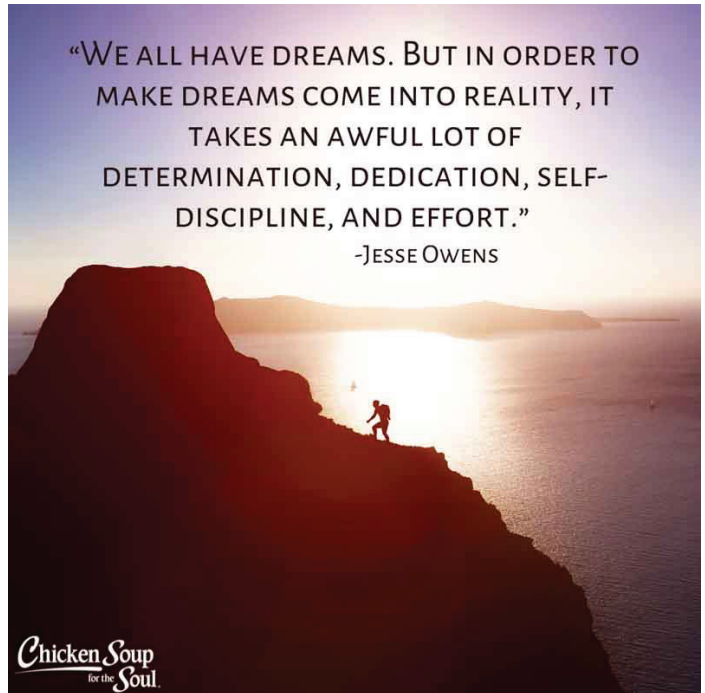


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High School Fall Sports Meeting!!
August 3rd from 6-7pm in the Arena!



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

State B American Legion Baseball Tournament

Christian Of Redfield Shuts Out Groton

Christian DeYoung threw a gem on Sunday for Redfield Post 92, allowing zero runs and besting Groton Post 39 by a score of 1-0

The pitching was strong on both sides. DeYoung struck out eight, while Alex Morris sat down three.

One bright spot for Groton Post 39 was a single by Pierce Kettering in the third inning.

DeYoung was credited with the victory for Redfield Post 92. The pitcher lasted seven innings, allowing four hits and zero runs while striking out eight and walking one.

Morris took the loss for Groton Post 39. The bulldog allowed five hits and one run over six innings, striking out three and walking one.

Peyton Osborn led Redfield Post 92 with two hits in two at bats. Redfield Post 92 was sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Keaton Rohlf's had the most chances in the field with nine.

Groton Post 39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Peyton Johnson had eight chances in the field, the most on the team.

Vermillion Captures Lead Early To Defeat Lake Norden/Badger

Lake Norden/Badger Post 260 watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in an 8-4 loss to Vermillion Post 1 on Sunday. Vermillion Post 1 scored on an error during Jake Jensen's at bat, a single by Drew Thelen, and a wild pitch during Dylan Thelen's at bat in the second inning.

Lake Norden/Badger Post 260 lost despite out-hitting Vermillion Post 1 eight to three.

Vermillion Post 1 pulled away for good with six runs in the second inning. In the second an error scored one run for Vermillion Post 1, Thelen singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring two runs, and Thelen reached on a dropped third strike.

Jacob Chaussee was the winning pitcher for Vermillion Post 1. The hurler allowed eight hits and four runs over seven innings, striking out five and walking zero.

Cameron Thue took the loss for Lake Norden/Badger Post 260. The pitcher allowed two hits and seven runs over three and two-thirds innings, striking out three.

Lake Norden/Badger Post 260 tallied eight hits in the game. Luke Steffensen, Thue, and Jackson Noem each collected multiple hits for Lake Norden/Badger Post 260. Noem, Thue, and Steffensen each collected two hits to lead Lake Norden/Badger Post 260.

Thelen led Vermillion Post 1 with two hits in four at bats. Vermillion Post 1 was sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Jensen made the most plays with ten.

With Riley On The Mound, Tabor Shuts Out Madison

Riley Rothschadl had all the right stuff on Sunday for Tabor Post 183, allowing zero runs and besting Madison Post 25 by a score of 13-0

Tabor Post 183 got things started in the first inning when Kaleb Kubal doubled on a 2-2 count, scoring one run.

Tabor Post 183 tallied five runs in the fourth inning. Tabor Post 183 offense in the inning was led by Dawson Bietz, Nolan Carda, Nolan Dvorak, and Kubal, who each had RBIs in the inning.

One bright spot for Madison Post 25 was a triple by Zach Whitlock in the second inning.

Rothschadl was credited with the victory for Tabor Post 183. The pitcher went five innings, allowing zero runs on four hits, striking out five and walking one.

Whitlock took the loss for Madison Post 25. The hurler surrendered three runs on one hit over one and one-third innings, striking out two.

Tabor Post 183 tallied 12 hits. Kubal, Preston Nedved, and Bietz all managed multiple hits for Tabor Post 183. Bietz, Nedved, and Kubal each collected two hits to lead Tabor Post 183. Tabor Post 183 was sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Dvorak made the most plays with five.

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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.

Mon, Aug 02

4:00PM CDT Start

Redfield Post 92

@ Madison Post 25

Mon, Aug 02

6:30PM CDT Start

Vermillion Post 1

@ 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

Living Well with Serious Illness

By Francine Arneson, M.D. and Kyle Arneson, M.D., Ph.D.



When patients and their families are asked to meet with palliative care specialists, it commonly triggers a wide range of emotions. Some may feel uncertainty about having an additional care team involved when they already have multiple appointments, and many fear what the referral may mean in regards to their current treatment plan and ultimately to their life trajectory.

Along with these complicated emotions, patients and their families often admit to being unsure why their doctors feel the need to involve palliative care.

By contrast, when a patient is referred to a cardiologist, oncologist, or surgeon they tend to understand why. The concept of palliative care has been utilized for decades by many clinicians but has only recently evolved into its own specialty. Recognized through research and clinical trials, palliative care has shown to help patients live well with serious illness by enhancing quality of life, extending prognosis, and ensuring patient centric care and comfort.

Palliative care is delivered alongside best standard medical care by an interdisciplinary team, consisting of doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, pharmacists, and others to meet the multidimensional needs of individuals. Ensuring that medical decisions align with the patient's personal values and enhancing the patient's quality of life remain the focus of specialty palliative care. Palliative care also aims at minimizing suffering.

Suffering is a scary word, but most people facing a difficult diagnosis will experience some element of suffering. Many first think of suffering as physical distress such as pain or shortness of breath. However, in palliative care, a much broader view of suffering is taken. It includes not only physical symptoms but also the emotional, spiritual, and practical toll illness places on our sense of self and our loved ones.

Palliative care commonly addresses suffering in those who are not having physical symptoms, but have anxiety or depression, overwhelming feelings of guilt, remorse, fear, or discord regarding faith. Palliative care will discuss how illness impacts a person's independence and appearance and focuses on how illness impacts relationships with loved ones. Palliative care provides that extra layer of support to ensure that all medical care is based upon individual choices and values.

As we attempt to maintain a sense of self through complicated illness, these topics are vitally important but are rarely addressed in normal health care settings. Specialty palliative care strives to ensure that the medical plan of care is based on diagnosis but is also optimized to incorporate the patient's personal values and beliefs, based on goals and life experiences.

So, although many people are initially hesitant when a palliative care referral has been made, ultimately most people deeply appreciate the benefit of excellent symptom management and the patient centric support that is provided throughout a relationship with the palliative care team.

Francine Arneson, M.D. and Kyle Arneson, M.D., Ph.D. are contributing Prairie Doc® columnists. They practice palliative medicine and radiation oncology, respectively, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Francine is the featured guest on the show this week. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Dominique Clare

The Minnesota Vikings camp is underway. The improved roster will make it interesting and competitive as players fight to make the final 53 man roster. The players have plenty of time to fight for their place on the team as final roster cuts are due by August 31st 2021. After camp the Vikings play 3 preseason games against the Denver Broncos, Indianapolis Colts, and Kansas City Chiefs. It will be a good chance for the coaches to get a great look at both sides of the ball.

Offense and defense are not the only two things coaches will be evaluating. This week we finish our roster breakdown with the special teams.

Special teams has been a weakness for the Minnesota Vikings over the years. Last year the coverage and return units were embarrassing while the kicking game was inconsistent. The Vikings can only go up from where they were ranked in the league.

Greg Joseph (Kicker) – The Vikings new kicker is very inexperienced. That might be intentional after the last two kickers the Vikings had were seasoned veterans in Dan Bailey and Kai Forbath.

Joseph has been in the NFL for two years. He spent last season with the Tennessee Titans where he didn't attempt any field goals and went 9 for 9 on extra points. His first season in the NFL was with the Cleveland Browns where he made 17 of 20 field goals and 25 of 29 extra points.

Britton Colquitt (Punter) – The Vikings are going on year 3 of Britton Colquitt. He has been one of the strengths of the special teams averaging 45.1 yards a punt. This will be a position that the Vikings will look at replacing in the near future as Colquitt is 35 years old.

Andrew Depaola (Long Snapper) – There isn't a lot to say about a long snapper. This is the Vikings second year with Depaola which should help create snap, hold, and kick consistency.

KJ Osborn (Returner) – After a disappointing rookie season, KJ Osborn is off to a great start in camp. He is working at returning both kicks and punts and is a candidate to start at both those positions.

Last season Osborn returned 7 punts for 27 yards and 14 kicks for 303 yards.

Dede Westbrook (Returner) – The Vikings added Dede Westbrook right before camp and he is a late favorite to be the main returner.

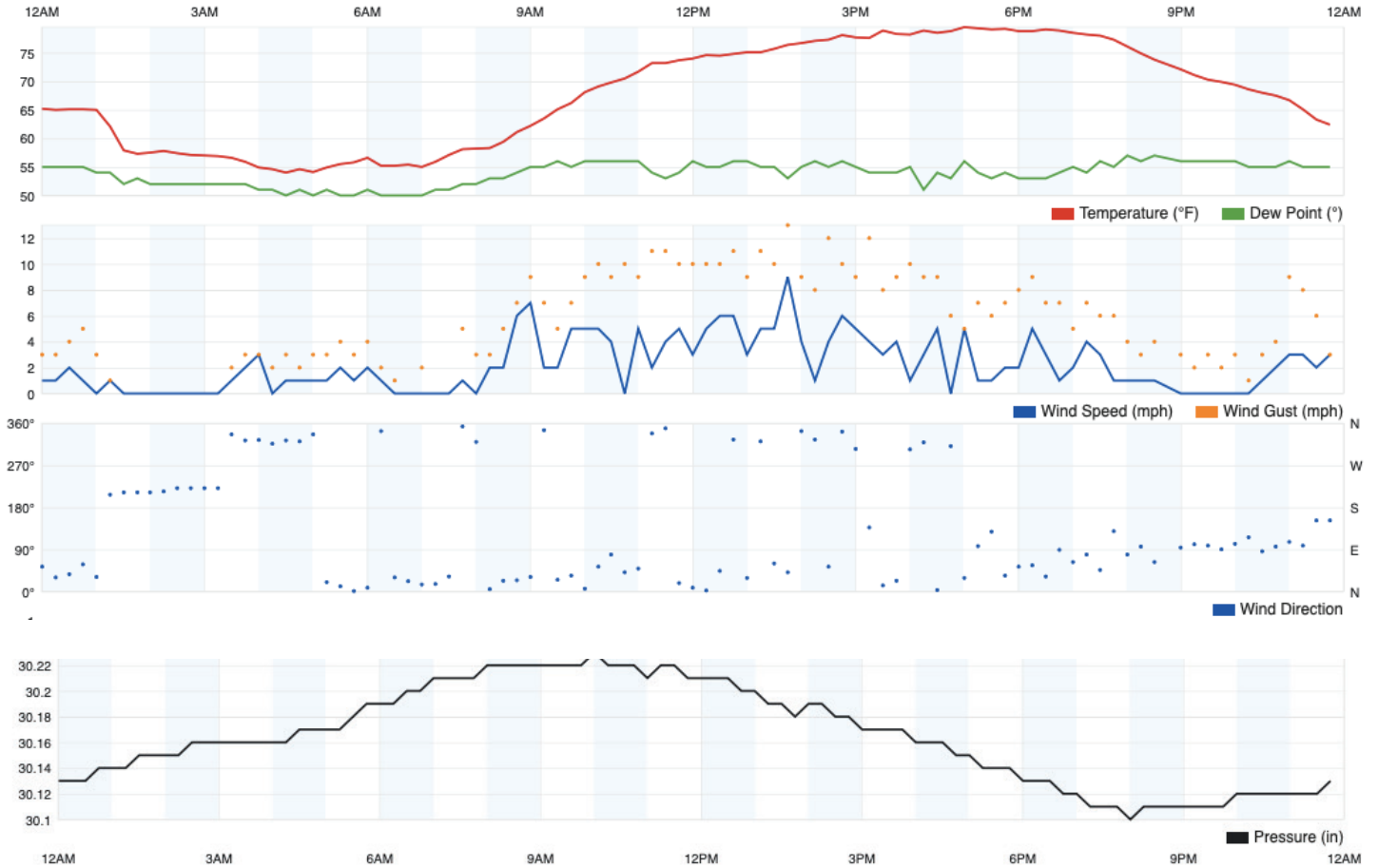
During his career Westbrook has returned 47 punts for 461 yards and 7 kicks for 126 yards.

Kene Nwangwu (Kick Returner) – A dark horse to be the kick returner is rookie running back and speedster Kene Kwangwu. He returned kicks for Iowa State all 4 years returning 92 kicks for 2470 yards.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Monday



Mostly Sunny

High: 87 °F

Monday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 58 °F

Tuesday



Hot

High: 90 °F

Tuesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 64 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 89 °F

This graphic provides a detailed weather forecast for Monday and Tuesday. It features two vertical panels against a background of a blue sky with white clouds. Each panel has a dark header with the day of the week, followed by weather conditions and a temperature range. A sun-and-cloud icon is centered in each panel.

Day	Conditions	Temperature Range
Monday	Patchy Smoke Dry Southerly Winds	82-91°F
Tuesday	Partly Sunny Dry Southerly Winds	85-94°F

Dry conditions with occasional smoke can be expected over the next couple of days.

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Today in Weather History

August 2, 1960: Hail, the size of a hen egg caused moderate damage to a total loss of corn, soybean, and grain crops on 50 to 75 farms in Marshall, Roberts, and Grant Counties. High winds caused damage to buildings and uprooted trees in Britton.

1954 - Severe thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail for thirty minutes in north central Kansas. One drift measured 200 feet long, seventy feet wide and three feet deep. (The Weather Channel)

1975 - Record heat gripped New England. Highs of 104 degrees at Providence, RI, and 107 degrees at Chester and New Bedford, MA, established state records. The heat along the coast of Maine was unprecedented, with afternoon highs of 101 degrees at Bar Harbor and 104 degrees at Jonesboro. (The Weather Channel)

1985: A strong and sudden wind gusts cause a plane crash at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport in Texas that kills 135 people. The rapid and unexpected formation of a supercell, an incredibly powerful form of a thunderstorm, led to the tragedy. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1987 - Hot weather continued in the central U.S. Fifteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Concordia KS with a reading of 106 degrees, and Downtown Kansas City, MO, with a high of 105 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Ohio Valley and the north central U.S. Thunderstorms in South Dakota produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Philip, and hail two inches in diameter at Faulkton. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Searing heat continued from the Middle and Upper Mississippi Valley to the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast States. Twenty-six cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Chicago IL reported a record seven days of 100 degree heat for the year. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Low pressure representing the remains of Hurricane Chantal deluged north central Texas with heavy rain. Up to 6.50 inches drenched Stephens County, and Wichita Falls reported 2.22 inches of rain in just one hour. Bismarck, ND, reported a record warm morning low of 75 degrees, and record hot afternoon high of 101 degrees, and evening thunderstorms in North Dakota produced wind gusts to 78 mph at Lakota. Early evening thunderstorms in Florida produced high winds which downed trees at Christmas. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2006: Johannesburg, South Africa residents see snow flurries for the first time in at least eight years.

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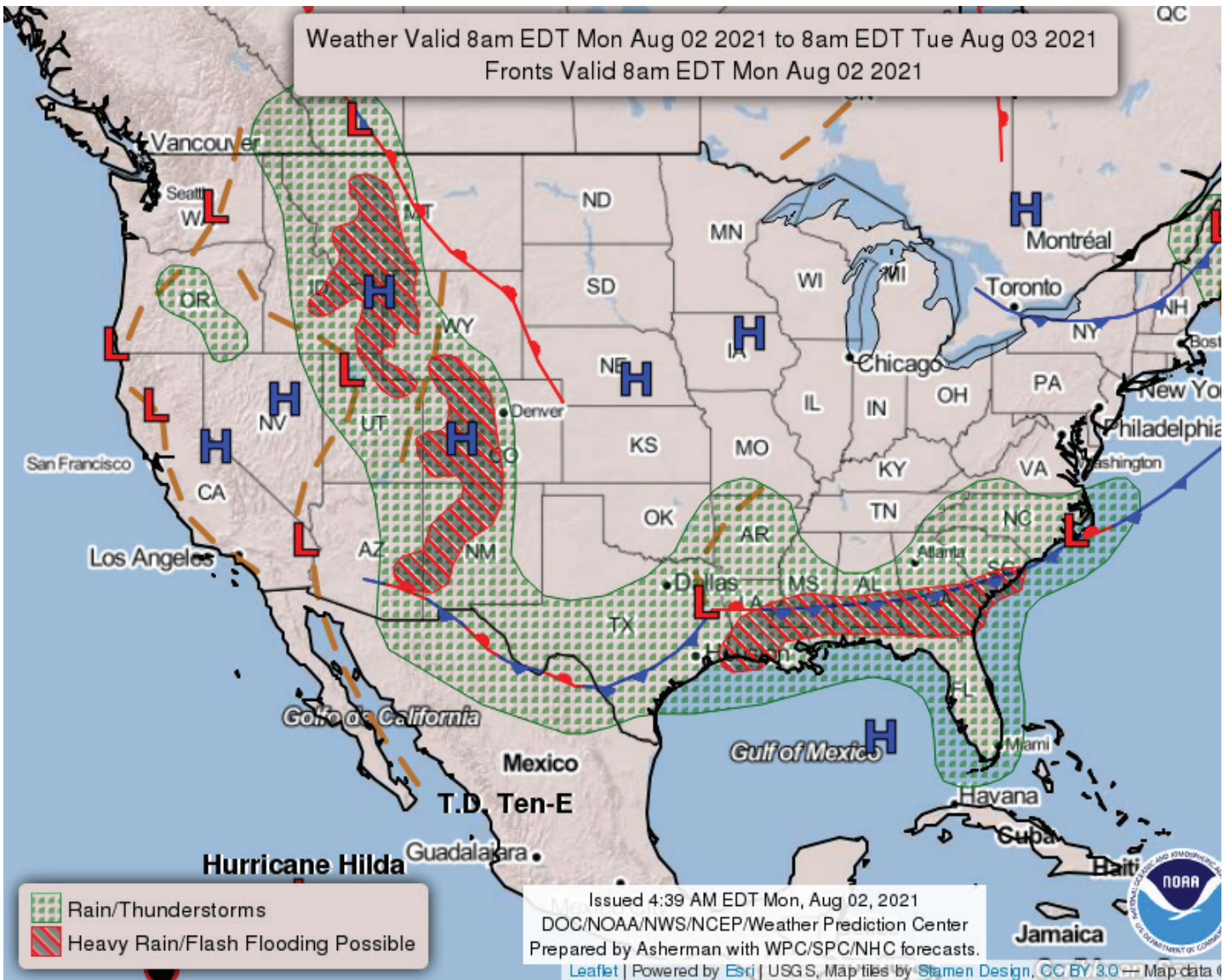
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 4:52 PM
Low Temp: 54 °F at 4:31 AM
Wind: 13 mph at 1:44 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 105° in 1930,1938
Record Low: 40° in 1971,2018
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 0.08
Precip to date in July.: 2.52
Average Precip to date: 14.18
Precip Year to Date: 7.27
Sunset Tonight: 9:00 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:21 a.m.



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AND IN CONCLUSION

We are all familiar with the Beatitudes of Jesus in the fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. But Psalm 84 contains three beatitudes we rarely think about: "The Three B's."

The first talks about our relationship with God – about being with Him and worshipping Him and praising Him. "Blessed," said the psalmist, "are those who dwell in Your House; they are ever praising You." Indeed, we are truly blest that His invitation to us is "Come, now is the day of salvation" – an invitation to be with Him today and every day throughout eternity. To dwell in His presence forever is not a blessing we often think about.

The second beatitude we find is "Blessed are those whose strength is in You, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage." Throughout this life we are not on our own to struggle with the difficulties we constantly face. His strength is always available to us when we are weak, weary, and worn out. He knew our "pilgrimage" would be long and difficult, so He continually makes Himself available to us whenever we call on Him.

And, perhaps the last beatitude actually sums up the other two: "O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man and woman who trusts in You."

A young college student was at home dying from cancer. He had been heavily sedated for days. Every now and then his Mother would sit by his bedside and ask, "Dennis, are you here?" He would answer her, "Yes, Mom, I'm still here." On the day of his death, however, he responded to her question, "No for long, Mother, I'm going home now."

Above his bed in an empty room are the words: "I hear you, Christian, happy, unafraid, For you heard a song from the other side of death."

Prayer: Thank You Father, for preparing our next home away from our present home. We thank You for all You all You have done and are doing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Psalm 84:12

Scripture For Today: Psalm 84:12 O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man and woman who trusts in You.

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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

Native garden would sit above underground research facility

By MEGAN FEIGHERY South Dakota Public Broadcasting

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — Much of the work at the Sanford Underground Research Facility is thousands of feet below the surface.

But one of the latest projects is above ground: a garden honoring Native American history in the Black Hills.

The garden will sit on top of a hillside in Lead, near the entrance to the facility. KC Russell is the facility's cultural and diversity coordinator. He said the location is important.

"This is a homeland. They have been here for hundreds of years. And the Black Hills has provided sustenance for all the tribes," he said.

Sacred Circle Garden is the English translation of Cangleska Wakan. Russell said the finished project will feature native plants and a medicine wheel.

"It has four colors and a circle. And it represents the four directions that Native Americans use for gardening and their migration back and forth," he said.

The four directions point to significant nearby landmarks: Bear Butte, the Badlands, Devil's Tower, and Black Elk Peak. Russell hopes the garden sends a positive message.

"The sacred circle, the circle of life, also tells us we're all connected in some way," he said. "Even the animals are connected to us."

The project is donor-funded, with about half of the \$800,000 cost raised so far. The garden will include a walking path around the medicine wheel and benches for the public to sit. Final plans are still in development, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

Staci Miller is the foundation director. She says the project has been a long time coming.

"The site itself comes down to the three words on our web page: protecting, respecting and understanding," she said.

The project will begin next spring or summer. The Sacred Circle Garden will host educational programs and be open to the public.

4 dead, 2 children hurt in Montana head-on collision

MISSOULA, Mont. (AP) — Four people have been killed and two children injured in a head-on collision on Interstate 90 in western Montana.

A 45-year-old Spokane, Washington man suspected of being under the influence was driving a Chevrolet Suburban the wrong way on the interstate on Saturday evening near Whitehall, the Montana Highway Patrol reported. He struck a vehicle carrying two adults and three children from Hartsford, South Dakota.

The man was killed, along with a 37-year-old woman, a 32-year-old man and a 14-year-old girl from the other vehicle, station KECI-TV reports.

Two of the victims were not wearing seatbelts.

An 8-year-old girl and 2-year-old boy were taken to the hospital with unknown injuries.

Olympics Latest: Wang wins China's 6th weightlifting gold

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:

Wang Zhouyu has won China's sixth weightlifting gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics with a commanding victory in the 87-kilogram category.

Wang lifted 120 kilograms in the snatch and 150 in the clean and jerk for a total 270 kilograms.

Tamara Salazar won the silver for Ecuador with a total of 263. Salazar is the second woman from Ec-

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ador to win an Olympic medal. Her teammate Neisi Dajomes was the first when she won gold in the 76-kilogram event.

Crismery Santana took the bronze with 256 for the Dominican Republic.

WORLD RECORD

China's Zhong Tianshi and Bao Shanju broke the world record in the women's team sprint with a time of 31.804 seconds to advance to the medal match at the Tokyo Olympics.

Zhong and Bao nearly bettered the mark of 31.928 seconds set by China at the Rio Games during qualifying. But they merely had to wait about an hour before getting another crack at it in the first round.

China could have been going for three straight Olympic golds, but its team was relegated to the silver medal at the 2012 Summer Games in London.

Germany also set a record earlier in the day in the women's team pursuit on a fast track in the Izu Velodrome.

Germany qualified first in the women's team pursuit at the Tokyo Olympics, shattering Britain's five-year-old record with a time of 4:07.307 on the first day of track cycling at the Izu Velodrome.

Britain qualified second in 4:09.022, which also bettered its mark of 4:10.236 set at the Rio Games. The two-time and reigning Olympic champions were followed by the U.S. in 4:10.118 and Italy in 4:11.666.

That means the Germans will face Italy and Britain will face the U.S. in the medal rounds Tuesday. The winning teams will race for gold.

The four-woman team from Germany has shattered the world record in qualifying at the Tokyo Olympics, stopping the clock in 4:07.307 on the first day of the track cycling program at the Izu Velodrome.

The team of Franziska Brausse, Lisa Brennauer, Lisa Klein and Mieke Koreger was the third to post a time in the team pursuit, where riders race against the clock over 4 kilometers. Four women start but only the first three that cross the finish line count for the time.

The Germans, who didn't even make the medal stand at the Rio Games, beat the record of 4:10.236 that the reigning gold medalists from Britain set in Brazil. But the British and the reigning world champion Americans were still to go in their qualifying rides Monday.

The top four teams will race Tuesday for the medals.

MEDAL ALERT

Jean Quiquampoix of France has earned the gold medal that eluded him five years ago in Rio, matching an Olympic record to win men's 25-meter rapid-fire pistol at the Tokyo Games.

Quiquampoix took silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics after Germany's Christian Reitz hit his final five shots to claim gold.

Quiquampoix left no doubt at Asaka Shooting Range, hitting 34 of 40 shots to beat Cuba's Leuris Pupo by five shots. The 25-year-old member of the French armed forces matches the Olympic record Pupo set while winning gold at the 2012 London Games.

Pupo earned his second medal in his sixth Olympics.

China's Lie Yuehong won bronze for the second straight Olympics.

UPSET ALERT

Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu of Indonesia have upset China's Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan, 2-0, for gold in women's doubles badminton.

The unseeded Indonesians won the first game 21-19 and the second 21-15 against an overwhelmingly favored Chinese team.

Emotions ran high in the match, with both teams screaming after won points and several times disputing their opponent's requests to change shuttles. At one point, Polii ran off the court after breaking her racket, got a new one, and joined the point in progress. Indonesia won the point.

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The match extends Chinese struggles in women's doubles, after years of domination. The Chinese team lost at the 2016 Rio Games to a Japanese pair. Before that, China had won a remarkable five straight golds.

Earlier Monday, Kim So-yeong and Kong Hee-yong won the bronze medal in women's doubles, beating countrywomen Lee So-hee and Shin Seung-chan, 2-0.

The U.S. women's volleyball team has lost a second player to a rolled right ankle after setter Jordyn Poulter landed on a teammate's foot.

Poulter went down in the third set of a pool-play match against Italy and is being treated by trainers on the sideline. The injury comes two days after star Jordan Thompson went down with the same injury against the Russian Olympic Committee.

Thompson is watching the Italy game from the stands but is hopeful of returning before the end of the Olympics.

MEDAL ALERT

Jasmine Camacho-Quinn of Puerto Rico has won gold in the women's 100-meter hurdles, powering ahead of American Keni Harrison.

That kept the United States out of the win column at the Olympic track meet for yet another session.

Camacho-Quinn finished in 12.37 seconds for a .15 second win over the world-record holder, Harrison. Jamaica's Megan Tapper finished third.

Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory that competes under its own flag at the Olympics, has one more track gold medal than the deepest team at the Games, as the meet approaches its halfway point.

MEDAL ALERT

Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece has edged Cuba's Juan Miguel Echevarria for the men's long jump gold medal with a winning jump on the last attempt.

Tentoglou's 8.41 meters in the last round equaled Echevarria's best mark but he won on a countback because he had the better of the next-best jumps.

Echevarria, jumping last, lost rhythm in his run-up and stopped before the board, kneeled on the ground and hit the runway with his hands.

U.S. women's volleyball star Jordan Thompson is sitting out the final pool play match against Italy after rolling her right ankle earlier in the tournament.

Thompson left Saturday's match against Russia early after stepping on a teammate's foot. She missed practice on Sunday to get treatment but USA Volleyball says she is expected to be able to return before the end of the Olympics.

The U.S. is already assured of a spot in the quarterfinals and the match against Italy is to determine seeding only.

Thompson came into the day tied for the third most points in the tournament with 66. Annie Drews started in her place.

World champion Sifan Hassan has made an incredible recovery from a fall at the final bell to win her 1,500-meter heat at the Olympics on Monday.

Hassan picked herself up after getting in a tangle with Kenyan runner Edinah Jebitok at the start of the last lap. She sped around the outside of the pack on the back straight and ended up crossing the line first in 4 minutes, 5.17 seconds to qualify for the semifinals.

It kept alive the Dutch runner's bid for a rare distance-running treble at the Tokyo Games.

Hassan has qualified to run in the 5,000-meter final later Monday at the Olympic Stadium, when the energy she expended on that last-lap scramble in the 1,500 heats might catch up with her.

She's expected to battle with two-time world champion Hellen Obiri of Kenya for the 5,000 gold.

April Ross and Alix Klineman have advanced to the quarterfinals of the Olympic beach volleyball tournament.

The American "A-Team" beat Cuba 21-17, 21-15 on Monday. The win came a day after two other U.S. teams were ousted in the first knockout round.

After taking the first set, Ross and Klineman lost the first four points in the second. Cuba's Lidy Echeverria and Leila Martinez led 9-7 when Echeverria was slow to get up after a collision at the net. The Americans took the point, and went on to win the second set as well.

Japan: Belarus runner involved in airport standoff is safe

By GRAHAM DUNBAR and DANIEL KOZIN Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's government said a Belarus track sprinter was safe Monday after she alleged her Olympic team tried to remove her from Japan in a dispute that led to a standoff at Tokyo's main airport.

An activist group supporting Krystsina Tsimanouskaya said she believed her life was in danger in Belarus and she would seek asylum with the Austrian Embassy in Tokyo.

Japanese government spokesman Katsunobu Kato told reporters that Japan was cooperating with other organizations "to take appropriate measures," and confirmed that Tsimanouskaya was safe. The Foreign Ministry said Japan was working with the International Olympic Committee and the Tokyo Olympics organizers.

Tsimanouskaya said in a filmed message distributed on social media that she was pressured by Belarus team officials and asked the IOC for help.

"I was put under pressure and they are trying to forcibly take me out of the country without my consent," the 24-year-old runner said.

Tsimanouskaya, who is due to run in the Olympic 200-meter heats Monday, criticized Belarus team officials on her Instagram account. She said she'd been put in the 4x400 relay despite never racing the event.

The Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation said government supporters targeted the athlete, and Tsimanouskaya contacted the group for help to avoid what she feared was a forced deportation to Minsk.

"The campaign was quite serious and that was a clear signal that her life would be in danger in Belarus," Alexander Opeikin, a spokesman for the BSSF, told The Associated Press in an interview.

Tsimanouskaya summoned Japanese police at Haneda Airport and did not board a flight departing for Istanbul. Foreign ministry officials arrived later at the airport, Opeikin said.

In a statement released by the BSSF, Tsimanouskaya said she was in a police station early Monday morning.

"I explained the situation to a police officer of how I was taken from the Olympic Village," she said. "Now I am in a secure situation and am figuring out the question of where I will spend the night."

The IOC, which has been in dispute with the Belarus National Olympic Committee ahead of the Tokyo Games, said it had intervened.

"The IOC ... is looking into the situation and has asked the NOC for clarification," it said in a statement.

Belarus' neighbor, Poland, where many critics of the Minsk regime have come to live, offered help to Tsimanouskaya. Deputy Foreign Minister Marcin Przydacz said on Twitter that Tsimanouskaya has been offered a "humanitarian visa and is free to pursue her sporting career in Poland if she so chooses."

The Belarus National Olympic Committee has been led for more than 25 years by authoritarian state president Alexander Lukashenko and his son, Viktor.

Both Lukashenkos are banned from the Tokyo Olympics by the IOC, which investigated complaints from athletes that they faced reprisals and intimidation in fallout from protests since last August after the country's disputed presidential election.

A spokeswoman for the Belarus Olympic team did not respond to a request for comment.

Tsimanouskaya was taken to a safe place and would ask for asylum from the Austrian embassy, Opeikin said.

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Tsimanouskaya already competed for Belarus on the first day of track events Friday at the National Stadium in Tokyo. She placed fourth in her first-round heat in the 100 meters, timing 11.47 seconds, and did not advance.

Evacuations lifted as progress made against fires in US West

BLY, Ore. (AP) — Firefighters in Oregon reported good progress in the battle against the nation's largest wildfire, while authorities canceled evacuation orders near a major blaze in Northern California and another on Hawaii's Big Island.

Containment of the Bootleg Fire in remote southern Oregon was up to 84% late Sunday. It was 56% contained a day earlier.

"That reflects several good days of work on the ground where crews have been able to reinforce and build additional containment lines," fire spokesman Al Nash said.

The blaze has scorched over 646 square miles (1,673 square kilometers) since being sparked by lightning July 6 in the Fremont-Winema National Forest.

California's Dixie Fire covered nearly 388 square miles (1,005 square kilometers) in mountains where 42 homes and other buildings have been destroyed.

The fire was 33% contained Sunday evening, and evacuation orders and warnings had earlier been lifted for several areas of Butte and Plumas counties.

The cause of the blaze was still under investigation.

Authorities warned that with unpredictable winds and extremely dry fuels, the risk of flare-ups remained high.

In recent days, lightning sparked two wildfires that threatened remote homes in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Evacuation warnings remained in place Sunday for communities along the Trinity River.

In Montana, a wind-driven wildfire destroyed more than a dozen homes, outbuildings and other structures, authorities said Sunday. Evacuations were ordered after flames jumped a highway and moved toward communities near Flathead Lake in the northwestern part of the state.

Crews also battled major blazes in northeast Washington and northern Idaho.

Nearly 22,000 firefighters and support personnel were battling 91 large, active wildfires covering 2,813 square miles (7,285 square kilometers) in mostly western states, the National Interagency Fire Center said.

A historic drought and recent heat waves tied to climate change have made wildfires harder to fight in the American West. Scientists say climate change has made the region much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

The U.S. Drought Monitor reported last week that while a robust monsoon has delivered drought-easing rainfall to the Southwest, critically dry conditions persist across Northern California and the Northwest, where there has been an expansion of "exceptional drought," the worst category.

Dry conditions and powerful winds made for dangerous fire conditions in Hawaii. A wind advisory was issued Sunday for portions of Lanai, Maui and the Big Island.

A fast-moving wildfire on Hawaii's Big Island grew to 62.5 square miles (101 square kilometers), prompting mandatory evacuation orders. Those orders — which forced thousands of residents out of their homes — were lifted Sunday evening. However, authorities told residents to remain alert.

"County officials ask all residents of the affected areas to only return home if absolutely necessary," Hawaii County spokesperson Cyrus Johnsen said in a statement. "Smoke and other conditions may make returns unsafe for those with prior and underlying respiratory conditions."

Local media reported at least two homes had been destroyed. Two community shelters were open for residents who weren't able to return home, the Hawaii Red Cross said.

At an extraordinary Olympics, acts of kindness abound

By SALLY HO Associated Press

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TOKYO (AP) — A surfer jumping in to translate for the rival who'd just beaten him. High-jumping friends agreeing to share a gold medal rather than move to a tiebreaker. Two runners falling in a tangle of legs, then helping each other to the finish line.

In an extraordinary Olympic Games where mental health has been front and center, acts of kindness are everywhere. The world's most competitive athletes have been captured showing gentleness and warmth to one another — celebrating, pep-talking, wiping away one another's tears of disappointment.

Kanoa Igarashi of Japan was disappointed when he lost to Brazilian Italo Ferreira in their sport's Olympic debut.

Not only did he blow his shot at gold on the beach he grew up surfing, he was also being taunted online by racist Brazilian trolls.

The Japanese-American surfer could have stewed in silence, but he instead deployed his knowledge of Portuguese, helping to translate a press conference question for Ferreira on the world stage.

The crowd giggled hearing the cross-rival translation and an official thanked the silver medalist for the assist.

"Yes, thank you, Kanoa," said a beaming Ferreira, who is learning English.

Days later, at the Olympic Stadium, Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy and Mutaz Barshim of Qatar found themselves in a situation they'd talked about but never experienced — they were tied.

Both high jumpers were perfect until the bar was set to the Olympic-record height of 2.39 meters (7 feet, 10 inches). Each missed three times.

They could have gone to a jump-off, but instead decided to share the gold.

"I know for a fact that for the performance I did, I deserve that gold. He did the same thing, so I know he deserved that gold," Barshim said. "This is beyond sport. This is the message we deliver to the young generation."

After they decided, Tamberi slapped Barshim's hand and jumped into his arms.

"Sharing with a friend is even more beautiful," Tamberi said. "It was just magical."

Earlier, on the same track, runners Isaiah Jewett of the U.S. and Nijel Amos of Botswana got tangled and fell during the 800-meter semifinals. Rather than get angry, they helped each other to their feet, put their arms around each other and finished together.

Many top athletes come to know each other personally from their time on the road, which can feel long, concentrated, and intense — marked by career moments that may be the best or worst of their lives.

Those feelings have often been amplified at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Games, where there is an unmistakable yearning for normalcy and, perhaps, a newfound appreciation for seeing familiar faces.

Restrictions designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have meant Olympians can't mingle the way they normally do.

After a hard-fought, three-set victory in the beach volleyball round-robin final on Saturday at Shiokaze Park, Brazilian Rebecca Cavalcanti playfully poured a bottle of water on American Kelly Claes' back as she did postgame interviews.

The U.S. team had just defeated Brazil but the winners laughed it off, explaining that they're friends.

"I'm excited when quarantine's done so we can sit at the same table and go to dinner with them. But it's kind of hard in a bubble because we have to be away," said Sarah Sponcil, Claes' teammate.

For fellow American Carissa Moore, the pandemic and its accompanying restrictions brought her closer with the other surfers.

The reigning world champion said she typically travels to surfing competitions with her husband and father. But all fans were banned this year, and Moore admitted she struggled without their reassuring presence in the initial days of the Games.

Moore had flown to Japan with the U.S. team 10 days before the first heat, and soon adjusted to living in a home with the other surfers, including Caroline Marks, whom Moore considered the woman to beat.

Moore said she didn't know Marks well before the Tokyo Games but on the night she was crowned the winner and Marks came in fourth, her rival was the first to greet her.

"Having the USA Surf team with me, it's been such a beautiful experience to bond with them," Moore

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said. "I feel like I have a whole another family after the last two weeks."

After the punishing women's triathlon last week in Tokyo, Norwegian Lotte Miller, who placed 24th, took a moment to give a pep talk to Belgium's Claire Michel, who was inconsolable and slumped on the ground, sobbing.

Michel had come in last, 15 minutes behind winner Flora Duffy of Bermuda — but at least she finished. Fifty-four athletes started the race but 20 were either lapped or dropped out.

"You're a (expletive) fighter," Miller told Michel. "This is Olympic spirit, and you've got it 100%."

A year ago: Death and birth at hospital hit by Beirut blast

By BASSEM MROUE and FAY ABUEL GASIM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Emmanuelle Khnaisser had been in labor all day, and now it was in the last stages. Her baby — her first — was crowning.

Five floors below, Jessica Bezdjian was just coming in through the entrance of Beirut's St. George Hospital. She was an hour early for her 12-hour shift as a nurse in the psychiatric ward.

Everything exploded.

In every room on every floor in a single instant, windows burst. Doors flew off their hinges, ceilings collapsed, and equipment toppled. A wave of dust and pulverized glass surged through the wards and halls. In the darkness and chaos came the screams of bloodied patients, doctors and nurses.

One of Lebanon's most prestigious and oldest medical centers, St. George stands overlooking the Mediterranean coast about 900 meters (yards) from Beirut's port. On that day a year ago, hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate improperly stored at a port warehouse blew up in one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history.

The Aug. 4, 2020 blast tore through the Lebanese capital at 6:07 p.m., destroying entire neighborhoods and killing at least 214 people, including 22 at St. George Hospital.

A year later, every moment of that day remains engrained in the minds of those who lived through it. Many still struggle with the physical and psychological trauma. Some wrestle with the inexplicable loss of a loved one, some try to grasp what it means to have survived.

"It was the happiest moment in my life and the ugliest one at the same time," said Edmond Khnaisser, Emmanuelle's husband.

Emmanuelle's water broke around 5 that morning. She was going into labor two weeks early. She and Edmond rushed to the hospital and were admitted to a room on the 5th floor.

Emmanuelle, a 29-year-old lawyer, was soon joined by her parents and sister, as well as her husband's mother and sister.

Together, they waited for baby George — as they already knew they would name him — to come into the world.

On the northern outskirts of Beirut, Chouchan Yeghiyan woke up her youngest daughter, Jessica, at 4 p.m. to get ready. Jessica usually slept for much of the day since she was working overnight shifts at St. George. The 22-year-old loved her work and was saving money to pursue a master's degree.

She had a meal and a shower. Once her older sister Rosaline got home around 5:30 p.m., Jessica went downstairs and took the car.

She waved goodbye to her father, George Bezdjian, who was standing on the balcony as she drove off.

"I wish I didn't wake her up that day," her mother said, tears running down her face.

Around 5:45 p.m., the baby's head could be seen. Emmanuelle was wheeled into the operating room. Just as Edmond was asking if he could step in, the blast hit.

Ceiling tiles and window frames collapsed onto Emmanuelle, and glass showered her from the waist down. Her entire bed was jolted nearly a meter (yard) out of place. One doctor was thrown under the bed, another was hit by debris. Their blue and white uniforms were splattered with blood. The machine

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registering George's heartbeat broke.

"I was in a state of shock. We had no idea what had happened," Emmanuelle said.

Videos from Edmond's cellphone document the panic. In one video, he can be heard screaming, "Where is my wife? Stay where you are. Oh, Virgin Mary."

Bleeding from a mean gash on his leg, he cleared the debris off Emmanuelle and started picking the glass from her body.

The baby had pushed back inside her, and the delivery had to start from scratch. The doctors moved her bed into the emergency exit corridor, where there was less damage.

She was disoriented and didn't know if her baby was alive. A doctor brought out a monitor and placed it on her stomach. After a few, tense moments, they heard his heartbeat.

"I felt that there is a reason I should live for. I have to do all I can because I have a big responsibility for George to come to this life," Emmanuelle recalled. She thought about her parents, her husbands' parents, and "I gathered all my strength and removed all negative ideas and concentrated."

As she pushed, Emmanuelle could hear people weeping and ambulance sirens blaring. Distraught people rushed by her in and out of the emergency exit, searching for loved ones. As the evening grew dark, the doctors continued the delivery by the lights of their cellphones.

Edmond ran out briefly to look after his mother, who had suffered broken ribs, and Emmanuelle's father, who had a head injury.

When he returned, the doctor used forceps to pull George out. At 7:18 p.m., the little boy with dark brown hair emerged, 71 minutes after the blast.

"When George was born, I did not believe that he was crying. I did not believe that my son was born," Emmanuelle said, holding back her tears.

"When they put him on my chest, I was feeling very guilty and told him ... 'I'm sorry, my life, that you had to be born this way.'"

In one of Edmond's videos, a nurse can be heard showing a crying baby George to Emmanuelle. "He is so beautiful," the nurse tells her.

Usually when Jessica arrives at work, she sends her mother emojis of kisses or hearts. On this day, at 6:05 p.m., she sent an emoji of an angel. Two minutes later came the horrific boom, earsplitting even at their home 6 kilometers (4 miles) from the port.

When they saw the news about the blast's extent, Yeghiyan started screaming: "I feel something in my heart. Maybe the girl died."

Her husband and their eldest daughter rushed out of the house and drove toward St. George, while Yeghiyan stayed behind and frantically tried to call Jessica. She then knocked on the neighbor's door and asked him to take her to the hospital. When they hit traffic, Yeghiyan jumped out of the car and stopped a man on a motorcycle. She climbed on the back, and he weaved his way through the jammed vehicles toward St. George.

The father and daughter got there first. They were told Jessica was in the emergency ward. They assumed she was there helping the wounded.

They recognized her from her shoes. She was lying on the emergency ward floor, doctors giving her artificial ventilation and pressing on her chest.

Bezdjian saw the gaping wound on his daughter's neck and her bag, soaked in blood, on the floor next to her.

"I took off my daughter's shoes and started kissing her feet," he recalled, his voice shaking. "I asked God, 'In nine days I will be 60. Take my breath and give it to her.'"

Yeghiyan arrived and saw her daughter's body. She fainted.

Jessica succumbed to her wounds around the same time George was born.

St. George Hospital was in crisis condition. The damage, from top to bottom, was too much. It had to shut down — for the first time since it was founded in 1878. The stunned staff evacuated patients, car-

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rying them down the stairs on plastic chairs or bedsheets. Patients were lined on the pavement outside while medical staff treated urgently injured people in the open air of a main yard.

At the same time, ambulances were rushing in with wounded from around the city. Dr. Alexandre Nehme, the hospital's chief medical officer, recalls how he had to tell them: "We don't exist anymore."

Back on the 5th floor, Edmond held his son tightly, scared of losing him amid the chaos. Doctors told the couple they needed to get George to another hospital within four hours.

Emmanuelle was carried down the stairs on a chair, while Edmond messaged every WhatsApp group on his phone asking whoever was closest to pick them up. They walked for a block through debris and broken glass, to where his brother-in-law was waiting in his badly damaged car.

They drove about 8 kilometers (5 miles) north of Beirut's city center and reached a hospital. Only after they were admitted did they discover that the needle of the IV drip had broken off in Emmanuelle's arm, and the epidural was still stuck in her back.

They spent a week at the hospital as Emmanuelle was treated for an infection. Then finally they brought their baby home.

Jessica's family headed home shortly before midnight on Aug. 4. The next day, the hospital called. They asked Bezdjian to come collect his daughter's body because there was no electricity in the morgue.

They waited for four days until relatives came from abroad to hold the funeral. It had the trappings of a wedding, as sometimes customary in Lebanon for those who die young. The mourners dressed in white. The Armenian Catholic priest gave a prayer used at weddings.

"I thank God that our daughter died in one piece and we were able to bury her," Bezdjian said in their apartment, where several photos of Jessica hang, in a north Beirut suburb. Other people had to bury pieces of their loved ones' bodies.

Three days after the funeral, the family took Jessica's dog, Foxy, a Pomeranian, to the cemetery where she was buried. They released the dog and watched from a distance as he ran from one grave to another, then jumped on Jessica's and started yowling.

Then in November, on what would have been Jessica's 23rd birthday, the family went to the cemetery and marked the occasion next to her grave.

In their Beirut apartment on a recent day, Emmanuelle and Edmond sat watching George as he played in his room.

They will celebrate his first birthday a few days after Aug. 4, out of respect for the many people who lost their lives or were hurt on that day a year ago.

Edmond, a dual Lebanese-Canadian citizen who was born in Edmonton, Alberta, said that despite the extreme hardship in Lebanon right now, the couple have no intention of leaving. They hope to give George a brother or sister at some point.

Emmanuelle said she was told that babies are aware of everything that happens around them. One day, she said, she will tell George about his birth in the blast.

"I will tell him how his birth was a ray of light amid all the darkness."

Beijing Games: Sports coverage fine, other things maybe not

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The IOC says the Olympics are only about the sports; no politics allowed. This will be the mantra, as it always is, when the Beijing Winter Games open in six months.

Covering ski races or figure-skating finals should be painless; just stay in the sports bubble and out of trouble. But reporters from other countries who puncture the PR skin to explore other aspects of life in China — as they have in Japan during the Tokyo Olympics — could draw more than criticism.

They could face harassment and threats if portrayals are deemed by the government — and the increas-

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ingly nationalist public — to be giving a negative view of China.

“China demands complete adherence to its position on a number of issues,” Oriana Skylar Mastro, who researches China security issues at Stanford University, told The Associated Press.

“It demands this from governments, but also corporations, media, and individuals,” she said in an email. “So, do I think China is going to go after anyone, including sports reporters during the Olympics, that deviate from the ‘acceptable’ script? Yes, I absolutely do.”

China’s foreign ministry has repeatedly criticized the “politicization of sports” and has said any Olympic boycott is “doomed to failure.” It has not addressed journalism during the Games specifically.

The peril for journalists was evident last week when foreign reporters covering floods in central China were targeted. The Communist Youth League, an arm of the Chinese Communist Party, asked social media followers to locate and report a BBC reporter on assignment. That expanded into broader accusations against foreign reporters for “slandering” China with coverage that could be seen as critical rather than focusing on government rescue efforts.

In a statement, The Foreign Correspondents’ Club of China said the “rhetoric from organizations affiliated with China’s ruling Community Party directly endangers the physical safety of foreign journalists in China and hinders free reporting.”

The organization added that staff from the BBC and the Los Angeles Times “received death threats and intimidating messages and calls.” This came after China last year expelled more than a dozen American reporters working for The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times.

Beijing was the IOC’s unlikely choice for the 2022 Winter Olympics, a decision made in 2015 chiefly because European favorites like Oslo and Stockholm pulled out for financial or political reasons. The IOC was left with only two candidates: Beijing and Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Beijing won by four votes, 44-40. The choice elicited sharp criticism from human rights groups, which continues.

The IOC has declined several recent demands to move the Olympics out of Beijing. China is accused by some foreign governments and researchers of imposing forced labor, systematic forced birth control and torture upon Uyghurs, a largely Muslim ethnic group Xinjiang, a region in the country’s west.

China has denied committing genocide against the Uyghur people, calling such accusations “the lie of the century.”

Last week a vice president of Intel, one of the IOC’s top 15 sponsors, said he agreed with a U.S. State Department assessment that said China was committing genocide against Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. Other sponsors including Coca-Cola, Visa, Procter & Gamble, and Airbnb appeared in a congressional hearing but wouldn’t answer most questions directly.

“It’s what I refer to as the Olympics Catch-22 for illiberal regimes like China,” Victor Cha, an Asian specialist at Georgetown University, wrote in an email to AP. Cha surveyed the politics of sports in Asia and the 2008 Beijing Olympics in his book “Beyond the Final Score.” He also served from 2004-2007 in the Bush White House as director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council.

“They want all the glory and attention of hosting the world for the Winter Games, but they want none of the inevitable criticism that comes with the media magnifying glass,” Cha said. “All hosts have to deal with this; witness all of the scrutiny over COVID pre-Tokyo. The difference is how the hosts handle it.”

The IOC says its focus is only sports, though it’s a highly political body with an observer seat at the United Nations. IOC President Thomas Bach touted his efforts to bring the two Koreas together during 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. He also addressed world leaders in 2019 in a G20 summit in Osaka, Japan.

“Our responsibility is to deliver the Games,” said Mark Adams, the IOC’s spokesman. “That is our responsibility. It is the responsibility of others — the United Nations, who have been very supportive of the Olympic Games, and governments to deal with this — and not for us.”

He added: “Given the diverse participation in the Olympic Games, the IOC has to remain neutral. That’s clear.”

Adams was asked in an email if the IOC was willing to “condemn China’s policy of interning Uyghurs and

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other largely Muslim minorities." He did not answer the question and referred to previous statements. "At all times, the IOC recognizes and upholds human rights within its remit," Adams wrote. "This includes the rights of journalists to report on the Olympic Games."

The IOC included human rights requirements several years ago in the host city contract for the 2024 Paris Olympics, but it did not include those guidelines — the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights — for Beijing. Paris is the first Olympics to contain the standards, long pushed for by human rights groups.

In countless interviews about China and its preparations for the Winter Olympics, Bach has not mentioned the situation of the Uyghurs. Nor has he said it was a topic covered in meetings of his executive board.

The IOC, however, has promoted press statements about conversations Bach has had with Chinese President Xi Jinping, though it has not revealed the content.

The Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, reacting to the BBC incident, essentially said the British news organization had it coming.

"The BBC has a long history of ideological bias against China," ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said. "It has been producing and broadcasting fake news, spreading false information on issues related to Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and the COVID-19 epidemic to attack and discredit China."

"The BBC has been reporting on China with tinted glasses for a long time, which brought down its reputation in China," Zhao added.

Yaqiu Wang, a China researcher for Human Rights Watch who grew up near Shanghai, said "the foreign media had brand credibility five or six years ago." But she said increasing information control by the Chinese state does not allow average Chinese to get a fair assessment of what the Western press is saying about China.

Wang said the mood is vastly different from 2008, when Beijing held the Summer Olympics. Many outside China hoped the Olympics would improve human rights, and some Chinese saw it as period of optimism. Controls over the foreign media were relaxed in the runup to the Olympics, which some interpreted as a relaxation on the political front after decades of "reform and opening-up," as China refers to its 40 years of economic reconfiguration.

"The hostility among the people is real, much more real than before," Wang said. "That kind of hostility did not exist in 2008, but it exists now. Among average people, they know that saying bad things about the West or being hostile, they know it's in your interest to do that."

"If you go to a stadium, it will be all good if they feel you are covering something good," Wang added. "But say you speak to some dissidents or somebody who is a victim of some kind of abuse, you could be in a dangerous position."

EXPLAINER: Why is there so much drama in Olympic boxing?

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — When Mourad Aliev sat on the boxing ring apron at the Kokugikan Arena for an hour after his disqualification for head-butting, the French super heavyweight took a metaphorical seat alongside all the boxers who believe they've been grievously wronged by Olympic refereeing and judging.

Over a century into boxing's stormy Olympic history, that gathering of angry fighters could fill an arena.

Ingemar Johansson. Jo Dong-gi. Byun Jung-il. Roy Jones Jr. Evander Holyfield. Floyd Mayweather Jr. Alexis Vastine. Michael Conlan. Vassiliy Levit. That's just a fraction of the boxers who felt victimized by controversial refereeing or messy judging in the Olympic ring over the decades.

For as long as boxing has been in the modern Games, fighters and fans have complained about it. Every attempt to improve the judging and officiating has been undone by another round of missteps.

The sport now is essentially defined by images of outraged boxers protesting their perceived injustices, from Byun's Seoul ring sit-in to Conlan's middle fingers to the Rio judges. Losing fighters cry conspiracy and corruption at almost every defeat, never explaining why a global cabal was created specifically to hurt them.

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But how much of modern Olympic boxing's dismal reputation is rooted in genuine scandal, and how much is simple human inconsistency? What causes some of those controversial decisions?

The answers probably aren't as complex as boxing conspiracy theorists and piqued pugilists believe.

THE FIGHTS ARE SHORT

Modern Olympic fights are three rounds. That's rarely enough time to decide anything in a quality boxing match. Many professionals are just starting to work in the third round, but an Olympian can be doomed before that.

"Sometimes a boxer is just getting going, and it's already over," U.S. head coach Billy Walsh said.

The fights are short by necessity, since boxers must compete multiple times in the 16-day tournament. The differences between fighters are often minuscule over nine minutes of competition compared to 36 in a pro title fight, but a losing boxer always fixates on what she did well.

Unless boxers are allowed to fight until one physically incapacitates the other — which is the way they actually competed at the ancient Olympic Games in 688 B.C. — decisions are an unfortunate necessity.

JUDGING IS SUBJECTIVE

Every boxing decision is inherently subjective, despite what your friend who buys every pay-per-view wants you to believe.

A good example arose when Conlan lost a decision to Russia's Vladimir Nikitin. The touted Irish bantamweight provided the iconic image of those Games when he flipped off the judges, slowly rotating so everybody could see his opinion.

But that's the dilemma: Judging is an opinion.

Conlan and his supporters claimed the decision represented anything from endemic financial corruption to a conspiracy supporting a Russian team that won one gold medal. To many others, Conlan boxed well and probably deserved the decision -- yet he also got punched in the face repeatedly by Nikitin, who exploited Conlan's inconsistent defense. Nikitin fought courageously with a bloody face, and he landed enough to have a chance in a short fight.

Conlan believes he was robbed. Others believe he just wasn't dominant enough to remove objective doubt.

And these are all opinions.

ALL OVER THE PLACE

Many bouts in Tokyo have featured five judges from five continents. It's an admirable dedication to representation, but judges from vastly differing backgrounds are rarely in lockstep on the intricacies of scoring.

The International Boxing Association (AIBA) made a much-praised return to the 10-must scoring system before Rio, and it dedicated extensive resources to coordinated judge education. Progress was being made.

AIBA was then suspended from the Olympics in 2019 after widespread financial problems alongside the usual complaints about the judging at the 2016 Olympics — where there were actually fewer inexplicable results than in Beijing or London under the old punch-counting system. Olympic judging has moved forward and backward for decades, and this dance marathon is tiring.

HARSH PROTECTION STANDARDS

Referee Andy Mustacchio disqualified Aliev for head clashes with British opponent Frazer Clarke, who had cuts near both eyes. Aliev claimed he hadn't even been warned, although others at ringside disagreed. "Those are the rules of the sport," Clarke said. "We didn't make them."

Olympic boxing has rules encouraging early stoppages for violations, ostensibly to protect fighters. Professional referees usually prefer to extend a bout, since that's why everyone is being paid to be there — and that's often when it's getting good.

The Olympic sport often doesn't understand this flexibility: French lightweight Sofiane Oumiha was stopped Saturday when Keyshawn Davis stunned and wobbled him with punches that didn't even knock him down.

Aliev and Oumiha almost certainly would have been allowed to continue a pro fight. A zealous referee can end an Olympic fight for relatively minor reasons — even when it seems terribly unfair.

SORE LOSERS

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Simply put, many boxers are poor sports. That's a self-preservation instinct: Most fighters' careers are over when they begin to lose regularly. It's rare for any boxer to accept defeat when a close fight goes to a decision — and that's about 90% of Olympic bouts.

Some Olympic fighters behave admirably in defeat. Kazakh middleweight sensation Abilkhan Amankul was gracious Sunday after a narrow quarterfinal loss to Brazil's Hebert Sousa.

Most boxers are inextinguishably confident in themselves. They take a losing decision as a personal attack to be countered with two middle fingers up, or with a ring sit-in.

Families urge using new DNA tech to ID Pearl Harbor unknowns

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — William Edward Mann enlisted in the Navy after graduating from high school in rural Washington state. A guitar player, he picked up the ukulele while stationed in Hawaii.

He's been presumed dead since Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor and set off a massive explosion that sank his battleship, the USS Arizona, launching the U.S. into World War II.

Now, his niece is among some families of crew members who are demanding the U.S. military take advantage of advances in DNA technology to identify 85 sailors and Marines from the Arizona who were buried as unknowns. They say the military has disinterred and identified remains from other Pearl Harbor battleships and should do the same for their loved ones.

"These men matter and they served. They gave their lives for our country. And they deserve the same honor and respect as any other service member past, present and future," Teri Mann Whyatt said.

The Arizona suffered more loss of life than any other ship at Pearl Harbor, with 1,177 dead. More than 900 went down with the ship and have remained entombed there ever since.

As with remains on other sunken ships, the Navy considers those aboard the Arizona to be in their final resting place. The families are not advocating for them to be removed and identified.

The issue is what to do with the 85 Arizona unknowns buried in a Hawaii cemetery. It emerged in February when the director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, which is tasked with finding and identifying the remains of U.S. service members from past conflicts, was asked during a Facebook Live meeting when the agency would disinter them.

Kelly McKeague said his agency had spoken to the Navy about exhuming the Arizona unknowns and moving them to the ship without identifying them first. McKeague said it didn't make "pragmatic sense" to identify them.

That outraged some families who feared the 85 remains would be placed on the sunken battleship without ever being identified.

The agency has since said it doesn't plan to move the cemetery remains onto the ship. Rear Adm. Darius Banaji, the agency's deputy director, said that was just a possibility discussed informally a few years ago.

Banaji also said the agency doesn't plan to disinter the remains and try to identify them because it lacks sufficient documentation.

The military has files on just half of those missing from the Arizona, he said. Of those, it has medical records — listing age, height and other information — for just half. It has dental records for only 130 men. Some documents are believed to have been destroyed with the battleship. Others may have been lost in a 1973 fire at a military personnel records office.

And the military only has DNA samples from relatives of just 1% of the missing Arizona crew members.

McKeague told The Associated Press that what he said about identifications not being pragmatic referred to the lack of documentation, not the cost.

"We must apply our limited resources in a manner that is equitable to all families and to do so as efficiently and effectively as possible," he said in a statement.

The agency, which aims to find more than 80,000 service members missing from World War II and on, has successfully identified unknowns from the USS Oklahoma, another battleship that capsized during the Pearl Harbor bombing.

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In 2015, the agency dug up the remains of 388 Oklahoma sailors and Marines from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the same graveyard where the Arizona unknowns are buried.

It acted after the military drafted a new policy allowing the disinterment of groups of unknown servicemen if it expected to identify at least 60% of the group.

The agency had dental records, age and height information for the vast majority of the Oklahoma unknowns. The military also had family DNA samples for more than 80%.

The agency predicted it would identify 80% of the Oklahoma remains, which were buried comingled in 61 caskets. As of this month, it has identified 344, or 88%, and anticipates naming more.

A group of families led by Randy Stratton, whose father, Donald Stratton, suffered severe burns as a sailor on the Arizona but lived to be 97, has drafted a petition demanding that the agency identify the 85 Arizona unknowns.

He's vowed to help families submit DNA samples. He's also been pushing for the agency to use genetic genealogy techniques like those used by law enforcement to solve cold cases.

Stratton said about 30 to 40 families of Arizona unknowns have joined him.

From a scientific perspective, there isn't much stopping the military from identifying the Arizona remains, said Michael Coble, associate director of the Center for Human Identification at the University of North Texas.

"It's definitely going to be a huge undertaking. But I think the technology has evolved that this kind of work could be done," said Coble, who was chief of research at the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory from 2006 to 2010.

The lab, which dates to 1991, has long used DNA to identify remains for the military.

One newer method uses so-called SNPs, which are unique to an individual — except for identical twins — and provide a kind of fingerprint. The lab hasn't been able to make much use of this technique because it's been unable to obtain adequate SNP profiles from degraded remains. Last month, however, it completed a project to get those samples.

This technique would help the lab distinguish between individuals even when it's only able to extract tiny fragments of DNA. SNPs are the same type of DNA sample that services like Ancestry.com and 23andMe use to help match people with long-lost relatives or learn their propensity for certain diseases.

DNA profiles from this technique could theoretically be used for the kind of investigative genetic genealogy work that Stratton advocates.

Tim McMahon, head of DNA operations for the Defense Department, said researchers could take samples that failed to find matches in the lab's in-house database and upload those to publicly available, private-sector DNA databases to look for potential cousins or other relatives. Genealogists could then study marriage licenses, birth records and other documents to make closer potential matches, which would then have to be confirmed with additional DNA tests.

Using such databases raises privacy concerns because relatives of the missing may not want their family's genetic information shared. The military would need to develop policies to protect privacy — for example, by potentially allowing researchers to upload an anonymous DNA profile of an unidentified serviceman.

But first, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency would have to decide that it wants to identify the Arizona unknowns.

For Stratton, it would be worth it.

"Why wouldn't you want to find out who these guys are?" Stratton said.

Texas audit proposed by GOP would miss minor but real errors

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and PAUL WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A group of Texas Republicans wants to audit the 2020 election results in just the large, mostly Democratic counties across the state. If they get their way, they'll miss many of the real — but minor — errors in the state's vote count.

That's according to a team of researchers that conducted a statewide analysis of the results across

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both Democratic and Republican counties. The group found a series of errors that would not come close to changing Republican Donald Trump's victory in the state or any other statewide race. But the errors stretch across both Republican and Democratic counties.

The research adds to a pile of evidence that contradicts the belief, widespread among Republicans, that elections in Democratic areas are rife with errors, irregularities and mismanagement. While errors in the tally do occur, research shows they tend to be random and small scale and do not benefit one party or the other.

In Texas, the mistakes, detected by election researchers from the University of Florida, were scattered across 37 of Texas' 254 counties. They added or subtracted a handful of votes from various candidates with no skew toward one party or the other. Trump apparently received 223 more votes than the 5,890,347 that the Texas secretary of state lists as the Republican's total. Democrat Joe Biden appears to have received 155 more votes than his listed 5,259,126, according to the research.

Minor mistakes like the Texas ones are relatively common, say election experts. In Texas, the errors are likely due to the state's use of an older computer system that requires counties to enter their tallies by hand, increasing the risk of errors when the wrong digit is typed.

But they take on greater significance at a time when Trump supporters are calling for increased scrutiny of Democratic election offices, such as in Texas, where Attorney General Ken Paxton is among the Republicans supporting legislation that would audit the state's largest counties — most of which were carried by Biden last year.

"If Texas is going to focus on the blue counties, that's probably the wrong thing to do," said Michael McDonald, the political scientist who led the team that found the Texas discrepancies. He also operates the U.S. Elections Project, which has tallies of all national elections since the nation's founding. "They should look at all the counties because there's something broken with this system."

Texas' elections director, Keith Ingram, said the state is working to upgrade its computer system to one that will automatically transmit counties' final tally to the state, eliminating the need for local election directors to type it in. But that may not be ready for testing until next year's primary.

"It's not a huge number," Ingram said of the discrepancies, which he had not heard of until contacted by The Associated Press. "Obviously, we want everything to be precisely spot on, and we're going to give counties the ability to do that."

Election experts say the Texas example shows the need for regular oversight of the system — as opposed to the so-called forensic audits that Trump supporters have backed that don't follow established procedures and chase wild theories of voting fraud. An audit authorized by the Republican-controlled state Senate in Arizona's largest county, for example, conducted a search for bamboo fibers on the ballots after a conspiracy theory circulated that fraudulent ballots for Biden were shipped in from Asia.

The Arizona audit has become a rallying cry for Trump backers who are convinced the election was stolen, although repeated professional audits and recounts have shown no mass voter fraud. They are pushing for new audits in Pennsylvania and Michigan. In Wisconsin, the Republican head of the assembly's elections committee has promised an audit. In Texas, nearly three dozen Republicans signed onto a bill that would audit 13 counties with populations of more than 415,000 people. The bill has been in limbo, along with other GOP priorities, since Democrats bolted to Washington to block new voting laws.

The Republican lawmaker who proposed the Texas audit, state Rep. Steve Toth, expressed bafflement to The Washington Post about expanding it to smaller counties. "What's the point?" Toth said. "I mean, all the small counties are red."

Toth's office did not respond to emails seeking comment from The Associated Press.

The Texas discrepancies are "why having real election audits and reconciliation audits is important — to make sure any transcription error like that is caught," said Tammy Patrick, a former Maricopa County election official who works with The Democracy Fund and is a critic of the partisan audits. "It's important that we don't look at those kind of errors as cavalier or that they don't matter, because they do, but they're not indicative necessarily of fraud."

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The mistakes range from Travis County, which includes Austin, reporting 100 too-few votes for a state Supreme Court candidate to small, conservative counties like Gillespie in Texas' Hill Country, where the totals were a single vote off in a handful of races.

"If it's different, then that's going to be an input error, and it's probably on the secretary of state," said Terry Hamilton, a clerk in the Gillespie County elections office.

The discrepancies don't all stem from transcription errors. In Kleberg County, near the southern Texas coast — a 30,000-population county won by Trump — Election Director Stephanie Garza had long-delayed knee replacement surgery three days after the election.

That meant she wasn't able to personally ensure that ballots judged to be legal days after the election — known as provisional ballots and, in Texas, also limited ballots — were included in the final numbers sent to the secretary of state.

Because they were omitted, Trump's winning total was understated by 71 votes, and Biden's total was missing 67.

Garza said she was mortified to find out about the omission, even though it represents only a minuscule fraction of ballots cast in the presidential race.

"As an election director, you don't want to be off whatsoever," Garza said.

Evictions expected to spike as federal moratorium ends

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Evictions, which have mostly been on pause during the pandemic, are expected to ramp up on Monday after the expiration of a federal moratorium as housing courts take up more cases and tenants are locked out of their homes.

Housing advocates fear the end of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention moratorium could result in millions of people being evicted in the coming weeks. But most expect an uptick in filings in the coming days rather than a wave of evictions.

The Biden administration announced Thursday it will allow a nationwide ban to expire. It argued that its hands are tied after the U.S. Supreme Court signaled the moratorium would only be extended until the end of the month.

House lawmakers on Friday attempted but, ultimately 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.

"Struggling renters are now facing a health crisis and an eviction crisis," said Alicia Mazzara, a senior research analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

"Without the CDC's moratorium, millions of people are at risk of being evicted or becoming homeless, increasing their exposure to COVID just as cases are rising across the country. The effects will fall heavily on people of color, particularly Black and Latino communities, who face greater risk of eviction and more barriers to vaccination."

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.

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 the distribution has been painfully slow. So far, only about \$3 billion of the first tranche of \$25 billion has been distributed through June by states and localities. Another \$21.5 billion will go to the states.

Ashley Phonsyry, 22, who will be in court Thursday for an eviction hearing after falling several thousands dollars behind on her Fayetteville, Arkansas, two-bedroom apartment, said her landlord has refused to take rental assistance. She left her job after being hurt in a domestic violence incident and suffering from

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depression and anxiety. The eviction hearing is a day after her domestic violence case goes to court.

"It frustrates me and scares me," she said of being evicted. "I'm trying so hard to make it right and it doesn't seem like it's enough."

Around the country, courts, legal advocates and law enforcement agencies are gearing up for evictions to return to pre-pandemic levels, a time when 3.7 million people were displaced from their homes every year, or seven every minute, according to the Eviction Lab at Princeton University.

In St. Louis, the sheriff's office handles court-ordered evictions. Sheriff Vernon Betts said 126 evictions have been ordered and are just waiting for the moratorium to end. His office plans to enforce about 30 evictions per day starting Aug. 9.

Betts knows there will be hundreds of additional orders soon. He's already been contacted by countless landlords who haven't yet filed for eviction, but plan to. And he expected to increase his staffing.

"We already know that we have about 126 evictions already lined up. What we're planning on doing is tripling our two-man team," he said. "Right off the bat we want to clean up that 126 evictions."

Sgt. William Brown, who leads the evictions unit for the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, said he doesn't know how quickly evictions will ramp up after the moratorium ends. Landlords still have to go through several steps before they can evict. But he said he has no doubt that many more people will be forced out, rattling off statistics that show the steep decline in evictions since the pandemic began: nearly 4,000 in 2018 and 2019, then a steep plunge to about 1,900 in 2020.

"Absolutely. Absolutely," he said. "I think that once evictions are there fully, there's no more moratorium in place, it's going to get really bad."

"It's the most challenging position that I've ever been in, because at the end of the day I have an empathy and sympathy. I'm required by state statute to execute this," he said. "You have to feel for these people ... watching small kids go through this, this entire process."

Lee Camp, an attorney with the St. Louis legal group ArchCity Defenders, said the vast majority of tenants facing eviction don't have lawyers, often because they can't afford them. Meanwhile, he said, eviction cases move through the courts quickly in Missouri, often in a matter of weeks.

"The scales of justice are just at this incredible imbalance," Camp said.

In Wisconsin, Heiner Giese, legal counsel for the Apartment Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, said his trade association for rental property owners in the Milwaukee area has been "very strong in urging our members and all landlords not to evict."

"I pretty strongly believe from the feedback we get from our members in the Milwaukee area ... there will not be this giant tsunami of (evictions)," Giese said.

Still, Colleen Foley, executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, said she "certainly" expects an uptick. She said 161 evictions were filed last week, a significant increase from prior weeks where filings tended to hover around 100 to 120. She said she was waiting to hear when those cases would go to court.

Trump's kingmaker status faces test in Ohio special election

By JILL COLVIN, THOMAS BEAUMONT and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

GROVE CITY, Ohio (AP) — As soon as it became clear last week that a Texas congressional candidate backed by Donald Trump would be defeated in a special election, the former president's allies quickly shifted their attention to Ohio to ward off another embarrassing loss.

Make America Great Again, a super PAC chaired by Trump's former campaign manager, quietly purchased \$300,000 in Ohio television advertising. The buy was intended to provide a late-stage boost to another Trump-backed candidate facing a crowded field of Republicans in a special election on Tuesday.

The midsummer race for Ohio's traditionally Republican 15th Congressional District wouldn't typically get much national attention. But it's suddenly becoming a high-stakes test of Trump's endorsement power, which he has wielded as a cudgel to silence opposition in the GOP.

Low-turnout special elections aren't perfect measures of Trump's strength and he remains a powerhouse

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in GOP politics, revealing over the weekend that his political action committees are sitting on a massive \$100 million pile of cash. But a second loss in two weeks could chip away at Trump's self-proclaimed king-maker status heading into next year's midterm elections.

"If it happens a couple times, candidates and political professionals — they're not stupid — they're going to say you can win this race even if you're not endorsed by Trump," said Ohio Republican consultant Ryan Stubenrauch.

In other cases, Trump's decision to throw his weight behind candidates with baggage, including several running against GOP incumbents who crossed him by voting in favor of his second impeachment, has put him at odds with other party leaders. Some Republicans fear his moves could complicate efforts to win back majorities in the House and Senate next year.

In Ohio, Trump has endorsed Mike Carey, a coal lobbyist who is among 10 Republicans jockeying to replace former GOP Rep. Steve Stivers, who retired from Congress earlier this year. He faces a formidable lineup, including three current state lawmakers: state Sens. Bob Peterson and Stephanie Kunze and state Rep. Jeff LaRe. Former state Rep. Ron Hood is also a contender.

LaRe is backed by Stivers, who held the seat for a decade. Hood, meanwhile, has generous support from U.S. Sen. Rand Paul's political action committee, along with religious conservative Ruth Edmonds, a minister and former Columbus NAACP president.

In an interview, Carey described the pitch he made to Trump when the two met for what he thought would be a photo-op earlier this year.

"I said, 'Listen, Mr. President, you've been somebody that supported a lot of political candidates over the course of your lifetime, and many of them let you down.' I said, 'I'm kind of in the same boat — I mean, on a much smaller scale,'" Carey recalled. "After about an hour and 20 minutes, he said, 'I'm all in. I'm going to endorse you and do whatever it takes to get you over the finish line.'"

Trump, who headlined a rally with Carey in June, repped his endorsement last week, decrying candidates who have used his likeness or cited him in ads to try to woo voters. "I don't know them, and don't even know who they are. But I do know who Mike Carey is — I know a lot about him, and it is all good," Trump said in a statement. "Let there be no further doubt who I have Endorsed!"

About 560,000 voters are registered to vote in Ohio's 15th Congressional District, which leans Republican. Half of its voters live in parts of Franklin and Fairfield counties, primarily suburban Columbus communities that Republicans for generations could count on, but where Trump lost support in 2020. In the sparsely populated remainder of the district, Trump improved over his 2016 performance, as he did throughout rural Ohio.

It can be tough to draw firm conclusions from a pair of low-turnout special elections, especially in Ohio, where the large field of candidates could split the vote in unexpected ways.

But Trump has put great personal stock in his endorsements and frequently touts his record of wins. His formal backing remains highly coveted, with candidates making pilgrimages to Trump's homes in Florida and New Jersey to win his favor.

Some advisers have urged Trump to be more judicious in his choices and avoid wading into races where there is no clear front-runner to preserve his reputation. And many expect that Trump will be less apt to weigh in on crowded primaries going forward.

In Texas, Trump had backed Susan Wright, the widow of Republican Rep. Ron Wright, who died in February after being diagnosed with COVID-19. Trump released multiple statements touting his "Complete and Total Endorsement," recorded a robocall late in the runoff and the Make America Great Again super PAC made a \$100,000 ad buy.

Nonetheless, she lost to fellow Republican Jake Ellzey, who sought to overcome Trump's snub by raising more money and highlighting his other supporters, including Rick Perry, a former Texas governor who was also Trump's energy secretary.

Trump has since insisted the loss was really a win, telling Axios: "The big thing is, we had two very good people running that were both Republicans. That was the win."

In other cases, some in the party fear Trump could do damage by backing candidates who may do well in

Republican primaries, where Trump supporters dominate, but then have trouble winning general elections.

Trump, for instance, has urged football great Herschel Walker to run for the Senate in Georgia, despite significant baggage. A recent Associated Press review of hundreds of pages of public records tied to Walker's business ventures and his divorce found accusations that Walker repeatedly threatened his ex-wife's life, exaggerated claims of financial success and alarmed business associates with unpredictable behavior.

Max Miller, a former Trump White House and campaign aide who is challenging Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, an Ohio Republican who voted for Trump's impeachment, has also come under scrutiny. Gonzalez has significantly outraised Miller, and a recent Politico investigation found Miller has a record of speeding, underage drinking and disorderly conduct.

Trump has also met with candidates looking to oust Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., who has emerged as a top Trump critic. The former president backed Kelly Tshibaka in her bid to unseat Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a Republican who voted to convict Trump at his impeachment trial and who is facing reelection next year.

It's unclear whether the loyalty many Republican voters feel toward Trump personally will transfer to candidates he backs. At a meeting last week of the Grove City Patriots, a new Republican club in the Columbus suburbs that heard from three of the candidates on the ballot Tuesday, nearly everyone was a Trump supporter. Few, however, said they cared about his endorsement.

Tim Ruzicka said that he and his wife, Julie, who co-founded the group, are "totally Trump people," but that his backing wouldn't influence their pick. "For this, no. Everybody stand on your own merit. May the best candidate win," he said.

Julie Ruzicka echoed her husband's sentiments, saying she planned to study up on the candidates all weekend before casting her vote.

"I'm totally Trump all the way, but that's not necessarily who I'm going to choose," she said. "You know, Trump's chosen bad people in the past — not his fault, but they flip once they get in there — so I've got to look deeper."

Mike Murray, an 80-year-old retiree, agreed that Trump's endorsement doesn't mean as much to him as maybe the former president would hope.

"I mean, I like him, but I don't go by other people's endorsements all the time," he said. "I kind of pick out my own — because most of them are, oh, 'I'm going to fight for you,' but what does that mean? I like Trump, but I have my own mind."

It's in - and big: Senators produce \$1T infrastructure bill

By KEVIN FREKING and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After much delay, senators unveiled a nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package, wrapping up days of painstaking work on the inches-thick bill and launching what is certain to be a lengthy debate over President Joe Biden's big priority.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act clocked in at some 2,700 pages, and senators could begin amending it soon. Despite the hurry-up-and-wait during a rare weekend session, emotions bubbled over once the bill was produced Sunday night. The final product was not intended to stray from the broad outline senators had negotiated for weeks with the White House.

"We haven't done a large, bipartisan bill of this nature in a long time," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. He said a final vote could be held "in a matter of days."

A key part of Biden's agenda, the bipartisan bill is the first phase of the president's infrastructure plan. It calls for \$550 billion in new spending over five years above projected federal levels, what could be one of the more substantial expenditures on the nation's roads, bridges, waterworks, broadband and the electric grid in years.

Senators and staff labored behind the scenes for days to write the massive bill. It was supposed to be ready Friday, but by Sunday even more glitches were caught and changes made. To prod the work, Schumer kept senators in session over the weekend, encouraging the authors to finish up work.

Late Sunday night, most of the 10 senators involved in the bipartisan effort rose on the Senate floor to

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mark the moment.

"We know that this has been a long and sometimes difficult process, but we are proud this evening to announce this legislation," said Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., a lead negotiator. The bill showed "we can put aside our own political differences for the good of the country," she said.

Republican negotiator Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio said the final product will be "great for the American people."

Over the long weekend of starts and stops, Schumer repeatedly warned that he was prepared to keep lawmakers in Washington for as long as it took to complete votes on both the bipartisan infrastructure plan as well as a budget blueprint that would allow the Senate to begin work later this year on a massive, \$3.5 trillion social, health and environmental bill.

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

Among the major new investments, the bipartisan package is expected to provide \$110 billion for roads and bridges, \$39 billion for public transit and \$66 billion for rail. There's also set to be \$55 billion for water and wastewater infrastructure as well as billions for airports, ports, broadband internet and electric vehicle charging stations.

The spending is broadly popular among lawmakers, bringing long-delayed capital for big-ticket items that cities and states can rarely afford on their own.

Paying for the package has been a challenge after senators rejected ideas to raise revenue from a new gas tax or other streams. Instead, it is being financed from funding sources that might not pass muster with deficit hawks, including repurposing some \$205 billion in untapped COVID-19 relief aid, as well as unemployment assistance that was turned back by some states and relying on projected future economic growth.

"I've got real concerns with this bill," said Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah.

Bipartisan support from Republican and Democratic senators pushed the process along, and Schumer wanted the voting to be wrapped up before senators left for the August recess.

Last week week, 17 GOP senators joined all Democrats in voting to start work on the bipartisan bill. That support largely held, with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., voting yes in another procedural vote to nudge the process along in the 50-50 Senate, where 60 votes are needed to overcome a filibuster an advance legislation.

Whether the number of Republican senators willing to pass the bill grows or shrinks in the days ahead will determine if the president's signature issue can make it across the finish line.

Cornyn said he expects Schumer to allow all senators to have a chance to shape the bipartisan bill and allow for amendments from members of both parties.

"I hope we can now pump the brakes a little bit and take the time and care to evaluate the benefits and the cost of this legislation," Cornyn said.

The bipartisan bill still faces a rough road in the House, where progressive lawmakers want a more robust package but may have to settle for this one to keep Biden's infrastructure plans on track.

The outcome with the bipartisan effort will set the stage for the next debate over Biden's much more ambitious \$3.5 trillion 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 for passage. Final votes on that measure are not expected until fall.

Pelosi, Democrats call on Biden to extend eviction ban

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House Democratic leaders called on the Biden administration to immediately extend the nation's eviction moratorium, calling it a "moral imperative" to prevent Americans from being put out of their homes during a COVID-19 surge.

An estimated 3.6 million Americans are at risk of eviction, some as soon as Monday.

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Congress was unable to pass legislation swiftly to extend the ban, which expired at midnight Saturday, and the Democratic leaders said in a statement that it was now up to President Joe Biden's administration to act. They called on the administration to extend the moratorium through Oct. 18.

"Action is needed, and it must come from the Administration," Pelosi said Sunday night in the statement signed by Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Whip James E. Clyburn and Assistant Speaker Katherine Clark. "Science and reason demand that they must also extend the moratorium in light of the delta variant. Doing so is a moral imperative."

The White House, which has urged localities and states to tap aid already approved by Congress, had no direct response to the Democrats' call for action.

Some Democratic lawmakers said they were caught by surprise last Thursday when Biden announced that he would not extend the moratorium again in the wake of a Supreme Court ruling that suggested congressional action was necessary for another extension. Lawmakers were left with only days to act before the ban expired, creating frustration and anger and exposing a rare rift with the administration.

On Sunday, hours after the expiration, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., said that Democrats had to "call a spade a spade" and pointed to her own party.

"We cannot in good faith blame the Republican Party when House Democrats have a majority," the progressive congresswoman said on CNN's "State of the Union."

Ocasio-Cortez and other Democrats joined Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., who camped outside the Capitol over the weekend in protest.

On Saturday, with no legislative action pending, Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., the chair of the Financial Services Committee, told CNN, "We thought that the White House was in charge."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention put the ban in place as part of the COVID-19 response when jobs shifted and many workers lost income. The ban was intended to hold back the spread of the virus among people put out on the streets and into shelters.

Another source of frustration for lawmakers is the slow pace of pandemic relief already approved by Congress — nearly \$47 billion in federal housing aid to the states — getting to renters and landlords owed payments. Biden has called on local governments to "take all possible steps" to disburse the funds immediately.

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

Brian Deese, director of the White House National Economic Council, appeared on "Fox News Sunday" to echo that sentiment. "No landlord should evict without seeking that rental assistance, and states and localities need to get that money out urgently, and they can do that," Deese said.

Landlords also have argued for speeding up the distribution of rental assistance and opposed another extension of the moratorium.

As the deadline approached Saturday night, Pelosi urged House Democrats to check into how the money already allocated had 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 during the coming week.

When the Supreme Court voted 5-4 in late June to allow 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."

The White House has maintained that Biden wanted to extend the moratorium but that concerns remained over challenging the court. Doing so could lead to a ruling restricting the administration's ability to respond to future public health crises.

While racing to respond to Biden's announcement Thursday that congressional action was needed, Democrats strained to draft a bill and rally the votes. Waters 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.

In the end, Democratic lawmakers had questions and concerns and could not muster support to extend the ban.

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the top Republican on another panel handling the issue, said the Democrats' bill was rushed and that "this is not the way to legislate."

Refugees pushed to back of the line amid vaccine shortages

By VICTORIA MILKO and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL AP Science Writers

NEW DELHI (AP) — Salimullah, a Rohingya refugee, has been living in the Indian capital of New Delhi since 2013 when he fled violence in Myanmar. Stateless, and now homeless after a fire razed his camp, the 35-year-old lives in a tent with as many as 10 other people at a time.

Before the pandemic, he ran a small business selling groceries from a shack. But that was closed during India's harsh, months-long lockdown, and his savings are gone. He and his family have been surviving on donated food, but he has to return to work soon, despite the risk of getting COVID-19 and infecting others.

Although some refugees in India have begun getting vaccines, no one in his camp has received shots. Just over 7% of India's population is fully vaccinated and vaccine shortages have plagued the nation of almost 1.4 billion.

"The disease doesn't discriminate. If we get infected, locals will also," Salimullah said.

It wasn't supposed to be like this.

For months the World Health Organization urged countries to prioritize immunizing refugees, placing them in the second priority group for at-risk people, alongside those with serious health conditions.

That's because refugees inevitably live in crowded conditions where the virus can spread more easily, with little access to the most basic health care or even clean water, said Sajjad Malik director of the U.N. refugee agency's division of resilience and solutions.

"They are really living in difficult situations," he said.

Over 160 countries included refugees in their plans, but these have been upended by supply shortages. According to the WHO, some 85% of vaccines have been administered by rich countries. In contrast, 85% of the world's 26 million refugees live in developing countries struggling to vaccinate even the most vulnerable, according to the U.N. refugee agency.

Some countries, like Bangladesh, pinned their hopes on COVAX, the global initiative aimed at vaccine equity. In February, it altered its original vaccination plan to include nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees in crowded camps on the country's border with Myanmar. But so far, it's received only 100,620 doses— less than 1% of its allocated shots — from COVAX, leaving Rohingya refugees without.

COVAX hasn't only faltered in Bangladesh. Globally the initiative has delivered less than 8% of the 2 billion vaccine doses it had promised by the end this year.

Even in countries where refugee vaccination has started, supplies remain an issue. In Uganda's Bidi Bidi camp less than 2% of the 200,000 refugees have received a single shot of the AstraZeneca vaccine, with second doses in short supply after India stopped exporting them after its own cases exploded.

Other obstacles ranging from language barriers to misinformation about vaccines are exacerbating the problem. Thomas Maliamungu, a South Sudanese refugee and teacher in Bidi Bidi, said he overcame his fears to get his first shot only after it was made mandatory for teachers.

"Based on the rumors on the ground, I never wanted it," he said.

Some countries, like India, initially required documents like passports or other government identification, that many refugees lack to register for vaccines. Online registration was also a barrier for many without internet access.

India started vaccinating people in January. Four months later documentation requirements were eased. The Chin community in New Delhi, a Christian minority who fled the violence in Myanmar, started getting shots in June. By then, India's monstrous surge had already ripped through their crowded settlement, with entire families falling sick and dying.

With the city's health system collapsing, refugees struggled to get a hospital bed and private hospitals were charging around \$4,000 for a few days, said James Fanai, president of the Chin Refugee Committee in Delhi. "Getting oxygen was almost impossible," he said.

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Registration initiatives, like volunteers going to camps to help refugees sign up for vaccines, have sometimes fallen flat, said Miriam Alía Prieto, the vaccination and outbreak response adviser for Doctors Without Borders.

"Many aren't in camps but living with relatives," she said, noting refugee populations in Jordan and Lebanon.

Due to the transient nature of some refugee populations, some countries in Europe are gravitating towards using the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine for refugees. Prieto said that Spain is waiting for these vaccines to arrive. Greece began a drive for those living in migrant camps and shelters in early June using Johnson & Johnson shots.

Refugees are getting shots in EU countries, but the situation is worse in other parts of the continent, said Frido Herinckx, COVID-19 Operations Manager at the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent's Regional Office for Europe. For example, only some 1.5% of people in Armenia and 4.2% in Ukraine are fully vaccinated.

In some countries, like Montenegro, the fear of arrest or deportation remains an obstacle and, he said, Red Cross volunteers are accompanying migrants, including refugees, to help them get shots while ensuring they weren't arrested afterwards.

"So (it's) keeping that firewall between ... the border guards and the health service," he said.

But even if vaccine supply increases there's the issue of liability — the question of who's responsible in rare cases of serious side effects from the vaccine.

Humanitarian organizations can apply to distribute vaccines under the humanitarian buffer — a contingency mechanism set up by COVAX as a last resort. But doing so also means accepting liability for any serious side effects.

Prieto said Doctors Without Borders wants to try to get vaccines from the manufacturers but doesn't want to assume liability. Many vaccine makers have refused to ink deals for vaccines or ship them without that stipulation.

Another obstacle, she said, is that sometimes a vaccine greenlit by WHO is not yet authorized by the host country, creating a mismatch between what vaccines are available and what can be used.

"We're in this weird phase where there's a drug being approved, but no one wants to take liability," she said.

As the virus continues to spread, the difficulties facing vaccinating refugee populations around the globe could spell disaster for host communities.

"The virus doesn't distinguish between a national and a refugee. So, if you don't protect and save your refugee population it becomes a public health issue," Malik said.

EXPLAINER: How gymnastics evolved from 'exercising naked'

By CLAIRE GALOFARO AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The word gymnastics is derived from the ancient Greek "gymnazein," meaning "to exercise naked."

The sport, now among the Olympics' most beloved events, was born millennia ago, as young men trained for war in the buff.

Throughout human history, in all corners of the globe, people have flipped and spun and twisted to explore the limits of the human body. Egyptian hieroglyphs depict backbends, according to Britannica, and stone engravings from ancient China illustrate acrobats.

In arenas today, gymnasts compete on a series of what are called apparatuses: both men and women do a tumbling routine, called a floor exercise, and launch themselves off a vault. But their other events are different. Men compete in a total of six: the floor, the vault, the pommel horse, still rings, parallel bars and horizontal bar. Women compete in just four, with the balance beam and uneven bars added to the floor and vault.

It wasn't always that way. Early gymnastics included activities like rope climbing.

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So how did gymnastics move from young Greeks training naked to specific, highly calibrated events with a complicated scoring system?

POMMEL HORSE

At the Games, men swing around a leather-covered block with handles called a pommel horse, that in early iterations roughly mimicked the size and shape of the actual animal. Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia from 336 to 323 B.C., had his Macedonian soldiers train on a similar device to practice mounting their horses for battle, according to the European Gymnastics Service.

The modern version was invented in the early 19th century by German Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, known as the "father of gymnastics" for founding a series of gymnastics centers meant to cultivate health and patriotism. These gyms were meant, in part, to get young Germans ready to defend the country against Napoleon's French military.

Jahn also invented the early versions of the bar exercises that exist today: parallel bars and horizontal bars for men, and the women's uneven bars evolved from the parallel bars to showcase agility and elegance.

THE VAULT

For most of modern gymnastics history, the vault looked like the pommel horse without handles. Both men and women sprint toward it, flip and launch themselves into a series of spins and twists.

But it was redesigned two decades ago after horrific injuries in the 1980s and 1990s as gymnasts started trying more risky maneuvers: American Julissa Gomez was paralyzed in a vaulting accident in 1988 and died three years later. A decade later, Chinese gymnast Sang Lan fell, broke her neck and was paralyzed.

Then, in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, the vault was set two inches too low. In this sport of precision and timing, the problem caused a disastrous set of mistakes including one athlete nearly missing the vault entirely.

The new apparatus was called a "vaulting table," and has a wider, more cushioned surface for athletes to spring from. Slate magazine reported in 2004 when it made its first Olympics debut that athletes had taken to calling it "the tongue."

STILL RINGS

When men suspend themselves on two rings, hanging from straps, they are performing the gymnastics event that requires the most physical strength of any of the apparatuses.

They are called still rings because the gymnasts attempt to keep them as stationary as possible as they swing into different positions. They were originally called the "Roman rings," because their origin as a strength-training device is believed to date back thousand of years in Italy. In early iterations of the modern Olympics, they were sometimes referred to as the "flying rings."

BALANCE BEAM

The balance beam started off hundreds of years ago as a log suspended in the air. It has been refined over the years to a padded beam, 16 feet long, four feet high and four inches wide. It is considered the women's event that requires the more focus and precision. A minuscule misstep can send a gymnast tumbling to the ground.

Olympic volunteers strive to tell their earthquake stories

By CHISATO TANAKA Associated Press

RIFU, Japan (AP) — Atsushi Muramatsu's handmade flyers are the size of a business card, written in several languages. "Welcome to Miyagi Stadium," one reads. "The gymnasium next door was the largest morgue for tsunami victims."

Over a decade after the massive earthquake and tsunami devastated northeastern Japan, the Tokyo Games were supposed to offer a chance to showcase how much has been rebuilt. They were even billed as the "Recovery and Reconstruction Games," and the Olympic torch relay started from Fukushima prefecture, the heart of the nuclear disaster area.

But the coronavirus pandemic means few spectators are coming to any of the Olympic events, including soccer and baseball, being held here. That leaves some Olympic volunteers having to find their own ways to recount their experiences to those rare fans who pass through, as well as members of the media.

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"I believe that residents in disaster-hit areas want to express gratitude for support from overseas, and I also want to keep delivering a message that we want to be remembered," said Muramatsu, who is serving as a volunteer at the Miyagi Stadium media operation center.

The stadium has a capacity of 49,000, but because of the pandemic, it's one of the few venues that allow up to 10,000 spectators.

Another volunteer, Mieko Onuma, wants to return the favor to all those who supported the reconstruction by sharing her experience with Japanese visitors to Miyagi at a storytelling center set up near a shuttle bus station.

"When the disaster happened, I was working as a teacher at an elementary school. I feel a sense of duty to tell what happened that day, so I tell my stories here," said Onuma.

Toshihiro Umeki, 14, came to see the soccer games with his father, but also joined Okuma's storytelling session.

"Back then I was 5 years old, so I barely remember the disaster. So it wasn't like recalling back my memories but rather learning new things," said Umeki. "There were so many shocking things I didn't know."

On March 11, 2011, the magnitude 9.0 quake sent a tsunami that triggered meltdowns at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. The disaster heavily damaged coastal neighborhoods and took more than 18,000 lives in all, with around 10,000 people killed in Miyagi prefecture.

Muramatsu said he observed hundreds of dead bodies being cleaned after their recovery from the ocean, then carried to the gymnasium.

Being exposed to such scenes every day and hearing about the deaths of his friends, Muramatsu said he felt there was no line between life and death. What motivated him to stay alive was the daily conversations with foreign rescuer workers, who helped lift people's spirits with a joke or a kind word.

"I want to pass on the message to the next generation that we have received so much support from overseas, and we shall never forget that support," Muramatsu said.

It's in - and big: Senators produce \$1T infrastructure bill

By KEVIN FREKING and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After much delay, senators unveiled a nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package Sunday night, wrapping up days of painstaking work on the inches-thick bill and launching what is certain to be a lengthy debate over President Joe Biden's big priority.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act clocked in at some 2,700 pages, and senators could begin amending it soon. Despite the hurry-up-and-wait during a rare weekend session, emotions bubbled over once the bill was produced. The final product was not intended to stray from the broad outline senators had negotiated for weeks with the White House.

"We haven't done a large, bipartisan bill of this nature in a long time," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. He said a final vote could be held "in a matter of days."

A key part of Biden's agenda, the bipartisan bill is the first phase of the president's infrastructure plan. It calls for \$550 billion in new spending over five years above projected federal levels, what could be one of the more substantial expenditures on the nation's roads, bridges, waterworks, broadband and the electric grid in years.

Senators and staff labored behind the scenes for days to write the massive bill. It was supposed to be ready Friday, but by Sunday even more glitches were caught and changes made. To prod the work, Schumer kept senators in session over the weekend, encouraging the authors to finish up work.

Late Sunday night, most of the 10 senators involved in the bipartisan effort rose on the Senate floor to mark the moment.

"We know that this has been a long and sometimes difficult process, but we are proud this evening to announce this legislation," said Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., a lead negotiator. The bill showed "we can put aside our own political differences for the good of the country," she said.

Republican negotiator Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio said the final product will be "great for the American people."

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Over the long weekend of starts and stops, Schumer repeatedly warned that he was prepared to keep lawmakers in Washington for as long as it took to complete votes on both the bipartisan infrastructure plan as well as a budget blueprint that would allow the Senate to begin work later this year on a massive, \$3.5 trillion social, health and environmental bill.

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

Among the major new investments, the bipartisan package is expected to provide \$110 billion for roads and bridges, \$39 billion for public transit and \$66 billion for rail. There's also set to be \$55 billion for water and wastewater infrastructure as well as billions for airports, ports, broadband internet and electric vehicle charging stations.

The spending is broadly popular among lawmakers, bringing long-delayed capital for big-ticket items that cities and states can rarely afford on their own.

Paying for the package has been a challenge after senators rejected ideas to raise revenue from a new gas tax or other streams. Instead, it is being financed from funding sources that might not pass muster with deficit hawks, including repurposing some \$205 billion in untapped COVID-19 relief aid, as well as unemployment assistance that was turned back by some states and relying on projected future economic growth.

"I've got real concerns with this bill," said Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah.

Bipartisan support from Republican and Democratic senators pushed the process along, and Schumer wanted the voting to be wrapped up before senators left for the August recess.

Last week week, 17 GOP senators joined all Democrats in voting to start work on the bipartisan bill. That support largely held, with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., voting yes in another procedural vote to nudge the process along in the 50-50 Senate, where 60 votes are needed to overcome a filibuster an advance legislation.

Whether the number of Republican senators willing to pass the bill grows or shrinks in the days ahead will determine if the president's signature issue can make it across the finish line.

Cornyn said he expects Schumer to allow all senators to have a chance to shape the bipartisan bill and allow for amendments from members of both parties.

"I hope we can now pump the brakes a little bit and take the time and care to evaluate the benefits and the cost of this legislation," Cornyn said.

The bipartisan bill still faces a rough road in the House, where progressive lawmakers want a more robust package but may have to settle for this one to keep Biden's infrastructure plans on track.

The outcome with the bipartisan effort will set the stage for the next debate over Biden's much more ambitious \$3.5 trillion 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 for passage. Final votes on that measure are not expected until fall.

Pelosi, Democrats call on Biden to extend eviction ban

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House Democratic leaders on Sunday called on the Biden administration to immediately extend the nation's eviction moratorium, calling it a "moral imperative" to prevent Americans from being put out of their homes during a COVID-19 surge.

An estimated 3.6 million Americans are at risk of eviction, some as soon as Monday.

Congress was unable to pass legislation swiftly to extend the ban, which expired at midnight Saturday, and the Democratic leaders said in a statement that it was now up to President Joe Biden's administration to act. They called on the administration to extend the moratorium through Oct. 18.

"Action is needed, and it must come from the Administration," Pelosi said in the statement signed by Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Whip James E. Clyburn and Assistant Speaker Katherine Clark. "Science and reason demand that they must also extend the moratorium in light of the delta variant. Doing so is

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a moral imperative.”

The White House, which has urged localities and states to tap aid already approved by Congress, had no direct response to the Democrats’ call for action.

Some Democratic lawmakers said they were caught by surprise last Thursday when Biden announced that he would not extend the moratorium again in the wake of a Supreme Court ruling that suggested congressional action was necessary for another extension. Lawmakers were left with only days to act before the ban expired, creating frustration and anger and exposing a rare rift with the administration.

On Sunday, hours after the expiration, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., said that Democrats had to “call a spade a spade” and pointed to her own party.

“We cannot in good faith blame the Republican Party when House Democrats have a majority,” the progressive congresswoman said on CNN’s “State of the Union.”

Ocasio-Cortez and other Democrats joined Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., who camped outside the Capitol over the weekend in protest.

On Saturday, with no legislative action pending, Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., the chair of the Financial Services Committee, told CNN, “We thought that the White House was in charge.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention put the ban in place as part of the COVID-19 response when jobs shifted and many workers lost income. The ban was intended to hold back the spread of the virus among people put out on the streets and into shelters.

Another source of frustration for lawmakers is the slow pace of pandemic relief already approved by Congress — nearly \$47 billion in federal housing aid to the states — getting to renters and landlords owed payments. Biden has called on local governments to “take all possible steps” to disburse the funds immediately.

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

Brian Deese, director of the White House National Economic Council, appeared on “Fox News Sunday” to echo that sentiment. “No landlord should evict without seeking that rental assistance, and states and localities need to get that money out urgently, and they can do that,” Deese said.

Landlords also have argued for speeding up the distribution of rental assistance and opposed another extension of the moratorium.

As the deadline approached Saturday night, Pelosi urged House Democrats to check into how the money already allocated had 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 during the coming week.

When the Supreme Court voted 5-4 in late June to allow 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.”

The White House has maintained that Biden wanted to extend the moratorium but that concerns remained over challenging the court. Doing so could lead to a ruling restricting the administration’s ability to respond to future public health crises.

While racing to respond to Biden’s announcement Thursday that congressional action was needed, Democrats strained to draft a bill and rally the votes. Waters 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.

In the end, Democratic lawmakers had questions and concerns and could not muster support to extend the ban.

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the top Republican on another panel handling the issue, said the Democrats’ bill was rushed and that “this is not the way to legislate.”

Viva Italia! Olympic golds follow soccer and song successes

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

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TOKYO (AP) — The first hints that this was Italy's year came when Italian band Maneskin won the popular Eurovision Song Contest in May.

Then came the European Championship soccer title run in June and July.

To top it all off, on the first day of August, Marcell Jacobs won the 100 meters at the Tokyo Olympics to succeed Usain Bolt as The World's Fastest Man.

And who was the first man to embrace Jacobs after he crossed the line in a personal-best 9.8 seconds on Sunday? That would be Gianmarco Tamberi, the Italian high jumper who had just won gold in his event in a tie with Mutaz Essa Barshim of Qatar.

Italian Olympic Committee president Giovanni Malagò called it "the greatest day in Italian sports history."

"We've accomplished something epic and extraordinary — just like the soccer success — and it's uniting the country," Malagò said. "We've had some epic victories, like winning the World Cup of soccer (four times), but in terms of the (Olympics), this is something that the grandchildren of our grandchildren will read about in history books one day."

The successes have been a welcome respite for a country that spent much of the past 16 months in various stages of lockdown. Italy was the first country outside Asia to get hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and suffered immensely, particularly in the spring of 2020 when hospitals in northern Italy were overwhelmed with patients and the death toll soared. Italy has recorded more than 128,000 coronavirus deaths, the highest in the 27-nation European Union.

Malagò discussed the extraordinary lengths that he personally was involved in to make sure that athletes like Tamberi and Jacobs could continue training during the various lockdowns.

For an athletics team that didn't win a single medal at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, the pressure was on.

"And now we've got The World's Fastest Man and the man who jumps the highest," Malagò said. "Marcello and 'Jimbo' have made all Italians proud. Words don't do them justice."

With still a week to go, Italy already has won a total of 26 medals at the Games across all sports, only two fewer than the Azzurri took home from Rio.

Jacobs was born in Texas to an American father and an Italian mother. The parents split when Jacobs was 6 months old and he moved to Italy and never got to know his dad. They reconnected about a year ago by phone, as the sprinter tried to learn about his roots.

Vivian Masini, Jacobs' mother, watched her son's race from her home in the northern Italian town of Manerba del Garda.

"I spoke to him between the heats and the semifinal, and before the final," Masini told Sky Italia. "He was having a massage to let out (the nerves) before the final. ... He wanted to have a laugh, and he told me, 'Mom, don't worry, I know what I'm doing.'"

"Marcell really is a very good guy, humble, even if sometimes he want to disguise this with his tattoos and his (wild) behavior," she added. "But he's a very grounded person."

Evacuations lifted as progress made against western fires

BLY, Oregon (AP) — Firefighters in Oregon reported good progress in the battle against the nation's largest wildfire, while authorities canceled evacuation orders near a major blaze in Northern California.

Containment of the Bootleg Fire in remote southern Oregon was up to 74% on Sunday. It was 56% contained a day earlier.

"That reflects several good days of work on the ground where crews have been able to reinforce and build additional containment lines," fire spokesman Al Nash said Sunday.

The blaze has scorched over 646 square miles (1,673 square kilometers) since being sparked by lightning July 6 in the Fremont-Winema National Forest.

California's Dixie Fire covered nearly 383 square miles (992 square kilometers) in mountains where 42 homes and other buildings have been destroyed.

The fire was 32% contained Sunday, and evacuation orders and warnings were lifted for several areas

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of Butte and Plumas counties.

The cause of the blaze, which ignited July 13, was still under investigation.

Authorities warned that with unpredictable winds and extremely dry fuels, the risk of flare-ups remained high.

In recent days, lightning sparked two wildfires that threatened remote homes in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Evacuation warnings remained in place Sunday for communities along the Trinity River.

In Montana, a wind-driven wildfire destroyed more than a dozen homes, outbuildings and other structures, authorities said Sunday. Evacuations were ordered after flames jumped a highway and moved toward communities near Flathead Lake in the northwestern part of the state.

Crews also battled major blazes in northeast Washington and northern Idaho.

Nearly 22,000 firefighters and support personnel were battling 91 large, active wildfires covering 2,813 square miles (7,285 square kilometers) in mostly western states, the National Interagency Fire Center said.

A historic drought and recent heat waves tied to climate change have made wildfires harder to fight in the American West. Scientists say climate change has made the region much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

The U.S. Drought Monitor reported last week that while a robust monsoon has delivered drought-easing rainfall to the Southwest, critically dry conditions persist across Northern California and the Northwest, where there has been an expansion of "exceptional drought," the worst category.

Dry conditions and powerful winds made for dangerous fire conditions in Hawaii. A wind advisory was issued Sunday for portions of Lanai, Maui and the Big Island.

A fast-moving wildfire on Hawaii's Big Island grew to 62.5 square miles (100.58 square kilometers), prompting evacuation orders.

The wildfire prompted officials to ask about 2,500 residents living in Waikoloa Village to evacuate Sunday, a day after people living in two other communities were asked to evacuate.

"This isn't the time to panic," Fire Chief Kazuo Todd said during a televised briefing.

About 50 fire apparatus are being employed to fight the fire, and the National Guard has been called in to help, he said.

"Due to the high wind and weather patterns that are going on through the area, the fire is continuing to break through our fire breaks," Todd said.

Local media report at least one home has been destroyed. An evacuation center was being set up at the old Kona airport.

Will Trump be spoiler as California GOP seeks Newsom recall?

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California could witness a stunning turnabout in a nation of deeply polarized politics if the liberal state dumps Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom and elects a Republican to fill his job in a September recall election.

With the country's political center largely vanished, it's rare to see governors win elections on adversarial ground, making the notion of a Republican upset in one of the nation's Democratic strongholds seem implausible. Republicans haven't won a statewide race in California since 2006.

But there are exceptions: Republican governors have defied the odds in solidly Democratic territory — Vermont, Massachusetts and Maryland. Their success looks even more striking when considering those states delivered the largest percentage victories for Joe Biden in the presidential election last year.

That could provide a dose of encouragement for Republican recall candidates, but the circumstances don't square neatly with California, starting with the unavoidable shadow of former President Donald Trump.

Vermont Gov. Phil Scott, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan emphatically distanced themselves from Trump. Scott said he voted for Biden last year, Baker left his ballot blank and Hogan said he voted for Ronald Reagan, the former president who died in 2004.

"All three of those governors are pretty significant critics of Donald Trump," noted Kyle Kondik, an analyst

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at the University of Virginia Center for Politics.

In California, the leading GOP candidates have supported or have ties to Trump, who is widely unpopular in the state outside his conservative base. Trump lost California to Biden by over 5 million votes.

Newsom's campaign is anchored to the slogan "stop the Republican recall" — an attempt to cast the election as a solely partisan effort, which it is not. Newsom's chief political strategist routinely tweets a 2019 photograph of Republican candidate Kevin Faulconer, the former San Diego mayor, beside Trump at his desk in the Oval Office.

In California, "I think it would be hard to pitch yourself as a national kind of Republican" with Trump still exercising broad influence, Kondik added.

Marshall Cohen, political director at the Democratic Governors Association, said the California race is entirely different than the elections in Vermont, Massachusetts and Maryland.

Those governors "have been able to strongly push back against Trump and create political profiles outside the modern Republican Party," Cohen said.

The Trump conundrum — he remains popular with the GOP base — is perhaps best witnessed in Republican California candidate Caitlyn Jenner, the former Olympian and reality TV personality.

Jenner supported Trump in 2016 but later clashed with his administration over transgender issues. Yet Jenner's advisers have included former Trump campaign insiders. At her first news conference in July, she said she didn't want Trump's endorsement.

"I hope the Republican Party comes to me and becomes more inclusive," she said.

Other top Republicans, including conservative talk radio host Larry Elder and businessman John Cox, who lost to Newsom in 2018, also were Trump supporters last year.

In an interview, Cox disputed that Trump was a force in the recall election, saying momentum to oust Newsom is coming from frustration with rising crime rates, water and energy shortages and the return of coronavirus restrictions.

"I'm my own person, and this race is not about Trump," Cox said, arguing that Newsom is trying to use the former president as a political wedge "to get people angry all over again."

Elder, who is Black, has said that to Newsom's campaign, "everything is racism, dividing Americans."

In Massachusetts, Baker, a social moderate who supports reproductive rights, has sought to avoid the divide of national politics and work across the political aisle, said his political adviser, Jim Conroy.

In an era of harsh partisanship in Washington, "it's that difference that makes him appealing to people," Conroy said.

With many voters unsettled by the pandemic and the status quo in Sacramento, Conroy thinks Republicans have an opening in California. If a candidate pairs a fiscally conservative agenda with calls for bipartisan solutions, "anyone can win with that message," he said.

Vermont's Scott also supports reproductive rights, while Hogan has made his mark by focusing on taxes and the economy, largely steering around entanglements on social issues.

Among leading Republican candidates in California, their core message is reversing the progressive policies on school choice, virus restrictions and just about everything.

Some, however, also have spoken out on cultural issues: Elder and state Assemblyman Kevin Kiley have derided critical race theory, which centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation's institutions and that they function to maintain the dominance of white people in society.

There are other differences with California. Despite Democratic leanings, Eastern states have a history of electing moderate Republican governors, while California has been growing increasingly Democratic. GOP voter registration has withered to 24% statewide.

There also are quirks to the California recall election that could set the stage for an unexpected finish.

Recent polling suggests the race is tightening. Those surveys also point to a vexing trend for Democrats, whose voters appear to be blasé about the election.

In a recall, voters will be asked two questions: First, should Newsom be removed, yes or no? The second question will be a list of replacement candidates from which to choose. If a majority of voters approve

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Newsom's removal, the candidate who gets the most votes on the second question becomes governor. With 46 replacement candidates on the ballot, it's possible a winner could emerge with as little as 20% of the vote should Newsom be recalled — a fraction of what a candidate would need in a typical statewide election.

It's also allowed Republicans to largely target their campaigns at Republicans and right-leaning independents, which could provide a sufficient coalition to win in the Sept. 14 election.

Cox, a multimillionaire real estate investor who opposes abortion, says he sees himself in the mold of Hogan or Baker who "ran for governor as business guys." California is under siege from homelessness, the rising cost of living and energy shortages, and "those are not cultural issues," he said.

MTV marks 40th anniversary with a new 'Moon Person' design

MTV is marking its 40th anniversary with a relaunch of its iconic image of an astronaut on the moon, with an MTV flag planted nearby.

On Sunday, the media network unveiled a large scale "Moon Person" during a ceremony at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The new design was inspired by a Moon Person image created this year by Kehinde Wiley, who painted the portrait of former President Barack Obama for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. In an interview this week with The Associated Press, MTV Entertainment President and CEO Chris McCarthy said that the image of space travel fit well with the spirit of its young audience.

"This is our third generation that we're reinventing for. Gen Z is by far one of the most interesting, incredibly creative and optimistic generations," he said. "And so we thought, 'Let's go back to the origins and do it with NASA, but really do it about the next frontier, which represents generation Z and really represents a beautiful moon person that Kehinde built and where we're going to be heading next.'"

NASA footage of the historic Apollo 11 landing in 1969, with the MTV flag added to the mix, were the first images to appear on MTV back on August 1, 1981, and the first video was the Buggles' "Video Killed the Radio Star." MTV vastly expanded the power of visual images in the music industry and has since broadly expanded its reach, broadcasting worldwide and adding such influential channels and programs as VH1, Comedy Central and the early reality show "The Real World."

After fans, reviewers, music industry leaders and such artists as David Bowie criticized the channel for airing videos of virtually only white performers in its first years, MTV began playing more Michael Jackson and other Black artists who proved highly popular. The hip-hop program "Yo! MTV Raps," which debuted in the U.S. in 1988, was lauded for highlighting a subculture which eventually became mass culture.

"I would be lying if I didn't say that we made mistakes along the way. One of the bigger mistakes in the early years was not playing enough diverse music," McCarthy said. "So we certainly have had our bumps in the road and made some mistakes. But the nice thing that I've always learned at MTV is we have no problem owning our mistakes, quickly correcting them and trying to do the right thing and always follow where the audience is going."

MTV now has a vast presence on social media, with more than 700 million followers of MTV Entertainment.

"We launched as a video channel on what was the new medium of the time in 1981, which, hard to believe, that was cable," McCarthy said. "I think the fun and interesting thing about MTV ... is to constantly have to blow yourself up and forget everything you knew in order for us to recreate a brand new entity for each generation."

Tourists, villagers flee as wildfires ravage Turkish resorts

By MEHMET GUZEL and ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

MAZIKOY, Turkey (AP) — Wildfires raged near Turkey's holiday beach destinations of Antalya and Mugla and in the surrounding countryside for a fifth day Sunday as the discovery of more bodies raised the death toll to eight while villagers lost their homes and animals. Residents and tourists fled the danger in small boats while the coast guard and two navy ships waited out at sea in case a bigger evacuation was needed.

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Fires also enveloped Mugla province's Mazikoy, and villagers who evacuated were devastated.

Farmer Nurten Almaz said she lost everything. "I feel so much pain, like I lost a child," she said. The 63-year-old woman lost her animals and her home as well as "one century of people's labor." She called for the death penalty for people who may have caused the fire.

Residents had to flee nearby Cokertme village as flames neared. Some got on boats and others left by cars as the fire got closer and closer. In one video, firetrucks and cars were rushing to escape fire raging on all sides. After nightfall, the village looked apocalyptic from a distance, with flames taking over the dark hills.

Bodrum mayor Ahmet Aras said Sunday evening that people experienced "hell" near Cokertme and Mazi as they drove away from the fire. He said the blaze could not be stopped and hoped to protect residential areas but said it was too late for the trees.

The area was engulfed by Sunday night, Turkish broadcasters said. Reporters said they had to get hurry to safety as the fire intensified with strong winds. Officials said precautions were being taken to protect two thermic power plants in the vicinity and at present the winds were blowing away from the plants.

Authorities warned tourists and residents to keep evacuating Turunc, a town in the seaside resort of Marmaris in Mugla province. Fires enveloped the area and strong winds made firefighting efforts more difficult. A helicopter attempted to extinguish the blazes, which were unreachable by land.

Aerial firefighting was not possible Sunday night and the fires raged, burning hectares (acres) of forests. Forestry official Mustafa Ozkaya said units continued to fight fires strategically, digging ditches and taking other measures. He said eight planes and 50 helicopters would fly in Mugla on Monday.

The European Commission announced it helped mobilized one firefighting Canadair plane from Croatia and two from Spain to aid Turkey. Planes from Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran have been helping.

Watching from out in the Mediterranean Sea, the area looked a bright orange.

As residents of villages around Marmaris pleaded for more help on social media, people boarded small boats carrying suitcases. Others waited anxiously to see if the fire would come down to the shore.

High temperatures and strong winds were making matters worse. Antalya registered 42 degrees Celsius (over 107 degrees Fahrenheit), about 5 to 6 degrees C higher than seasonal averages.

Earlier Sunday, police water cannons, usually used to control riots, helped helicopters and fire trucks in Mugla's popular district of Bodrum to fight fires. Turkish television showed fires had reignited after being extinguished earlier, with flame and smoke approaching a village.

Social media videos showed tourists in Bodrum scampering down streets rolling their luggage to escape the nearby flames.

The health minister, Fahrettin Koca, said at least 27 people affected by the fires were still receiving treatment in hospitals while hundreds of others had been released.

The minister of forestry and agriculture, Bekir Pakdemirli, said 117 wildfires were "under control" across Turkey while eight continued. His tweets showed that since Wednesday, wildfires had ignited in 32 provinces.

While Turkish authorities say they are investigating whether the fires may have started as "sabotage" by outlawed Kurdish militants, experts mostly point to climate change along with accidents caused by people. Erdogan said one of the fires was started by children.

A heat wave across southern Europe, fed by hot air from North Africa, has led to wildfires across the Mediterranean, including on the Italian island of Sicily and in western Greece, where some residents had to be evacuated by boat to escape the flames.

On Sunday afternoon, bathers on an Italian beach south of the Adriatic city of Pescara fled when they spotted towering clouds of smoke and flames from a fire in a nearby pine forest, the Italian news agency LaPresse reported. Several people were reportedly injured when they tried to put out wind-whipped flames that had reached their homes. Local officials told state TV that an elderly home in Pescara had to be evacuated.

Meanwhile, in Turkey's eastern Van province, floods over the weekend destroyed at least six houses after a small river overflowed amid heavy rains. Villagers were ordered to leave their homes and climb to

higher locations.

Texas-born Italian sprints from unknown to Bolt's successor

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The 100 meters at the Olympics is the event that turns sprinters into kings: Jesse Owens, Carl Lewis, Usain Bolt.

On one of the most unusual nights the sport has ever seen, fans, experts, and even the racers themselves needed a lineup card.

The race that has long defined Olympic royalty went to a Texas-born Italian who hadn't cracked 10 seconds until this year. He's a 26-year-old whose best days before this came in the long jump. He's a man even the runner in the next lane didn't really know.

At the Tokyo Olympics, Marcell Jacobs is The World's Fastest Man.

"I think I need four or five years to realize and understand what's happening," Jacobs said.

The Italian crossed the line in 9.8 seconds Sunday night to capture the first 100-meter medal ever for the country better known for its soccer prowess. Pietro Mennea won the 200 at the 1980 Olympics in Moscow and Livio Berruti won that race at the 1960 Games in Rome.

Even in a contest with no clear favorites — American Ronnie Baker was a candidate and China's Su Bingtian ran a shocking 9.83 in the semis — Jacobs came from nowhere.

He topped America's Fred Kerley, a 400-meter runner who moved down in distance because he saw a medal chance, and Canada's Andre DeGrasse, who adds another 100-meter bronze to the one he won Rio. Kerley finished second in 9.84 and DeGrasse was next at 9.89.

"I really don't know anything about him," Kerley said of the new gold medalist. "He did a fantastic job."

Jacobs' path was made that much clearer because of who wasn't in the race. The reigning world champion, Christian Coleman, is serving a ban for missed doping tests. The world leader in 2021 and the favorite to win the gold, Trayvon Bromell, didn't make it out of the semifinals.

Bolt, who has commandeered the Olympic and every other sprint stage since 2008, is retired.

He was a sure thing in all nine Olympic sprints he ran from the Beijing Games — a stretch of dominance that redefined track and field, but also left a gaping hole in the sport when he called it a career.

"He changed athletics forever," Jacobs said. "I'm the one who won the Olympics after him. That's unbelievable. But drawing comparisons, I don't think it's the time now."

Bolt's world record is 9.58.

Before Sunday, Jacobs' personal best was 9.95.

"I mean, 9.8 from the Italian guy?" DeGrasse said. "I didn't expect that. I thought my main competition would be the Americans."

Nope. The Italians.

Perhaps the only person at the track who really knew the new champ was the man who hugged him after he crossed the finish line. That was Gianmarco Tamberi, the Italian high jumper who tied Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim for gold.

Tamberi and Barshim ended their evening-long jump-fest in a dead heat — a rare result that appeared headed for a jump-off to decide gold and silver. But after huddling with an official who told them two gold medals were possible, Barshim -- the two-time world champion who won silver in Rio and bronze in London -- agreed to call it a tie for first.

Bedlam ensued.

Barshim ran up to the stands to celebrate. Tamberi covered his face with his hands and rolled on the ground. "I was in ecstasy," he said. He was clearly a man looking for someone to hug.

He found just the person a few minutes later when Jacobs crossed the line first. Tamberi leaped into the broad-chested sprinter's arms and curled his own arm around Jacobs' bald head.

"My heart was exploding," Tamberi said.

Only a night before, they'd been sitting in Jacobs' tiny room in the Olympic village playing video games.

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"And we said, 'Can you imagine if we win?'" Jacobs said. "(We said) 'No, no, no. It's impossible. Don't think this.'"

Not long after the two golds were secure, Italy's premier, Mario Draghi, stated the obvious — "You're honoring Italy," he said — and announced he'd be inviting the athletes to his office, the Chigi Palace, when they return home.

There was one of many beautiful moments on a most unusual Day 3 of the Olympic track meet. Another highlight came from Venezuelan Yulimar Rojas' toppling of a 26-year-old world record in the triple jump. Her new mark is 51 feet, 5 inches (15.67 meters).

Other vignettes didn't involve medals.

Luca Kozak tripped on a hurdle and looked over three lanes to see a Jamaican opponent, Yanique Thompson, had suffered the same fate. Kozak helped her back to her feet.

Later, in the men's 800 semifinals, American Isaiah Jewett got tangled up with Botswana's Nijel Amos and the two went tumbling to the ground. They helped each other up and jogged slowly together toward the finish line.

"I don't want any bad blood, because that's what heroes do -- they show their humanity through who they are and show they're good people," Jewett said.

The day's other gold medal went to Gong Lijao of China, who bested American Raven Saunders of the United States.

Saunders, who is Black and gay, wears an "Incredible Hulk" mask when she competes, closed out the medals ceremony by lifting her arms above her head and forming an "X" with her wrists.

"It's the intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet," she explained.

All memorable.

And then came the man hardly anybody knew.

Even though the run came in front of a nearly empty stadium, you could practically hear the collective "Who?" echoing across the seats. From all places, that is, except for from the Italian contingent.

A good hour after the victory, some of those reporters and coaches were on the track taking pictures with their country's new high-jump and sprint heroes. They had Italy's green, white and red flag draped around their shoulders and were still hugging it out — COVID protocols be damned.

Quite an evening for Jacobs, who was born in El Paso — the son of an American father and an Italian mother. The parents split when Jacobs was 6 months old and he moved to Italy and never got to know his dad.

They reconnected about a year ago by phone, as the sprinter tried to learn about his roots.

Now, the world is learning about him.

"My dream was to arrive here and run a final," Jacobs said. "And we ran a final. And we won a final. It's amazing. I have no words to describe this moment."

DaBaby booted from Lollapalooza after homophobic comments

CHICAGO (AP) — Rapper DaBaby was cut Sunday from Lollapalooza's closing lineup following crude and homophobic remarks he made last week at a Miami-area music festival.

The Grammy-nominated artist, whose name is Jonathan Kirk, had been scheduled as a closing act on the final night of the four-day music festival in downtown Chicago. Lollapalooza organizers tweeted Sunday that rapper Young Thug would perform at 9 p.m. instead.

"Lollapalooza was founded on diversity, inclusivity, respect, and love," organizers wrote. "With that in mind, DaBaby will no longer be performing at Grant Park tonight."

Festival organizers didn't immediately reply to a request for comment.

In recent days, artists including Madonna, Questlove and Elton John have denounced remarks DaBaby made during a performance last Sunday at Miami's Rolling Loud Festival.

While on stage, the rapper called out members of the LGBTQ community and people with HIV and AIDS. Using crude language, he asked attendees who weren't gay men or people affected by HIV or AIDS to

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raise their cellphone flashlights, and he incorrectly said the disease would "make you die in two or three weeks."

DaBaby's representatives didn't immediately reply to emails seeking comment. A person who answered the phone Sunday at his label, South Coast Music Group, and did not give his name said, "No comment."

The North Carolina rapper's song "Rockstar" was one of the biggest hits of 2020 and was nominated for a Grammy Award for record of the year.

US, UK and Israel blame Iran for ship attack; Tehran denies

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States and the United Kingdom joined Israel on Sunday in alleging Iran carried out a fatal drone strike on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman in the Arabian Sea, putting further pressure on Tehran as it denied being involved in the assault.

Calling it a "unlawful and callous attack," British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said his country and its allies planned a coordinated response over the strike Thursday night on the oil tanker Mercer Street. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken soon followed, saying there was "no justification for this attack, which follows a pattern of attacks and other belligerent behavior."

The strike on the Mercer Street 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.

While no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, Iran and its militia allies have used so-called "suicide" drones in attacks previously, which crash into targets and detonate their explosive payloads. However, Israel, the U.K. and the responding U.S. Navy have yet to show physical evidence from the strike or offer intelligence information on why they blame Tehran.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett went further than Blinken and Raab in his remarks Sunday at a Cabinet meeting, making a point to stare directly into the camera and slowly warn: "We know, at any rate, know how to convey the message to Iran in our own way."

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 blast killed two crew members from the United Kingdom and Romania.

The Navy said the American nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and the guided missile destroyer USS Mitscher had escorted the Mercer Street as it headed to a safe port. On Sunday, satellite-tracking information from MarineTraffic.com showed the tanker stopped off the coast of Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates.

In his statement, Raab said it was "highly likely" Iran attacked the tanker with one or more drones.

"We believe this attack was deliberate, targeted and a clear violation of international law by Iran," he said. "Iran must end such attacks, and vessels must be allowed to navigate freely in accordance with international law."

Blinken similarly described the U.S. as "confident" Iran carried out the attack, using multiple drones.

"These actions threaten freedom of navigation through this crucial waterway, international shipping and commerce, and the lives of those on the vessels involved," he said in a statement.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh described the allegation Iran carried out the attack as "baseless."

"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.

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.

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"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."

Other Israel-linked ships have been targeted in recent months as well amid a shadow war between the two nations, with Israeli officials blaming the Islamic Republic for the assaults. Shipping in the region began being targeted in the summer of 2019, about a year after then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Israel meanwhile has been suspected of conducting a series of major attacks in Iran and on Iranian shipping. Also, Iran saw its largest warship recently sink under mysterious circumstances in the nearby Gulf of Oman.

The Mercer Street, owned by Japan's Taihei Kaiun Co., is managed by London-based Zodiac Maritime, part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group. In early July, the Liberian-flagged container ship CSAV Tyndall, once tied to Zodiac Maritime, suffered an unexplained explosion on board while in the northern Indian Ocean, according to the U.S. Maritime Administration.

The attack marks the first major confrontation with Iran for Bennett, who 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."

Settled: High-jump friends elect double gold over jump-off

By PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The Italian high jumper leaped into his rival's arms, then belly-flopped onto the hard track, rolled around a few times and screamed.

Gianmarco Tamberi was just getting warmed up, too.

It's not every day you tie your good friend for gold.

Tamberi and Mutaz Barshim of Qatar agreed to the tie Sunday at the Tokyo Games in a competition settled not by clearing the top height but through a subtle nod.

Edge definitely to Tamberi, though, for the degree of difficulty in celebrations. That's not even counting all the hugs and kisses he delivered — or all of the people he jumped into the arms of.

He was just that excited. This was that crazy of an ending.

"I still can't believe it happened," Tamberi said. "Sharing with a friend is even more beautiful. ... It was just magical."

In a huddle with track officials, the athletes were given the option to settle the tie with a jump-off.

Barshim had a better idea: How about two golds?

The official said that was possible.

Barshim nodded and Tamberi instantly accepted, slapping Barshim's hand and jumping into his arms. It would be far from his last celebration.

"For me, coming here, I know for a fact that for the performance I did, I deserve that gold," Barshim said. "He did the same thing, so I know he deserved that gold."

It stressed sportsmanship, too — or so they hope. It also adds to Barshim's Olympic medal collection, pairing nicely with silver in Rio and another medal at the 2012 London Games.

"This is beyond sport," Barshim said. "This is the message we deliver to the young generation."

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Both high jumpers were perfect until the bar was set to the Olympic-record height of 2.39 meters (7 feet, 10 inches). Each missed three times.

Funny, they actually talked about this sort of situation before. Not in great detail, though.

"We just said, 'Imagine,'" Barshim recalled. "Today, it happened."

When Italian sprinter Marcell Jacobs surprisingly won the 100 meters a few minutes later, there was Tamberi to greet him. Not so much as greet him as celebrate by jumping into the sprinter's arms and curling his own arm around Jacobs' bald head.

"I was in ecstasy. My heart was exploding," Tamberi said. "I was just full of emotions and I just screamed at him before he got in the blocks and I just supported him. I'm the captain of the national team so I just felt to do something."

Tamberi has kept a cast for five years — a reminder of his broken ankle just before Rio. He was in his best shape, too, which forced him to watch the Rio Games. When it came off, he wrote on it "Road to Tokyo 2020." Then, he crossed out 2020 after the pandemic led to a postponement and wrote in red, "2021."

"I said to myself that day, 'I want to be back in Tokyo and I want to fight for the gold medal,'" Tamberi said.

They appeared to have all sorts of fun during a competition in which Maksim Nedasekau of Belarus earned bronze. Tamberi launched an imaginary jump shot after clearing a height.

Swish.

Barshim was the epitome of cool in shades that kept falling off after his jumps. One time, he even swatted them away after a successful leap.

They broke.

"I've got 50 pairs," Barshim said.

Now, one gold.

Another for his buddy, too.

"He's one of my best friends. Not only on the track but outside of the track," Barshim said. "We're always together almost. True spirit, sportsmen spirit, coming here and delivering this message.

"Appreciate what he's done, he appreciates what I've done. This is amazing."

Smoke triggers pollution alerts in US West, Midwest

DENVER (AP) — Numerous areas of the U.S. West and Midwest were under air quality alerts on Sunday as wildfire smoke lingered over much of the country.

Alerts were in place across much of the northern U.S. Rockies, including portions of Colorado, Wyoming, Washington state and Idaho.

Further to the east, smoke from fires burning into Canada triggered pollution alerts in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa.

Wildfires emit huge volumes of microscopic smoke
Fauci: More 'pain and suffering' ahead as COVID cases rise

By JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

Dr. Anthony Fauci warned Sunday that more "pain and suffering" is on the horizon as COVID-19 cases climb again and officials plead with unvaccinated Americans to get their shots.

Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, also said he doesn't foresee additional lockdowns in the U.S. because he believes enough people are vaccinated to avoid a recurrence of last winter. However, he said not enough are inoculated to "crush the outbreak" at this point.

Fauci's warning comes days after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed course to recommend that even vaccinated people return to wearing masks indoors in parts of the U.S. where the delta variant is fueling infection surges. With the switch, federal health officials have cited studies showing vaccinated people can spread the virus to others.

Most new infections in the U.S. continue to be among unvaccinated people. So-called breakthrough infections can occur in vaccinated people, and though the vast majority of those cause mild or no symptoms, the research shows they can carry about the same amount of the coronavirus as those who did

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not get the shots.

"So we're looking, not, I believe, to lockdown, but we're looking to some pain and suffering in the future because we're seeing the cases go up, which is the reason why we keep saying over and over again, the solution to this is get vaccinated and this would not be happening," Fauci said on ABC's "This Week."

According to data through July 30 from Johns Hopkins University, the seven-day rolling average for daily new cases in the U.S. rose from 30,887 on July 16 to 77,827 on July 30. The seven-day rolling average for the country's daily new deaths rose over the same period from 253 on July 16 to 358 on July 30, though death reports generally lag weeks after infections and even longer after hospitalizations.

Currently, 58% of Americans 12 years and older are fully vaccinated, according to the CDC's data tracker. However, people are "getting the message" and more are rolling up their sleeves amid the threat of the delta variant, according to the director of the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Francis Collins said on CNN's "State of the Union" that vaccinations are up 56% in the U.S. in the last two weeks.

Louisiana, which has the most new cases per capita among states in the past 14 days, has seen vaccinations up threefold over that period, Collins said.

"That's what desperately needs to happen if we are going to get this delta variant put back in its place, because right now it's having a pretty big party in the middle of the country," Collins said.

Collins also said that even with the prevalence of the delta variant, the shots are working "extremely well" and reduce a person's risk of serious illness and hospitalization "25-fold." The guidance for vaccinated people to start wearing masks indoors again in certain places with worsening outbreaks, he said, is mostly meant to protect unvaccinated and immunocompromised people.

The CDC has also recommended indoor mask-wearing for all teachers, staff, students and visitors at schools nationwide, regardless of vaccination status.

No hard feelings: Amos and Jewett tangle, finish together

By PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Isaiah Jewett and Nijel Amos were sprawled on the track next to each other, seemingly out of the running in the 800 meters.

Hurt or hard feelings? Just the opposite. The American and Botswanan runners were good sports.

Jewett and Amos helped each other to their feet, put their arms around each other and finished together Sunday in a semifinal heat at the Tokyo Olympics.

They were 54 seconds behind the winner. But in this case, time didn't matter. It was the right thing to do, Jewett insisted.

Later in the night, Amos was reinstated into the final on appeal. Jewett remained out.

"Regardless of how mad you are, you have to be a hero at the end of the day," Jewett said. "Because that's what heroes do, they show their humanity through who they are and show they're good people."

Jewett was in front of Amos and just about to go into his kick on the final turn when the back of his heel appeared to hit Amos. He went down. So did Amos.

But it may have been Jewett who inadvertently tripped himself.

"As he looked at me, he said, 'I'm sorry,'" Jewett recounted. "I said, 'It's OK, man.'"

Said Jewett: "I am crazy about it, but that is 800. These things happen."

Jewett has one simple rule when he's racing: Finish. He made sure Amos did, too.

"I'm super blessed because not a lot of people got to be here. I have to live in that moment, not the moment that just happened," the 24-year-old runner from California said. "I'm able to go on to this stage and show you guys that this is me. That's what I want to continue to do, to show who I am. If it wasn't today, I'll try again tomorrow. That's not going to stop me from trying to be a hero."

The friendly gesture was certainly appreciated by Amos.

"You are all united by emotion," he said. "We felt all the emotion when we went down. When we stood up and just tried ... to get home.

"I thought I was in a good position to take this heat, and I can't put words on it."

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He will have another chance Wednesday.

Jewett was banged up in the collision. He did fell hard to the track and believes he hit his head.

"It's adrenaline right now that I'm standing and able to run around," Jewett said. "I felt a little bit of spikes on my legs. I'm still living. I'm still walking. That's all anybody can ask for."

Olympics Latest: Belarus runner says team forcing departure

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:

Belarus track sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya says her Olympic team officials tried to remove her from Japan in a dispute that led to a standoff Sunday evening at Haneda Airport in Tokyo.

Tsimanouskaya says in a filmed message on social media she was "put under pressure" by team officials and asked the International Olympic Committee for help.

The Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation says the athlete did not board the flight and summoned Japanese police. Foreign ministry officials arrived later at the airport.

A spokesman for the activist group, Alexander Opeikin, says Tsimanouskaya is "being transported to a safe place now" and will be in contact with European diplomats.

Tsimanouskaya, who is due to run in the Olympic 200-meter heats Monday, criticized Belarus team officials on her Instagram account. She said she'd been put in the 4x400 relay despite never racing the event.

The IOC says in a statement it asked the Belarus national Olympic officials for clarification on the dispute.

The Belarus National Olympic Committee has been led for more than 25 years by authoritarian state president Alexander Lukashenko and his son, Viktor. The BNOC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

MEDAL ALERT

Chen Yu Fei of China won gold in women's singles badminton.

The top-seeded Chen beat Tai Tzu-Ying of Taiwan 21-18, 19-21, 21-18.

Chen's victory marks a return to form for Chinese women in badminton. They had won four straight golds in singles until Carolina Marin of Spain won at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

Marin did not defend her title at the Tokyo Games because of a knee injury.

P.V. Sindhu of India won bronze by beating He Bing Jiao of China.

MEDAL ALERT

Mutaz Barshim of Qatar and Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy tied for the gold medal in the men's high jump at the Tokyo Games.

Both men were clean at every attempt to 2.37 meters and both missed all three attempts at the Olympic record of 2.39.

The 30-year-old Barshim was the silver medalist at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games and was also on the podium at the 2012 London Games. He won the world championship gold medal at home in Qatar in 2019.

Gianmarco Tamberi is a former world indoor champion.

Maksim Nedasekau of Belarus won the bronze medal. He also cleared 2.37 for a national record.

MEDAL ALERT

Marcell Jacobs of Italy won the men's 100-meter race at the Tokyo Olympics.

He crossed the line in 9.80 seconds.

Fred Kerley of the United States was second and Andre DeGrasse of Canada took third.

MEDAL ALERT

Yulimar Rojas of Venezuela set a world record with her final attempt to win the women's triple jump gold

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medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

Rojas finished the competition with a mark of 15.67 meters to break a record set in 1995. Inessa Kravets of Ukraine held the record at 15.50.

Rojas broke the Olympic record of 15.39 with her first attempt in the final. The two-time world champion won a silver medal at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Patricia Mamona of Portugal took silver and Ana Peleteiro of Spain won bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Neisi Dajomes of Ecuador has won the women's 76-kilogram weightlifting event as Kate Nye took silver for the United States' best result in the sport since 2000.

Dajomes lifted 118 kilograms in the snatch and 145kg in the clean and jerk for a total 263, beating Nye by 14kg.

It's Ecuador's second gold of the Tokyo Olympics after Richard Carapaz won the men's cycling road race, and only the South American nation's fourth medal of any sort in history.

The only U.S. weightlifting medals this century were gold for Tara Nott in 2000 in the first ever women's Olympic competition, bronze for Cheryl Haworth the same year and a bronze for Sarah Robles in 2016.

Aremi Fuentes took bronze for Mexico on a total 245kg.

MEDAL ALERT

The French men's foil team avenged its loss in the 2016 Olympic final by beating a trio of Russians for a gold medal in Tokyo.

Erwann le Pechoux, Julien Mertine and Enzo Lefort combined to best Anton Borodachev, Kirill Borodachev and Timur Safin 45-28 for France's second fencing gold of the Tokyo Olympics. Romain Cannone won the men's epee individual. It's the first win in men's team foil for the country since the 2000 Sydney Games.

The ROC still finished the fencing slate with eight medals and four golds.

The United States team of Alexander Massialas, Race Imboden and Gerek Meinhardt won the bronze with a 45-31 victory over Japan.

MEDAL ALERT

Nina Derwael of Belgium won the gold medal in the uneven bars and Olympic all-around gymnastics champion Sunisa Lee added a bronze medal to her haul at the Tokyo Games.

The 18-year-old Lee's total of 14.500 points was good enough for third behind Derwael and Russian athlete Anastasiia Iliankova.

Lee's bronze gives her three medals so far at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre. She earned a silver in the team competition last week before becoming the fifth straight American woman to win the all-around. Lee has one more final remaining in the balance beam on Tuesday.

The Cuban boxing team has finally lost a fight at the Tokyo Olympics after winning its first 12 bouts and already clinching five medals.

U.S. super heavyweight Richard Torrez Jr. beat Dainier Pero 4:1 in the quarterfinals at the Kokugikan Arena to clinch the American team's third medal in Tokyo.

Cuba is second only to the United States in gold medals and total medals won in Olympic boxing history and its Tokyo team has been outstanding. The Cubans won three golds and three silver medals in Rio de Janeiro a half-decade ago to finish behind only Uzbekistan in the medals table.

Featherweight Lazaro Alvarez, welterweight Roniel Iglesias and light heavyweight Arlen Lopez all advanced earlier in the evening session in Tokyo before Pero fell short against Torrez. He lost 29-28 on four of the five judges' cards.

Lopez actually advanced to the light heavyweight gold medal bout by beating a Cuban. Loren Alfonso is representing Azerbaijan. That country over the past several years has signed up several Cuban boxers who couldn't make their own national team for various reasons.

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American Trayvon Bromell will not race in the 100-meter men's final after finishing third in his semifinal heat.

The fastest time over the three heats came from Su Bingtian of China, an indoor specialist who was the first man from his country to break 10 seconds.

Su ran the third heat in an Asian record 9.83 seconds, finishing a fraction ahead of American Ronnie Baker. Bromell came in with the world's fastest time this year at 9.77 and as the favorite to succeed Usain Bolt as Olympic gold medalist. But he looked rusty in the first round and wasn't better in Sunday night's first semifinal.

He finished in 9.996 seconds, which was .001 out of the second automatic qualifying spot.

Bromell then had to wait to see if he would get one of the two wildcard spots in the eight-man final but the top four runners in Su's heat all cracked 10 seconds.

Also in the final, set for later Sunday, are Canada's Andre DeGrasse and America's Fred Kerley.

They'll be joined by Lamont Jacobs (Italy), Akani Simbine (South Africa), Zharnel Hughes (Britain) and Enoch Adegoke (Nigeria).

All sorts of history was made at the Olympic pool.

Emma McKeon not only became the first female swimmer to win seven medals at one games, she became the most decorated Olympian in Australia's history. She won two more golds on the final day of the meet to give her 11 for her career, eclipsing the record of nine that she shared for one day with swimming greats Ian Thorpe and Leisel Jones.

Britain capped its most prolific swimming performance ever at the Olympics with a silver medal in the men's 4x100-meter medley relay, pushing its overall total to eight medals. That surpassed the country's previous record of seven swimming medals, set more than a century ago at the 1908 London Games. Duncan Scott also became the first British athlete to win four medals at an Olympics in any sport, while Adam Peaty and James Guy both earned three medals.

Finally, Penny Oleksiak won her seventh career medal as part of Canada's bronze medal effort in the women's 4x100 medley relay. She became her country's most decorated Olympian, breaking the record of six medals that had been shared by cyclist and speedskater Clara Hughes and speedskater Cindy Klassen.

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 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

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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.

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

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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 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

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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 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

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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 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

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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.

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

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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.

Pandemic eviction crisis leads to greater tenant protections

By MICHAEL CASEY and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (AP) — In a mostly empty conference room at a Virginia cultural arts center, Tara Simmons was looking for someone who might help her stave off eviction.

Simmons, a 44-year-old home health aide who lives with her two children and two grandchildren, was only a month behind on her rent. But that didn't stop her landlord from ordering her out of the house by Saturday, when the federal eviction moratorium ended.

Already enduring health problems, Simmons said she feared she would be out on the street.

"I've been in my house for four years now. And two months before my lease was up, I get an email saying that they weren't renewing my lease," said Simmons of Newport News, Virginia. "That's it. No explanation why or whatever."

"I've been trying to find somewhere to move since I got that. I still haven't been able to find a way to move because of the economy. ... This pandemic is hard."

As a state lawmaker made a few remarks and others grabbed free lunch, Simmons connected with attorneys from the Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia. They advised her that her landlord needed a court order to get her out. She was safe for now.

The Virginia event in late July is part of a growing national movement — bolstered by tens of billions of dollars in federal rental assistance — to find ways to keep millions of at-risk tenants hurt by the coronavirus pandemic in their homes.

The push has the potential to reshape a system long skewed in favor of landlords that has resulted in about 3.7 million evictions a year — about seven every minute — according to the Eviction Lab at Princeton University. Many are Black and Latino families.

"This is an opportunity not to go back to normal, because for so many renters around the country, normal is broken," Matthew Desmond, author of a Pulitzer Prize-winning book on evictions and the principal investigator at the Eviction Lab, told a White House conference on the issue.

"This is a chance to reinvent how we adjudicate and address the eviction crisis in a way ... that works for tenants and property owners better than the status quo, in a way that clearly invests in homes and families and communities, with the recognition that without stable shelter, everything else falls apart."

Housing advocates have mostly attacked the problem from two directions.

Some teamed up with lawmakers and court administrators to launch programs to resolve eviction cases before they reach the courts. Others focused on state and local tenant protection legislation, including

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sealing eviction records and ensuring tenants get lawyers. Having an eviction record can make it impossible to find a new apartment, while the right to counsel evens the playing field, since most landlords, but not tenants, come to court with a lawyer.

Many of the ideas have been around for years. But the scope of the eviction crisis during the pandemic, the historic amount of federal rental assistance available and the eviction moratorium changed the calculus. Politicians from areas that rarely see evictions were hearing from anxious constituents and craved a solution. Landlords were more willing to participate in the programs because evicting tenants became a challenge.

"The pandemic, at least here in Baltimore, has created a sense of urgency around creating some forms of tenant protection," said Carisa Hatfield, a housing attorney for the Homeless Persons Representation Project, noting Baltimore passed a bill last year guaranteeing tenants the right to counsel and the state adopted a similar measure this year. The city also temporarily barred rent increases during the pandemic and banned late fees.

"The politicians saw the same urgency we did," she said. "It afforded the opportunity to have a conversation with politicians about the very real problems around evictions, the very real implications for families around being evicted."

In Colorado, state Sen. Julie Gonzales said the widespread eviction threat encouraged legislators to pass several bills this year, including a grace period for late fees and limits on what fees can be imposed. Tenants also can withhold payment for problems like utilities being shut off or mold, and present that as a defense in court. Another bill that passed gives evicted tenants 10 days, rather than 48 hours, to find new housing.

"We realized that it wasn't just an urban thing, that rural Coloradans, mountain towns were struggling with people unable to pay their rent," Gonzales said.

According to the Urban Institute, 47 state and local programs nationwide now offer some mix of legal help, a housing counselor and mediation between landlord and tenant.

Some, like Texas, Michigan and Massachusetts, offer statewide programs, while others, including Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Pinellas County, Florida, launched their own initiatives. Even states not usually associated with evictions, like New Hampshire and Montana, offer programs.

In Philadelphia, the City Council passed a series of bills last year that include requiring landlords to participate in a city eviction diversion program if the tenant was affected by the pandemic. Then in April, the courts mandated that landlords attend the program before filing an eviction.

"This is a fundamentally important change to the way Philadelphia approaches evictions," said Rachel Garland, managing attorney at the housing unit of Community Legal Services in Philadelphia.

"Rental assistance and diversion prioritizes the economic health of landlords and complete health and well-being of tenants in a way that resolves situations so landlords get paid, issues get resolved and tenants are able to stay in their homes," she said.

"Even though it was created in response to the pandemic, its importance will long outlive the pandemic and will hopefully become a permanent fixture in Philadelphia."

A pilot mediation program in two New Hampshire cities this year was driven in part by concerns that courts would be inundated by eviction cases. The program's success has the court requesting \$750,000 from the state to expand mediation efforts statewide.

"If we can get parties together and either get the case resolved or get them to this emergency funding, I'm saying it's a win-win-win," said David King, the administrative judge of New Hampshire Circuit Court, which handles landlord-tenant matters.

"It's a win for the landlord, who gets paid. It's a win for the tenant, who gets to stay, and, selfishly, it's a win for the courts because that is one less case we have to process."

The right to counsel, too, has spread.

John Pollock, coordinator for the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel in Baltimore, said Washington state, Connecticut and Maryland have passed right-to-counsel laws. Ten cities have approved measures, including Seattle, Cleveland and Louisville. Milwaukee County set aside money to provide low-

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income tenants with lawyers.

So far, the initiatives are proving successful.

Some 75% of the 1,788 tenants participating in a Philadelphia program have remained housed, according to the city. In New York, 86% of tenants who had lawyers were able to remain in their homes. Cleveland, which saw legal representation increase from 2% to 19% after the law went into effect last year, said all tenants who wanted rental help have gotten it and 93% who wanted to avert evictions were successful.

A program in Michigan last year resulted in 97% of tenants remaining housed, according to a study from the University of Michigan, the state and Legal Services of South Michigan.

Among them is Regina Howard, a 53-year-old disabled veteran from Southfield who faced eviction last year from the \$1,600-a-month house she shares with her husband and grandson. She turned to the state's eviction diversion program, where she was connected with free legal services. From there, Lakeshore Legal Aid helped her get \$24,550 in federal funds to pay for 15 months of rent.

"I was feeling hopeless that there was no help out there. Now I feel better," Howard said. "You could tell they really wanted to help."

Myanmar military extends emergency, promises vote in 2 years

BANGKOK (AP) — Six months after seizing power from the elected government, Myanmar's military leader on Sunday declared himself prime minister and said he would lead the country under the extended state of emergency until elections are held in about two years.

"We must create conditions to hold a free and fair multiparty general election," Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing said during a recorded televised address. "We have to make preparations. I pledge to hold the multiparty general election without fail."

He said the state of emergency will achieve its objectives by August 2023. In a separate announcement, the military government named itself "the caretaker government" and Min Aung Hlaing the prime minister.

The state of emergency was declared when troops moved against the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, an action the generals said was permitted under the military-authored 2008 constitution. The military claimed her landslide victory in last year's national elections was achieved through massive voter fraud but offered no credible evidence.

The military government officially annulled the election results last Tuesday and appointed a new election commission to take charge of the polls.

The military takeover was met with massive public protests that has resulted in a lethal crackdown by security forces who routinely fire live ammunition into crowds.

As of Sunday, 939 people have been killed by the authorities since Feb. 1, according to a tally kept by the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. Casualties are also rising among the military and police as armed resistance grows in both urban and rural areas.

Moves by The Association of Southeast Asian Nations to broker a dialogue between the military government and its opponents have stalled after an agreement at an April summit in Jakarta to appoint a special envoy for Myanmar.

Min Aung Hlaing said that among the three nominees, Thailand's former Deputy Foreign Minister Virasakdi Futrakul was selected as the envoy. "But for various reasons, new proposals were released and we could not keep moving onwards. I would like to say that Myanmar is ready to work on ASEAN cooperation within the ASEAN framework, including the dialogue with the ASEAN special envoy in Myanmar," he said.

ASEAN foreign ministers were expected to discuss Myanmar in virtual meetings this week hosted by Brunei, the current chair of the 10-nation bloc.

Myanmar is also struggling with its worst COVID-19 outbreak that has overwhelmed its already crippled health care system. Limitations on oxygen sales have led to widespread allegations that the military is directing supplies to government supporters and military-run hospitals.

At the same time, medical workers have been targeted by authorities after spearheading a civil disobedience movement that urged professionals and civil servants not to cooperate with the government.

Min Aung Hlaing blamed the public's mistrust in the military's efforts to control the outbreak on "fake news and misinformation via social networks," and accused those behind it of using COVID-19 "as a tool of bioterrorism."

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. More than 200,000 marched across France on Saturday, 14,000 of them in Paris, in the biggest show yet.

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 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

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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."

For US teen Buddhist lama, it's faith, school, football

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, Minn. (AP) — In most ways, Jalue Dorje is a typical American teen — he grew up in a suburb of Minneapolis, loving football, Pokémon and rap music.

Yet a few years from now, he's expecting to say goodbye to his family and homeland and join a monastery in the foothills of the Himalayas — from an early age, he was recognized by the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist leaders as a reincarnated lama.

Since that recognition, he's spent much of his life training to become a monk, memorizing sacred scriptures (often rewarded by his dad with Pokémon cards), practicing calligraphy and learning the teachings of Buddha.

Now he's 14 and entering his first year of high school. After graduation in 2025, he'll head to northern India to join the Mindrolling Monastery, more than 7,200 miles (11,500 kilometers) from his home in Columbia Heights.

Following a period of contemplation and ascetism, he hopes to return to America to teach in the Minnesota Buddhist community. His goal? "To become a leader of peace," he said. "Like the Dalai Lama or Gandhi or Nelson Mandela."

On a recent day, he chanted ancient prayers for hours with his father and other monks who gathered in a

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prayer room in the family's home to ring bells, bang drums and blow conch shells near an altar decorated with offerings of fruits, flowers and Torma ritual cakes.

The annual ceremony, which was suspended last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, pays homage to Guru Rinpoche, the Indian Buddhist master who brought Tantric Buddhism to Tibet. Over two days this year, the group prayed for victims of natural disasters, war and COVID-19, and for the peace and happiness of beings worldwide.

On a break, Jalue sat for lunch in the yard under the summer sun, the youngest by far among the monks, and then walked upstairs in his maroon and gold robes to play the NBA 2K video game against Delek Topgyal, his 13-year-old cousin and best friend.

The young lama would lose with team Kyrie Irving and later explain that team LeBron James "is practically unbeatable."

The process of identifying a lama is based on spiritual signs and visions. Jalue was about 4 months old when he was identified by Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche, a venerated master of Tibetan Buddhism who was the leader of the Nyingma lineage. He was later confirmed by several other lamas as the eighth Terchen Taksham Rinpoche — the first one of whom was born under the name Taksham Nüden Dorje in 1655.

After the Dalai Lama also recognized him at age 2 as the guru's reincarnation, Jalue's parents took him to meet the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism when he visited Wisconsin in 2010. The Dalai Lama cut a lock of Jalue's hair in a ceremony. He also advised the parents to let their son stay in the U.S. so he could perfect his English and then send him to a monastery at age 10.

Jalue is now fluent in English and Tibetan and often gets A's in class. Although he was officially enthroned in a 2019 ceremony in India, he's still living in Columbia Heights, where his parents decided he'll stay until graduation.

"Seeing him growing up to a teenager is a lot of things to take in because he's a Buddhist master, and at the same time, he's a normal person as well," said his uncle, Tashi Lama. "We get to see the two sides of it."

In Jalue's room, a photo of the Dalai Lama rests above DVD collections of "The Simpsons," "Family Guy" and "South Park," next to volumes of "Buddha." That's a graphic novel series by Osamu Tezuka, a master of the Japanese comic art form known as manga.

On his bedside table, Jalue keeps a journal where he diagrams football strategies that he'd like to try on the field playing as a defensive tackle and offensive guard with his school team.

He loves sports, especially Atlanta teams.

"You'll always see me outside wearing this hat" he said about his favorite Falcons cap. "Unless I'm wearing my robes." Would it be easier if he was just a regular teen? "Nothing like that crosses my mind," he said, laughing. "It's always been religion first."

Growing up he had a deal with his dad, who would give him the Pokémon cards in return for committing Buddhist scriptures to memory. He collected hundreds and would sometimes sneak them in his robes at ceremonies.

Every morning he wakes up to recite sacred texts. He then attends school, followed by football practice, and returns home for tutoring lessons on Tibetan history and Buddhism. Late at night he might practice his calligraphy or run on a treadmill in the basement while listening to rappers like Drake and Polo G.

"He's naturally very open-minded, and he's also very genuinely interested in the world. ... He doesn't have these preconceived notions of who he is," said Kate Thomas, one of his tutors and the teachings coordinator at Minneapolis' Bodhicitta Sangha Heart of Enlightenment Institute.

"He knows he's Tibetan. He also knows he's American," Thomas said. "But like the youth of today, he is a global citizen as well. And he started out that way due to his age, his generation."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined
Today in History

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Today is Monday, Aug. 2, the 214th day of 2021. There are 151 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 2, 1939, Albert Einstein signed a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt urging creation of an atomic weapons research program.

On this date:

In 1610, during his fourth voyage to the Western Hemisphere, English explorer Henry Hudson sailed into what is now known as Hudson Bay.

In 1776, members of the Second Continental Congress began attaching their signatures to the Declaration of Independence.

In 1862, the Ambulance Corps for the Army of the Potomac was created at the order of Maj. Gen. George McClellan during the Civil War.

In 1873, inventor Andrew S. Hallidie (HAH'-lih-day) successfully tested a cable car he had designed for the city of San Francisco.

In 1921, a jury in Chicago acquitted several former members of the Chicago White Sox baseball team and two others of conspiring to defraud the public in the notorious "Black Sox" scandal. Opera singer Enrico Caruso, 48, died in Naples, Italy.

In 1922, Alexander Graham Bell, generally regarded as the inventor of the telephone, died in Nova Scotia, Canada, at age 75.

In 1923, the 29th president of the United States, Warren G. Harding, died in San Francisco; Vice President Calvin Coolidge became president.

In 1934, German President Paul von Hindenburg died, paving the way for Adolf Hitler's complete takeover.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman, Soviet leader Josef Stalin and Britain's new prime minister, Clement Attlee, concluded the Potsdam conference.

In 1980, 85 people were killed when a bomb exploded at the train station in Bologna, Italy.

In 1985, 137 people were killed when Delta Air Lines Flight 191, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed while attempting to land at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, seizing control of the oil-rich emirate. (The Iraqis were later driven out in Operation Desert Storm.)

Ten years ago: The Senate passed, and President Barack Obama signed, legislation to avoid an unprecedented national default. New York Yankees first baseman Mark Teixeira set a major league record when he homered from both sides of the plate for the 12th time in his career during a 6-0 win over the Chicago White Sox.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama castigated Donald Trump as "unfit" and "woefully unprepared" to serve in the White House, and challenged Republicans to withdraw their support for their party's nominee, declaring "there has to come a point at which you say 'enough.'"

One year ago: Lord & Taylor, America's oldest retailer, joined the list of retail companies seeking bankruptcy protection after faltering during the pandemic. Florida's east coast was pounded by heavy rain from Tropical Storm Isaias, as state officials dealt with surging cases of the coronavirus. Closing out a test flight by Elon Musk's SpaceX company, two NASA astronauts returned from the International Space Station with a retro-style splashdown, as their capsule parachuted safely into the Gulf of Mexico.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Nehemiah Persoff is 102. Rock musician Garth Hudson (The Band) is 84. Singer Kathy Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 78. Actor Joanna Cassidy is 76. Actor Kathryn Harrold is 71. Actor Butch Patrick (TV: "The Munsters") is 68. Rock music producer/drummer Butch Vig (Garbage) is 66. Sen. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., is 64. Singer Mojo Nixon is 64. Actor Victoria Jackson is 62. Actor Apollonia is 62. Actor Cynthia Stevenson is 59. Actor Mary-Louise Parker is 57. Rock musician John Stanier is 53. Writer-actor-director Kevin Smith is 51. Actor Jacinda Barrett is 49. Actor Sam Worthington is 45. Actor Edward Furlong is 44. TV meteorologist Dylan Dreyer (TV: "Today") is 40. Actor Marci Miller is 36. Singer Charli XCX is 29. Actor Hallie Eisenberg is 29.