter.

U.N. climate chief Patricia Espinosa welcomed that 110 signatories of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had met the cut-off date, which was extended from the end of 2020 due to the pandemic. But she said it was "far from satisfactory" that only 58% had submitted their new targets in time.

Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syria and 82 other nations also failed to update their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in time to include them in a report Espinosa's office is preparing for the U.N. climate change conference in November.

Espinosa noted that a previous report found countries were doing too little to meet the goal of keeping global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) by the end of the century compared with pre-industrial times, let alone the more ambitious target of capping warming at 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees F).

"Recent extreme heat waves, droughts and floods across the globe are a dire warning that much more needs to be done, and much more quickly, to change our current pathway," said Espinosa. "This can only be achieved through more ambitious NDCs."

Under the 2015 Paris climate accord, countries set their own emissions reduction goals but are required to be transparent about them and jointly raise their targets over time to ensure that global warming remains at agreed acceptable levels.

China did announce last year that it aims for its emissions of carbon dioxide — the main greenhouse gas — to peak before 2030, and to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. The target has yet to be formally included in its submission to the U.N., however, meaning it can't yet be counted toward the global effort.

Earlier this month, the chair of the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, Alok Sharma of Britain, met with environment ministers from more than 50 countries, including the U.S. and China. Speaking to reporters after the meeting — the first physical meeting of its kind since the start of the pandemic — Sharma said participants had agreed the 1.5 degrees C goal must stay "within reach."

"Between now and COP26 we must, and I promise you we will, make every single day count," he said.

Tenants prepare for unknown as eviction moratorium ends

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Tenants saddled with months of back rent are facing the end of the federal eviction moratorium Saturday, a move that could lead to millions being forced from their homes just as the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus is rapidly spreading.

The Biden administration announced Thursday it would allow the nationwide ban to expire, saying it wanted to extend it due to rising infections but its hands were tied after the U.S. Supreme Court signaled in June that it wouldn't be extended beyond the end of July without congressional action.

House lawmakers on Friday attempted, but failed, to pass a bill to extend the moratorium even for a few months. Some Democratic lawmakers had wanted it extended until the end of the year.

"August is going to be a rough month because a lot of people will be displaced from their homes," said Jeffrey Hearne, director of litigation Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. "It will be at numbers we haven't seen before. There are a lot of people who are protected by the ... moratorium."

The moratorium, put in place by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in September to try to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, is credited with keeping 2 million people in their homes over the past year as the pandemic battered the economy, according to the Princeton University's Eviction Lab. Eviction moratoriums will remain in place in New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Illinois, California and Washington, D.C., until they expire later this year.

Elsewhere, the end of the federal moratorium means evictions could begin Monday, leading to a years'

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worth of evictions over several weeks and ushering in the worst housing crisis since the Great Recession. Roxanne Schaefer, already suffering from myriad health issues, including respiratory problems and a bone disorder, is one of the millions fearing homelessness.

In a rundown, sparsely furnished Rhode Island apartment she shares with her girlfriend, brother, a dog and a kitten, the 38-year-old is \$3,000 behind on her \$995 monthly rent after her girlfriend lost her dishwasher job during the pandemic. Boxes filled with their possessions were behind a couch in the apartment, which Schaeffer says is infested with mice and cockroaches, and even has squirrels in her bedroom.

The landlord, who first tried to evict her in January, has refused to take federal rental assistance, so the only thing preventing him from changing the locks and evicting her is the CDC moratorium. Her \$800 monthly disability check won't pay for a new apartment. She only has \$1,000 in savings.

"I got anxiety. I'm nervous. I can't sleep," said Schaefer, of West Warwick, Rhode Island, over fears of being thrown out on the street. "If he does, you know, I lose everything, and I'll have nothing. I'll be homeless."

More than 15 million people live in households that owe as much as \$20 billion to their landlords, according to the Aspen Institute. As of July 5, roughly 3.6 million people in the U.S. said they faced eviction in the next two months, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey.

Parts of the South and other regions with weaker tenant protections will likely see the largest spikes, and communities of color, where vaccination rates are sometimes lower, will be hit hardest. But advocates say this crisis is likely to have a wider impact than pre-pandemic evictions, reaching suburban and rural areas and working families who lost their jobs and never before experienced an eviction.

"I know personally many of the people evicted are people who worked before, who never had issues," said Kristen Randall, a constable in Pima County, Arizona, who will be responsible for carrying out evictions starting Monday.

"These are people who already tried to find new housing, a new apartment or move in with families," she said. "I know quite a few of them plan on staying in their cars or are looking at trying to make reservations at local shelters. But because of the pandemic, our shelter space has been more limited."

"We are going to see a higher proportion of people go to the streets than we normally see. That is unfortunate."

The crisis will only get worse in September when the first foreclosure proceedings are expected to begin. An estimated 1.75 million homeowners — roughly 3.5% of all homes — are in some sort of forbearance plan with their banks, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. By comparison, about 10 million homeowners lost their homes to foreclosure after the housing bubble burst in 2008.

The Biden administration had hoped that historic amounts of rental assistance allocated by Congress in December and March would help avert an eviction crisis.

But so far, only about \$3 billion of the first tranche of \$25 billion had been distributed through June by states and localities. Another \$21.5 billion will go to the states. The speed of disbursement picked up in June, but some states like New York have distributed almost nothing. Several others have only approved a few million dollars.

"We are on the brink of catastrophic levels of housing displacement across the country that will only increase the immediate threat to public health," said Emily Benfer, a law professor at Wake Forest University and the chair of the American Bar Association's Task Force on Eviction, Housing Stability and Equity.

Some places will see a spike in people being evicted in the coming days, while other jurisdictions will see an increase in court filings that will lead to evictions over several months.

"It's almost unfathomable. We are on the precipice of a nationwide eviction crisis that is entirely preventable with more time to distribute rental assistance," Benfer said.

"The eviction moratorium is the only thing standing between millions of tenants and eviction while rental assistance applications are pending. When that essential public health tool ends on Saturday, just as the delta variant surges, the situation will become dire."

Many beleaguered tenants will be forced out into a red-hot housing market where prices are rising and

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vacancy rates have plummeted.

They will be stuck with eviction records and back rent that will make it almost impossible to find new apartments, leaving many to shack up with families, turn to already strained homeless shelters or find unsafe dwellings in low-income neighborhoods that lack good schools, good jobs and access to transportation. Many will also be debt-ridden.

Evictions will also prove costly to the communities they reside in. Studies have shown evicted families face a laundry list of health problems, from higher infant mortality rates to high blood pressure to suicide. And taxpayers often foot the bill, from providing social services, health care and homeless services. One study by the National Low Income Housing Coalition and Innovation for Justice Program at the University of Arizona found costs could reach \$129 billion from pandemic-related evictions.

In Rhode Island, Schaefer has struggled to grasp why her landlord wouldn't take federal rental assistance. Landlords, many of whom have successfully challenged the moratorium in court, argue the economy is improving and coronavirus cases are down in most places. Those who don't take rental assistance refuse for a variety of reasons, including a desire to get the tenant out.

"It's not that I wanna live here for free," Schaefer said. "I know wherever you go and live, you gotta pay. But I'm just asking to be reasonable."

"Why can't you take the rent relief? You know, they pay," she added. "In the paperwork it says they're gonna pay, like, two months in advance. At least by then, two months, I can save up quite a bit of money and get to put a down payment on somewhere else to move, and you'll have your money that we owe you and will be moving out."

French police clash with anti-virus pass protesters in Paris

By BOUBKAR BENZABAT and ELAINE GANLEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Thousands of people protested France's special virus pass with marches through Paris and other French cities on Saturday. Most demonstrations were peaceful, but sporadic clashes with riot police marked protests in the French capital.

Some 3,000 security forces deployed around Paris for a third weekend of protests against the pass that will be needed soon to enter restaurants and other places. Police took up posts along the Champs-Elysees to guard against an invasion of the famed avenue.

With virus infections spiking and hospitalizations rising, French lawmakers have passed a bill requiring the pass in most places as of Aug. 9. Polls show a majority of French support the pass, but some are adamantly opposed. The pass requires a vaccination or a quick negative test or proof of a recent recovery from COVID-19 and mandates vaccine shots for all health care workers by mid-September.

Across the Alps, thousands of anti-vaccine pass demonstrators marched in Italian cities including Rome, Milan and Naples for the second consecutive week. Milan demonstrators stopped outside the city's courthouse chanting "Truth! "Shame!" and "Liberty!" while in Rome they marched behind a banner reading "Resistance." Those demonstrations were noisy but peaceful.

For anti-vaccine pass demonstrators in France, "Liberty" was the slogan of the day. The marches drew some 204,000 people around the country. Some 14,250 people hostile to the pass protested in Paris, several thousand more than a week ago.

Hager Ameur, a 37-year-old nurse, said she resigned from her job, accusing the government of using a form of "blackmail."

"I think that we mustn't be told what to do," she told The Associated Press, adding that French medical workers during the first wave of COVID-19 were quite mistreated. "And now, suddenly we are told that if we don't get vaccinated it is our fault that people are contaminated. I think it is sickening."

Tensions flared in front of the famed Moulin Rouge nightclub in northern Paris during what appeared to be the largest demonstration. Lines of police faced down protesters in up-close confrontations during the march. Police used their fists on several occasions.

As marchers headed eastward and some pelted police with objects, police fired tear gas into the crowds,

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plumes of smoke filling the sky. A male protester was seen with a bleeding head and a police officer was carried away by colleagues. Three officers were injured, the French press quoted police as saying. Police, again responding to rowdy crowds, also turned a water cannon on protesters as the march ended at the Bastille.

A calmer march was led by the former top lieutenant of far-right leader Marine Le Pen who left to form his own small anti-EU party. But Florian Philippot's new cause, against the virus pass, seems far more popular. His contingent of hundreds marched Saturday to the Health Ministry.

Among those not present this week was Francois Asselineau, leader of another tiny anti-EU party, the Popular Republican Union, and an ardent campaigner against the health pass, who came down with COVID-19. In a video on his party's website, Asselineau, who was not hospitalized, called on people to denounce the "absurd, unjust and totally liberty-killing" health pass.

French authorities are implementing the health pass because the highly contagious delta variant is making strong inroads. More than 24,000 new daily cases were confirmed Friday night — compared to just a few thousand cases a day at the start of the month.

The government announcement that the health pass would take effect on Aug. 9 has driven many unvaccinated French to sign up for inoculations so their social lives won't get shut down during the summer holiday season. Vaccinations are now available at a wide variety of places, including some beaches. More than 52% of the French population has been vaccinated.

About 112,000 people have died of the virus in France since the start of the pandemic.

Mask guidance divides parents heading into new school year

By PAT EATON-ROBB Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — With U.S. health officials recommending that children mask up in school this fall, parents and policy makers across the nation have been plunged anew into a debate over whether face coverings should be optional or a mandate.

The delta variant of the coronavirus now threatens to upend normal instruction for a third consecutive school year. Some states have indicated they will probably heed the federal government's guidance and require masks. Others will leave the decision up to parents.

The controversy is unfolding at a time when many Americans are at their wits' end with pandemic restrictions and others fear their children will be put at risk by those who don't take the virus seriously enough. In a handful of Republican-led states, lawmakers made it illegal for schools to require masks.

In Connecticut, anti-mask rallies have happened outside Gov. Ned Lamont's official residence in Hartford, and lawn signs and bumper stickers call on him to "unmask our kids." The Democrat has said that he's likely to follow the latest advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC on Tuesday recommended indoor masks for all teachers, staff, students and visitors at schools nationwide, regardless of vaccination status. The agency cited the risk of spread of the highly contagious delta variant, even among vaccinated people.

Alima Bryant, 33, a mother of four who organizes anti-mask parents in Branford, Connecticut, said she's not a conspiracy theorist, but she believes scientists have overstated the dangers of COVID-19, especially for children. She said she will take her children out of school rather than subject them to wearing masks, which she believes are more likely to make them ill than the virus.

"Especially with little kids, I can imagine how often they're touching dirty things, then touching the mask," she said. "Also, in kindergarten, you have to learn social cues, and even with speech and everything, it's so important to not be wearing a mask."

But parents such as Ryan Zuimmerman, of Lenexa, Kansas, fear that approach will prolong the pandemic.

In Johnson County, Kansas, the state's most populous county, five districts recommend but do not require masks. A sixth district has not yet decided.

Zuimmerman, speaking at a recent meeting of county commissioners, said that if masks are only recommended and not required, "95% of kids won't be wearing them."

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"This isn't about comfort or control or obedience or your rights. It is not conspiracy or child abuse. It is about doing unto others as you want them to do unto you," he said.

"I ask you this: If it was your kid who was high risk, what if you had to send that kid you had spent your whole life protecting to school in this environment?"

Another public meeting, this one in Broward County, Florida, had to be postponed for a day this week after roughly two dozen mask opponents waged screaming matches with school board members and burned masks outside the building.

When the discussion resumed Wednesday, it was limited to 10 public speakers, and all but one spoke vehemently against masks, saying their personal rights were being eroded.

Vivian Hug, a Navy veteran, brought her twins with her as she addressed board members, saying she was tired of the "fear mongering" and giving up "freedoms in the name of safety."

"Please stop the insanity. You have already done damage to these kids having to wear masks," she said before putting her daughter up to the microphone, where the little girl complained that masks make it hard for her to breathe and give her headaches.

But Dr. Karyl Rattay, director of the Delaware Division of Public Health, said there is no credible evidence masks are unsafe for children. She said the science is clear that face coverings have prevented the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

"If we want to have kids in school this fall, and as many kids as we possibly can get into school, masks are a key component," she said.

Amid the debate, there is also a push to get more older kids vaccinated. President Joe Biden has asked schools to host vaccine clinics for the those 12 and older, and states are also beginning to discuss whether to mandate that school employees either be vaccinated or undergo frequent testing for the coronavirus.

"To me that seems very reasonable," said Dr. Joseph Kanter, the state health officer of the Louisiana Department of Health. "You achieve the goal of providing a safe environment. You maintain some choice in there. And clearly most people are going to look at that and say it make sense for them to get vaccinated, given that context."

The push to vaccinate children varies by country. Half of 12- to 17-year-olds in Estonia's second-largest city of Tartu have received their first vaccine shot, and local health officials are working to push the number to 70% before the school year begins. Countries such as Denmark and France also are actively encouraging vaccination of children, while others such Sweden and the United Kingdom have yet to begin mass vaccinations for those under 18.

The Pfizer shot is currently the only U.S. vaccine authorized for children 12 years and up. Moderna expects the Food and Drug Administration to rule soon on its application for children in the same age group.

Moderna said Monday that it expects to have enough data to apply for FDA authorization for younger children by late this year or early 2022. Pfizer has said it expects to apply in September for children ages 5 through 11.

But some parents, such as Bryant, say they will not get their children vaccinated, even after the kids are eligible, until they know more about potential side effects. Bryant said she knows people who have had severe reactions and others who believe it has affected their menstrual cycles.

Kanter urges families to vaccinate all eligible children. He said the argument that they rarely get severely ill from COVID-19 is becoming outdated.

"As an absolute number, we are seeing younger individuals and kids get sicker in higher numbers and get more severe numbers with delta than they have before," he said.

Young people themselves have been wrestling with misinformation and vaccine hesitancy among parents and peers.

Angelica Granados, 16, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, finally got permission from her mother to take a COVID-19 vaccine last month. She worried about a potential allergic reaction.

"I've always wanted to take it," Granados said, describing the shot as a choice between going "back to normal living" or risking infection.

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Her mother, Erica Gonzales, stood by as she got the injection and waited with her during an extended 30-minute observation period.

"I didn't want her to take it, but I mean, that's her choice. It's her body. She knows it best," Gonzales said.

US memorials to victims of COVID-19 pandemic taking shape

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

CHILLICOTHE, Ohio (AP) — Ohio has planted a memorial grove of native trees to remember people who died of COVID-19, and governors and state lawmakers nationwide are considering their own ways to mark the toll of the virus.

Temporary memorials have sprung up across the U.S. — 250,000 white flags at RFK stadium in the nation's capital, a garden of hand-sculpted flowers in Florida, strings of origami cranes in Los Angeles.

The process of creating more lasting remembrances that honor the over 600,000 Americans who have died from the coronavirus, though, is fraught compared to past memorial drives because of the politics.

Last year, a bill kickstarting a national COVID-19 memorial process died in Congress as the Trump administration sought to deemphasize the ravages of the pandemic.

States are a good place to start with monuments given the complexities involved in remembering the federal government's early handling of the disease, said James Young, founding director of the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Institute for Holocaust, Genocide and Memory Studies.

"We remember not just the victims, but we end up remembering kind of the U.S. administration's indifference or even neglect, malignant neglect, of the disease itself, much less the victims," he said.

Non-pandemic monuments — such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the Oklahoma City National Memorial and the National Sept. 11 Memorial in New York — resulted from negotiations among diverse stakeholders willing to push through controversy to hash out common narratives, said Nancy Bristow, a history professor at the University of Puget Sound.

A national COVID-19 memorial won't be so clear-cut, she said.

"The problem and the strength of memorials is they tell the story we want to tell, and they may not have anything to do with learning from the past or even with remembering the complexities of what we've been through," Bristow said. "Commemoration and memorializing is not about nuance."

For governors who may be staking their political fortunes on the success of their virus response, however, the power to tell their own stories could be critical.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, a Republican, and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, were among the first to seize the virus narrative with their memorial proposals earlier this year.

Earlier this month, Democratic Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced a panel of experts from state government and the local art community had selected 11 artists to submit design proposals for that state's permanent memorial after a money-raising campaign this spring. A state lawmaker in Maine proposed legislation there to do the same.

The COVID-19 Pandemic Memorial Grove that DeWine dedicated in April at a state park near Chillicothe, in southern Ohio, included among its native trees the white oak, which can live for 400 years.

"Maybe someone will come here and will talk about their grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother who went through the pandemic," DeWine said at the event. "Maybe someone in their family died, maybe someone in their family was a nurse or doctor, someone who was there to make a difference for others. We should not forget the sacrifices that have been made."

Cuomo is regrouping after plans for a concrete state memorial to essential workers at Battery Park faced outcry from neighbors upset at the related loss of green space. He has said workers need to be remembered for their valor.

"They saved the lives of New Yorkers," he said in announcing the panel to spearhead the project in April. "COVID was a war and they were war heroes. They gave their lives in the midst of that war to save others."

DeWine and Cuomo are patterning their memorial language around their contrasting leadership styles, Young said.

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"I think DeWine did see himself as a kind of a pater familias trying to take care of everybody, and Cuomo did see himself or portray himself as a general going to war against the virus," Young said.

Bristow said the war metaphor was also used with the deadly 1918 influenza epidemic, which arose during a real war — World War I — and that conflation ultimately overwhelmed all memory of the deadly disease, which never got a national memorial.

"The war was a heroic narrative, the war was a success, the war was an expression of American exceptionalism and how great we were, which is how Americans wanted and want to see themselves," she said. "And the pandemic just didn't offer that kind of story line."

COVID-19 memorials also bring practical questions.

For instance, listing victims by name on a national memorial, as monuments sometimes do, could be a tricky business.

Responding to concerns about deaths being misattributed to the virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a report in March that found only about 5% of the death certificates that listed COVID-19 as a cause listed it exclusively. Instead, it was often paired with other contributing problems, including exacerbating diseases such as diabetes and simultaneous conditions such as pneumonia.

As such details are worked out, some smaller permanent memorials — a statue to sanitation workers in New York, wall murals in Detroit and a churchyard sculpture in Dover, Delaware, for instance — are already in place.

Heartfelt yet ephemeral tributes are also abundant, including bell-rings, vigils and websites.

Kristin Urquiza, co-founder and co-executive director of the Marked by COVID organization, said she is laying the groundwork for a push later this year for a permanent national memorial.

Urquiza drew attention last year for a speech she delivered during the Democratic National Convention blaming Trump's lack of leadership for her father's death from COVID-19, but she said the project is non-partisan and unifying officials of both parties.

"A physical memorial would be a place to acknowledge our grief," she said. "A place we can unite from, to see each other as human beings, as Americans, as people, who went through this together."

U.S. Rep. Adriano Espaillat, a New York Democrat, also has reintroduced the bill that would begin a national COVID-19 memorial process.

Espaillat said the legislation envisions seating the memorial in the Bronx, an early COVID-19 hotspot. He refrained from addressing whether the virus politics of the Trump administration played a role in his earlier bill's demise. But he said any memorial have to address some uncomfortable truths revealed by the pandemic.

"As we continue our push to establish this national memorial, we must consider and reflect on the serious racial disparities that COVID-19 ravaged throughout the health systems that make Black and brown communities more susceptible," he said in a statement.

Massachusetts photographer Keith Jacobs died of COVID-19 in April 2020, only weeks into the pandemic, just as he'd made it to the top of a list to receive a kidney transplant.

His widow, Marcy Jacobs, 64, of Stoughton, Massachusetts, said she fears her late husband and other pandemic victims will be forgotten as the disease wanes and people who didn't lose a loved one move on.

"Don't expect us to move on without giving us a place to grieve," she said, recalling her husband as kind, uncomplaining and simple. "Is it a stone for everyone? I don't know."

President Joe Biden's inauguration-eve remembrance for COVID-19 victims was nice, she said, but more is needed.

"What is the country going to do?" she said.

UK prime minister's wife says she's pregnant again

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's wife, Carrie, said Saturday that she is expecting the couple's second child.

Carrie Johnson announced her pregnancy in a post on Instagram in which she also revealed that she

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suffered a miscarriage earlier this year.

"At the beginning of the year, I had a miscarriage which left me heartbroken," she wrote. "I feel incredibly blessed to be pregnant again, but I've also felt like a bag of nerves."

Johnson said she hoped to welcome her "rainbow baby" around Christmas. Rainbow baby is a term used to describe a child born after a miscarriage, still birth or the death of an infant.

The 33-year-old environmental campaigner and former Conservative Party communications director said she wanted to share the news about her miscarriage to help others.

"Fertility issues can be really hard for many people, particularly when on platforms like Instagram it can look like everything is only ever going well," she said. "I found it a real comfort to hear from people who had also experienced loss so I hope that in some very small way sharing this might help others too."

The Johnsons married in May of this year in a private Catholic ceremony at Westminster Cathedral in London. Their first child, Wilfred, was born in April 2020.

The prime minister had four children with his second wife, Marina Wheeler, and has fathered at least one child outside of his marriages.

The baby will be the fourth born to a sitting British prime minister this century. Tony Blair and David Cameron's wives also had babies while their husbands were in office.

Olympic attention to mental health: Can NBC coverage pivot?

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — If NBC's Michele Tafoya expected exultation or tears of joy from American swimmer Caeleb Dressel when she asked how it felt to reach his dream of an Olympic gold medal, that's not what she got.

He was happy, but hurting. "It's a really tough year," he said. "It's really hard."

Olympic athletes, most notably gymnast Simone Biles, haven't been afraid to express the mental and emotional difficulties they've faced during these pandemic games, a development that's thrown NBC a curve.

The network that presents the Games has been forced to pivot, and the addition of Michael Phelps to its broadcast team turned into a master stroke for unanticipated reasons. Yet it's also worth questioning whether an intense focus on gold is out of touch for what these Games have become.

For most of the athletes, it has been an extraordinarily intense year. After training with the goal of being ready in 2020, the Games' postponement to 2021 — and the pandemic that caused it — forced them to decide if they wanted to essentially put another year of their lives on hold for what is often a lonely quest, said Mark Aoyagi, coordinator of the Sports and Performance Psychology program at the University of Denver.

Then they traveled to a lockdown environment to perform without their friends and family present; indeed, they had hardly any audience at all.

That strain was evident when NBC connected Dressel with his parents, wife and sister at home for a conversation shortly after his swim. He started sobbing.

In its coverage, NBC should make it a point to talk to athletes about their mental, not just physical, preparation for the games, said Hillary Cauthen, a sports psychologist from Austin, Texas, who is on the executive board of the Association for Applied Sports Psychology.

"We need to lean into this conversation," Cauthen said.

Between cable networks and streaming, NBC Universal peeks into every corner of the Olympics. By far, though, NBC's prime-time coverage is the window through which most Americans experience the Games, and that is primarily focused on the medal hunt by American athletes in gymnastics, swimming & diving and track & field.

By its very nature, the Olympics are an athletic competition. There are winners and losers, dreams fulfilled and dreams dashed. While many athletes thrive in that environment, Biles' decision to pull out of the team and all-around gymnastics competition is the most prominent sign that for some, the pressure takes a toll.

Not many television viewers realize that a large number of competing Olympians understand they have

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no realistic expectation of winning a medal. For them, simply coming to Tokyo and competing is a joyful accomplishment, Aoyagi said.

"We never see that story," he said. "Obviously, NBC highlights those that are in medal contention. It's a very cultivated story that is presented to people that doesn't capture the essence of why most of them are over there."

Molly Solomon, executive producer of NBC's Olympics coverage, objects to any characterization of the network's philosophy as simply winner takes all.

"We always celebrate winning a silver or bronze and the achievement of being an Olympian," Solomon said. "That's our foundational philosophy, our ethos. If you listen to the tenor and tone of our comments in the opening ceremony, we talk about for so many of the Olympians, that simply being at the Games is their crowning achievement."

For NBC Universal, the Olympics are a multibillion-dollar business, and the company needs stars to entice viewers. That put athletes such as Katie Ledecky and Biles in an intense spotlight, and the gymnast's decision not to compete has likely contributed to the network's disappointing ratings thus far. American Sunisa Lee's victory in the women's gymnastics all-around competition on Thursday offered a boost.

For Biles, the attention turned her from a woman chasing her own dreams to America's great sports hope.

"We just have to have a grace and kindness to understand what they're going through," Cauthen said.

NBC's Olympics host, Mike Tirico, noted in a commentary that Biles' story and the focus on mental health didn't fit into society's desire for instant results and a willingness to criticize athletes who don't live up to expectations.

"Maybe this helps the rest of us understand that even though they crave and create a lot of the attention, sometimes what we know them for and what we admire them for is not the most important thing," he said.

NBC hired the 23-time gold medalist Phelps primarily to add context to its swimming coverage. Instead, Phelps' activism and willingness to talk about his own mental health issues has provided a crucial element to NBC's Biles coverage. Phelps said he understood how Biles felt she carried the weight of the world on her shoulders, since he felt it, too.

He'll keep talking about the issue, Solomon said.

Bacon may disappear in California as pig rules take effect

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Thanks to a reworked menu and long hours, Jeannie Kim managed to keep her San Francisco restaurant alive during the coronavirus pandemic.

That makes it all the more frustrating that she fears her breakfast-focused diner could be ruined within months by new rules that could make one of her top menu items — bacon — hard to get in California.

"Our number one seller is bacon, eggs and hash browns," said Kim, who for 15 years has run SAMS American Eatery on the city's busy Market Street. "It could be devastating for us."

At the beginning of next year, California will begin enforcing an animal welfare proposition approved overwhelmingly by voters in 2018 that requires more space for breeding pigs, egg-laying chickens and veal calves. National veal and egg producers are optimistic they can meet the new standards, but only 4% of hog operations now comply with the new rules. Unless the courts intervene or the state temporarily allows non-compliant meat to be sold in the state, California will lose almost all of its pork supply, much of which comes from Iowa, and pork producers will face higher costs to regain a key market.

Animal welfare organizations for years have been pushing for more humane treatment of farm animals but the California rules could be a rare case of consumers clearly paying a price for their beliefs.

With little time left to build new facilities, inseminate sows and process the offspring by January, it's hard to see how the pork industry can adequately supply California, which consumes roughly 15% of all pork produced in the country.

"We are very concerned about the potential supply impacts and therefore cost increases," said Matt Sutton, the public policy director for the California Restaurant Association.

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California's restaurants and groceries use about 255 million pounds of pork a month, but its farms produce only 45 million pounds, according to Rabobank, a global food and agriculture financial services company.

The National Pork Producers Council has asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture for federal aid to help pay for retrofitting hog facilities around the nation to fill the gap. Hog farmers said they haven't complied because of the cost and because California hasn't yet issued formal regulations on how the new standards will be administered and enforced.

Barry Goodwin, an economist at North Carolina State University, estimated the extra costs at 15% more per animal for a farm with 1,000 breeding pigs.

If half the pork supply was suddenly lost in California, bacon prices would jump 60%, meaning a \$6 package would rise to about \$9.60, according to a study by the Hatamiya Group, a consulting firm hired by opponents of the state proposition.

At one typical hog farm in Iowa, sows are kept in open-air crates measuring 14-square-feet when they join a herd and then for a week as part of the insemination process before moving to larger, roughly 20-square foot group pens with other hogs. Both are less than the 24 square feet required by the California law to give breeding pigs enough room to turn around and to extend their limbs. Other operations keep sows in the crates nearly all of the time so also wouldn't be in compliance.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture said that although the detailed regulations aren't finished, the key rules about space have been known for years.

"It is important to note that the law itself cannot be changed by regulations and the law has been in place since the Farm Animal Confinement Proposition (Prop 12) passed by a wide margin in 2018," the agency said in response to questions from the AP.

The pork industry has filed lawsuits but so far courts have supported the California law. The National Pork Producers Council and a coalition of California restaurants and business groups have asked Gov. Gavin Newsom to delay the new requirements. The council also is holding out hope that meat already in the supply chain could be sold, potentially delaying shortages.

Josh Balk, who leads farm animal protection efforts at the Humane Society of the United States, said the pork industry should accept the overwhelming view of Californians who want animals treated more humanely.

"Why are pork producers constantly trying to overturn laws relating to cruelty to animals?" Balk asked. "It says something about the pork industry when it seems its business operandi is to lose at the ballot when they try to defend the practices and then when animal cruelty laws are passed, to try to overturn them."

In Iowa, which raises about one-third of the nation's hogs, farmer Dwight Mogler estimates the changes would cost him \$3 million and allow room for 250 pigs in a space that now holds 300.

To afford the expense, Mogler said, he'd need to earn an extra \$20 per pig and so far, processors are offering far less.

"The question to us is, if we do these changes, what is the next change going to be in the rules two years, three years, five years ahead?" Mogler asked.

The California rules also create a challenge for slaughterhouses, which now may send different cuts of a single hog to locations around the nation and to other countries. Processors will need to design new systems to track California-compliant hogs and separate those premium cuts from standard pork that can serve the rest of the country.

At least initially, analysts predict that even as California pork prices soar, customers elsewhere in the country will see little difference. Eventually, California's new rules could become a national standard because processors can't afford to ignore the market in such a large state.

Kim, the San Francisco restaurant owner, said she survived the pandemic by paring back her menu, driving hundreds of miles herself through the Bay Area to deliver food and reducing staff.

Kim, who is Korean-American, said she's especially worried for small restaurants whose customers can't afford big price increases and that specialize in Asian and Hispanic dishes that typically include pork.

"You know, I work and live with a lot of Asian and Hispanic populations in the city and their diet consists of pork. Pork is huge," Kim said. "It's almost like bread and butter."

Ammunition shelves bare as U.S. gun sales continue to soar

By MARTHA BELLISLE The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with record sales of firearms, has fueled a shortage of ammunition in the United States that's impacting law enforcement agencies, people seeking personal protection, recreational shooters and hunters -- and could deny new gun owners the practice they need to handle their weapons safely.

Manufacturers say they're producing as much ammunition as they can, but many gun store shelves are empty and prices keep rising. Ammunition imports are way up, but at least one U.S. manufacturer is exporting ammo. All while the pandemic, social unrest and a rise in violent crime have prompted millions to buy guns for protection or to take up shooting for sport.

"We have had a number of firearms instructors cancel their registration to our courses because their agency was short on ammo or they were unable to find ammo to purchase," said Jason Wuestenberg, executive director of the National Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors Association.

Doug Tangen, firearms instructor at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, the police academy for the state, said the academy also has had trouble obtaining ammo.

"A few months ago, we were at a point where our shelves were nearly empty of 9mm ammunition," he said. In response, instructors took conservation steps like reducing the number of shots fired per drill, which got them through several months until fresh supplies arrived, Tangen said.

Officer Larry Hadfield, a spokesman for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, said his department also has been affected by the shortage. "We have made efforts to conserve ammunition when possible," he said.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, an industry trade group, says more than 50 million people participate in shooting sports in the U.S. and estimates that 20 million guns were sold last year, with 8 million of those sales made by first-time buyers.

"When you talk about all these people buying guns, it really has an impact on people buying ammunition," spokesman Mark Oliva said. "If you look at 8.4 million gun buyers and they all want to buy one box with 50 rounds, that's going to be 420 million rounds."

The FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System database also documented an increase in sales: In 2010, there were 14.4 million background checks for gun purchases. That jumped to almost 39.7 million in 2020 and to 22.2 million just through June 2021 alone.

The actual number of guns sold could be much higher since multiple firearms can be linked to a single background check. No data is available for ammunition because sales are not regulated and no license is required to sell it.

As the pandemic raced across the country in early 2020, the resulting lockdown orders and cutbacks on police response sowed safety fears, creating an "overwhelming demand" for both guns and ammo, Oliva said. Factories continued to produce ammunition, but sales far exceeded the amount that could be shipped, he said.

"Where there is an increased sense of instability, fear and insecurity, more people will purchase guns," said Ari Freilich of the Gifford Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

As supplies dwindled, Feilich said, some gun owners began stockpiling ammo.

"Early on in the pandemic, we saw people hoarding toilet paper, disinfectant, and now it's ammo," he said.

Wuestenberg emphasized the danger in first-time gun buyers not being able to practice using their new weapons.

Going to the gun range entails more than trying to hit a target, he said. It's where shooters learn fundamental skills like always pointing their guns in a safe direction and keeping their fingers off the trigger until they're ready to fire.

"It's that old adage: Just because you buy a guitar doesn't mean you're a guitar player," Wuestenberg said. "Some have the misconception of 'I shot this target 5 yards away and did just fine so I'm OK if someone breaks into my house.' You've got to go out and practice with it."

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The U.S. military is not affected by the shortage because the Army produces ammunition for all branches of the military at six sites across the country, according to Justine Barati, spokesperson for the U.S. Army Joint Munitions Command.

The U.S. shooting team, which won four medals at the Tokyo Olympics, also had the ammo needed to train thanks to a commitment from sponsors, but membership and junior programs have struggled, said Matt Suggs, chief executive officer for USA Shooting.

The U.S. Biathlon team, training for the 2022 Winter Olympics in February, also has been supplied with ammo from its sponsor, Lapua, made in Finland. But local clubs face shortages, said Max Cobb, president of U.S. Biathlon Association.

Jason Vanderbrink, a vice president at Vista Outdoor, which owns the Federal, CCI, Speer and Remington ammunition brands, said the companies are shipping ammo as fast as they can make it.

"I'm tired of reading the misinformation on the internet right now about us not trying to service the demand that we're experiencing," he said in a YouTube video produced for customers aimed at quashing speculation suggesting otherwise.

Imports of ammunition from Russia, South Korea, the European Union and others were up 225% over the past two years, according to an analysis by Panjiva Inc., which independently tracks global trade. But at least some U.S.-made ammo is heading out of the country.

Winchester has logged 107 shipments since January 2020, according to Panjiva. Most went to Australia to fulfill a contract Winchester secured with NIOA, the country's largest small-arms supplier. Nigel Everingham, NIOA's chief operating officer, said he could not disclose how much ammo Winchester is supplying.

A few shipments also went to Belgium and Israel.

Meanwhile, most of the ammunition pictured on the website for Champion's Choice, a gun store in LaVergne, Tennessee, is listed as "out of stock."

"We keep ammo on order but we're not sure when it's going to come available," sales manager Kyle Hudgens said. "It does put us in a bad position with our customers. They're asking what the deal is."

And Bryan Lookabaugh at Renton Fish & Game's skeet and trap range in Renton, Washington -- where shooters try to hit discs flying at 35 to 70 mph -- said the limited availability means fewer people show up for shooting practice and some couldn't participate in a recent competition.

"We have not had a full shipment in a year," he said.

Duane Hendrix, the range master at the Seattle Police Athletic Association, a police and civilian gun range in Tukwila, Washington, said he now limits ammo sales to two boxes per customer.

"I've never seen anything like it before," Hendrix said. "There's stuff we can't get, especially rifle ammo. If you don't have ammo for your customers, there's no point in having your doors open."

Justice Department says Russians hacked federal prosecutors

By ALAN SUDERMAN and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Russian hackers behind the massive SolarWinds cyberespionage campaign broke into the email accounts of some of the most prominent federal prosecutors' offices around the country last year, the Justice Department said.

The department said 80% of Microsoft email accounts used by employees in the four U.S. attorney offices in New York were breached. All told, the Justice Department said 27 U.S. attorney offices had at least one employee's email account compromised during the hacking campaign.

The Justice Department said in a statement Friday that it believes the accounts were compromised from May 7 to Dec. 27, 2020. Such a timeframe is notable because the SolarWinds campaign, which infiltrated dozens of private-sector companies and think tanks as well as at least nine U.S. government agencies, was first discovered and publicized in mid-December.

The Biden administration in April announced sanctions, including the expulsion of Russian diplomats, in response to the SolarWinds hack and Russian interference in the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Russia has denied wrongdoing.

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Jennifer Rodgers, a lecturer at Columbia Law School, said office emails frequently contained all sorts of sensitive information, including case strategy discussions and names of confidential informants, when she was a federal prosecutor in New York.

"I don't remember ever having someone bring me a document instead of emailing it to me because of security concerns," she said, noting exceptions for classified materials.

The Administrative Office of U.S. Courts confirmed in January that it was also breached, giving the SolarWinds hackers another entry point to steal confidential information like trade secrets, espionage targets, whistleblower reports and arrest warrants.

The list of affected offices include several large and high-profile ones like those in Los Angeles, Miami, Washington and the Eastern District of Virginia.

The Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, where large numbers of staff were hit, handle some of the most prominent prosecutions in the country.

"New York is the financial center of the world and those districts are particularly well known for investigating and prosecuting white-collar crimes and other cases, including investigating people close to the former president," said Bruce Green, a professor at Fordham Law School and a former prosecutor in the Southern District.

The department said all victims had been notified and it is working to mitigate "operational, security and privacy risks" caused by the hack. The Justice Department said in January that it had no indication that any classified systems were affected.

The Justice Department did not provide additional detail about what kind of information was taken and what impact such a hack may have on ongoing cases. Members of Congress have expressed frustration with the Biden administration for not sharing more information about the impact of the SolarWinds campaign.

The Associated Press previously reported that SolarWinds hackers had gained access to email accounts belonging to the then-acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf and members of the department's cybersecurity staff, whose jobs included hunting threats from foreign countries.

Drive to charge packagers for recycling, but industry fights

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — States across the U.S. are looking to adopt new recycling regimes that require producers of packaging to pay for its inevitable disposal — but industry is digging in to try to halt the movement.

Maine became the first state to adopt such a program in July when Democratic Gov. Janet Mills signed a bill that requires producers of products that involve packaging materials to pay into a new state fund. The fund will be used to reimburse municipalities for recycling and waste management costs.

Oregon has approved a similar bill that is awaiting signature from Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, and at least six other state legislatures have similar bills pending, said Yinka Bode-George, environmental health manager for the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. Lawmakers in at least four other states have also expressed interest in such bills, she said.

The states with active bills — most of them Democratic-leaning — include large, influential economies like New York and California. Environmentalists in those states and others believe shifting packaging disposal costs away from taxpayers and toward producers is long overdue.

More laws like Maine's would incentivize industry to stop creating excessive packaging in the first place, Bode-George said. "This culture of throwing things away after one use is part of the problem," she added. "It's important for the producers of these materials to really take ownership of them."

Maine's bill is designed to cut down on plastic, cardboard, paper and other packaging waste by requiring what the state called "producer payments." The companies can lower the payments by implementing their own, independent recycling programs or simply reducing packaging. The fees will go to a private organization that will reimburse municipalities for recycling and waste management costs and invest in education geared at reducing packaging and improving recycling.

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Oregon's proposed law is slightly different in that it would require producers and manufacturers of packaging to create a nonprofit group tasked with developing a recycling plan for packaging materials.

Advocates of these strategies sometimes call them "extended producer responsibility." They are widely used in Europe as well as in some Canadian provinces. The National Waste & Recycling Association, a Virginia-based trade group, has said it can support such programs when they focus on "incentives to create new markets for recycling materials," because buyers are needed for all these recyclables.

"The most important thing is that there's a market for it," said Brandon Wright, a spokesperson for the group.

But the moves have ignited heavy pushback from several sectors of American industry where fears are widespread that the new laws will drive up the cost of doing business in some states. New recycling obligations could cause companies to pull out of those states or pass on costs to consumers, industry members say.

The American Institute for Packaging and the Environment, or AMERIPEN, which represents the packaging industry, had asked Mills to veto Maine's bill and plans to play an active role in an upcoming rulemaking process about it, said Dan Felton, the group's executive director.

AMERIPEN hoped to work with Maine on a different new recycling scheme, but the approved law leaves "producers and the people of Maine on the outside of the process and forced to foot the bill for a system where the Maine Department of Environmental Protection is the sole decision-maker," Felton said.

The proposed recycling laws have also generated pushback from industries that don't work directly in packaging, but rely on it. Robert Luria, government relations manager for Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, told a state committee that Maine's law "has the potential to increase inefficiencies in Maine's recycling system."

Recycling, particularly of plastics, has been further complicated by China's decision to stop accepting plastic waste from other countries.

Advocates say the new recycling bills could help with that waste disposal problem by decreasing reliance on single-use plastic products. Maine's bill sent "a strong signal that it's time for big corporations and brands to do their part to curb plastic pollution and reduce wasteful packaging," said Sarah Nichols of the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

In Maine, industry representatives who opposed the bill know the changes are coming and are working with the state to craft rules they can live with.

Industry is also preparing for other states to follow Maine's lead, said Christine Cummings, executive director of the Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association.

"I think this is just the very start of what this program will evolve into both in Maine and around the country," Cummings said.

Census: 1 in 5 dorms, prisons had no data at end of US count

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

By the end of the U.S. head count last year, the Census Bureau had no data for almost a fifth of the nation's occupied college dorms, nursing homes and prisons, requiring the statistical agency to make eleventh-hour calls to facilities in an effort to collect information or use a last-resort statistical method to fill in gaps.

Residents of 43,000 of the 227,000 occupied dorms, prisons, military barracks, homeless shelters, group homes and nursing homes remained uncounted as late as December, according to new documents and slide presentations released recently by the Census Bureau in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed by a Republican redistricting advocacy group.

The documents hint at the scope of the challenges the bureau faced in conducting the massive count in the midst of a global pandemic, an effort made more difficult by wildfires, hurricanes and attempts by the Trump administration to interfere with the census.

The facilities — known collectively to the bureau as group quarters — were among the most difficult places to count people during the 2020 census because the pandemic forced colleges to shutter dorms

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and send students home, and nursing homes and other facilities restricted access in an effort to protect vulnerable residents from the virus.

Bureau officials are confident that they have since filled in the gaps using a statistical method they consider reliable, though they acknowledge that the challenge was formidable.

Census Bureau official Barbara LoPresti said recently that data collected from group quarters accounted for a large share of irregularities the statistical agency encountered but the data processing "has not shown any critical errors in data collection that we could not fix."

"Anomalies in processing aren't errors, but they can turn into errors if we don't evaluate them and fix them," LoPresti told a virtual meeting of outside experts who are evaluating the quality of the 2020 census data. "Our quality (check) process was therefore working."

Fixing irregularities, though, forced the Census Bureau to delay the release of numbers used for divvying up congressional seats among states in a process known as apportionment. It also pushed back by five months the release of redistricting data used for redrawing congressional and legislative districts.

Though people living in group quarters account for a small share of the overall population — under 3% of the 331 million people living in the U.S. — any inaccurate information can have a big impact on college towns or areas with a large prison population or a military base. That in turn can diminish representation in Congress and the amount of federal funding they are eligible to receive.

"Individual group quarters can be huge in some areas," Connie Citro, a senior scholar at the Committee on National Statistics, said during the virtual meeting of outside experts.

The Republican advocacy group, Fair Lines America Foundation, sued the Census Bureau for information about how the group quarters count was conducted, saying it's concerned about its accuracy and wants to make sure anomalies didn't affect the state population figures used for apportionment. The apportionment numbers were released by the Census Bureau in April, and the redistricting numbers used for drawing congressional and legislative districts are being made public next month.

The group quarters count is under added scrutiny this census because the Census Bureau, for the first time, decided in the middle of crunching numbers to use a last-resort statistical technique called imputation to fill in the data gaps for the dorms, nursing homes and prisons. The method has been used for some time to fill in missing information on individual households.

"If the Census Bureau is permitted to conduct these sorts of methodology changes and implementations behind closed doors ... electoral chaos may result from the states' reliance on potentially defective numbers in conducting redistricting," Fair Lines said in court papers.

In addition to the 43,000 group quarter addresses that lacked data last December, another 3,500 addresses had counts that were implausible because they were listed as having zero people or were way too high, suggesting there were duplicates. Statisticians removed duplicates, such as college students who were counted at both their dorms and parents' homes, the documents said.

If they didn't have any information about residents in a dorm, nursing home or prison, Census Bureau statisticians applied information they already knew about the facility, either from previous surveys, earlier contacts or administrative records, to arrive at the count.

After imputation and duplicate removal, the revised numbers appeared to artificially inflate the count for group quarters by 444,000 people. Instead of an expected 8.1 million residents living in group quarters, there were almost 8.6 million people. The group quarters count in the revised data was noticeably higher for California, New York, Florida and Washington state, the documents and slide presentations showed.

The Census Bureau said in a statement that the numbers in the documents weren't the final figures and that the 444,000-person difference was addressed in later numbers-crunching. The statistical agency didn't say what the final figures were or provide details about how the difference was handled.

"The Census Bureau made several improvements to its methodology after the date these slides were created," the statement said.

Today in History

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By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Aug. 1, the 213th day of 2021. There are 152 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 1, 1907, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established an aeronautical division, the forerunner of the U.S. Air Force.

On this date:

In 1876, Colorado was admitted as the 38th state.

In 1936, the Olympics opened in Berlin with a ceremony presided over by Adolf Hitler.

In 1944, an uprising broke out in Warsaw, Poland, against Nazi occupation; the revolt lasted two months before collapsing.

In 1957, the United States and Canada announced they had agreed to create the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD).

In 1966, Charles Joseph Whitman, 25, went on an armed rampage at the University of Texas in Austin that killed 14 people, most of whom were shot by Whitman while he was perched in the clock tower of the main campus building. (Whitman, who had also slain his wife and mother hours earlier, was finally gunned down by police.)

In 1971, the Concert for Bangladesh, organized by George Harrison and Ravi Shankar, took place at New York's Madison Square Garden.

In 1975, a 35-nation summit in Finland concluded with the signing of a declaration known as the Helsinki Accords dealing with European security, human rights and East-West contacts.

In 1977, former U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, working as a traffic reporter for KNBC-TV in Los Angeles, was killed with his cameraman, George Spears, when their helicopter ran out of fuel and crashed; Powers was 47.

In 1981, the rock music video channel MTV made its debut.

In 2007, the eight-lane Interstate 35W bridge, a major Minneapolis artery, collapsed into the Mississippi River during evening rush hour, killing 13 people.

In 2013, defying the United States, Russia granted Edward Snowden temporary asylum, allowing the National Security Agency leaker to slip out of the Moscow airport where he had been holed up for weeks.

In 2014, a medical examiner ruled that a New York City police officer's chokehold caused the death of Eric Garner, whose videotaped arrest and final pleas of "I can't breathe!" had sparked outrage.

Ten years ago: The U.S. House of Representatives passed, 269-161, emergency legislation to avert the nation's first-ever financial default; Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords returned to the House for the first time since being shot in Jan. 2011 to cast a "yes" vote.

Five years ago: The United States launched multiple airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Libya, opening a new front against the group at the request of the United Nations-backed Libyan government. Vice President Joe Biden officiated a gay wedding, a first for the early proponent of same-sex marriage as he presided over the union of Joe Mahshie and Brian Mosteller, both longtime White House aides, at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington.

One year ago: The coronavirus forced baseball's 17th postponement in 10 days, prompting at least two more players to opt out of playing during the shortened season. Character actor Wilford Brimley, whose films included "Cocoon" and "The Natural," died in a Utah hospital at the age of 85.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Ramblin' Jack Elliott is 90. Former Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., is 84. Actor Giancarlo Giannini is 79. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Roy Williams is 71. Blues singer-musician Robert Cray is 68. Singer Michael Penn is 63. Rock singer Joe Elliott (Def Leppard) is 62. Rock singer-musician Suzi Gardner (L7) is 61. Rapper Chuck D (Public Enemy) is 61. Actor Jesse Borrego is 59. Actor Demian Bichir is 58. Rapper Coolio is 58. Actor John Carroll Lynch is 58. Rock singer Adam Duritz (Counting Crows) is 57. Movie director Sam Mendes is 56. Country singer George Ducas is 55. Actor Jennifer Gareis is 51. Actor Charles Malik Whitfield is 49. Actor Tempestt Bledsoe is 48. Actor Jason Momoa is 42. Actor Honeysuckle Weeks is 42. Singer Ashley Parker Angel is 40. Actor Taylor Fry is 40. Actor Elijah Kelley is 35.