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## County Computers are down

Heads up from Brown County: The Brown County computer network is currently down. County offices including, treasure, reg of deeds, landfill, and others are currently unable to do any transactions. We will let you know when things are back up. Sorry for the inconvenience.

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



**HOW HIRING!**

## Day shift and night shift assemblers!

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

To apply:  
[www.uslbm.com/careers](http://www.uslbm.com/careers) or  
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## Britton



**TRUSS PROS**  
A Division of US



**Precision  
Wall Systems**  
A Division of US

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## State B American Legion Baseball Tournament

### Redfield Runs Away With Early Lead In Victory Over Madison

Madison Post 25 fell behind early and couldn't come back in a 9-3 loss to Redfield Post 92 on Monday. Redfield Post 92 took the lead on a single in the first inning.

The Madison Post 25 struggled to contain the high-powered offense of Redfield Post 92, giving up nine runs.

Redfield Post 92 got things moving in the first inning. Cooper Hainy drove in one when Hainy singled.

Madison Post 25 tallied three runs in the seventh inning. Madison Post 25's big bats in the inning were led by a triple by Trey Smith and a double by Logan Allbee.

Redfield Post 92 scored four runs in the third inning. The big inning for Redfield Post 92 came thanks to singles by Camden Osborn and Easton Millar.

Owen Osborn pitched Redfield Post 92 to victory. Osborn lasted seven innings, allowing seven hits and three runs while striking out one and walking one.

Peyton Wolf took the loss for Madison Post 25. The pitcher allowed eight hits and nine runs over three and two-thirds innings, striking out six.

Zach Whitlock went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Madison Post 25 in hits.

Redfield Post 92 tallied ten hits. Keaton Rohlf, Peyton Osborn, Osborn, and Hainy all managed multiple hits for Redfield Post 92. "Powered by Narrative Science and GameChanger Media. Copyright 2021. All rights reserved."

### Scieszinski's Walk-Off Seals The Deal In Tabor's Victory Over Vermillion

Tabor Post 183 took their game in dramatic walk-off fashion, thanks to a walk-off single at the end of the game to topple Vermillion Post 1. The game was tied at three with Tabor Post 183 batting in the bottom of the seventh when Nate Scieszinski singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run.

Tabor Post 183 got things moving in the first inning. Tabor Post 183 scored one run when Nolan Carda doubled.

Dustin Honomichl pitched Tabor Post 183 to victory. The bulldog allowed four hits and three runs over five and a third innings, striking out three and walking one. Trent Herrboldt threw one and two-thirds innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Jake Jensen took the loss for Vermillion Post 1. Jensen lasted six and a third innings, allowing seven hits and four runs while striking out three and walking zero.

Carda led Tabor Post 183 with two hits in three at bats.

Jack Kratz went 2-for-4 at the plate to lead Vermillion Post 1 in hits.

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## Championship Game slated for 1 p.m. Tuesday

The championship game of the State B American Legion Baseball Tournament is now set for 1 p.m. on Tuesday. Tabor will face Redfield in the title game. Tabor remains undefeated and Redfield's loss came to the hands of Tabor on Friday, 5-3. That means if Tabor wins the game, they will be the champions. However, if Redfield wins, both teams will have one loss forcing a second game which will follow.



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I seen this post on Patti Woods' Facebook Page. Someone had a drone and took this photo of Locke-Karst Field from the air. What is neat is how the outfield is mowed. Aaron Severson did a neat job in perfecting the pattern in the outfield. This was taken of the opening ceremony.

Here you go Theresa - my selfie from Plymouth, Minn. She wanted proof that I'm actually out of town! I'm attending the Summer Institute of Theology through the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The church I serve near Sisseton, Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, is affiliated with the AFLC and I have to go to the week-long session each year to remain certified.



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## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

August 3, 2021 – 7:00pm

120 N Main Street

(NOTICE ADDRESS)

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Minutes
3. Bills
4. Department Reports
5. Secretary's Award for Drinking Water Excellence 2020 – 20 consecutive years of safe drinking water to the City of Groton
6. Second Reading of Ordinance #749 Regarding the Issuance of Local Medical Cannabis Establishment Permits and/or Licenses
7. Maguire Iron Application for Payment #9 - \$7,875
8. 2021 Annual SD Municipal League Conference October 5-8, 2021 – Spearfish
9. WEB Water increasing rates effective October 2021 - \$0.24 per 1000 contracted gallons usage increase, along with \$0.55 per 1000 over the contract rate increase
10. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
11. Adjournment





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## That's Life by Tony Bender

### In cowboys we trust

Editor's note: It's rodeo season, and this week we look back at Tony Bender's experience with the Ashley ND Rodeo which is this weekend.

There might be as many descriptions of what makes a cowboy as there are cowboys. I've known a lot of them, and there's no one mold. It involves more than wearing a hat and boots. It's not a uniform; it's a way of life that is harder to pin down than a politician or a greased pig. You know one when you see one. A cowboy, that is.

There are few things I know about cowboys that are universal. They can't all sing, but they hear music in the rustle of tall grass and the squeak of a properly-cinched saddle. They might chew but not that sissy stuff. They don't eat yogurt or tofu, they can't spell quiche, and they damn sure ain't vegetarians. Real cowboys eat meat yet have an abiding respect for the animals they raise and ride.

I was stationed at Chute #1 at the Ashley Community Rodeo last weekend watching cowboys rocket into the arena and come limping back in the dust. More than one stopped to offer appreciation for the quality of the animal that dumped them to Jim Mosbrucker, whose company supplies rough stock to rodeos. Unfailingly, they called him sir. Cowboys are respectful.

When I come back, I want come back as Jim Mosbrucker. Black hat, black jacket, aviator sunglasses—cowboy cool—with a lifetime of knowledge accrued the old fashioned way. Each scar, the squint, the bones mended off center, a diploma of sorts.

From time to time, he predicted how a particular animal might perform and was spot on. Like it was scripted. He moved everyone back for one bull—1,500 pounds of ornery—that sent the chute gate screaming into the fence where we had been standing seconds before. Saved my camera and probably my nose. You couldn't miss the admiration Jim felt as he watched the contests between young cowboys and young horses. "Like any athlete, the young horses will keep trying something new until they figure out what works," he said. The cowboys have to keep up. Action, reaction, call and response. Poetry.

The pen behind us was littered with riders, impossibly young, readying gear, one praying, and another nursing a shoulder injury, grimacing, after a brutal tumble.

Someone asked, "You okay?"

You could tell it hurt to talk. "Yeah," he gasped.

He was just fine. It's pretty much against the law for a cowboy to be anything but fine. Cowboys don't complain. Cowboys don't give a lick about universal health care plans because they have a one size fits all remedy. You just get right back up. And maybe rub some dirt on it. Maybe.

In the afternoon, the kids lined up at the rodeo grounds—some as young as four—like they were awaiting their executions. Mutton busting. One after another, they tumbled to the ground, kicked and stomped, tears turning dust to mud. Those in line, boys and girls, bore witness to the carnage, but most stoically marched forward when their names were called. A few of the smarter ones refused. Not everyone is cut out to be a cowboy.

In the wake of one particularly hard sheep-wreck, announcer Tim Fuller said in his homespun Oklahoma drawl, "I want you to remember something, son. Chicks dig scars... Just sayin'."

Maybe it's because cowboys have more time to think—around here, eight seconds is forever—but every real cowboy is part philosopher. After another unfortunate dismount and subsequent trampling, Fuller said, "I've never been able to figure this out—you can't spank your kids at Wal-Mart, but you can strap them to the back of farm animals for entertainment."

Cowboys are a uniquely American breed, closer to the root than the branches of the American soul. Evolved as a matter of necessity, Darwinians, with sunburns and scraped knuckles, adapting to the hardships of a hard land, but prayerful in appreciation of a higher power, who on any given day might be the boss, the chuck wagon cook, a pretty girl at the dance, or the man upstairs.

This is a world in which all things are earned but not boasted about. There is a certainty among cowboys that this is the best way to live. It's not arrogance. It's the certainty that comes from observation of the

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world around us compared to the Cowboy Way.

During a break in the action, rodeo clown "Backflip" Johnny Dudley polled the crowd: "Where you all from?"

"Africa!"

He seemed taken off guard. "W-w well, welcome to America," he said graciously before moving on.

"And where are you from?"

"New York!"

A brief pause.

"Well, welcome to America, too," he said, softly.

© Tony Bender, 2013

## JAMES VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS 64TH ANNUAL MEETING

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

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

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

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



**JAMES  
VALLEY**  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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## July 2021 In Weather Review

Thanks to much above average temperatures from the 1-4th/5th and 21-28th (even a couple instances of daily record-breaking heat), July 2021 finished above average overall across the region by between 1 and 4 degrees. This will go down as the 6th warmest July on record at Mobridge. While dewpoints were low during the beginning of the month, they increased substantially by the end into the 70s. This led to muggy conditions in addition to the heat, meaning high heat index values in the 100s for a number of days across the area. On July 28th, Aberdeen reached an air temperature of 101 F, and the inside of a vehicle at our office reached 127 F! A reminder how unsafe the inside of vehicles are for any period of time during the summer.

Pierre reached 100° F on 8 days this month, 4 of which were consecutive (25-28th), the longest streak since July 21-25th, 2007. Similarly, Mobridge reached 100° F 6 times, 3 consecutive (25-27th), the longest streak since July 21-25th, 2007. Aberdeen reached 90° F for 11 consecutive days (18-28th), which ties for the 7th longest streak on record. Furthermore, Aberdeen has observed 32 days this year with a high temperature of at least 90° F, which is already the most in any full year since 1988 (46 days total). Sisseton has observed 25 90° F days, already the most since 1988 (38 days total). Mobridge has observed 11 days this year with a high temperature of at least 100° F, which is already the most in any year since 1959 (12). Similarly, Aberdeen has already observed 7 100° F days, already the most since 1988 (14 total).

Precipitation-wise, while the area did see rounds of showers and thunderstorms through the month (including a widespread rain event on the 5-6th) totaling generally to between 1 and 4 inches, most locations finished below average. Severe weather was lacking as well, with only two more concentrated events: wind near the ND/SD border on the evening of July 23rd, and large to significantly large hail across the area on July 25th. Find much more information about the hail event at this event storm summary page: <https://www.weather.gov/abr/July25LargeHail2021>.

Drought conditions remained in place across the area, with only local improvement or worsening. North Central South Dakota remains the largest area affected by D3/Extreme Drought as of August 1st. Due to the heat and dry conditions, fire weather remained a concern through the month as well - many fires ignited across the area during/around the 4th of July due to fireworks. Finally, smoke transported aloft from Western US and Canadian wildfires was a common sight this July, leading to milky afternoon skies and red sunsets. A cold front swept smoke southward from Canadian fires, keeping it at the surface late in the month. As a result, July 29-30th featured reduced visibility to 1-2 miles or less, a strong smell of smoke, and unhealthy air quality for all people spending time outdoors, as determined by the Air Quality Index. Air quality alerts were in affect for some as well.



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

I mentioned yesterday that I had this piece for you. It's too long to append to an Update; it's longer by itself than most Updates. As a result, I'm posting it today without any other news.

The US Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Vivek Murthy, has called misinformation about Covid-19 an "urgent threat" to public health. He's not wrong. I am unutterably weary of this, but I was sent another steaming pile of scaremongering by a friend, and I suppose it requires a response—or at least I have to try. This one, a flyer posted in a public place, doesn't really make arguments; it just presents "facts" so you can "educate" yourself before you receive a vaccine (which, it is made clear, the author doesn't expect you will do once you've read said "facts"). Some of the "facts" are facts, albeit presented without context; others, not so much. The easiest way to do this is probably just to work my way down the list and respond to each assertion. So here goes:

The header on this piece (of highly aromatic refuse) says, "Educate before you vaccinate: Covid-19 Vaccine Fast Facts." I appreciate that particular construction because it gives me the opening to mention that the "Fast" is mostly a matter of playing fast—and loose—with the facts.

Then there's a heading, "Liability-free," and under it, the flyer says, "The Public Readiness & Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act shields entities & individuals involved in the development, manufacture, testing, distribution, administration, & use of COVID-19 vaccines from liability for injuries & deaths, arising out of, relating to, or resulting from administration or use of COVID-19 vaccines."

That sounds really bad, doesn't it? Could it be true that Congress passed a bill for the express purpose of protecting Big Pharma from the consequences of rushing these vaccines to market so they can cash in on a crisis? I've been seeing all sorts of sinister implications made by folks citing the PREP Act, that secret back-room deal cooked up by Pfizer, et al, to immunize them from liability for killing people with their untested Covid-19 vaccines. I've heard more than a few people say, "I'm not taking any vaccine as long as the manufacturers don't have liability for side effects." This sort of ignorant statement is how I can tell these people had never heard of the PREP Act before they saw this talking point in an Internet meme or some such. This is how they out themselves as people who don't actually know anything about legal liability for vaccines in the US or the PREP Act.

To make this point, I am going to digress for a bit into the history of the anti-vax movement in the US. (And if you want to talk about nefarious plots to kill Americans, you could do worse than start with those folks.) Back in the '70s and '80s, there was a lot of rumormongering around childhood vaccines. I happen to remember this well because it was in the '70s and '80s that I was having babies and making decisions about vaccinating them. I do recall hearing the reports of terrible neurological damage, worrying a great deal about what I was hearing, and carefully following the research before I made a call about my own children (all of whom, for the record, received all of their vaccinations on schedule and, while occasionally frustrating their parents in one way and another ever since, show no significant signs of brain damage). Folks were suing doctors and pharmaceutical companies, claiming that the DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) vaccine routinely given to infants and children was causing neurologic injury. Never mind there was no proof (because it turned out not to be true) that the vaccines were causing brain damage, thing is, juries were sometimes inclined to hand out large awards to parents of "injured" children because who could dismiss a brain-damaged baby, right? Much like the general public these days, juries back then were free to ignore actual facts and just make emotional judgements about vaccines, and they did.

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Irrespective of the merits of these claims, losses are losses, and liability insurance companies were dropping the vaccine manufacturers like hot rocks. The upshot was that manufacturers were discouraged from producing vaccines and dropped out of the market until we eventually had just one company still making DPT vaccine in this country; and there were serious concerns about supply. This is what prompted Congress to pass the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act in 1986. This law did a number of things to insure vaccine safety, including establishing a robust regulatory structure, and also immunized vaccine manufacturers from financial liability for vaccine injuries. In place of liability, the law set up a fund into which all of the manufacturers contributed that compensated those who suffered adverse effects of childhood vaccinations. You might wonder why big, rich pharmaceutical companies should have gotten a break like that from Congress (and I'm not exactly a person who gives a pass to pharmaceutical companies in general); but getting children vaccinated is an established public good, so is this was the way to do that, it looked like a pretty good bargain at the time. Frankly, it still looks that way to me. I will also note that the compensation is being paid by the pharmaceutical companies, not taxpayers. And for the record, no company is getting rich off of children's vaccines these days; they're a pretty low-margin product.

What this means is that everyone born since 1986 (and actually somewhat before) has received a whole lot more than one or two vaccines for which their manufacturers carried no legal liability. That's a whole lot of people these days. Seems sort of silly all of a sudden now to be hollering about the dangers of shielding companies from liability, doesn't it? At least it does if you have a clue about the landscape around vaccination in this country. Which, of course, the folks hollering these days do not; they're getting their marching orders from crazies on the Internet.

Digression over, we come now to the PREP Act. An effect of this Act is pretty much as described—that it shields manufacturers of Covid-19 vaccines from tort liability for adverse effects, but in this recitation of "facts," there are some facts left out, quite a few of them actually. Let's look at those.

Most importantly, this is not a law passed just to enable the government to foist off terrible Covid-19 vaccines on an unsuspecting public. How do I know this? Because the PREP Act was passed in 2005. (Hint to those who haven't been keeping up: There was no Covid-19 in 2005. Draw your own conclusions from there.) What's more, when there's a PREP Act declaration, this law does not apply just to vaccines; it can also apply to any other treatments developed—the antivirals and the monoclonals and the convalescent serum, to devices like ventilators made by auto manufacturers, to companies making personal protective equipment who don't usually make stuff like that, and such. It is also covering health care personnel doing telemedicine across state lines (usually prohibited) or for uses not generally approved. The Act applies to so-called "countermeasures" to the emergency which has been declared. It's an all-hands-on-deck approach to emergencies intended to insure we have an optimal response in a time of crisis.

Turns out the PREP Act was designed to meet just the sort of emergency we're in at the moment, primarily to remove the financial risk barriers to the development of new pharmaceuticals. Now you're free to think helping pharmaceutical companies hedge their bets is a bad plan (and many people do), but it's not a plan that was made just for Covid-19. This is not a law which has never been applied before; we've had declarations around other emergencies, H1N1 influenza, Ebola, and Zika, for example. I should also point out that the PREP Act does not indemnify for "willful misconduct," that is, if a manufacturer intentionally disregards the welfare of folks receiving vaccines, they're not covered by the Act. So it is not true that they are completely shielded from all liability.

I know a posted flyer like this one doesn't exactly permit full context; there's no room for all these words on a poster. That's why you should not rely for your health care information on posters. You should rely on actual scientists and public health professionals. There's an idea.

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Next up: a heading, "Unnecessary." This is always one of my favorites because who thinks preventing a life-threatening infection for which we have no effective treatments is necessary, right? There are several bullet points under this heading, to wit:

"Safe & effective nutrient & off-patent drug therapies exist that can greatly reduce risk of infection & reduce risk of severe disease, even as the virus mutates." Not much to say about this until we get more detail. No worries: Details are coming; read on.

"Low Vitamin D levels are directly related to susceptibility & disease severity." Well, they're not exactly directly related—more what I'd call maybe associated without a ton of evidence yet. This is what we call getting out ahead of your evidence. We do know that T regulatory lymphocytes are a principal defense against uncontrolled inflammation and viral infection. We also know that T regulatory lymphocyte levels have been low in some Covid-19 patients. We know vitamin D supplementation in those who are deficient can increase T regulatory lymphocyte levels. And we know thrombotic (abnormal blood clotting) episodes are increased in those who are deficient in vitamin D. So there is some circumstantial evidence that vitamin D deficiency might exacerbate the effects of conditions like Covid-19; what we don't have is evidence that deficiency actually does that in Covid-19 or that vitamin D supplementation will reduce the most severe effects of a virus infection, specifically Covid-19. Nonetheless, as weak as the connection appears to be at the moment, there is some support for taking a supplement because it isn't harmful if the dose isn't stupid-high; even Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said he's taking a supplement during the pandemic. We've had this conversation before, first in my Update #199 posted September 9, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3955536507796059>, and then in my Update #206 posted September 16, 2020, at <https://facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3979442498738793>. Check those out, but don't go thinking vitamin D capsules replace solid prevention efforts or are some sort of cure-all. No one who knows things thinks that. You still need to be vaccinated.

"Ivermectin prevents infection & treats symptoms of disease at all stages. Ivermectin & Hyperbaric Oxygen are promising for treating 'long-hauler' symptoms." Ohhh, now I get it: This is another publication from that august research society, the beyond-relentless Ivermectin Fan Club. In brief, ivermectin is a drug approved by the FDA for use as an anthelmintic, that is, for the treatment of parasite infections—intestinal worms. It is much more widely used as a veterinary drug for the same purpose, especially for livestock, but sometimes pets too. Somewhere along the line, evidence emerged that, in very high concentrations, this drug showed activity against this virus. I first wrote about it in April, 2020. By December, I was writing, "I'm feeling like ivermectin is the new hydroxychloroquine—unproven, but with a great fan club," and pointing out that the NIH was saying the concentrations required to show activity were looking difficult to achieve in tissue at any dose known to be safe. I have stayed with this story with Update #303 posted December 22 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4281566265193080>, Update #375 posted March 4, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3684593851556994>, and Update #431 posted April 29, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4669383029744733>. Bottom line: Zero evidence has emerged that the drug has any beneficial effect in real live people at any concentration achieved by doses that are close to those approved by the FDA for use in humans, and a fair amount of evidence has emerged that it is not effective at those concentrations. I'm not writing it off yet, but things are not looking good. So no, ivermectin is not "promising," not even close. And I have to admit that by now, any time I see a claim about ivermectin, I am very inclined to write off anything else I see presented with it because these folks are zealots and my experience of zealots is that they tend to be unreliable on all fronts. Nonetheless, let's carry on throughout the rest of this particular piece of advertising.

But before we move on, let's contemplate the use of hyperbaric oxygen as a therapy for long-Covid since that is also mentioned as "promising." Hyperbaric means gas pressures greater than 1 atmosphere



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of pressure, which is the standard pressure of the earth's atmosphere at sea level (14.7 pounds per square inch); and hyperbaric oxygen therapy involves enclosure in a chamber enabling inhalation of a specified concentration of oxygen (normal concentration in the atmosphere is 21 percent) at two to three times atmospheric pressure. This isn't a crazy idea when you have a look at the kinds of conditions this is used to treat now; and there was a paper published by NIH's National Center for Biotechnology Information of a matched-samples study of 20 patients treated at New York University's Winthrop Hospital in April, 2020 that showed the treatment was safe and suggesting further randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy. Despite diligent searching, I have, however, been unable to find the results of any such studies. The lack of information is generally a sign that either trials were never done or they didn't work out so well; but I can't say for sure which (if either) of these might be true. If anyone here has a citation for me, I will appreciate receiving it so that I can evaluate the work described. For now, it seems unlikely, but not impossible, the treatment would qualify as promising.

"The overall recovery rate from COVID-19 infection is greater than 99% with the majority of people experiencing no, mild, or moderate symptoms. A positive PCR test result does not always mean someone is sick or contagious." I'm going to take issue with the 99 percent recovery rate: We do think the number who survive infection is likely greater than 99 percent, but there's a whole lot more that goes wrong for infected people than dying. Last numbers I've seen indicate as many as 14 percent of cases develop the lingering symptoms known as long-Covid, and this does not account for the huge numbers of those with lasting neurologic, kidney, heart, lung, or other tissue damage from the direct effects of the virus or the inflammatory response. There are quite literally millions of Americans dealing with those long-term sequelae in addition to long-Covid, and it's difficult to classify all those folks as "recovered," isn't it?

It is true that the majority of people experience no, mild, or moderate symptoms; I don't think anyone's claiming otherwise. Thing is, with almost 35 million reported cases just in the US so far—and it turns out we're far from out of this—a few percent adds up to a hell of a lot of people who did have severe disease, and we know way over 600,000 have died. We should also note the prevalence of long-Covid in people who had only mild or moderate disease; it so happens you don't have to have gotten very sick at the time to suffer serious long-term sequelae. So there's that too.

And we know a positive PCR test doesn't necessarily indicate illness; this is not news, nor has anyone ever claimed it does. We've known almost from the first day that there are asymptomatic infections and those which are so mild as to pass almost unnoticed; in fact, we've recognized that those cases are the worrisome ones because they act as a source of transmission to others without being readily detectable. No one's denying asymptomatic cases exist. As for contagiousness, this is at the moment an open question. We have long known that not every case is shedding virus in amounts which pose a risk to others; but the recent data on the B.1.617.2 or Delta variant, the one first identified in India, raises the possibility that this may have changed, that maybe now every single case is a serious risk to others. I don't like this any more than anyone else does, but it certainly raises doubts about the assertion in this flyer.

"Studies are showing that natural immunity to COVID-19 is long-lasting." Maybe. We do not, of course, know about very long-term immunity because this virus hasn't been around long enough to be sure; but we have seen immunity from natural infection waning after six to eight months whereas vaccine-induced immunity is strong after a year, probably longer. An additional problem is that, while recovery from natural infection had seemed to confer fairly long-lasting immunity to prior variants, the Delta variant appears to have changed things. We do not have definitive evidence at the moment, but there's some reason to suspect a natural infection is not going to be as highly protective against Delta. It is at least irresponsible to make assertions about this without good data to back you up, data no one has. Further, we do know that vaccination results in far higher levels of antibodies for far longer than what we see from natural infection. Responsible public health experts are not recommending relying on your prior infection to protect

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you. At all. None of them.

Last category: "Safety & Effectiveness Concerns." We have a number of points to address here too. First is this: "COVID-19 vaccines are under Emergency Use Authorization (EAU [sic]); they are not FDA licensed or approved. Clinical trials are still underway." It is true that these vaccines are not licensed; the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine likely will be within weeks with Moderna's vaccine not far behind, but so far, it is not. On the other hand, the claim that the vaccines are not "approved" needs a little context; "approved" is not a designation the FDA applies to vaccines. They have authorized them for emergency use, and later they'll license them, which is what most folks call "full approval," but "approved" isn't exactly a term that applies, which makes this claim at least misleading. This is not, after all, the Wild West where mad scientists are cooking up and selling "unapproved" patent medicines to bilk the public of its hard-earned dollars.

As for the trials, of course, they're ongoing. For now, companies are collecting data to submit with a Biologics License Application; they're also collecting data on pediatric trials and on proposed boosters and on formulations tweaked for new variants, as well as on other Covid-19 vaccines entirely. Additionally, data will continue to be collected for at least a couple of years, even after licensing is obtained, because that's how vaccine development works in today's world. The fact that there are ongoing clinical trials is a good thing, not a sign of nefarious activity.

"As of April 8, 2021, 68,347 Adverse Reactions and 2,602 deaths have been reported to the U.S. Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. This is a passive system that suffers from under-reporting." In the following discussion, I'm going to assume these numbers are accurate; I have no way to ascertain what they were back in April, but they very well could be right, so we'll roll with them. Even so, this is a load of bunkum. We've had this conversation before (and probably will have to do so again—sigh!) and I'll link a fuller explanation below; but the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) does not provide evidence of any particular thing. I'll say up front that this is not just a "passive system;" health care providers are required to report particular events, including deaths, that occur after vaccination whether or not the provider believes the event is linked to the vaccine. That's not very passive.

Additionally, the purpose of VAERS is to collect as much data as possible about bad things that happen to people after vaccination so that patterns will emerge that enable us to spot rare adverse effects. That happens only if you have masses of information. However—and this is critical to note—the events listed in VAERS have not been investigated or verified. It's just a pile of information whose meaning emerges only with analysis. Example: Health care providers are required to report to VAERS any death that occurs after vaccination. This would include death in a car accident or death by falling off a roof or death by homicide, as well as deaths from cancer or insulin shock or heart attack. Now, with 160 million people vaccinated, we know some of them are going to die in any six-month period irrespective whether they've ever been vaccinated; almost 8000 of Americans die every single day and a bunch of those folks will have been vaccinated. This is particularly true of the age group that is most vaccinated—the elderly—since older people die more often than younger people. Those 2602 deaths are going to include deaths from all causes; it does not mean the vaccines killed 2602—or any—people. We only discover that by having a look at every one of these deaths, and there are people at the CDC whose job it is to do just that work.

Another problem with taking VAERS data right from the website is that anyone can report anything, anything at all. People can report their ingrown toenails or their earaches or their nausea. They can report falling off their bike and forgetting their computer password and feeling grumpy. False reports happen. People make stuff up, including deaths; when these are spotted, they're removed, but it's unlikely they all get spotted. The University of Nebraska website told of an anesthesiologist who successfully submitted a report to VAERS that flu vaccine has turned him into the Incredible Hulk. (To be clear, I think he did it

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to make a point; I do not believe there are any anesthesiologists running around the country who think they're the Incredible Hulk.) I wrote about these sorts of pitfalls in my Update #437 posted on May 10, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4704667976216238>.

So if it's so darned unreliable, why even have VAERS? Because you want those masses of data, the ones that enable you to spot a pattern of, say, abnormal blood-clotting and check that out. The ingrown toenails aren't likely to rise to the level of showing a pattern, but without the tens of thousands of data points, we might never have noticed the blood clots or those rare allergic reactions or the myocarditis—things we really do want to know about. But anyone who's citing data directly from VAERS is seeking to mislead you. Every single time. Because unfiltered VAERS data has zero probative value at all.

So what are the many adverse events these folks are attributing to Covid-19 vaccines? There's a list, and so we'll take a look at it: First up is "Anaphylaxis and CARPA." I'm going to assume they used the fancy sciencey words for this stuff instead of saying "severe allergic reaction" to impress you with their medical knowledge. Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction involving a drop in blood pressure, shortness of breath, and rapid heartbeat. CARPA is complement activation-related pseudoallergy; while technically not the same thing as anaphylaxis, it looks pretty much like it and carries the same sorts of risks, as I understand it. This potential for allergic response is known and acknowledged; it is the reason you are asked to wait 15 minutes (30 for those with certain known allergies) after vaccination before you leave the vaccination site and also that vaccination sites are required to be equipped with the appropriate countermeasures for this reaction and personnel who can administer those. There's nothing new here.

Then comes "Pathogenic Priming," a term scientists don't use; apparently only anti-vaxxers use it. It refers to what is properly called antibody-dependent enhancement (ADE) or antibody-mediated enhanced disease, a phenomenon whereby antibodies, instead of protecting you from infection, actually facilitate the virus binding to your cells so it can infect the cells. This is a real phenomenon, but not a thing with these Covid-19 vaccines. Folks have been looking for that from the first day a dose went into a human way back last summer. It hasn't turned up. Putting this on the list is, quite simply, lying. (I first wrote about the potential for ADE in March, 2020, and you can find a brief discussion in my Update #120 posted June 22, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3705662329450146>.)

Next up: "Autoimmunity." This is a phenomenon where you produce antibodies that attack your own tissues; they might target just one kind of tissue or multiple kinds, depending on the specific autoimmune disorder you have. Again, this is a real thing that happens in people, just not a real thing that happens as a result of Covid-19 vaccination. There are, however, cases on record where the virus itself has appeared to trigger the development of autoantibodies and some speculation that long-Covid may actually be autoimmune or partially so. This seems likely to be the source of this false assertion about the vaccines and probably arises from the anti-vax evangelism of Sherry Tenpenny, a publicity hound who's been a vocal part of the Campaign for Death for months now. She's been going around citing a study showing the development of autoantibodies in patients. She's not making up the autoantibodies; the study did find them. The part she's making up is the part about the vaccines causing them; we can be sure of this because there were no vaccines for Covid-19 at the time the study was done; the patients studied were infected with the virus, and they were not vaccinated. That little factoid hasn't slowed down Tenpenny a bit. A common thread I've noticed in anti-vaxxers of all stripes is a fairly loose relationship with facts, so this is not a stunning development—it is precisely the sort of thing we've come to expect from her. A whole lot of people have put a fair amount of time into looking for autoimmune disease resulting from vaccines; despite this diligent effort, no link has been seen. This is simply another lie.

Now we come to "Thrombocytopenia (ITP)." Thrombocytopenia is a deficiency of thrombocytes or



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platelets, little cell fragments that operate in blood clotting. ITP is a condition called idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura which results in easy bruising, bleeding, and tiny purple spots (purpura) on the legs. It can follow viral infections in children. Now this one is interesting because there is a thrombocytopenic condition that has been "plausibly" linked to one of the vaccines in use in the US, the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson (and also the Oxford/AstraZeneca, which is in use in other countries, but not here); however it's not ITP, but rather one called TTS, thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome. Even when they're not lying, they're wrong. Doesn't exactly inspire confidence in the rest of the claims, does it? It shouldn't. (I wrote about this condition with respect to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in my Update #423 posted April 21, 2021, at [www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4643934608956242](https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4643934608956242) and with respect to the Janssen/J&J in my Update #438 posted on May 13, 2021, at [www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4714094301940272](https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4714094301940272).)

And then we have "Heart failure." Guessing this is a reference to the rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the membranous tissue surrounding the heart) that have been associated with all of the currently-authorized vaccines. Now that's not heart failure, but heart failure sounds scarier, doesn't it? And it's not like we should be all surprised at this point in the proceedings to find these folks trying to mislead. While myocarditis can be a serious thing, the cases in question here have been mild and the patients typically recover; there have been no reports of deaths from vaccine-associated myocarditis. When set against the known risk for myocarditis from the virus itself, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices concluded the potential benefit of vaccination clearly outweighs the potential risk. (I wrote about this issue in my Update #447 posted June 24, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4847015368648164>.)

And finally, "Miscarriage." Old story. Tired story. False story. There isn't even a whisper of a hint of linkage with any pregnancy-associated or reproductive complication from any of these vaccines. Despite that, this one's been done to death. See my previous comments on the subject and a full explanation of the totally bogus claim and why it's bogus at my Update #287 posted December 6 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4237138519635855>.

Tired? Me too. Almost finished, hang in there.

We have just one more: "#screenb4vaccine Those already immune are at higher risk of severe adverse reaction to vaccination." This is garbage, made up out of whole cloth. There are zero reports of harms in previously-infected individuals who are vaccinated—and we've vaccinated a few million of those over the past few months. Likewise, we have a number of clinical trials underway that involve fully-vaccinated individuals receiving booster doses; there have been zero reports of serious side effects in those folks either. If being vaccinated when you are already immune was a dangerous proposition, we'd have some evidence of that by now, and we simply do not. This is another lie.

Only other thing on this poster is a link to more information from the rumormongers, and I'm not about to share that. If you want someone to tell you lies, you're going to have to do your own research to find them.

This is dangerous, damaging rubbish that is going to kill some people—already has. I can only assume the folks promulgating it haven't found the complete lack of a conscience very much of a problem in life. Too bad that.

Be well. I'll be back with a regular Update in a few days.

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## 2021-22 GROTON AREA TIGERS

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### Football

Fri., Aug. 20	Clark/Willow Lake	7:00
Fri., Aug. 27	Redfield	7:00
Fri., Sept. 3	at Webster	7:00
Fri., Sept. 10	at Deuel	7:00
Fri., Sept. 17	Mobridge-Pollock (HC)	7:00
Fri., Sept. 24	Aberdeen Roncalli	7:00
Fri., Oct. 1	Dakota Hills @ Wilmot	7:00
Fri., Oct. 15	at Sisseton	7:00
Thurs., Oct. 21	First Round Playoffs	
Thurs., Oct. 28	Second Round Playoffs	
Fri., Nov. 5	Quartfinals	
Nov. 12	State at Dakota Dome	

### Boys Golf

Mon., Aug. 16	at Sioux Valley	10:00
Thurs., Aug. 19	at Milbank	10:00
Tues., Aug. 24	NEC at Milbank	10:00
Tues., Aug. 31	at Lee Park, Abdn.	10:00
Thurs., Sept. 9	OGGC, Groton	10:00
Thurs., Sept. 14	at Redfield	10:00
Thurs., Sept. 16	Tiopia Zina Invite @ 11:00	
Thurs., Sept. 23	at Sisseton	10:00
Mon., Sept. 27	Region 1A	
Oct. 4-5	State at Madison	

### Cross-Country

Thurs., Sept. 2	at Redfield	10:00
Thu., Sept. 7	at Britton	4:00
Mon., Sept. 13	at Webster	4:00
Thurs., Sept. 16	at Roncalli (Lee Park)	4:00
Mon., Sept. 20	at Deuel (Clear Lake)	4:00
Mon., Sept. 27	GROTON (OGGC)	4:00
Thurs., Sept. 30	at Sisseton	4:00
Thurs., Oct. 7	NEC at Webster	1:30
Thurs., Oct. 14	Region at Webster	3:30
Sat., Oct. 23	State at Yankton Trails, SF	

### Volleyball

Thurs., Aug. 26	Britton-Hecia	
Mon., Aug. 30	Aberdeen Christian	
Tues., Aug. 31	at Ipswich	4:00
Tues., Sept. 7	at Webster Area	
Thurs., Sept. 9	Sisseton	
Thurs., Sept. 16	Mobridge-Pollock	
Tues., Sept. 21	at Warner	
Thurs., Sept. 23	at Clark/Willow Lake	
Mon., Sept. 27	Faulkton	
Tues., Sept. 28	at Florence/Henry	
Thurs., Sept. 30	at Redfield	
Sat., Oct. 2	at Redfield Tourney	
Tues., Oct. 12	at Tiopia Zina	
Thurs., Oct. 14	Milbank	
Sat., Oct. 16	at Milbank Tourney	
Mon., Oct. 18	at Langford Area	
Tues., Oct. 19	Northwestern	
Fri., Oct. 22	Aberdeen Roncalli	
Mon., Oct. 25	Deuel	
Tues., Oct. 26	at Redfield	
Thurs., Nov. 2	Region 1A	
Thurs., Nov. 9	SoDak 16	
Nov. 18-20	State at Rapid City	

### Track

Tues. Apr. 5	at Ipswich	12:30
Tues., Apr. 12	Groton Luecke Invite	11:00
Tues., Apr. 19	at Deuel	3:00
Fri., Apr. 26	Groton Invite	11:30
Fri., Apr. 30	at Webster	2:00
Tues., May 3	at Milbank	1:00
Fri., May 6	at Sisseton	3:00
Thurs., May 12	NEC at Britton	11:00
Thurs., May 19	Region at Webster	10:00
May 26-28	State at Sioux Falls	

### School Calendar

Calendar Composed by Groton Daily Independent

Aug. 25	First Day of School
Sept. 3	NO SCHOOL
Sept. 6	NO SCHOOL - Labor Day
Sept. 13	Homecoming Coronation (8:00)
Sept. 17	Homecoming game with N-P
Oct. 7	P-T Conferences (4:00-8:00)
Oct. 8	NO SCHOOL - P-T Conf. (8-12)
Oct. 8	Lake Region Marching Festival
Oct. 11	NO SCHOOL - Native American Day
Oct. 13	LifeTouch Pictures at Elementary
Oct. 14	LifeTouch Pictures at GHS
Oct. 22	End of First Quarter
Oct. 23	ACT testing
Nov. 11	Financial Aid Night
Nov. 11	Veteran's Day Program (2:00)
Nov. 24-26	Thanksgiving Vacation
Dec. 2	LifeTouch Picture Retake Day
Dec. 9	MS/HS Christmas Concert (7:00)
Dec. 11	ACT testing
Dec. 22	Elementary Christmas Concert (1:00)
Dec. 22	Early Dismissal (2:00)
Dec. 22	End of First Semester
Dec. 23-Jan. 3	Christmas Vacation
Jan. 4	School Resumes
Jan. 14	NO SCHOOL - NCEC Faculty Inservice
Feb. 9	LifeTouch Pictures
Feb. 17	P-T Conferences (4:00-8:00)
Feb. 18	NO SCHOOL - P-T Conf. (8-12)
Feb. 21	NO SCHOOL - President's Day
Mar. 10	End of Third Quarter
Mar. 17-18	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
Apr. 2	ACT testing
Apr. 3	POPS Concert (2:00 & 5:00)
Apr. 15-18	NO SCHOOL - Easter Vacation
Apr. 23	PROM
Apr. 28	MS Spring Concert (7:00)
May 3	Elementary Spring Concert (7:00)
May 5	HS Concert/Awards Night (7:00)
May 15	Graduation (2:00)
May 18	End of 2nd Semester

\*All make-up days will be added to the end of the school calendar.

### Wrestling

Sat., Dec. 4	at Clark/Willow Lake	10:00
Sat., Dec. 11	at LaMoure	10:00
Sat., Dec. 18	at Sioux Valley (Volga)	10:00
Thurs., Dec. 30	at Webster	9:30
Thurs., Jan. 6	Redfield & Webster in Groton	6:00
Sat., Jan. 15	at Gettysburg	10:00
Sat., Jan. 22	at Arlington	10:00
Sat., Jan. 29	Groton Invite	10:00
Fri., Feb. 4	Lyman/Bonnett Co. & Presho	10:00
Sat., Feb. 5	at Stanley County	10:00
Sat., Feb. 19	Regions at Britton-Hecia	
Feb. 24-26	State at Sioux Falls	

### Soccer

Sat., Aug. 14	Garretson	Boys	Girls
Fri., Aug. 20	St. Thomas More	3:00	5:00
Sat., Aug. 21	Belle Fourche	3:00	1:00
Sat., Aug. 28	at Vermillion	3:00	1:00
Sat., Sept. 4	Tea Area	3:00	1:00
Thurs., Sept. 9	at JV Christian	4:00	4:00
Fri., Sept. 10	West Central	3:00	1:00
Sat., Sept. 11	at S.F. Christian	3:00	1:00
Sat., Sept. 18	at Garretson	5:00	1:00
Sat., Sept. 18	Freeman Academy	5:00	
Thurs., Sept. 23	at JV Christian	4:00	
Sat., Sept. 25	Freeman Academy	3:00	1:00
Tues., Oct. 5	1st Round Playoffs		
Sat., Oct. 9	Semi-Final Playoffs		
Sat., Oct. 16	State at Sioux Falls		

### Girls Golf

Mon., Apr. 16	at Milbank	10:00
Thurs., Apr. 28	at Redfield	10:00
Mon., May 9	Groton Invite	10:00
Mon., May 16	NEC at Lee Park.	10:00
June 6-7	State at Bakker Crossing, SF	

Calendar Composed by Groton Daily Independent  
397-NEWS (6397)

### Basketball

Red=GBS Blue=BBB Black=DH

Fri., Dec. 10	Britton-Hecia	
Sat., Dec. 11	at Britton-Hecia	
Thurs., Dec. 16	Hamlin	
Sat., Dec. 18	at Sioux Falls Lutheran	
Mon., Dec. 20	at Redfield	
Tues., Dec. 21	at Jamestown College Classic	
Mon., Dec. 27	at Webster	
Fri., Dec. 31	at Warner	
Fri., Jan. 4	Sisseton	
Sat., Jan. 8	Classic at Redfield	
Mon., Jan. 10	Webster	
Tues., Jan. 11	Aberdeen Christian	
Thurs., Jan. 13	at Aberdeen Roncalli	
Fri., Jan. 14	Aberdeen Roncalli	
Mon., Jan. 17	Langford Area	
Fri., Jan. 20	at Clark/Willow Lake	
Fri., Jan. 21	at Northwestern	
Thurs., Jan. 24	at Northwestern	
Sat., Jan. 29	at Madison Classic	
Tues., Feb. 1	Langford Area	
Thurs., Feb. 3	at Faulkton Area	
Sat., Feb. 5	at Madison Classic	
Tues., Feb. 8	Tiopia Zina	
Tues., Feb. 8	vs. North Central at TBD	
Thurs., Feb. 10	at Milbank	
Sat., Feb. 12	Mobridge-Pollock	
Mon., Feb. 14	at Sisseton	
Tues., Feb. 15	at Flandreau Indian	
Fri., Feb. 18	at Deuel	
Mon., Feb. 21	Tiopia Zina	
Fri., Feb. 25	Aberdeen Christian at Civic Center	
Thurs., Mar. 3	SoDak 16	
Tues., Mar. 8	SoDak 16	
March 10-12	State at Brookings	
March 17-19	State at Summit Arena, Rapid City	

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The Groton School Activities Calendar is taking shape. You can view the calendar on our home page at 397news.com, the link will be on the horizontal black bar.

I am still waiting for the Oral Interp/Debate schedule, Robotics schedule and the dates for the basketball region games. It sounds like the region dates will not be decided until they have their upcoming meeting.

I have Weston checking on the Robotics schedule.

If anyone has a direct contact with Kristen, please let her know. I've emailed her twice, but it's the school email so I don't think she has seen it yet.

## Federal Relief Resources for Renters and Landlords

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS), Huron, S.D., August 2, 2021 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced a one-month extension of the CDC Eviction Moratorium expiring on July 31, 2021. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an almost unprecedented housing affordability crisis in the United States. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provided billions of dollars to support distressed tenants and landlords and the USDA continues to collaborate with federal partners to ensure Rural America receives ample relief. Provided below is information on several federal resources designed to help those facing rental hardship or eviction.

### U.S. Treasury

Even as the American economy continues its recovery from the devastating impact of the pandemic, millions of Americans face deep rental debt and fear evictions and the loss of basic housing security. To meet this need, the U.S. Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program makes funding available to assist households that are unable to pay rent or utilities. The funds are provided directly to grantees such as states, U.S. territories, local governments, and (in the case of the first round of funding) Indian Tribes. Grantees use the funds to provide assistance to eligible households through existing or newly created rental assistance programs. To learn more about how to apply for emergency rental assistance in your state, please visit this link. Information in Spanish for renters can be found here, and information in Spanish for landlords can be found here.

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program will provide 70,000 housing choice vouchers to local Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in order to assist individuals who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, were recently homeless, or have a high risk of housing instability. For more information on eligibility and how to apply, please visit this link. The HUD and USDA have also partnered on developing a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) fact sheet, which can be found here. Information in Spanish can be found here.

### Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)

The CFPB provides additional resources to inform renters of potential options to help them stay in their homes. Please visit CFPB's Renter Protections resource webpage for more information.



## Experts Share How Soil Health Can Reduce Impacts of Drought During Seminar

By Lura Roti for SDFU

Drought not only stresses crops and livestock, it also impacts their caregivers, explained Canistota farmer, Al Scott.

"There's a lot of stress...and no rain days," Scott said. "Expenses continue, but the income is likely to shrink. Right now, I'm debating whether to put more treatments on the crop – like fungicide, herbicide and insecticide – because of the cost."

Scott was among the South Dakota farmers and ranchers to attend the Soil Health & Drought Management Workshop held in Mitchell July 27 and sponsored by South Dakota Farmers Union, South Dakota Soil Health Coalition, SDSU Extension and USDA Farm Service Agency.

Like most farmers, 2021 isn't Scott's first drought. The third-generation farmer says he's learned from past droughts to keep a positive attitude. "We've got to stay optimistic to stay in this business."

Scott points out each growing season is unique. Springfield farmer, Brad Odens agrees. "Here I've had ground in prevent plant the last few years because it's been too wet to plant."

This point was emphasized by seminar speakers SDSU Extension Climate Specialist and Meteorologist Laura Edwards and SDSU Extension Soils Specialist Anthony Bly.

"Look where we came from. We came from a deluge. No one knows what nature will throw our way and extremes are psychologically hard on us," Bly said. "This is all about water management. Good soil health is your friend in either situation – too wet or too dry."

Bly shared how fields managed with soil health practices like no-till, cover crops and diverse crop rotations, are more porous. Healthy soils are able to capture and hold water.

"Even in this drought year, we have places that got too much rain," said Bly, sharing a photo of standing water in a Minnehaha County field after a storm dropped an inch and a half of rain in about 45 minutes. "What I don't have a photo of is the dust blowing off the top of the hill the same day because it was so dry."

Bly explained more porous, less compact soils allow plant roots to access water. And because residue from previous crops is left on fields managed with soil health practices, soil temperatures are lower – reducing plant stress and increase water intake.

He added that in extremely wet years, like 2019, some no-till fields with crop residue allowed some farmers to get necessary machinery into fields in a timely fashion to harvest crops.

"Soil health is about improving soil resiliency, so it is able to overcome adverse climate extremes," Bly said.

He encouraged farmers and ranchers interested in building soil health to begin by learning about the five principles of soil health and begin implementing them. "You don't get healthy soils overnight and you don't change a system on a dime. This is why it is so important to start now," Bly explains.

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Patience is key, explained Wolsey farmer, Bill Chase. "This is long-term knowledge. It isn't a fix now that we are in this drought."

Chase and his wife, Kathy also raise livestock, so in addition to monitoring their crops, they also spend their days hauling water. The couple said they also appreciated the drought relief information provided by the Farm Service Agency representative.

Seminar speaker, Dan Forgey understands what it's like to make field decisions today that will take time to yield results. Forgey has farmed near Gettysburg for more than 50 years and for the last 30 years he has focused farm management on soil health practices. He serves on the Board for the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition. In his talk, Forgey shared positive results he has seen after implementing each of the five soil health principles: soil cover, limited disturbance, living roots, diversity and integrating livestock.

Forgey's presentation also included several lessons he's learned as he worked to increase fields' soil health. Thirty years later, soil tests show soil health practices have increased field organic matter from 2.8 percent to 4.1 percent.

"The water gain per acre for every percent of organic matter is about 25,000 gallons," Forgey shared. "Soil health is my passion. I am old and I am about done. I have been fighting this battle for 30 years and that is why I came here today. If I can help one producer change his mind on what he is doing."

Improving his fields' soil health is the reason Dimock farmer Jason Tiede attended the seminar. "It's for the future. Every time I am able to attend a soil health event, I learn something new or I am reminded of ways to improve the health and productivity of the land."

To learn more about soil health, access information and resources or to connect with Soil Health Technicians, visit [www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org](http://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org). To learn more about seminars and events South Dakota Farmers Union hosts for South Dakota's family farmers and ranchers, visit their website at [www.sdfu.org](http://www.sdfu.org).

## Senior Art Show: Artist's Entries Accepted for SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks

(SIOUX FALLS, SD – August 2, 2021) The South Dakota Health Care Association (SDHCA), Great Western Bank, Legacy Healthcare and KELOLAND Television announce that Entry Forms are available for the 24th Annual SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks Art Show. The SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks Art Show is open to all South Dakota citizens age 60 and older.

Entries will be accepted at the South Dakota Health Care Association Office located at 804 N Western Avenue, Sioux Falls, September 27 – October 1 between the hours of 9 AM – 3 PM. Entry Forms are available at [www.sdhca.org](http://www.sdhca.org) by following the SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks link or call 1-800-952-3052. The Exhibit Show will be held October 28 - 29, in the Jerstad Center at the Good Samaritan Society National Campus in Sioux Falls. Free public admission to the Exhibit Show.

SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks was created to showcase the talent and creativity of South Dakotans 60 and older. "The second half of life is full of creative growth and fulfillment, and SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks demonstrates that reality," said SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks Coordinator LuAnn Severson. The competition is open to every citizen of South Dakota age 60 and older. The winning entries will be exhibited at various sites throughout South Dakota following the Sioux Falls Show.

Categories include watercolor painting, oil painting, acrylic painting, drawing/pastels, photography, mixed media and wood carving. (The Mixed Media category is limited to a mixture of 2 or more of the following – oil paint, acrylic paint, watercolor paint, pencils, scratchboard or photography. Other items outside of these listed are not accepted within the artwork. No shadow boxes. 2-dimensional only. Size limited to no larger than 30" x 36" total including the frame.)

A first (\$75), second (\$50), and third (\$25) place award will be given in each of the categories. In addition, professional judges will select a Best of Show (\$100). A People's Choice (\$100) will also be awarded. Two entries are allowed from each entrant completed within the past 3 years.

Corporate sponsors include EmpRes, Accura, Good Samaritan Society, Tieszen Memorial Home, Dow Rummel Village, Grand Living at Lake Lorraine, The Inn on Westport, Bethany, Clarkson Health Care, Westhills Village Retirement Community, Fischer Rounds & Associates, Jenkins Living Center, Imagery Photography, and Sisson Printing.

This year's artwork for the promotional poster was created by People's Choice winner, Dennis Linn of Rapid City, SD. To receive an entry form contact: SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks, 804 N Western Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57104 or call LuAnn Severson, SDHCA, 605-339-2071 or 1-800-952-3052. Entry Forms and entry information may also be found by visiting [www.sdhca.org](http://www.sdhca.org) and follow the SDHCA Dakota MasterWorks link.



## The Life of Doris Zoellner



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

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

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

Doris Matilda was born on January 26, 1929 to Charles and Hulda (Johnson) Strom. She was born the youngest of nine siblings, including her twin brother. Doris attended school in Groton and began working at the Bank in Groton following graduation. This is where she met her future husband, Richard Zoellner. They were married a year later on September 12, 1949 at the United Methodist Church in Groton. The couple made their home on

the family farm and were blessed with four children.

Doris was an active member of the United Methodist Church. For over 50 years, she served on the UMW Committee and was honored for her service. Doris enjoyed baking and often did so for others, making her famous caramel rolls. In earlier years, she loved traveling to visit her family in other states and her daughter in Poland. Doris also cherished time spent with her grandchildren, helping them with puzzles, playing cards, reading to them and baking Christmas cookies.

Celebrating her life are her children, Kenneth Zoellner of Aberdeen, Yvonne (Jim) Bailey of Sioux Falls, Kathy (Richard) Engel of Warsaw, Poland, Bill Zoellner of Groton, 8 grandchildren: Katie, Michael, Matthew, David, Samantha, Bailee, Tia, Christina and two sister-in-laws.

Preceding her in death was her husband Richard in 2009, her daughter-in-law, Wanda, her eight siblings, and five half-brothers.

Casketbearers will be Art Zoellner, Loel Schott, Bill McKiver, Alan Strom, Dan Strom and Michael Bailey.

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## 2021 South Dakota American Legion State Class "B" Jr. Baseball Tournament

South Dakota American Legion  
State Class "B" Jr. Baseball Tournament  
Redfield, SD  
August 6 - August 8, 2021

### Elk Point/Jefferson

#1 Seed South

8/6 Game 1  
11:00 AM

### Belle Fourche

#4 Seed North

8/7 Game 7  
5:00 PM

### Lake Norden/Badger

#3 Seed South

8/6 Game 2  
30 Min After G1

### Clark

#2 Seed North

8/8 Game 11  
30 Min After Game 10

Champion

### Groton

#3 Seed North

8/6 Game 3  
5:00 PM

### Winner/Colome

#2 Seed South

8/7 Game 8  
30 Min After G7

### Lennox

#4 Seed South

8/6 Game 4  
30 Min After G3

### REDFIELD

#1 Seed North

Loser Game 7

8/8 Game 10  
30 Min After G9

3rd Place

Loser Game 8

Loser Game 1

8/7 Game 5  
11:00 AM

Loser Game 2

8/8 Game 9  
1:00 PM

5th Place

Loser Game 3

8/7 Game 6  
30 Min After G5

Loser Game 4

Tournament MVP:

Big Stick Award:

Porter T. Talcott Sportsmanship Award:

## Central Plains Dairy Foundation Now Accepting Scholarship Applications

PIERRE, S.D. – The Central Plains Dairy Foundation (CPDF) is now accepting applications for the Lon and Kathy Tonneson Dairy Leadership Scholarship and the Central Plains Dairy Foundation (CPDF) Dairy Scholarships Grant.

Established in 2019 by Tracey and Brian Erickson, this year marks the 3rd year of the Lon and Kathy Tonneson Dairy Leadership Scholarship. The scholarship honors Lon and Kathy for their dedication to growing the dairy industry. Students who have completed at least one semester in a post-secondary college or university, pursuing a degree in agriculture with an emphasis in agriculture communication and/or leadership, are eligible for this scholarship. Preference will be given to applicants in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

The CPDF Dairy Scholarships grant program is available to organizations and schools who wish to provide scholarships to dairy students. Students must be attending a two or four-year college that offers one or more dairy education programs. This grant, and subsequent scholarships, are intended for up-and-coming young leaders in the dairy industry. Awardees must attend a post-secondary school in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, or South Dakota.

"Agriculture is at the core of who we are in the Midwest," says Chris Maxwell, Executive Director of the Central Plains Dairy Foundation. "We created these scholarships programs to support up-and-coming leaders in the dairy industry, and we are very proud to do so."

Applications must be submitted by September 15, 2021. Information about the scholarship and grant programs and applications are available online at [centralplainsdairyfoundation.org](http://centralplainsdairyfoundation.org).

For additional information about the Central Plains Dairy Foundation, call 605.412.8403 or email [foundation@centralplainsdairyexpo.com](mailto:foundation@centralplainsdairyexpo.com).

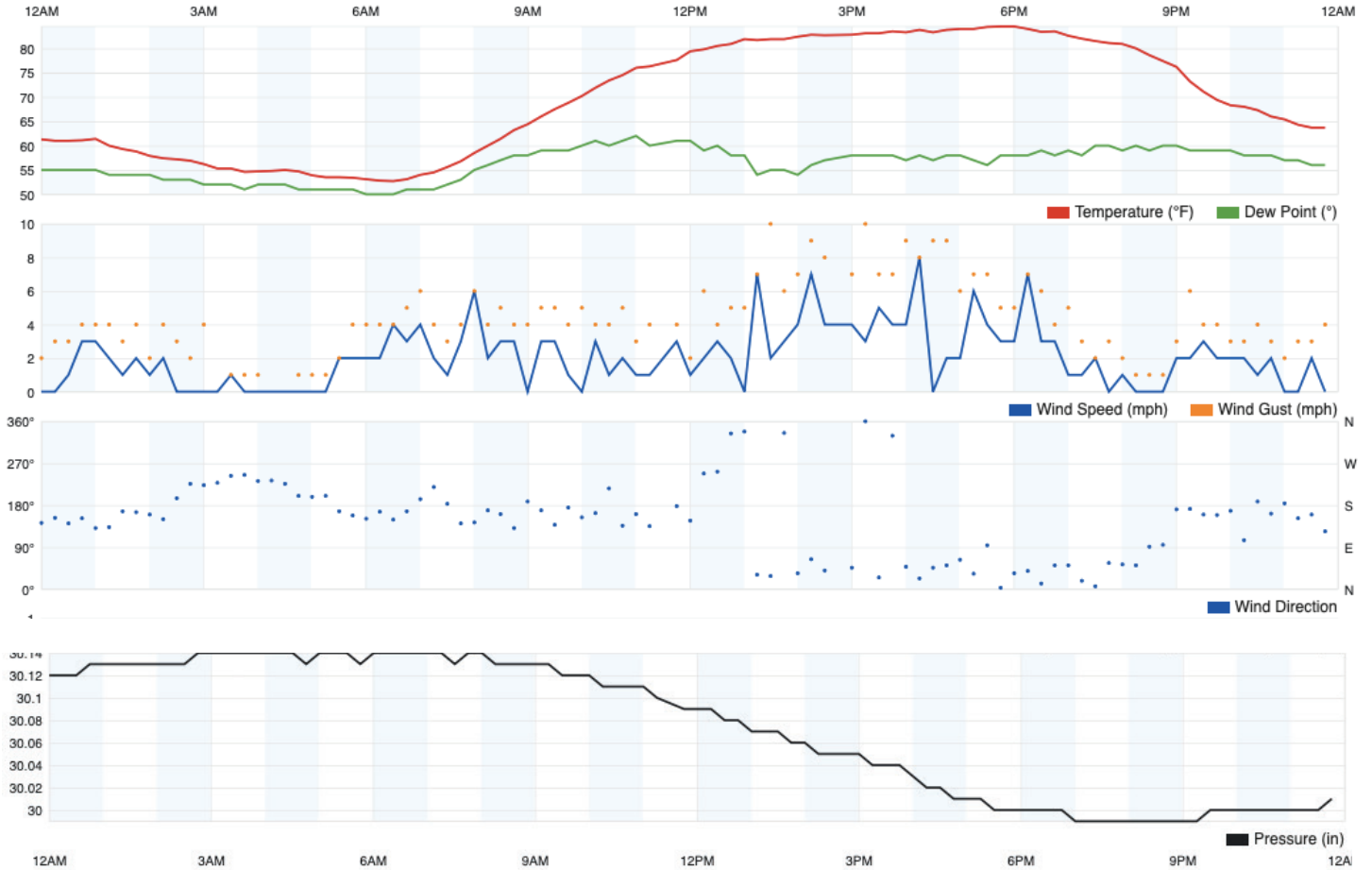
The Central Plains Dairy Foundation is an independent 501(c)3 organization committed to investing in proactive programming to support the dairy industry along the I-29 corridor in South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 89 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 64 °F

Wednesday



Partly Sunny  
then Slight  
Chance  
T-storms

High: 87 °F

Wednesday  
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 62 °F

Thursday



Hot

High: 90 °F

**Today**

- Mostly Sunny with some smoke aloft
- Highs 80s to Low 90s

**Tonight**

- Partly Cloudy
- Lows in the 60s

**Wednesday**

- Partly Sunny with a slight chance of showers/storms
- Highs 80s to low 90s

Another day of warm temperatures and dry conditions is on tap for today. However, a system will move across the region on Wednesday, with slight chances for rain. #sdwx #mnwx

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## Today in Weather History

August 3, 1984: During the morning hours, estimated four to six inches of rain fell from west of Garden City in Clark County to north of Henry in Codington County. Low lying areas were flooded, and a potato field west of Garden City was washed out.

August 3, 1989: Strong thunderstorm winds gusted to 70 mph, driving golf ball size hail through most the windows on the west side of buildings in Amherst, Marshall County. Corn crops were stripped off their leaves with an estimated 1800 acres being severely damaged.

August 3, 1996: High winds up to 90 mph uprooted and damaged many trees in Mobridge. The roofs of two buildings were blown off while other roofs received some damage. Windows were broken out in eight vehicles at the South Dakota Winds up to 90 mph also caused damage in Herreid where doors on a concrete elevator were blown out.

August 3, 2008: Severe thunderstorms moved across north-central South Dakota during the early morning hours bringing large hail and damaging thunderstorm winds to the area. Isabel, Timber Lake, and Selby were among the hardest hit locations. Isabel in Dewey County saw eighty mph winds which damaged or downed several trees, damaged carnival equipment, destroyed some sheds, and rolled some large hay bales. High winds up to 80 mph severely damaged a barn, downed some power poles along with many trees and branches in and around Timber Lake. Also, several vehicles and many acres of crops were damaged by the hail and high winds. The Little Moreau Elk Lodge roof was destroyed, and some windows were broken. One-hundred mph winds downed six power poles and caused considerable damage to sunflowers, corn, wheat, and beans in and around Selby in Walworth County. Also, an empty grain bin was blown over and damaged. Numerous trees were snapped off. The coop seed building in Selby sustained considerable damage with many trees uprooted or damaged throughout town.

August 3, 2009: A cold front moving southeast across the area brought many severe thunderstorms to parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail up to golf ball size along with wind gusts nearing 80 mph occurred across the area. Brown, Hyde, Lyman, and Gregory Counties were among the hardest hit locations. Hail and sixty mph winds significantly damaged many acres of soybeans and corn near Putney in Brown County. Seventy to 80 mph winds brought down several large trees along with many large tree branches in and around Highmore in Hyde County. The high winds also tipped over a semi, a gravity wagon, and a grain auger along with damaging several fences. There were also power outages in Highmore. Golf ball size hail combined with strong winds broke many windows in the house and dented several vehicles south of Kennebec in Lyman County. The house pet was also injured. Large hail, up to two inches in diameter, fell in a swath a few miles wide from northwestern to south-central Gregory County. The hail broke numerous windows, severely damaged siding and roofs of homes and other buildings, and severely damaged vehicles, while covering the ground in several places. Property damage has been particularly severe in the town of Gregory. Crop damage was also severe along the swath, with corn crops in some areas destroyed to the point of only small stubble left.

1970: Hurricane Celia was the costliest tropical cyclone in Texas history until Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Hurricane Celia made landfall near Port Aransas as a major Hurricane, Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale with sustained winds of 130 mph.

1885 - A tornado hit Philadelphia and Camden along its eight mile path. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A severe thunderstorm moved across Cheyenne, WY, during the mid afternoon. The thunderstorm produced hailstones up to two inches in diameter causing more than 37 million dollars damage. The eastern U.S. sweltered in the heat. A dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Paducah KY with a reading of 102 degrees. Beckley WV established an all-time record with an afternoon high of 93 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a slow moving cold front produced severe weather from the Central High Plains to the Upper Great Lakes Region. Thunderstorms around Fort Collins, CO, produced wind gusts to 74 mph along with marble size hail. Sixteen persons were injured in the storm, most of whom were accidentally locked out of their office building, having evacuated it when the fire alarm went off, apparently triggered by lightning. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



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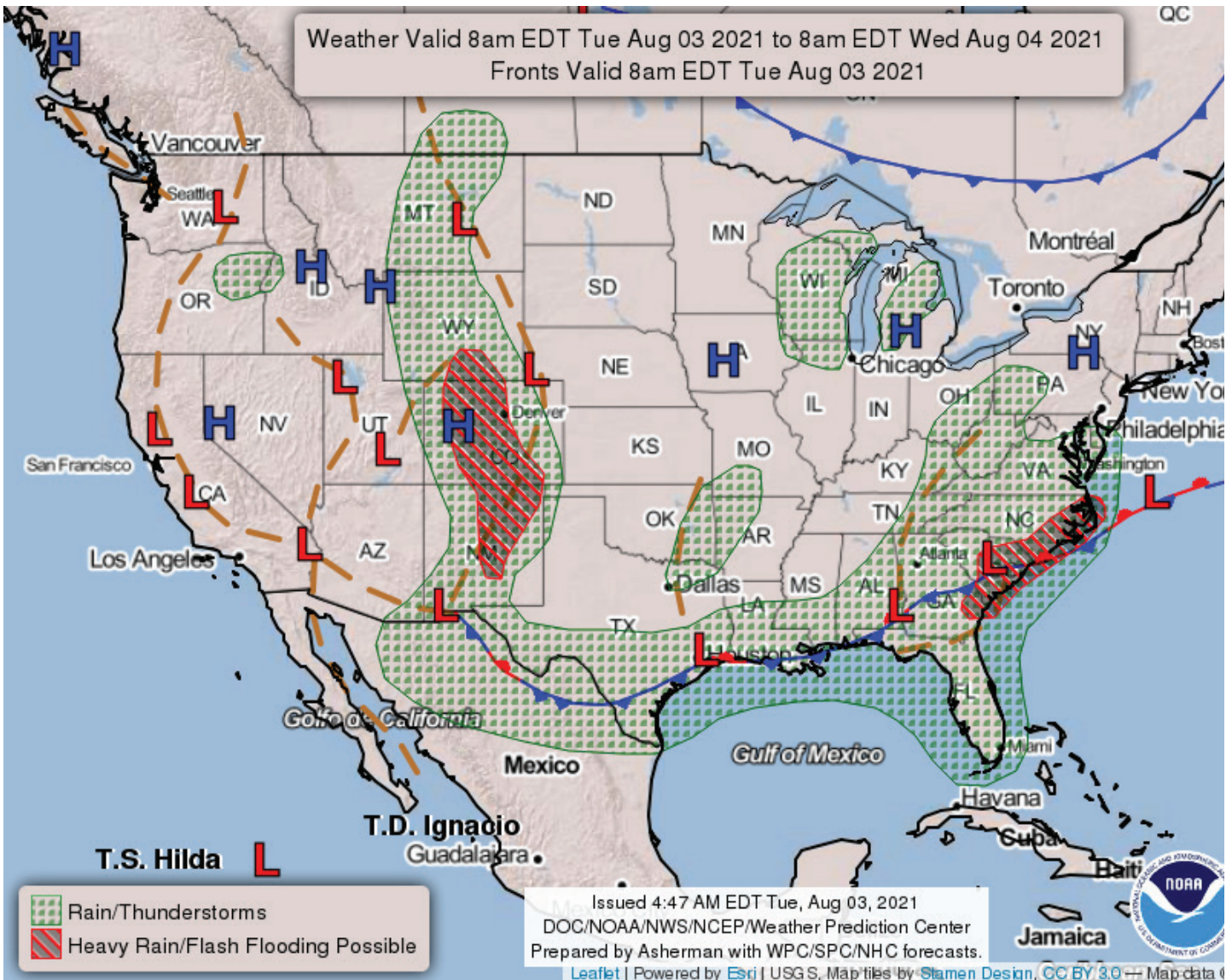
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 84.5 °F at 5:45 PM**  
**Low Temp: 52.7 °F at 6:30 AM**  
**Wind: 10 mph at 1:30 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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## GOD'S PEACE

There is an interesting theme that runs throughout the Bible. It is the if/then theme. If we are obedient to God, then we can be confident of His blessings, favor, gifts and a sense of His presence in our lives. If on the other hand, we are disobedient and willingly disobey His laws and teachings, then we will experience guilt and a separation from Him.

Certainly the feelings of separation can be a good thing. It is God within us stirring up a special gift He has given us – the gift of the Holy Spirit who is to guide us and guard us; and give us peace. When we become “disconnected” from God, He is there to “alert us” of impending dangers and convict us to return to the path and plan He has designed for us. He is eager to do His work if we are willing to allow Him to do so.

Our Psalmist reminds us that God “speaks peace to His people and to His saints.” His peace is what brings us “wholeness and completeness” and unites us with Him. It dissolves the fear we have of Him and removes the guilt that we carry within us from being disobedient to Him.

So our Psalmist wisely adds, “but let them not return to their folly” – or perhaps a more appropriate translation of the word “folly” is “stupidity.” What might this mean?

Often we become “presumptuous” and assume that we deserve God’s blessings. We take an inventory of our lives and things appear to be “just about as wonderful as wonderful can be.” We have no “fear” of God and take His goodness for granted. “What stupidity!” says the Psalmist. “Be careful of falling into Your past sinful ways.”

Prayer: May we be constantly alert, Lord, to any sin that will separate us from You, Your peace, and Your blessings. Please keep us from being “stupid!” In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 85:8

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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

### **Supreme Court allows excessive force lawsuit to proceed**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court is allowing a lawsuit to go forward alleging police officers used excessive force when arresting a Sioux Falls woman in 2016.

Nichole Boggs sued in Second Circuit Court for injuries she suffered when two police officers took her into custody while investigating a call for help at her apartment. When officers arrived they found an injured man, Boggs' son, outside the apartment complex and determined he had been hurt in his mother's apartment.

Boggs refused to let the officers into her apartment. Eventually another son came out of the apartment with injuries, so police entered the unit without a warrant or consent.

In its recently released opinion, Supreme Court justices agree that circumstances at the time created an exception to the constitutional ban on unreasonable searches.

But the Supreme Court did not agree that the police officers accused of excessive force are entitled to qualified immunity, which generally protects them from personal liability, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

The Supreme Court has upheld the circuit court's refusal to summarily dismiss the claim of excessive force. But the high court says the lower court should have found the warrantless search to be legal.

In its opinion, justices agree with the circuit court's finding that given the circumstances, a jury might find that the officers used excessive force.

The Supreme Court has returned the case to the Second Circuit, where the lawsuit will continue to settlement or trial.

### **Olympics Latest: Aussie athletes in 'unacceptable behavior'**

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:

The Australian Olympic team says some of its athletes were responsible for "unacceptable behavior" on a Japan Airlines flight to Sydney last Friday.

Australian Olympic Committee chief executive Matt Carroll says rugby and soccer officials "have told me that such behavior is certainly not acceptable within their sports."

Australian teams in men's soccer and men's and women's rugby all failed to win medals. The women's soccer team is still in Japan and will play the United States for bronze.

#### **MEDAL ALERT**

Roniel Iglesias of Cuba won his second Olympic boxing gold medal by soundly beating Pat McCormack of Britain in the welterweight final.

Iglesias added Tokyo gold to his two previous light welterweight medals. He won gold in London and bronze from Beijing. He also fought at welterweight in Rio de Janeiro but lost in the quarterfinals.

Iglesias largely controlled the final bout with superior footwork and technique against McCormack. McCormack was gracious in defeat as Iglesias celebrated Cuba's first official boxing medal in Tokyo. Several more are already clinched.

Aidan Walsh of Ireland and Andrei Zamkovoy of Russia claimed bronze medals. Walsh was unable to fight McCormack in the semifinals after he injured his ankle while leaping to celebrate his quarterfinal victory.

#### **MEDAL ALERT**

Chinese gymnasts Guan Chenchen and Tang Xijing have swept the gold and silver in balance beam. American Simone Biles won bronze in the event, her first medal of the Tokyo Olympics.

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Guan took the gold with a score of 14.633, ahead of Tang (14.233).

Biles (14.000) earned her seventh career Olympic medal — tied with Shannon Miller for the most by an American in gymnastics — by drilling a slightly watered-down version of her usual routine in front of a crowd that included IOC President Thomas Bach.

The Greek Olympic team says the outbreak of COVID-19 cases among its artistic swimmers has ruled them out of competing at the Tokyo Games.

Three new cases were reported Tuesday and the entire artistic swimming squad was asked to leave the Olympic Village. Only one case had been previously confirmed.

The Greek team says they are all staying at a quarantine hotel.

Greece was due to compete in the duet and team events.

Simone Biles has won a bronze medal in balance beam, her first of the Tokyo Olympics.

The American gymnastics star finished behind gold medalist Guan Chenchen and silver medalist Tang Xijing both of China.

A week after taking herself out of several competitions to focus on her mental health, Biles drilled a slightly altered routine on Tuesday.

Biles, using a routine that ended with a double-pike dismount — no twisting required — posted a score of 14.000.

## MEDAL ALERT

The Netherlands romped past Britain in Olympic-record time to win the men's team sprint at the Izu Velodrome.

The team of Jeffrey Hoogland, Roy van den Berg and Harrie Lavreysen stopped the clock in 41.369 seconds to easily beat the British, who had claimed the last three gold medals in the three-lap race.

The British team of Ryan Owens, Jack Carlin and Jason Kenny led by the slimmest margins after the first lap but was unable to keep up the pace. The Dutch pulled after the second lap and wound up easing up across the finish line.

The British finished in a time of 44.589 seconds.

France easily beat Australia in the matchup for the bronze medal.

## GOLD MEDAL, WORLD RECORD

Germany became the first women's pursuit team to beat Britain in an Olympic final, breaking its own world record with a time of 4:04.259 in track cycling at the Izu Velodrome.

The team of Franziska Brausse, Lisa Brennauer, Lisa Klein and Mieke Kroege led the British by nearly 2 seconds by the midway point of the 4,000-meter race and never looked back. The British wound up finishing in 4:10.607.

Britain had won the gold medal the previous three Summer Olympics.

The world champion Americans led the whole way in beating Canada for the bronze medal.

## MEDAL ALERT

Zou Jingyuan of China has captured gold on parallel bars. Zou's winning score of 16.233 was the highest on any event by any gymnast during the nine days of competition at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre.

Zou topped qualifying with a score of 16.166 but went even higher in the finals, giving him a gold to go with the bronze he won in the team competition last week.

Lukas Dauser of Germany grabbed silver after posting a 15.700, just ahead of Ferhat Arican of Turkey, who took bronze.

American Sam Mikulak, competing in his third Olympics, finished sixth in the eight-man final. The 28-year-old Mikulak is retiring following a career in which he won six U.S. titles.

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## WORLD RECORD

Italy topped another record in track cycling at the Tokyo Olympics with a new mark in men's team pursuit. The team of Simone Consonni, Filippo Ganna, Francesco Lamon and Jonathan Milan stopped the clock in 3:42.307 for the 4,000 meters to break the mark of 3:44.672 that Denmark set at last year's world championships.

The Italians were pushed the entire way by New Zealand in the race for a spot in the gold medal race. The team of Aaron Gate, Campbell Stewart, Regan Gough and Jordan Kerby also bettered the previous record with a time of 3:42.397.

## MEDAL ALERT

Xie Siyi and Wang Zongyuan have given China another 1-2 finish in Olympic diving, taking gold and silver in men's 3-meter springboard.

The Chinese divers held the top two spots after both the preliminaries and the semifinals, and it was more of the same in the finals.

Xie broke down in tears when marks for his final dive were posted, a string of 9.0s and 9.5s that clinched the gold with 558.75 points. Wang came over to give his teammate a hug.

The biggest drama was for the silver, but Wang nailed his final dive to hold off Britain's Jack Laugher with 534.90.

Laugher was only 2.05 points behind Wang going to the final round but over-rotated his entry a bit, leaving him with the bronze at 518.00.

Long the world's dominant diving nation, China has been near-perfect at the Tokyo Aquatic Center with five gold medals in six events.

British track cyclist Ed Clancy withdrew from the Tokyo Olympics and announced his retirement because of an ongoing back and sciatica injury, hours before his pursuit team was scheduled to compete in its first-round ride.

Charlie Tanfield will replace him alongside Ethan Hayter, Ethan Vernon and Ollie Wood in the four-man lineup.

Clancy has been part of the gold medal-winning pursuit squad during the last three Olympic cycles. He also has a bronze medal in the multidiscipline omnium while spending just over 20 years on the national team.

Clancy said he was "absolutely gutted that my Olympic career has ended this way."

But he said he wants the rest of the team to have the best chance of winning a medal.

The medal rounds of the team pursuit take place Wednesday.

## MEDAL ALERT

Sena Irie of Japan has claimed the first-ever women's featherweight boxing gold medal with a unanimous decision over the Philippines' Nesthy Petecio.

Irie became the first female boxer to win a medal for Japan when she secured the first gold of the Tokyo boxing tournament by sweeping the third round on all five judges' cards at the Kokugikan Arena. Irie's crisp punches won over the judges in a bout with plenty of clinching.

Petecio settled for the Philippines' first boxing medal of any kind since 1996, but Manny Pacquiao's home nation is in contention for at least two more medals in Tokyo.

Featherweight was one of two women's weight classes added to the Olympics in Tokyo. The women's field also was expanded to 100 fighters from 36 in its first two Olympics.

Italy's Irma Testa and Britain's Karriss Artingstall won the division's inaugural bronze medals.

The IOC says it asked China's Olympic team to explain two gold medal winners wearing pins of communist leader Mao Zedong at their medal ceremony.

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It risks being judged a breach of Olympic Charter Rule 50 prohibiting political statements on the podium. After winning the women's sprint in track cycling Monday, Bao Shanju and Zhong Tianshi wore pin badges of Mao, the founding leader of communist China.

The Chinese incident followed one day after American shot put silver medalist Raven Saunders crossed the wrists of her raised arms on the podium, in a symbol of support for oppressed people. That happened seconds after the Chinese national anthem finished playing for gold medalist Gong Lijiao.

Adams says the IOC has asked the United States team for more details. The U.S. Olympic body said it was taking no action against Saunders.

A shot putter from the country of Georgia has tested positive for steroids and been pulled from his event Tuesday.

The International Testing Agency says Benik Abramyan tested positive for two steroids and a banned hormone in a sample taken in Tokyo on Saturday. That was his 36th birthday.

Abramyan was due to take part in the shot put qualifying round later Tuesday.

The agency says the athlete can appeal against his provisional suspension at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Abramyan competed at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics and did not reach the final.

Xie Siyi and Wang Zongyuan gave China a 1-2 finish in the semifinals of men's 3-meter springboard diving at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Looking for China's fifth diving gold in six Olympic events, Xie and Wang led a group of 12 qualifiers to the afternoon final.

Xie totaled 543.45 points for six dives, with Wang right behind at 540.50. Britain's Jack Laugher was the only diver even close to China's powerhouse duo, taking the third spot with 514.75.

Another British diver, James Heatly, was fourth in 454.85 -- a whopping 88.60 behind the leader.

The lone U.S. diver, Andrew Capobianco, advanced to the final in 10th at 419.60. Teammate Tyler Downs was eliminated in Monday's preliminaries. Capobianco already won a silver medal with Michael Hixon in the 3-meter synchronized event, one of three diving medals for the Americans.

## MEDAL ALERT

Malaika Mihambo of Germany took the top spot in the women's long jump with a 7-meter leap on her final attempt and edged U.S. veteran Brittney Reese for the Olympic gold medal.

Mihambo won the world championship title in 2019 and finished just off the podium in fourth place at the 2016 Olympics.

The 34-year-old Reese now has back-to-back Olympic silver medals at the Tokyo Games and from Rio de Janeiro after winning the title at London in 2012.

The four-time world champion had the chance to win with the final jump of the competition but couldn't improve on her best mark of 6.97 meters.

Ese Brume of Nigeria, who led after the first round and was in top spot again after the fourth, also finished on 6.97-meters and took bronze on a countback.

## MEDAL ALERT

Cuba won a surprise gold medal in the men's canoe double 1,000 meters, ahead of China and Germany. Germany had won the event at five of the last seven Olympic games and Sebastian Brendel had been in the German boat for gold medals in 2012 and 2016.

But the race developed into a battle between Cuba and China over the final 500 meters. Cuba's Serguey Torres Madrigal and Fernando Dayan Jorge Enriquez edged across the line to win by 0.2 seconds.

The Cuban duo had won silver at the world championships in 2019, but Cuba hadn't medaled in this event at the Olympics since 2000.



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Germany won bronze to earn a medal in the events for the seventh consecutive Olympics.

## MEDAL ALERT

New Zealand's Lisa Carrington blew away the field in winning her third consecutive women's kayak sprint 200 at the Sea Forest Waterway.

The gold medal could be the first of a potential four medals for Carrington in Tokyo. She's also in the women's kayak double 500 later Tuesday and the 500 single and fours later in the week.

Carrington bolted out of the start and had a lead of half a boat length barely 50 meters into the race. She beat Spain's Teresa Portela of Spain by 0.76 seconds.

Emma Aastrand Jorgensen of Denmark won the bronze medal.

Allyson Felix won her first-round heat of the 400 meters as she began her Tokyo quest for a 10th Olympic medal.

The 35-year-old Felix, who's competing at her fifth Olympics, has six gold medals and three silvers on her resume. She's tied with Jamaican great Merlene Ottey for the most women's track medals in Olympic history. Felix has a chance to medal in the 400 and may have another shot in the women's 4x400 this weekend.

Before her race, she was introduced as a legend.

Felix ran in spikes designed by her new company, Saysh. It made the moment more special. The only thing missing was her young daughter, Camryn, who's back home.

"It's changed everything," Felix said of motherhood. "It's given me a different drive. ... I think it's even more meaningful to be on this stage as a mom."

The Court of Arbitration for Sport says Belarus sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya failed in a legal action to be allowed to run in the 200 meters heats.

The court revealed early Tuesday the legal steps Tsimanouskaya took while she was also seeking a humanitarian visa to avoid returning to Belarus, where she believes her life would be in danger.

CAS says it denied Tsimanouskaya's request for an interim ruling to overturn Belarus Olympic officials' refusal to let her race in the 200.

The heats were held Monday morning and semifinals in the evening session at the Olympic Stadium.

April Ross is the last medalist standing in the Olympic beach volleyball women's bracket.

The American 2016 bronze medalist and her partner ousted defending champion Laura Ludwig of Germany on Tuesday and advanced to the semifinals at the Shiokaze Park venue. Ross, who also has a silver medal from London, is the last woman remaining who has reached the podium at a previous Summer Games.

This time, Ross is playing with Olympic first-timer Alix Klineman. They beat Ludwig and her new partner Maggie Kozuch 21-19, 21-19.

Ross and Klineman are the U.S.'s last hopes for a beach volleyball medal in Tokyo. The sport's birthplace has never been shut out in the Olympics.

## Belarus sprinter says punishment awaited her back home

By DANIEL KOZIN Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Belarusian Olympic sprinter who had a public feud with officials from her team at the Tokyo Games said Tuesday that authorities "made it clear" she would face punishment if she returned home to an autocratic government that has relentlessly stifled any criticism.

Waiting to leave Japan to seek refuge in Europe, Krystsina Tsimanouskaya said she hopes she can continue her career, but for now her safety is the priority. After she criticized the management of her team on social media, she accused officials of hustling her to the airport and trying to put her on a plane back to Belarus.

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In the dramatic standoff, several countries offered her help, and Poland granted her a humanitarian visa Monday. She plans to fly to Warsaw later in the week, according to an activist group that is supporting her.

Team officials "made it clear that, upon return home, I would definitely face some form of punishment," the 24-year-old sprinter told The Associated Press in a videocall interview from Tokyo. "There were also thinly disguised hints that more would await me."

She added that she believed she would be kicked off of the national team. She hopes to be able to continue running once she has reached safety.

"I would very much like to continue my sporting career because I'm just 24, and I had plans for two more Olympics at least," she said. But "for now, the only thing that concerns me is my safety."

Asked what made her fear she would be in danger at home, Tsimanouskaya said that "the key phrase was that 'we didn't make the decision for you to go home, it was decided by other people, and we were merely ordered to make it happen.'"

She added that she's worried about her parents, who remain in Belarus. Her husband, Arseni Zdanevich, left the country and is in Ukraine.

The standoff began after Tsimanouskaya's criticism of how officials were managing her team set off a massive backlash in state-run media back home, where the government has cracked down on dissent since a presidential election a year ago triggered a wave of unprecedented mass protests.

The runner said on Instagram that she was put in the 4x400 relay even though she has never raced in the event. She was then barred from competing in the 200 meters.

Tsimanouskaya waged — and lost — a legal fight to run in that event. The Court of Arbitration for Sport said in a statement that it denied Tsimanouskaya's request for an interim ruling that would have allowed her to run at the Olympic Stadium on Monday. The heats were held in the morning and the semifinals were in the evening.

On Tuesday, Tsimanouskaya called for an investigation and suggested possible "sanctions against the head coach who approached me and who deprived me of the right to compete in the Olympic Games." She said she wanted international sports authorities "to investigate the situation, who gave the order, who actually took the decision that I can't compete any more."

At the same time, she said that "the athletes aren't guilty of anything, and they should keep competing."

Belarus' authoritarian government has at times gone to extremes in its crackdown on dissent, including recently diverting a plane to the capital of Minsk and arresting a journalist aboard. Authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko maintained that there was a bomb threat against the flight, but European officials denounced the move as an act of air piracy.

Lukashenko appears to have a particular interest in his country's Olympic team: He and his son, Viktor, have led the Belarus National Olympic Committee for more than 25 years.

Both Lukashenkos are banned from the Tokyo Olympics by the International Olympic Committee, which investigated complaints from athletes that they faced reprisals and intimidation during the crackdown following the wave of anti-government protests over the last year.

Athletes seeking asylum at global sporting events is nothing new — such requests were especially frequent during the Cold War but they have also happened occasionally in the decades since.

But Tsimanouskaya's circumstances appear to differ from the typical situation, though some have accused her planning to flee to Europe all along. Tsimanouskaya dismissed that, saying events in Tokyo forced her hand.

"Everything that is happening now absolutely wasn't in my plans," Tsimanouskaya said. She said she only spoke out when she learned she would be competing in an event she had never competed in — but couldn't see how that led to her being asked to go home.

Still, the athlete declined to link her problems to the larger struggle in Belarus.

"I don't want to get involved in politics," she said. "For me, my career is important, only sports is important, and I'm only thinking about my future, about how I can continue my career."

## Biles returns to Olympic competition, wins bronze on beam

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Simone Biles stuck the landing.

The American gymnastics superstar won bronze during the balance beam final on Tuesday, a week after she took herself out of several competitions to focus on her mental health.

Biles earned her seventh career Olympic medal — tied with Shannon Miller for the most by an American in gymnastics — by drilling a slightly watered-down version of her usual routine in front of a crowd that included IOC President Thomas Bach.

Biles, using a double-pike dismount — no twisting required — posted a score of 14.000. That was good enough for bronze behind the Chinese duo of gold medalist Guan Chenchen (14.633) and Tang Xijing (14.233).

“I had nerves but I felt pretty good,” Biles said.

Olympic all-around champion Sunisa Lee of the United States finished fifth. The 18-year-old Lee won three medals in Tokyo, including silver in the team final and bronze on uneven bars.

Biles arrived on the floor about 90 minutes before the competition started, wearing a red, white and blue leotard emblazoned with nearly 5,000 crystals. If she was nervous, it hardly showed. She warmed up as if it was just another day back in the gym her family owns in the northern Houston suburbs. Twice she hopped onto the beam to do a run-through of her routine and she stuck her double-pike dismount to applause from the stands and the whirl of dozens of cameras.

Biles arrived in Tokyo as the face of the U.S. contingent in Japan and perhaps the Games themselves. Yet the brilliance she’s summoned so easily for so long during her run atop the sport came undone after qualifying on July 25.

She bailed out of her vault during the first rotation of the team finals on July 27, then stunningly removed herself from the competition as a matter of protection because she was having difficulty locating herself in the air. She later described the phenomenon as “the twisties” and subsequently pulled out of the all-around, uneven bars, floor exercise and vault finals.

The decision amplified increased attention on the importance of mental health in sports in general and among Olympians specifically. Add it to the growing list of movements the 24-year-old Biles has become a touchstone for during her rise to stardom.

She’s spent the last week continuing to train and be evaluated by team physician Dr. Marcia Faustin while doubling as lead cheerleader for a U.S. women’s team that has racked up some serious hardware in her absence.

“Put your health and safety first above all things,” Biles said.

Lee became the fifth straight American woman to capture the all-around title and added a bronze on uneven bars. MyKayla Skinner, placed into the vault final after Biles scratched, soared to silver. On Monday, Jade Carey’s long journey to the Olympics ended with a victory on floor exercise after Biles gave her a pep talk following a nightmarish vault performance in which she tripped at the end of the runway and narrowly avoided serious injury.

Her return to competition on beam served as a fitting ending to her Olympic experience. She earned bronze on the event in Brazil five years ago thanks in part by reaching down to grab the 4-inch piece of wood after she slipped. The decision cost her gold but assured her of a fifth medal and the one, in retrospect, she said she’s most proud of.

While she hasn’t officially announced her retirement — she’s hinted that she might want to stick around in some fashion until the 2024 Paris Games to honor coaches Laurent and Cecile Landi, who are both French — a long layoff awaits. She’s headlining a post-Olympic tour through the fall but stressed recently she plans to stay close to the sport.

“I just need to process this Olympics first,” Biles said.

If Tuesday night was her official goodbye, she did it on her terms. Just like she has for most of an eight-year elite career that pushed the boundaries of gymnastics and saw her achieve the kind of crossover

success typically reserved for sprinters like Usain Bolt and swimmers like Michael Phelps.

## Turkey's Erdogan faces mounting criticism over wildfires

By MEHMET GUZEL and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

BOZALAN, Turkey (AP) — As Turkish fire crews pressed ahead Tuesday with their weeklong battle against blazes tearing through forests and villages on the country's southern coast, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government faced increased criticism over its apparent poor response and inadequate preparedness for large-scale wildfires.

Fed by strong winds and scorching temperatures, the fires that began Wednesday have left eight people dead, forced thousands of residents and tourists to flee homes or vacation resorts in boats or convoys of cars and trucks. Charred and blackened trees have replaced some of the pine-coated hills in Turkey's Turquoise Coast while many villagers lost homes and livestock.

Firefighters were still tackling nine fires in the coastal province of Antalya and Mugla that are popular tourist destinations. Other active fires were reported in the provinces of Adana and Isparta. In all, 137 fires that broke out in over 30 provinces since Wednesday have been put out, officials said.

A senior Turkish forestry official described the wildfires as the worst in Turkey in living memory, though he could not say how many acres of forest land the fires had devoured. He also could not estimate how long it would take the crews to put the fires out, saying strong winds were reigniting flames that had previously been brought under control. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with government regulations.

As residents lost homes and livestock, anger turned toward the government, which admitted that it did not have a firefighting aircraft fleet, and that the existing planes were not in usable condition. Opposition parties accused the government of failing to procure fire-fighting planes while channeling funds for construction projects that they say are harmful to the environment.

Erdogan's government has also been accused of compromising firefighting efforts by refusing help from Western nations, including rival Greece, during the early stages of the fires. Agriculture and Forestry Minister Bekir Pakdemirli rejected the accusation, saying that the government had only refused offers for planes whose water-dumping capacities were less than five tons.

The Israeli Embassy said Tuesday that Israel had also offered to help but that Turkish officials had refused the offer, saying the "situation is under control." It said the offer still stands.

Local mayors posted videos pleading for areal firefighting responses to wildfires in their areas while celebrities joined a social media campaign requesting foreign help to combat the blazes. The campaign drew an angry response from a top Erdogan aide, Fahrettin Altun, who said "Our Turkey is strong. Our state is standing strong."

Erdogan, meanwhile, has also been accused of insensitivity after he threw bags of tea at residents from a bus during a weekend visit to the fire-hit Antalya region.

Fire-dumping planes sent from Spain and Croatia were set to join planes from Russia, Iran, Ukraine and Azerbaijan on Tuesday. A total of 16 planes, 51 helicopters and more than 5,000 personnel were tackling the fires, officials said.

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said 36 people in Mugla and 11 people in Antalya were still being treated in hospitals for fire-related injuries.

Authorities have launched investigations into the cause of the fires, including possible sabotage by Kurdish militants. Experts, however, mostly point to climate change as being behind the fires, along with accidents caused by people.

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

In Italy, the head of the civil protection agency, Fabrizio Curcio, described wildfires affecting much of central and southern Italy as "dramatic." Firefighters on Tuesday were fighting seven major blazes in Calabria, Sicily, Basilicata and Puglia, employing aircraft near Matera, in Basilicata and around three fires in



Calabria. They carried out more than 1,100 interventions in the last 24 hours.

## Hubbard shy about making history as a transgender Olympian

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Weightlifter Laurel Hubbard was never seeking the attention that inevitably came with becoming the first openly transgender woman to compete in the Olympics.

The 43-year-old was the focus of intense scrutiny at the Tokyo Games. Ultimately, she didn't win — Hubbard couldn't complete any of her first three lifts and finished out of contention for a medal.

But in the end, going home to New Zealand empty-handed was secondary to being authentic.

"All I've ever wanted to be is myself," she said. "I'm just so grateful that I've had the opportunity to come here and be me."

Hubbard, who was largely quiet in the run-up to the Olympics and during the competition except for statements released by the federation, is soft-spoken and intensely private. But as an athlete and competitor, the Olympic stage beckoned.

"What drives me in sport, I think, is the sport itself," she said to a small group of reporters on Tuesday. "And this is the pinnacle event for weightlifting, as it is for so many sports. And I suppose that's what's drawn me here, because anyone I think can train in their own time, but to actually be called to account on the platform. We've got one minute to make it all happen. That's the real test for, I suppose, anyone and weightlifting."

The Tokyo Games are the first time that openly transgender athletes have competed in the Olympics.

Quinn, a non-binary player for the Canadian women's soccer team, came out last year and goes by they and them pronouns. Quinn is guaranteed a medal after Canada advanced to the gold medal match against Sweden Friday. Chelsea Wolfe, a transgender cyclist, is a reserve on the U.S. women's BMX Freestyle team. U.S. skateboarder Alana Smith is also non-binary, and has written "they/them" on their board.

Hubbard, who transitioned when she was 35, downplayed her history-making role in this Olympics.

"These type of situations are always quite difficult for me because, as some of you may know, I have never really been involved with sport because I'm looking for publicity, profile or exposure," she said. "And while I recognize that my involvement in sport is a topic of considerable interest to some, in some ways I'm looking forward to this being the end of my journey of as an athlete and the attention that comes from it."

The International Olympic Committee first allowed for transgender participation in 2004. In 2015 the IOC drew up a set of recommendations for transgender athletes.

Many sports bodies, including the International Weightlifting Federation, have implemented similar policies based on the IOC recommendations.

The IOC signaled during the Tokyo Games that it will release a new "framework" for transgender athletes' eligibility, taking into account newer scientific studies. That will form a basis for sports to draw up their own updated policies.

In weightlifting, transgender women must show their testosterone is below a certain level after transitioning, a requirement which Hubbard met. She won a silver medal at the 2017 world championships but had not competed for 1 1/2 years before Tokyo because of the pandemic.

Quinn has similarly been quiet at the Olympics, but opened up after Canada defeated the United States in the semifinals. After the game, U.S. star Megan Rapinoe hugged Quinn in congratulations.

"Getting messages from younger folks saying that they've never seen a trans person in sports before, and getting to be that person, to hopefully help them continue on with sports, because I know for me athletics is the most exciting part of my life and the thing that brings me the most joy," Quinn said. "So hopefully if I can allow kids to keep playing the sport they love, and that's my legacy, that's what I'm here for."

Quinn and Hubbard said they saw vitriolic messages toward them on social media.

"I tried not to dwell on, I suppose, negative coverage or negative perception, because it makes a hard job even harder. It's hard enough lifting a barbell but if you're putting more weight on it, it just makes it

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an impossible task, really," Hubbard said. "One thing I will say though is that I think often, a lot of negative coverage and negative perception is not really based on any sort of evidence or principle but rather it's based on emotion that people are often reacting, out of fear or discomfort. I hope that in time, they will open themselves up to a broader perspective."

With that, Hubbard says she's ready to move on.

"Really, age has caught up with me. In fact if we're being honest, it probably caught up with me some time ago," she said. "Consequently, it's probably time for me to start thinking about hanging up the boots and concentrating on other things in my life."

## China orders mass testing in Wuhan as COVID outbreak spreads

BEIJING (AP) — China suspended flights and trains, canceled professional basketball league games and announced mass coronavirus testing in Wuhan on Tuesday as widening outbreaks of the delta variant reached the city where the disease was first detected in late 2019.

While the total number of cases is still in the hundreds, they are far more widespread than anything China has dealt with since the initial outbreak that devastated Wuhan in early 2020 and over time spread to the rest of the country and the world.

China has not eliminated but largely curbed COVID-19 at home with quick lockdowns and mass testing to isolate infected people whenever new cases pop up. Most previous outbreaks didn't spread far beyond a city or province. This time, cases have been confirmed in more than 35 cities in 17 of China's 33 provinces and regions.

The cities of Nanjing and Yangzhou have canceled all domestic flights, and Beijing has halted long-distance trains from 23 stations. The Chinese Basketball Association said that matches of its men's professional league would be suspended because of the pandemic.

Wuhan, a provincial capital of 11 million people in central China, is the latest city to undergo city-wide testing. Three cases were confirmed there on Monday, its first non-imported cases in more than a year.

They were among 90 new cases confirmed nationwide the previous day, the National Health Commission said Tuesday. Of those, 61 were locally spread ones and 29 among people who had recently arrived from abroad.

Most of the local cases are still in Jiangsu province, where an outbreak started at the airport in Nanjing, the provincial capital, and has spread to other parts of the province and beyond. Authorities reported 45 new cases, five in Nanjing and 40 in the city of Yangzhou, 105 kilometers (65 miles) away, where a second round of mass testing was underway.

Five other provinces and the cities of Beijing and Shanghai reported new local cases in the single digits. In Shanghai, the nation's largest city, a driver working at one of its two main airports tested positive. Beijing has reported a total of five cases in recent days.

The Nanjing outbreak, which has been traced to the delta variant, is the source of the cases in most other places. Separately, delta variant outbreaks in two other places have been linked to neighboring Myanmar, which has seen a sharp rise in infections.

An outbreak in Zhengzhou, a city hit by flooding that killed about 300 people last month, started with people who arrived from Myanmar by air. A third outbreak, the one that started the earliest, spilled into Yunnan province from its border with Myanmar.

Government-affiliated scientists have said that Chinese vaccines are less effective against the new strains of the coronavirus but still offer some protection. Only Chinese vaccines are currently being given in China, where authorities say more than 1.6 billion doses have been administered.

## Best race ever? Warholm wins record-setting hurdles race

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — When brash Norwegian hurdler Karsten Warholm led the field to the starting line on a steamy afternoon at Olympic Stadium, he and his seven opponents had every reason to expect they'd

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be part of something special.

It turned out to be more than that.

This gathering of the world's best 400-meter hurdlers Tuesday produced a gold medal for Warholm, a world record, a masterpiece and slice of history. It also might have been one of the best races ever run.

"I never thought in my wildest imagination that this would be possible," Warholm said after smashing his own world record in a time of 45.94 seconds.

In deciding where the race stands in the annals of Olympic history, there is a lot to consider:

—The man who finished behind Warholm, Rai Benjamin, ran more than half a second faster than any other hurdler in history: 46.17. Had anyone dared tell him he would run that fast and finish second, Benjamin said, "I would probably beat you up and tell you to get out of my room."

—The third-place finisher, Alison dos Santos of Brazil, finished in 46.72, which would've been a world record five weeks earlier.

—The man who finished seventh in the eight-man field, Rasmus Magi of Estonia, was barely in the frame of photos taken from behind the finish line. But he was one of six to set either a world, continental or national record.

"It's a lot to process," Benjamin said.

Warholm's pull-away win in front of an empty stadium — someday, thousands might brag they were there — eclipsed his month-old world record by .76 seconds.

By comparison, in the 400 flat, it took 48 years for the record to come down by a comparable amount — .85 seconds between 1968 (Butch Reynolds) and 2016 (Wayde van Niekerk).

Van Niekerk's world record in the 400 is 43.03. That's only 2.91 faster than what Warholm did with 10 hurdles to scale.

Hard to believe, even for the athletes watching it unfold in front of them.

"After the second hurdle. I was like, s—. If you go after them, it's suicidal," said Kyron McMaster, the fourth-place finisher whose time of 47.08 would've won the last six Olympics.

As recently as June 30, 2021, the 400-meter hurdle record stood at 46.78. It was set by American Kevin Young at the 1992 Barcelona Games.

On July 1, Warholm brought it down to 46.7, which felt like either a brazen rejoinder to Benjamin, or a sign of things to come.

Only a week before that, at U.S. Olympic trials, Benjamin had run 46.83 to become the fourth man to crack 47. After the run, he announced that he felt he had a "low 46" in him somewhere, maybe in Tokyo.

That back-and-forth set the stage for Tuesday, and a showdown between rivals who have brought this event to a pinnacle not seen since the 1980s. Over a decade of dominance, Edwin Moses won 107 straight finals, two Olympic golds and lowered the world record four times.

One thing Moses didn't have was a rival, which, he explained earlier this week, might have kept him from going lower than the 47.02 that stood as the record for nearly nine years before Young.

Warholm and Benjamin are rivals. In the pre-race introductions, they both thumped their chests like boxers, and Warholm slapped himself in the face a few times.

The went to their respective lanes, set their starting blocks, dug their heels in, lined up and took off.

Nobody was going to catch them. Specifically, nobody was going to catch Warholm.

Running out of Lane 6, he caught the guys who started in front of him after three hurdles and was clearly in the lead at the halfway point.

Covering the distance between the barriers 13 powerful steps at a time, Warholm never came close to breaking stride. At the eighth hurdle, Benjamin was about a body length behind and seemed to be closing. But in the homestretch, Warholm pulled away. He sped through the finish with arms-a-flailing.

As his time flashed on the scoreboard, he tore open his jersey. "Pure emotions coming out." It was a scene reminiscent of the time he announced himself on the world stage with his victory at world championships in London in 2017, complete with a wide-eyed, Viking helmet-wearing post-race celebration.

This moment, however, was set up back in 2018, when Qatar's Abderrahman Samba became the second

man to crack 47 seconds, a barrier that Warholm had not yet reached.

"I decided I didn't like to lose," Warholm said. "So I went back, and I trained very hard."

Samba was in this final, too. He finished fifth in 47.12 — a season best for him, but he was one of only two hurdlers not to hit a national record.

Warholm didn't just break the world record, he went under the 46-second barrier that nobody had seriously been thinking about.

"Sometimes in training, my coaches keep telling me this could be possible," Warholm said. "But it was hard to imagine it because it's a big barrier."

One debate swirling inside track circles is how much credit new shoe technology should get. A combination of foam and carbon plates has given runners more spring in their stride and might have played into the sudden plummet in the records.

"Of course, technology will always be there," Warholm said. "But I also want to keep it down to a level where we can actually compare results."

Either way, somebody has to run in those shoes, and these men are some of the best to put on spikes.

Did they deliver the best race ever? Did they produce a moment that would put them on the level of Billy Mills (1964), or Seb Coe and Steve Ovett ('80), or Flo Jo ('88) or Michael Johnson ('96), or Usain Bolt (pick a race)?

With the underbelly of the stadium still buzzing as the hurdlers mingled with the media, a consensus started forming.

"I don't think any race really compares to what we just did," Benjamin said.

Warholm wasn't about to argue.

"I've always said that the perfect race doesn't exist," Warholm said. "But this is the closest I think I've come to a perfect race."

## After Beirut blast, winning justice becomes a life's mission

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — After the massive explosion at Beirut's port a year ago, only a small part of Ibrahim Hoteit's younger brother was identified: his scalp. Hoteit buried his brother — a large man, a firefighter, a martial arts champion — in a container the size of a shoebox.

Since then, Hoteit has sold his business, a perfume and accessories shop. He sleeps only a few hours a night. Black circles ring his eyes.

One thing drives him now: winning justice for the victims of the Aug. 4, 2020, explosion that killed more than 214 people and punishing Lebanon's political elite, blamed for causing the disaster through their corruption and mismanagement.

"I don't see a minister or president or parliament speaker. I am seeing the person who killed my brother and others with him," said Hoteit, who says he gets anonymous threats. "This is what gives me strength. I see that I have nothing to lose."

Hoteit and his wife, Hanan, have built an association of more than 100 families of those killed. They are waging a campaign of protests and rallies trying to shame, pressure and force politicians to allow the truth to come out.

A year later, critics say the political leadership has succeeded in stonewalling the judicial investigation into the explosion.

President Michel Aoun has said no one will have political cover if they are found negligent or guilty, but has not addressed accusations that officials are obstructing the investigation.

Hoteit and other families say they are up against not just a government but the political system that has ruled Lebanon for more than 30 years. It's a system that protects itself so intensely it seems invulnerable, even as many Lebanese say it has led the country into ruin — pointing to both the explosion and a financial meltdown that is one of the world's worst in the past 150 years.

Even the current caretaker premier, Hassan Diab, has acknowledged this, saying weeks after the explo-



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sion that corruption in Lebanon "is bigger than the state."

Black and white portraits of each of the blast's victims, commissioned by Hoteit's group, hang from the walls of a central square near the port. Painted on a wall opposite the still mangled port, a large slogan declares, "My government did this."

The blast was preceded by a fire that broke out at the port, and hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate stored in a hangar along with other highly combustible materials exploded.

It was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history. Along with the dead, thousands were injured. Some 300,000 homes were damaged or destroyed.

It soon emerged in documents that the ammonium nitrate had been stored improperly at the port since 2014 and that multiple high-level officials over the years knew of its presence and did nothing.

But a year after the government launched a judicial investigation, nearly everything else remains unknown — from who ordered the shipment to why officials ignored repeated internal warnings of the danger. Multiple government agencies have a role at the port, but all of them have said the ammonium nitrate was not their responsibility.

Hoteit's brother Tharwat was among the group of firefighters who rushed to battle the initial blaze. All were killed.

Hoteit and his wife spent the next 12 days searching through hospitals for his brother. It was harrowing. They turned over bodies to see their faces. Doctors notified them when they identified Tharwat's remains.

Along the way, they met other families on the same grisly search. Hoteit and Hanan saw one man carrying his dead son's hand in a plastic sack. The families continued to communicate, first through a WhatsApp group, trading stories of their loved ones.

Then they organized to fight.

With his black T-shirt, jeans and hair slicked back, Hoteit has become synonymous with calls for justice. The 51-year-old-father of three is unforgiving, determined — and a clear-eyed strategist.

He coordinates with local groups to document and archive every piece of information on the blast. He has met with several of the politicians he has led protests against, as well as repeatedly with investigators.

At first, the group held vigils outside the port on the 4th of every month. But as the investigation stalled, the group changed tactics, targeting specific officials with protests.

At a protest last month, hundreds carried empty coffins outside the acting interior minister's home.

At first, Hoteit tried to keep the group orderly, while Hanan and others shouted angrily at the minister inside. The protest got tense as numbers swelled and the minister never came out to talk to them. Protesters tried to make their way through the gates.

Police fired tear gas and pushed them back.

The biggest challenge has been trying to ensure the investigation moves forward.

The first lead investigator was Fadi Sawwan, a former military judge. When the families felt he was dragging his feet, citing coronavirus restrictions, they protested outside his home.

When he did act, they couldn't protect him.

Sawwan named three former government ministers and Diab, the caretaker prime minister, to be charged with negligence leading to death. Diab has dismissed the allegations as "diabolical." The political class united and won Sawwan's removal by court order in February.

That's when the families staged their first angry rally, burning tires, blocking roads and warning they may storm the Justice Ministry. A replacement for Sawwan was swiftly named: Tarek Bitar, a younger judge with no clear political affiliations.

Bitar cast a wider net, pursuing even senior military, intelligence and security officers. In February, he asked the government and parliament to lift immunity from the heads of two main security agencies and two lawmakers so he could question them.

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The families were elated.

But the political elite again closed ranks. Lawmakers and government officials refused to lift immunity. The interior minister said his legal department advised against it, reportedly because the security agency in question was not responsible for the shipment.

So the families took aim at parliament members and officials they accuse of burying the truth. In TV ads and social media posts, they branded those who opposed lifting immunity as “the ammonium nitrate lawmakers.”

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The same group of politicians have run Lebanon since its long civil war ended in 1990.

They head the same sectarian-rooted factions that fought the conflict. They have divvied government offices up among themselves, and their patronage system has fomented widespread corruption.

Dozens of political assassinations have never been properly investigated. Corruption has gone unpunished despite widespread documentation.

Impunity is entrenched in the system. Though rivals, the factions close ranks to prevent accountability.

That impunity translated into stunning callousness by politicians in the wake of the explosion.

No one deployed security around a city thrown into chaos. No authority took charge of the crime scene or search and rescue. No politician visited damaged areas. No state agency offered aid or shelter to those left homeless, and none cleaned up the rubble — all was left to volunteers.

The state never offered an apology or condolences to families. Even declaring Aug. 4 a National Day of Mourning took months of pressure.

“The state didn’t care for anything at all. If we didn’t follow up on everything big and small, nothing would happen,” Hoteit said, speaking at his home in the mainly Shiite southern Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh.

Like many Lebanese, Hoteit had long been resigned to the system. It was dictated by fate and geopolitics, he felt.

He can abide it no more.

“If the judiciary doesn’t give us our right, I will take vengeance for my brother with my own hands.”

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The families’ lives have been consumed by the fight for accountability.

Salam Iskander, a mother of four whose younger brother Hamzeh was killed, comes from her home in northern Lebanon to Beirut to participate in every activity organized by the group. Her father was furious, saying she was endangering her family by taking on the politicians.

The memory of her brother drives her. Hamzeh, a soldier, supported her and her children, since her husband has a disability that prevents him from working. Her mother died a few months after Hamzeh — killed by grief, Iskander believes.

“Hamzeh is not coming back. Nothing will cool my heart,” she said. “But I want to be able to say I did something for him. .... Maybe I can do something as simple as punish those who did it.”

Tracy and Paul Naggear lost their only child, 3-year-old daughter Alexandra. Lexou, as they call her, was one of the youngest killed in the blast.

They can’t bring themselves to return to live in their home near the port. Tracy has grown thin with stress. After Lexou’s funeral, they thought about leaving Lebanon — Tracy has Canadian citizenship — but then they started working with others campaigning for justice. Now they regularly participate in Hoteit’s protests.

“This government killed my daughter, and it’s my right and my duty to seek justice, and I will,” Tracy said. “They can try and block the truth as much as they want ... They will get exhausted before we do.”

The Naggears are also part of another network of families asking the U.N. Human Rights Council to establish a fact-finding mission into the blast. Proponents hope that could circumvent politicians’ obstructions.

A third group, made up of families of killed firefighters, has focused on lobbying Lebanese security agencies.

Families have had to fight over and over for even the smallest help for the victims.

Parliament stalled when they asked that the victims be considered military martyrs, which would secure

them and their families a pension and assistance. So Hoteit called a strike outside the home of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

Eventually they won the declaration. But Hoteit said the speaker's allies in the government social insurance agency, feeling slighted by the protest against Berri, retaliated by slowing delaying payments to the injured. So Hoteit held a news conference naming and shaming those responsible. The payments resumed.

## **Mao pins worn by Chinese athletes may test Olympic rules**

By GRAHAM DUNBAR and JOE McDONALD Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The image of Communist China's founding leader, Mao Zedong, made an unscheduled appearance at the Tokyo Olympics, and the International Olympic Committee said Tuesday it is "looking into the matter."

The gesture — Mao pin badges worn by two Chinese gold medalists at their medal ceremony — risks being judged a breach of Olympic Charter Rule 50, which prohibits political statements on the podium at the Tokyo Games — and at the upcoming 2022 Beijing Winter Games.

After winning the women's sprint in track cycling Monday, Bao Shanju and Zhong Tianshi wore pin badges of Mao. The communist leader who proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 remains an iconic figure in China 45 years after his death in 1976.

The incident came one day after American shot-put silver medalist Raven Saunders crossed the wrists of her raised arms on the podium. She was standing next to the gold medalist from China.

It was unclear Tuesday if the Mao pins were a response to the shot-put medal ceremony.

"We have contacted the Chinese Olympic Committee, asked them for a report about the situation," IOC spokesman Mark Adams said at the daily news conference at the Tokyo Games.

Badges showing Mao's profile were worn by hundreds of millions of people in the 1960s to show their loyalty to the Communist Party chairman and the ultra-radical Cultural Revolution he launched in 1966. China's current party chief, Xi Jinping, has invoked Mao's image as he tries to promote his own status as a history-making Chinese leader.

At a July 1 event, Xi appeared on Tiananmen Square in central Beijing in a gray Mao jacket identical to one worn by the former leader in a nearby portrait overlooking the square. Other party leaders at the same event dressed in blue business suits.

The IOC has publicized its president Thomas Bach's regular calls with Xi ahead of the Beijing Olympics opening in February, which human rights activists have tried to brand the "Genocide Games" because of the government's treatment of Muslim minority Uyghur people in China's northwest.

At a Tokyo Olympics, where athlete activists were expected to draw attention, Saunders pushed at the limits of Rule 50 by crossing her wrists to make the shape of an X. "It's the intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet," Saunders said when asked to explain it.

Saunders turned toward photographers at the Olympic Stadium to make the gesture seconds after she stood facing the Chinese flag during the national anthem playing for Gong Lijiao. The U.S. Olympic body is taking no action against Saunders, who it said late Monday "was respectful of her competitors and did not violate our rules related to demonstration."

The IOC has asked U.S. team officials for more details, Adams said Tuesday, adding it noted public opinion in the case. There has been wide support for Saunders, who is Black and gay.

Saunders said at the Olympic track her aim was "to show younger people that no matter how many boxes they try to fit you in, you can be you and you can accept it."

The IOC has long claimed it is politically neutral and must maintain that stance to allow more than 200 national teams to arrive and compete at an Olympic Games as equals. Still, the rule prohibiting all athlete protests in Olympic venues was eased slightly in the weeks before the opening ceremony in Tokyo where athletes were expected to test its limits.

Gestures and statements are now allowed inside the field of play at the start line or before a game, though not during competition or at medal ceremonies. Several women's soccer teams, for example,

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kneeled on the field before kickoff on the first day of Olympic action on July 21.

The Mao pins, though, were an unexpected twist on the Rule 50 debate. The wearing of such badges declined after 1970 due to complaints producing them used up scarce supplies of metal required by Chinese industry. The original Cultural Revolution-era ones are sought after by collectors, both in China and in the West.

Mao images became popular again in the 1990s to express complaints that ordinary Chinese gained too little from wrenching economic changes that caused inflation and layoffs at state companies.

## Tennessee won't incentivize COVID shots but pays to vax cows

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tennessee has sent nearly half a million dollars to farmers who have vaccinated their cattle against respiratory diseases and other maladies over the past two years.

But Republican Gov. Bill Lee, who grew up on his family's ranch and refers to himself as a cattle farmer in his Twitter profile, has been far less enthusiastic about incentivizing herd immunity among humans.

Even though Tennessee has among the lowest vaccination rates in the country, Lee has refused to follow the lead of other states that have offered enticements for people to get the potentially life-saving COVID-19 vaccine.

Lee hasn't always been against incentivizing vaccinations.

Tennessee's Herd Health program began in 2019 under Lee, whose family business, Triple L Ranch, breeds Polled Hereford cattle. The state currently reimburses participating farmers up to \$1,500 for vaccinating their herds, handing out \$492,561 over the past two fiscal years, according to documents from the Tennessee Agriculture Department.

Lee, who so far has avoided drawing a serious Republican primary challenge in his 2022 reelection bid, has been accused of complacency in the face of the deadly pandemic. Tennessee's vaccination rates for COVID-19 hover at 39% of its total population, versus over 49% nationally for the fully vaccinated. The state's COVID hospitalizations have more than tripled over the past three weeks and infections have increased more than five-fold.

Speaking at the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association annual conference on Friday, Lee said he did not think incentives were very effective, WBIR-TV reported. "I don't think that's the role of government," he added. "The role of government is to make it available and then to encourage folks to get a vaccine."

In an emailed reply to a question about the contrast to incentivizing vaccination for cattle, spokesperson Casey Black wrote, "Tennesseans have every incentive to get the COVID-19 vaccine – it's free and available in every corner of the state with virtually no wait. While a veterinarian can weigh in on safely raising cattle for consumption, the state will continue to provide human Tennesseans with COVID-19 vaccine information and access."

After Ohio's Republican Gov. Mike DeWine announced the state's Vax-a-Million lottery on May 12, with prizes that included \$1 million and full college scholarships, many other states around the country followed suit with their own incentives. They include custom outfitted trucks in West Virginia, annual passes to the state parks in New Jersey, and gift certificates for hunting and fishing licenses in Arkansas. Last week, President Joe Biden joined the call for incentives, encouraging state and local governments to use federal funds to pay people \$100 to vaccinate.

But Lee has avoided employing any of those tactics and has maintained throughout the pandemic that the decision to vaccinate against COVID-19 is a personal choice.

"We want to encourage Tennesseans to talk to their doctor, to talk to their clergy, to talk to their family members, the trusted voices in their life, in order for them to make a personal decision about whether or not to pursue getting the vaccine," he told reporters recently, "but we encourage that because it is the tool that will most effectively allow us to manage this virus."

Lee was vaccinated against COVID-19 but didn't publicize it, as he did when he received his flu shot.

More recently, Lee's administration has been under fire after the state's vaccination chief was termi-



nated in what she has called an attempt to appease GOP legislators who were outraged over COVID-19 vaccination outreach to minors. At a hearing in June, one Republican lawmaker called an ad promoting vaccination for teenagers "reprehensible" and some went so far as to suggest they might pull the Health Department's funding.

Dr. Michelle Fiscus has been vocal about what she thinks are the political motives for her firing, sharing her positive performance reviews with the press. Fiscus also called out the Health Department for halting outreach for all childhood vaccinations, not just COVID-19. The department has since restarted outreach, but says it is only targeting parents.

Lee was initially silent on the controversy. Then, at a recent news conference, Lee said he supports Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey and her decisions, although he said he doesn't have a direct hand in them.

Dr. Jason Martin, who has been treating COVID-19 patients in Sumner County since the beginning of the pandemic, has been so disappointed in the state's response that he is exploring running for governor himself. The Democrat wishes Lee would be "excited about incentivizing Tennesseans to take a safe, effective, live-saving vaccine," he said. "It would help us beat COVID, keep our businesses open and thriving, get our kids back to school safely."

Black, Lee's spokesperson, would not answer a question about whether the governor's family farm received money from the Herd Health program, but records from the Agriculture Department do not show anyone with the last name Lee as a recipient.

## Clean, repeat: At Tokyo Games, virus is Olympians' chief foe

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Holding each other tighter than lovers, the wrestlers smear each other with sweat, spittle and — when they inadvertently cut each other — sometimes blood. Lungs heaving, mouths agape, they huff and puff into each others' flushed faces. On their glistening bodies, it's impossible to tell their opponents' fluids and theirs apart.

Underscoring the health risks of such proximity: They are the only people in the cavernous hall not wearing face masks.

Watching Olympic wrestling in the midst of the pandemic of a deadly airborne disease feels like being part of a virological experiment, a real-life study of droplets, aerosols and fluid dispersion.

A germophobe's nightmare, it's a messy spectacle best observed from the stands where volunteers hold signs reading "keep physical distance" for non-existent crowds, barred from the Tokyo Games because of surging coronavirus infections in the Olympic host country where less than one-third of the population is vaccinated.

But because wrestling is the most close-contact sport of the Olympics, it also speaks loudest of the all-out war against the virus that athletes have waged to get to Tokyo and, once here, continue to fight to stay free of infection and compete.

Wrestlers are the Games' equivalent of the canaries that alerted coal miners to noxious gases in the air of closed-in mines. That even they say they feel safe going body to body in combat testifies to extraordinary efforts that Olympians are making to stay healthy, exercising a sanitary discipline that has made competition possible but has also squeezed a lot of fun from their Olympic experience.

Which Brazilian wrestler Aline Silva says is a necessary price to pay. She hopes the Tokyo Games will serve as a counterweight to COVID-19 fatigue by sending a sobering message that until the virus is beaten, people everywhere should exercise greater caution and take better care of themselves and others. Brazil has the world's second-highest COVID-19 death toll with 556,000 fatalities.

"In Brazil, everybody knows that it is best to not be in parties and do things like that. But I don't know why they don't care, they do anyway," Silva said. "So we need to show people that we need, right now, to be focused on doing our jobs as safely as possible."

The 34-year-old had set her sights in Tokyo on making amends for her failure to win a medal at her home Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. But when the pandemic struck, she decided to put wrestling on hold

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indefinitely, in part because it no longer felt safe but also to set an example that life couldn't, shouldn't, simply carry on as before. She has an uncle who spent 13 days in the hospital with COVID-19. Only this year, in a small bubble of athletes who were tested and lived together with limited outside contact, did she resume preparations for the Games.

"I believe that, right now, people should be thinking about lives. That matters more than any sport. But we are here, trying to beat this virus, too," she said. "We need to do our part for everybody to survive. I might not die of COVID but I don't want to pass the disease on to somebody that might die. A lot of people, I think, don't think about that."

In Tokyo, Olympians can't not think about that. They are sealed off in a giant sanitary bubble built with daily tests, oceans of sanitizer and strict restrictions on their movements. They are instructed not to mix with people outside their teams. They are told to avoid hugs, high-fives and handshakes — all deemed "unnecessary" by Games organizers — advice they often ignore in the heat and joy of competition. They cannot watch sports other than their own or wander around the city.

The dining hall in the athletes' village where most of them are confined has hospital-like cleanliness. Matilda Kearns, a water polo competitor from Australia, detailed the sanitary procedures in a TikTok posting. They not only sanitize their hands but also wear plastic gloves before touching food trays that have also been sanitized, she said.

They then eat in small cubicles, which they wipe down with disinfectant wipes, separated by see-through plastic screens that make meal-time chat "pretty difficult because it's hard to hear through them," Kearns said. She added that they also have an additional team rule "that once the mask is off, you only have 10 minutes to eat to reduce exposure."

Preventive measures extend also onto fields of play.

Table tennis has barred players from blowing on the ball before they serve, which some used to do to rid it of dust, and from wiping sweaty palms on the table. Before the pandemic, players were only allowed to wipe themselves down with towels after every six points, to avoid slowing play. Now, they can use towels liberally, to avoid sweat on the table. Players also must wear masks and gloves when selecting their stock of balls before matches.

In badminton, when players need to replace a damaged shuttlecock, they now get a new one themselves from a dispenser, so they are no longer handled by the match official who used to distribute them.

At the Olympic boxing arena, uniformed cleaners attack the ring between most fights to wipe down the ropes, corner pads and canvas of any sweat or blood, before the next pair of boxers forces them to do it all over again. In weightlifting, the bar is disinfected with surgical alcohol between lifts.

Outside the Olympic bubble, fueled by the more contagious delta variant, infections in Tokyo have logged new daily records and nearly tripled in the first week after the Games opened on July 23. Japanese officials say the surge is unrelated to the Olympics.

Inside the Olympians' bubble, infections have been limited. Since July 1, 222,000 tests on athletes and team officials yielded 32 positives, a strike rate of 0.01%, Games organizers say.

Fully vaccinated and as careful as he can be, Finnish wrestler Elias Kuosmanen said he felt safe enough to shut off his mind to the risk of infection when he competed and got all sweaty in the men's Greco-Roman heavyweight class.

"We're tested all the time, so I am pretty sure that the opponents and everyone are COVID-19-free," he said. "I don't need to stress about it."

## Landlords, tenants fill courts as eviction moratorium ends

By MICHAEL CASEY and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island (AP) — Gabe Imondi, a 74-year-old landlord from Rhode Island, had come to court hoping to get his apartment back. He was tired of waiting for federal rental assistance and wondered aloud "what they're doing with that money?"

Hours later, Luis Vertentes, in a different case, was told by a judge he had three weeks to clear out of his

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one-bedroom apartment in nearby East Providence. The 43-year-old landscaper said he was four months behind on rent after being hospitalized for a time.

"I'm going to be homeless, all because of this pandemic," Vertentes said. "I feel helpless, like I can't do anything even though I work and I got a full-time job."

Scenes like this played out from North Carolina to Virginia to Ohio and beyond Monday as the eviction system, which saw a dramatic drop in cases before a federal moratorium expired over the weekend, rumbled back into action. Activists fear millions will be tossed onto the streets as the delta variant of the coronavirus surges.

The Biden administration allowed the federal moratorium to expire over the weekend and Congress was unable to extend it.

Historic amounts of rental assistance allocated by Congress had been expected to avert a crisis. But the distribution has been painfully slow: Only about \$3 billion of the first tranche of \$25 billion had been distributed through June by states and localities. A second amount of \$21.5 billion will go to the states.

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.

In Columbus, Ohio, Chelsea Rivera showed up at Franklin County court Monday after receiving an eviction notice last month. A single mom, she's behind \$2,988 in rent and late fees for the one-bedroom apartment she rents for herself and three young sons.

The 27-year-old said she started to struggle after her hours were cut in May at the Walmart warehouse where she worked. She's applied to numerous agencies for help but they're either out of money, have a waiting list, or not able to help until clients end up in court with an eviction notice.

Rivera said she's preparing herself mentally to move into a shelter with her children.

"We just need help," she said, fighting back tears. "It's just been really hard with everyday issues on top of worrying about where you're going to live."

But there was more optimism in Virginia, where Tiara Burton, 23, learned she would be getting federal help and wouldn't be evicted. She initially feared the worst when the moratorium lifted.

"That was definitely a worry yesterday," said Burton, who lives in Virginia Beach. "If they're going to start doing evictions again, then I'm going to be faced with having to figure out where me and my family are going to go. And that's not something that anyone should have to worry about these days at all."

She was relieved to learn she was approved for assistance through the Virginia Rent Relief Program. Her court hearing was postponed 30 days, during which time she and her landlord can presumably work things out.

"I'm grateful for that," she said. "That's another weight lifted off of my shoulders."

For some tenants, getting assistance has proven impossible.

After her landlord refused federal assistance to cover \$5,000 in back rent, Antoinette Eleby, 42, of Miami, expects an eviction order within two to three weeks. She is sending her five children to live with her mother in another county.

"My main concern is that now that I have an eviction, how will I find another place? Some places will accept you and some will not," said Eleby, whose entire family got COVID-19 earlier this year.

Around the country, courts, legal advocates and law enforcement agencies were 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.

Some cities with the most cases, according to the Eviction Lab, are Phoenix with more than 42,000 eviction filings, Houston with more than 37,000, Las Vegas with nearly 27,000 and Tampa more than 15,000. Indiana and Missouri also have more than 80,000 filings.

While the moratorium was enforced in much of the country, there were states like Idaho where judges ignored it, said Ali Rabe, executive director of Jesse Tree, a non-profit that works to prevent evictions in the Boise metropolitan area. "Eviction courts ran as usual," she said.

That was much the way things played out in parts of North Carolina, where on Monday Sgt. David Ruppe knocked on a weathered mobile home door in Cleveland County, a rural community an hour west of Charlotte.

"We haven't seen much of a difference at all," he said.

He waited a few minutes on the porch scattered with folding chairs and toys. Then a woman opened the door.

"How are you?" he asked quietly, then explained her landlord had started the eviction process. The woman told Ruppe she'd paid, and he said she'd need to bring proof to her upcoming Aug. 9 court date.

Ruppe, who has two young sons, said seeing families struggle day-after-day is tough.

"There's only so much you can do," he said. "So, if you can offer them a glimmer of hope, words of encouragement, especially if there's kids involved. Being a father, I can relate to that."

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## Olympic families find solace, create bonds far from Tokyo

By MARK LONG AP Sports Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Christina Dressel began organizing the room long before the NBC cameras started rolling.

The mother of swimming superstar Caeleb Dressel reeled off a makeshift seating chart for the couch, directed everyone who wanted to be on television where to stand and even scoured the posh hotel for life-sized, cardboard cutouts of her son. She found four and lined them up behind the 40-strong Dressel posse.

She then asked if the coffee table was too cluttered with empty wine glasses and water bottles. Nope. After all, it was an accurate portrayal of this party scene.

The Dressels were among hundreds who accepted an offer to spend part of the Tokyo Olympics at Universal Orlando with other equally disappointed friends and families of American athletes, all banned from traveling to Japan because of the coronavirus pandemic.

They gathered nearly 12,000 miles from Tokyo in a crowded ballroom at a resort with hundreds of strangers — at least at first — and created a red, white and blue-themed blowout that rivaled anything they would have experienced abroad.

It turned out to be a support system like no other.

"These people are great," said Venus Jewett, whose son Isaiah failed to make the 800-meter final after tangling feet with a fellow runner in a semifinal heat. "They get it. ... Being here, it's not like being over there, but it's a good consolation prize. You can't get much better than this."

Parents, siblings, friends and former teammates crowd into the ballroom at the Lowes Sapphire Falls Resort daily to watch the Summer Games and bond with others in a similar situation, all of them unable to be on hand to root for their loved ones competing for gold.

They spend mornings and nights together, smiling and laughing, eating and drinking, screaming and cheering. They're usually celebrating and occasionally consoling.

Team Dressel was the main event during the swimming competition, with Christina Dressel and Caeleb's photogenic wife, Meghan, taking center stage for an entire week.

Universal Orlando and NBC invited The Associated Press inside for a sneak peek on the night Dressel set a world record in the 100-meter butterfly and won his third of five gold medals at the Tokyo Games. Most of his crew wore red Speedo T-shirts with Team Dressel printed on the back.

They posed for pictures on the stage, cramming shoulder to shoulder underneath a Team USA banner, and led "U-S-A, U-S-A" cheers that have become a nightly lead-in to NBC's television coverage.

Christina Dressel quieted the raucous crowd as soon as her son entered the pool area half a world away, eager to hear everything the commentators had to say about her son.

Dressel's inner circle — his mom, dad, wife, sister and brother — were directly in front of one of two scoreboard-sized projection screens inside the ballroom. Christina and Meghan stood as soon as the race



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started. His sister joined them. His dad and brother reluctantly followed.

The roars reached a fever pitch when Dressel made the turn in first place, on pace to break the world record. His mom ducked behind his dad for a few seconds, too nervous to watch. But she quickly emerged and started jumping up and down as it became clear Dressel was about to make history.

Christina and Meghan collapsed onto the couch as Dressel touched the wall first. The celebration was just getting started. Mom eventually hugged everyone around her, including Dressel's Orlando-based agent who was videotaping the rowdy scene for a documentary on his pandemic-altered path to Olympic glory.

Dressel raced two more times that night, finishing first in one 50-meter freestyle semifinal heat and anchoring the 4x100-meter mixed medley relay team that came home a disappointing fifth. Team Dressel was in full effect for both.

Dressel's family members rented a house in Orlando and routinely took advantage of the hospitality lounge, which was open for breakfast every morning and for dinner and an open bar at night. The emotional video of them trying to chat with Dressel following his second gold medal went viral, bringing extra attention to the family and the venue.

Universal Orlando, NBC, the U.S. Olympic Committee and two sponsors, including Japanese automaker Toyota, offered each Team USA athlete plane tickets and four days of accommodations to the resort and Universal's three theme parks for two family members or friends. They had the option to purchase more passes.

The lounge serves as its own entertainment district, a full bar in the middle of the ballroom and televisions and tables in every direction. Toyota put several cars on display, including one that could be taken for a virtual test drive and another with a colorful paint job inspired by Dressel's tattoos. There are games galore, too; table tennis, cornhole, a giant "four to score" board and an extra large Jenga setup.

But those other Games get way more attention.

Jewett brought her 17-year-old daughter, 82-year-old mother and 79-year-old father to the hotel for several days. A former collegiate sprinter and current fifth-grade teacher in Inglewood, California, Jewett had saved for years in anticipation of traveling to Tokyo with her son.

Even after a yearlong delay and a seemingly endless stretch of uncertainty, she was as devastated as any Olympic parent when Japan decided to ban spectators. She settled for Orlando and ended up making new friends and creating lifelong memories.

She was at the lounge when Katie Plum's daughter, Kelsey, led the United States to a gold medal in 3-on-3 basketball.

"It's sad to not be there," said Katie Plum, who moved from San Diego to Las Vegas to be closer to her WNBA daughter. "But this has made it super fun and I've learned a lot. But, of course, I'd like to be in the USA House in Tokyo. I'm just grateful they got to go."

Plum and her family spent two days at Universal Orlando and proudly offered to show off a voicemail from Jill Biden congratulating them on Kelsey's gold. How did she miss a call from the first lady?

"We were waiting in line at Harry Potter," she said, laughing and shaking her head.

She didn't miss out on nearly as much while attending the lounge, getting drawn into rugby, rowing, track and other sports.

"We've been on all kinds of (emotional) trains," she said. "You end up trying to support everyone you meet. And you appreciate when people get invested in your kid and want to watch. So you want to give back and sit over by somebody's couch. I've watched some amazing games, stuff I might otherwise not have gotten to see."

## Rapid virus spread through Indonesia taxes health workers

By EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Irman Pahlepi is back at work in Jakarta's Dr. Suyoto public hospital, immediately resuming his duties treating COVID-19 patients after recovering from an infection himself — for the second time.

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With numbers of infections in Indonesia skyrocketing and deaths steadily climbing, health care workers are being depleted as the virus spares nobody, Pahlepi, 30, felt he had no option but to jump right back in.

"We have so many extra patients to treat compared to last year," he said. "The number of COVID-19 patients is four times higher now than during the previous highest spike in January."

Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country, had its deadliest day with 2,069 deaths from COVID-19 last Tuesday and fatalities remain high. As of Sunday, total official cases stood at more than 3.4 million with 97,291 deaths, though with poor testing and many people dying at home, the real figures are thought to be considerably higher.

As the region grapples with a new coronavirus wave fueled by the delta variant, Indonesia's death rate hit a 7-day rolling average of 6.5 per million on Aug. 1, second only to Myanmar and far higher than India's peak rate of 3.04 that it hit in May during the worst of its outbreak.

Among the dead in Indonesia are more than 1,200 health care workers, including 598 doctors, according to the Risk Mitigation Team of the Indonesian Medical Association. The doctors included at least 24 who were fully vaccinated.

Many others are exhausted from the workload, said Mahesa Paranadipa, who co-leads the mitigation team, making them more likely to fall ill, like Pahlepi.

"We are worried about overburdened workloads lasting for a long time, causing potential burnout conditions," Paranadipa said. "This fatigue causes the immunity of health care workers to decrease."

Acknowledging the risks faced by health care workers, Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said Monday that a top priority is giving them a third booster vaccine dose. Most who have been vaccinated have received Sinovac, which appears to be less effective against the delta variant, and Indonesia has already begun administering booster shots.

"The boosters, from Moderna, are for health care workers ... so they will be ready for the patients at the hospitals," Sadikin said.

On top of the lack of medical personnel, Indonesia is also suffering from inadequate supplies.

Pahlepi said his hospital experiences oxygen shortages and is filled far beyond its patient capacity, making it even more difficult to treat people properly.

Over the last two months, it has become common to see dozens of people with severe symptoms waiting in line for a bed in the hospital's emergency unit, and more lines of people waiting for a space in the isolation ward following treatment, he said.

Some patients have brought their own oxygen tanks with them, and as the hospital's own supplies have waned, doctors and nurses have had to ask them to share with others.

Last year, most of the severely ill patients Pahlepi saw were senior citizens. Now, as the delta variant spreads through the country, most of the patients arriving at the emergency room with medium and severe symptoms are children and young adults, he said.

Between his own coronavirus infections, Pahlepi and his wife had their first child — a daughter who is now 5 months old — and he said it's been particularly hard as a new father to see so many children admitted for treatment with relatively severe symptoms.

"It is difficult to help the infants put on an oxygen hose because they feel uncomfortable when an unfamiliar object is on their face. They need their parents to be with them when we put on the hose," Pahlepi said.

"Those infants remind me of my baby daughter at home. It makes me sad."

Pahlepi has been involved in treating coronavirus patients since the beginning of the pandemic, starting as a COVID-19 intake doctor at Gatot Soebroto Army Central Hospital, which was designated by the government as a referral hospital for the disease.

In November, he tested positive himself despite taking precautions. Fortunately, his case was mild and he was able to return to work after recovering in isolation for two weeks.

He tested positive again on July 14 while working extra shifts to help cope with the influx of patients in the recent surge — just one week before he was to receive his first vaccination.

While he was asymptomatic during his first infection, he had severe headaches and his bones ached

during the second.

Like many of his patients, he decided to isolate at home. But unlike most, with his training he was able to keep a careful eye on his health, ensuring that his blood oxygen level was adequate and that he didn't need more advanced treatment.

"There are so many people with heavier symptoms who deserve beds in the hospital more than me," Pahlepi said in a video interview as he was in isolation.

As soon as he was better, Pahlepi went right back to help his overworked colleagues.

"The emergency unit was full, and we were overwhelmed handling COVID-19 patients," he said. "The number of patients is beyond our capabilities. We have to use 200% to 300% of our energy every shift."

Though there is no end in sight for the current wave in Indonesia, Pahlepi's thoughts are regularly of the day when life returns to normal for his young family and the rest of the country.

"I feel tired — exhausted — but we have to keep our spirits up to make Indonesia successfully free from COVID-19," he said.

## Dating changed during the pandemic; apps are following suit

By UROOBA JAMAL Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Early in the coronavirus pandemic, Jennifer Sherlock went out with a few men she met through dating apps. The dates were "weird," she said, and not just because they were masked, socially distanced and outdoors.

One one occasion, a date remained masked while they were out for a stroll, but soon after invited her back to his place, a move Sherlock saw as reckless. "It was so off putting, and awkward," she said. "So we wouldn't be safe outside without mask(s), but we would be safe back at his place maskless?"

She decided she needed a way to filter people, so she began arranging video chats before agreeing to meet anybody in person. Sherlock, 42, a PR consultant who lives in New Jersey, said it's a practice she'll continue post-pandemic.

Sherlock isn't alone in changing the way she used dating apps during the pandemic, prompting many to roll out new features. Despite the social distancing of the past 18 months, the use of dating apps in general has surged as people sought connections amid their isolation.

Tinder reported that 2020 was its busiest year yet; this year, its users have already set two records for usage between January and March. Hinge tripled its revenue from 2019 to 2020, and the company expects it to double from that this year.

In response to changing demands, Tinder announced new tools last month that will allow users to get to know people better online. People will now be able to add videos to their profile and can chat with others even before matching with them.

"Historically consumers were reluctant to connect via video because they didn't see the need for it," said Jess Carbino, an online dating expert and sociologist who has worked for Tinder and Bumble. Post-COVID, however, many people expect a higher degree of screening, she said. "Online dating apps like Tinder are leaning into that."

The dating apps say their research shows video chats are here to stay, even as life starts to return to normal in some parts of the world.

Almost half of Tinder users had a video chat with a match during the pandemic, with 40% of them intending to continue them post-pandemic. Tinder says this is largely driven by Gen Z users in their late teens and early 20s, who now make up more than half of the app's users. And a majority of Hinge UK users, 69%, also say they'll continue with virtual dates after the pandemic.

Tinder, alongside other popular apps including Hinge, OkCupid and Bumble, has in Britain and the U.S. partnered with the government to add a badge to profiles indicating that users have been vaccinated. (There's no verification process, though, so matches could be lying.)

Dating app users are also increasingly looking for deeper connections rather than casual encounters, Carbino said.

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That's what happened to Maria del Mar, 29, an aerospace engineer, who wasn't expecting to end up in a relationship after she matched with someone on Tinder early in the pandemic last year.

She started chatting with her now-boyfriend through the app in April 2020 during a complete lockdown in Spain, where she lives. Having moved back to her parent's tiny town of León from Barcelona, del Mar was bored when she joined the app, but was surprised to find many things in common with her current partner.

After weeks of chatting, they finally met for a first date — a socially-distanced hike — after restrictions eased slightly in May 2020. Now the two have moved in together. "If it wasn't for the app, probably our paths wouldn't have crossed," she said.

Fernando Rosales, 32, was a frequent user of Grindr, an app popular with gay men looking for more casual encounters, in pre-pandemic times. He turned to Tinder for social connections when coronavirus restrictions prevented people from meeting others in London, where he lives.

"Grindr is like, 'I like you, you like me, you're within 100 meters of me, I'm going to come over,'" said Rosales, who works at the popular British coffee chain Pret.

"Tinder is something more social," he added,. Sometimes he uses the app just to meet others to play online video games or video chat.

Ocean, 26, a drag artist and photographer in Berlin, turned to the live video feature of a LGBTQ+ app called Taimi to make friends across the world during the pandemic. Having two-to-five minute video chats with strangers from places like the Philippines or parts of the U.S. was "amazing," she said. Ocean's given name is Kai Sistemich; she identifies as a woman when in drag.

She said she'll continue using the feature post-pandemic, especially while she's doing solo activities like cooking, or getting ready before going out to party.

Sherlock also expects some of her pandemic dating behaviors to carry into the post-pandemic world. She recently asked two men she was texting for Facetime chats before meeting in person, something she would not have done pre-pandemic.

"It's a crazy dating world out there, so saving time is necessary," she said.

## Bipartisan bill leaves out key climate, clean energy steps

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package unveiled by the Senate includes more than \$150 billion to boost clean energy and promote "climate resilience" by making schools, ports and other structures better able to withstand extreme weather events such as storms and wildfires.

But the bill, headed for a Senate vote this week, falls far short of President Joe Biden's pledge to transform the nation's heavily fossil-fuel powered economy into a clean-burning one and stop climate-damaging emissions from U.S. power plants by 2035.

Notably, the deal omits mention of a Clean Electricity Standard, a key element of Biden's climate plan that would require the electric grid to replace fossil fuels with renewable sources such as solar, wind and hydropower.

Nor does it include a Civilian Climate Corps, a Biden favorite and a nod to the Great Depression-era New Deal that would put millions of Americans to work on conservation projects, renewable energy and helping communities recover from climate disasters.

The White House says the bipartisan deal is just the first step, with a proposed \$3.5 trillion, Democratic-only package following close behind. The larger bill, still being developed in Congress, will meet Biden's promise to move the country toward carbon-free electricity, make America a global leader in electric vehicles and create millions of jobs in solar, wind and other clean-energy industries, supporters say.

While the bipartisan plan is "a good start," lawmakers will "deal with the climate crisis in the magnitude, scope and scale that's required" in the Democratic-only bill, said Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass.

For now, the focus is on the bipartisan deal, which includes \$550 billion in new spending for public works projects, \$73 billion of that to update the electric grid and more than \$50 billion to bolster infrastructure against cyberattacks and climate change. There's also \$7.5 billion for electric charging stations.



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Citing the deadly Texas power outages earlier this year, the White House touted spending to upgrade the nation's power grid and boost renewable energy. An Energy Department study found that power outages cost the U.S. economy up to \$70 billion a year. The bill also invests in demonstration projects for advanced nuclear reactors, carbon capture and storage and so-called clean hydrogen that can be burned with few emissions.

Still, the measure falls far short of meeting Biden's promise to address the climate crisis, even as triple-digit temperatures across the West caused hundreds of deaths this summer and a busy Atlantic hurricane season causes extensive damage.

"It is clear that the deal does not meet the moment on climate or justice," said Tiernan Sittenfeld, a senior vice president of the League of Conservation Voters.

"This looks like the Exxon Infrastructure Bill," said Janet Redman of Greenpeace USA. "An infrastructure bill that doesn't prevent a full-blown climate catastrophe by funding a swift transition to renewable energy would kill millions of Americans."

The bill offers "glimmers of hope" such as a multibillion-dollar commitment to clean up and remediate old oil wells and mines, Redman said, calling on Democrats to demonstrate "the courage to be visionary and go bigger" in the partisan bill expected later this year.

One of the lead negotiators, Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, acknowledged that no one got everything they wanted in the bipartisan bill. "But we came up with a good compromise that's going to help the American people," he said.

"This is about infrastructure," Portman said at the White House. "This is roads and bridges, but also lots of other kinds of infrastructure, including broadband, our water system and our rail system — all of which is good for the economy. This will lead to more efficiency and higher productivity, more economic growth."

The plan includes \$21 billion to clean up brownfields and other polluted sites, reclaim abandoned mine land and cap orphaned oil and gas wells. The plan will help communities near contaminated industrial sites and rural areas where abandoned oil wells pose a continuing hazard, the White House said.

The Senate voted, 66-28, Friday to advance the bill, but it's unclear if enough Republicans will eventually join Democrats to support final passage. Senate rules require 60 votes in the evenly split 50-50 chamber to advance the bill but a simple majority to pass it.

The measure also faces turbulence in the closely divided House, where progressives are pushing for increased spending on climate change and other issues and centrist lawmakers are wary of adding to the federal debt.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, called the Senate bill inadequate and pledged to push for changes in the House, which passed a separate, \$715 billion transportation and water bill in early July. Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.

DeFazio, the House bill's lead sponsor, said his bill "charts our path forward," adding that he is "fighting to make sure we enact a transformative bill that supports our recovery and combats the existential threat of climate change."

## Election body targets Bolsonaro after he fails to show fraud

By DÉBORA ÁLVARES Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — After years of attacking Brazil's voting system as susceptible to fraud, President Jair Bolsonaro ignored a Monday deadline from the nation's electoral court to present proof of his claims. And the election authority, in turn, adopted its strongest measures yet aimed at preventing Bolsonaro from chipping away at faith in the nation's upcoming election.

According to two of Bolsonaro's ministers, his administration considered turning over a compilation of videos and documents, most of which the far-right president already exhibited publicly on July 29 and the court that oversees and administers elections has debunked. His administration's order for the Federal Police to find evidence of election fraud from the past 25 years didn't identify any such examples, said the ministers, who spoke with The Associated Press on condition of anonymity due to concern of retaliation.

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from the president.

One of the ministers and the electoral court's press office confirmed that no evidence was sent.

Bolsonaro has alleged that Brazil's electronic voting system isn't reliable and makes it impossible to audit results. As such, he has backed a constitutional amendment that would make a printed receipt of each vote visible to the voter before being deposited in a sealed container for subsequent review, if necessary.

Analysts have expressed concern that Bolsonaro, trailing in opinion polls ahead of his 2022 reelection bid, will follow the example of former U.S. President Donald Trump, who goaded supporters to dispute his loss.

The electoral court has rebuffed his claims as baseless, saying the system is trustworthy and there are several means of checking results. The court's president, Luís Roberto Barroso, previously told AP that the proposed reform would be a risky solution to a nonexistent problem, creating opportunities for vote buying and fraud claims.

Late Monday, the court unanimously approved sending a request to the Supreme Court for Bolsonaro to be targeted as part of its probe into the dissemination of allegedly fake news. It also approved opening its own investigation of Bolsonaro for his claims, which the court wrote in its decision could characterize a variety of violations, including abuse of economic and political power; improper use of social media; corruption; fraud; or premature campaigning.

Bolsonaro last week promised he would present the proof of fraud that he has long claimed to possess.

Once live on state television and his social media channels, he showed internet videos that have been available for years and spreadsheets tracking the tabulation of the 2014 presidential vote, while the party that lost that election says it was fair.

Eventually, Bolsonaro conceded he lacked concrete evidence.

"There is no way to prove the elections were or weren't defrauded. There are indications. Crime is revealed with several indications," he told his audience during the nearly three-hour presentation on July 29.

He used the opportunity to lambast his likely opponent in next year's election, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who several polls have shown leading Bolsonaro by double-digits in a runoff.

The electoral court fact-checked Bolsonaro live on its social media channels that evening and, on Monday it published a letter signed by 15 former presidents, plus the current president and its incoming chief, who denied any fraud since the electronic system's implementation started in 1996.

The two ministers who spoke on condition of anonymity said that while there is no proof of election fraud, the president's insistence has served to galvanize his base, as seen with street protests in at least 15 state capitals Sunday.

In Rio de Janeiro, thousands gathered beside Copacabana beach chanting and holding signs like "AUDIT-ABLE VOTE NOW!" A plane flew low overhead with the same demand on a trailing banner.

"Our vote is checked by some judges, some members of the electoral court, in a secret room. We want it to be counted in every electoral section of Brazil," said teacher Marquele de Souza.

The tallying is done automatically by each electronic ballot box, which transmits the results through an encrypted network.

Ricardo Penteado, a lawyer who focuses on electoral and political rights, said Brazil's institutions took too long to react to Bolsonaro's hard-charging stance, so are partly responsible for letting him commandeer the national conversation.

"It doesn't matter how or what the arguments are. This is a fight of someone who isn't right and that isn't about perfecting the democratic system," said Penteado, a member of the Sao Paulo state bar's electoral rights commission. "Rather, it is to destabilize that system and discredit the justice system."

Christopher Garman, managing director for the Americas at the political risk consultancy Eurasia Group, said he doesn't see any danger of Brazil's military backing Bolsonaro in challenging results, even if a leftist like da Silva triumphs. That means risks to post-election governability are "negligible," he wrote in a research note Monday.

"Centrist parties in congress will certainly bandwagon to whoever wins the election to gain access to government positions, and any effort to undermine the election result by Bolsonaro will only act to unite

the rest of the political class to defend whoever is elected," Garman wrote. "The latter is particularly true if there are acts of violence in the election process."

On Monday, the Supreme Court's first session after weeks of recess opened with the chief justice delivering a fiery speech in defense of Barroso, who presides over the electoral court and has been a frequent target for Bolsonaro's animus, and of democracy itself.

"Constantly vigilant of a country's democracy and institutions, judges need to glimpse the right moment to raise their voices in the face of possible threats," Chief Justice Luiz Fux said. \_\_\_ Associated Press videojournalist Lucas Dumphreys in Rio de Janeiro contributed to this report.

## Fears over impunity grow as Haiti probes president's slaying

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Police have detained more than 40 suspects in the killing of President Jovenel Moïse, but many people fear Haiti's crumbling judicial system could result in the assassination going unpunished.

Interrogations are continuing, while dozens of suspects, including an ex-Haitian senator and former justice official, are still at large. But the judicial process has already hit significant snags, among them death threats and allegations of evidence tampering.

Experts and even Haiti's Office of Citizen Protection, an ombudsman-like government agency, warn that the country faces many challenges to properly handle such a complicated case.

"The judicial system is held hostage by certain sectors and weakened by a disciplinary body ... that protects dishonest and corrupt judges but persecutes, through bogus human rights NGOs, those who are honest," the agency said in a Sunday statement.

Brian Concannon, an adviser for the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, said he worries about "so much intentional misdirection" as the Moïse investigation moves forward.

"The big issue is are you going to have a structure that can deliver the truth?" he said. "It's possible there are good people that are getting at the truth, but there is enough misdirection, intimidation (and) people apparently manipulating evidence. ... I'm not confident that we're getting closer to the truth with the current process."

Haiti's Office of Citizen Protection noted that 32 high-profile killings dating from 1991 have never been resolved, including those of former government officials, lawyers, academics and journalists. It also accused corrupt judges of freeing suspects arrested by police, noting that in the past two decades there has been no significant criminal process in well-known murder cases.

The agency urged judicial officials, especially Haiti's chief prosecutor, "not to be intimidated by the pressure or the unfair maneuvers of individuals of all stripes who want at all costs to sabotage the investigation into the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in order to reinforce the phenomenon of impunity in Haiti."

Bedford Claude, the Port-au-Prince prosecutor overseeing the case, did not return messages for comment.

A recent report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council that has not been made public but was shared with The Associated Press condemned what it called chronic impunity in Haiti and the lack of an independent justice sector.

"The judiciary remains in a state of chronic dysfunction," the report said, blaming increased political interference, threats against judicial officials and lack of resources among other things. "Corruption is rampant and there are clear indications of the judiciary acting to vindicate political and other ends, rather than those of justice."

The report said Haiti's judicial system remains marred by lengthy pretrial detentions and paralyzed by the government's failure to pay the salaries of clerks and other workers. It also accused authorities of failing to adequately protect judicial officials.

Among those investigating Moïse's killing who have received death threats is Carl Henry Destin, a justice of the peace who told the AP that he has gone into hiding. He declined to provide other details, including how the threats might be hampering the investigation into the July 7 attack at Moïse's private home in

which his wife, Martine Moïse, was seriously wounded.

Another targeted official is court clerk Marcelin Valentin, who filed a complaint July 29 with the chief prosecutor saying he received serious death threats by phone. He said that in one two days after the assassination, a caller threatened to kill him if he didn't modify names and statements in his report.

One of the messages he received in Creole translates roughly to: "Clerk, you've got a bullet to the head waiting for you."

Valentin said the threats forced him to remain in hiding and stay away from his office.

"My family is obligated to take a forced vacation out of fear that something bad will happen to them," he said in the report.

Deaths threats issued during the investigation of high-profile slayings in Haiti is nothing new. In one recent case, a judge overseeing the 2020 killing of Monferrier Dorval, head of the bar association in Port-au-Prince, went into hiding out of fear for his life. The case has since been at a standstill.

Among the significant challenges in Dorval's case are the theft of evidence from the crime scene and from the courthouse, and there are worries that could be repeated in the Moïse investigation.

Haitian authorities have not disclosed what kind of evidence they have collected in the president's slaying with the help of the FBI, and they have released only limited details at news conferences during which they have largely refused to take questions.

Among those arrested are 18 former Colombian soldiers. The government of Colombia has said the majority of them were duped and did not know about the real operation that was brainstormed in Florida and Haiti.

A growing concern is where the soldiers and other suspects arrested in the case are being held. A June 2021 report issued by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti said that more than 80% of detainees in the country's extremely overcrowded prisons have not been tried and that most live in cells without proper ventilation or clean water and get one daily ration of food and have limited or no access to health care.

"The conditions of detention ... represent a situation of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment," the report said.

Another concern is the upcoming presidential election, which newly installed Prime Minister Ariel Henry has pledged to hold as soon as possible. The first round of voting had been scheduled for late September before Moïse was killed, and it is unclear if the date will change.

Concannon, adviser for the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, said the outcome of the Moïse investigation could depend largely on whether the candidate elected is "somebody who has the mandate and ambition to really get to the truth of this."

## Lawmaker who named rape accuser says she did nothing wrong

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — An Idaho state lawmaker refused to answer questions she deemed "irrelevant" during a hearing Monday to determine whether she violated ethics rules by publicizing in disparaging social media posts the name of a woman who accused another lawmaker of rape.

The lawmaker also argued that the young Statehouse intern who said she was raped wasn't actually a victim or entitled to privacy under the law.

Republican Rep. Priscilla Giddings became the subject of two ethics complaints by about two dozen lawmakers after she publicized the rape accuser's name, photo and personal details about her life in April by sharing links to an far-right news article on social media and in a newsletter to constituents.

The Legislature's ethics committee scheduled the public hearing after finding probable cause that Giddings engaged in "conduct unbecoming a representative, which is detrimental to the integrity of the House as a legislative body."

The lawmaker accused of raping the intern, Republican Aaron von Ehlinger, resigned earlier this year after the ethics committee recommended he be removed from the Statehouse. Von Ehlinger has denied all wrongdoing. The rape allegation is under investigation by police.



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Giddings told the ethics committee Monday that shortly after the allegations against von Ehlinger became public in April, she called one of his attorneys to ask if he would release von Ehlinger's response to the rape accusation, and if he planned on including the accuser's name.

After the attorney did so, Giddings said she checked with a news reporter to determine if he had received the document, Giddings told the committee.

Then she said she went on Facebook to post a link to a different far-right blog article that included the intern's photo, name and other personal information — and linked to the same article in a newsletter to constituents.

After the intern's identity was revealed, she was subjected to a flood of harassment. Advocates for victims of sexual assault said the situation showed why many are afraid to report crimes.

But Giddings, who is running for lieutenant governor, said the complaints about her behavior amounted to little more than "woke cancel culture" and argued the ethics investigation was politically motivated.

She also said sharing the article link was the same as handing someone a newspaper, and was protected under her First Amendment right to free speech.

When Giddings entered the hearing Monday, she was met with applause, shouts of support and a standing ovation by some supporters in the audience — which included some militia members, members of an anti-vaccination group and others with far-right political organizations.

Some wore shirts with messages of support, including "victims for Priscilla," and "Stand with Priscilla, fighting for our freedom."

In her opening statement, Giddings said the ethics investigation was an unfair attack by political opponents and that she exercised her constitutionally protected right to free speech by sharing the link that revealed the intern's identity.

Giddings also said she believed the outcome of the hearing had been pre-determined and left the hearing room for most of the day, declining to cross-examine any of the witnesses who testified against her.

Rep. Brooke Green, a Democrat and one of the bipartisan group of lawmakers that signed onto an ethics complaint, said that the other two dozen lawmakers who also signed the complaint were approached individually and not told who else was signing to ensure that political motivations didn't play a part.

Green said the complaint was made because the Legislature has an obligation to ensure that sexual assault victims are safe and not revictimized by having their privacy violated. The Associated Press generally does not name people who say they have been sexually assaulted.

Rep. Greg Chaney, a Republican who brought one of the complaints against Giddings, said not all speech is protected under the First Amendment, including speech that wrongly defames someone.

Chaney also said Giddings' actions amounted to retaliation against an employee or coworker who reports harassment or sex assault and therefore did not qualify as constitutionally protected speech.

Republican Rep. Julie Yamamoto, who also signed one of the complaints, testified that she would have withdrawn her name and forgiven Giddings if Giddings had apologized.

But that never happened, and Yamamoto said she didn't want to be counted among the lawmakers who are unwilling to hold each other accountable.

"You can do whatever you want, you can say whatever you want, but you need to be willing to accept the consequences," she said.

The hearing grew increasingly tense after the committee called Giddings to return as a witness, asking her why she shared the links and whether she felt that the intern — whom the committee called "Jane Doe" — was entitled to any privacy protections under the state's crime victim laws.

"You're way out of the park right now because there is no victim, so that doesn't apply at all," Giddings said.

Christopher McCurdy, the attorney representing the ethics committee, then asked Giddings, "Do you believe Jane Doe is entitled to dignity during the ethics hearing?"

Giddings declined to answer, calling the question "irrelevant."

She also said she wasn't initially aware that the intern's photo was included in the post she made on her

page, and that she only skimmed the article before sharing it.

The link and the photo remained on her page until the afternoon of April 29 and screenshots collected by The Associated Press showed that commenters on that Facebook post and others repeatedly criticized Giddings for “doxing” the accuser. Critical comments appeared to be frequently deleted.

Some of the committee members grew visibly frustrated with Giddings’ combative approach at the hearing, particularly when she refused to answer questions she deemed irrelevant or that she said focused on her beliefs.

“Just be candid with the committee. Tell us ‘yes’ or ‘no,’” Republican Rep. Brent Crane said. “Don’t hedge this way and hedge that way and play semantics and games.”

Giddings declined to call any witnesses to testify on her behalf, saying she thought that the committee would have served the subpoenas for her. She said she wasn’t able to reach them all by email.

The hearing is scheduled to resume Tuesday, when committee members will decide whether they will recommend that the full House censure, reprimand or expel Giddings.

## Dems ask McCarthy to recant Pelosi taunt as tensions rise

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Several House Democrats have called on House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy to apologize to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi or resign after audio surfaced of him saying at a weekend fundraiser that it would be “hard not to hit her” with a gavel if he’s sworn in as speaker after the 2022 midterm elections.

The comment is emblematic of the rising tension between the two leaders since the Jan. 6 insurrection, in which a violent mob of former President Donald Trump’s supporters broke into the Capitol and some hunted for Pelosi by name. After initially condemning the rioters and blaming Trump for inciting them, McCarthy and his leadership team have recently tried to lay blame on Pelosi, falsely claiming that she was responsible for a delay in military assistance. And McCarthy has remained close to Trump, who often insulted his political rivals in personal terms.

Democrats responded quickly, noting the threats on Pelosi’s life on Jan. 6, when the insurrectionists broke into her office, stole some of her belongings and called out for her.

“Threatening violence against the Speaker of the House is no joke,” tweeted New York Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney. “This is the kind of reckless language that led to a violent insurrection.”

The public strain between the two — extraordinary even by congressional standards — has moved beyond the insurrection into most every matter between them as McCarthy is eyeing the speakership and an election map that could be favorable to Republicans next year. McCarthy last week blamed Pelosi for a renewed mask mandate in the House as “a decision conjured up by liberal government officials who want to continue to live in a perpetual pandemic state.” Pelosi shot back that he was a “moron.”

On Saturday, McCarthy was attending a Tennessee Republican Party Fundraiser when he was gifted an oversized gavel with the words “fire Pelosi” on it, according to local publication Main Street Nashville, which also posted audio of the comments. McCarthy responded by saying that he wanted the crowd to watch Pelosi hand him the gavel if he wins the speakership, and “it’ll be hard not to hit her with it, but I will bang it down.”

Asked about the comments, McCarthy’s office said in a statement that “he was joking.”

But Democrats suggested the remarks were part of a broader problem. New Hampshire Rep. Annie Kuster noted that McCarthy had voted against the Violence Against Women Act, legislation designed to protect women from domestic violence that passed the House in March.

Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pa., tweeted: “There’s nothing funny about hitting Speaker Pelosi or any woman,” adding that he “continues to reminds us that nothing will get in the way of his ambitions — including joking about hitting a woman to excite his small base.”

Democratic Reps. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts and Eric Swalwell of California said McCarthy should step down. “I’ve said it before & I’ll say it again—he should RESIGN!!” tweeted McGovern.

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While already disagreeing on most policy matters, McCarthy and Pelosi have also clashed in recent weeks over the mask mandate, which some Republicans have resisted and argued is not based on science. The requirement was re-instituted in the House after a recommendation from the Capitol Physician.

Asked about her "moron" comment last week, Pelosi responded: "To say that wearing a mask is not based on science, I think is not wise, but that's all I am going to say about that."

McCarthy also withdrew five members from a select committee established last month to investigate the insurrection after Pelosi rejected two of his members, saying they couldn't sit on the panel because of their "antics" defending Trump after the attack. McCarthy called the move an "egregious abuse of power" and the committee a "sham."

Holding a news conference ahead of the committee's first hearing, in which police officers spoke emotionally about their physical and mental pain after the rioting, McCarthy and his leadership tried to shift blame from the Trump supporters who laid siege to Pelosi herself. McCarthy said there were "questions into the leadership within the structure of the Speaker's office" about delays in the National Guard's arrival that day.

However, Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer called for the guard's help after the fighting began, and Pelosi's office has said she did not weigh in on the guard's presence before that. The delays were instead due to communications between security officials in the Capitol and the Pentagon and a lack of preparedness ahead of the attack.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, who was then majority leader, had identical authority over the guard as Pelosi. But McCarthy has repeatedly ignored all questions about his role.

## US hits 70% vaccination rate -- a month late, amid a surge

By MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

The U.S. on Monday finally reached President Joe Biden's goal of getting at least one COVID-19 shot into 70% of American adults -- a month late and amid a fierce surge by the delta variant that is swamping hospitals and leading to new mask rules and mandatory vaccinations around the country.

In a major retreat in the Deep South, Louisiana ordered nearly everyone, vaccinated or not, to wear masks again in all indoor public settings, including schools and colleges. And other cities and states likewise moved to reinstate precautions to counter a crisis blamed on the fast-spreading variant and stubborn resistance to getting the vaccine.

"As quickly as we can discharge them they're coming in and they're coming in very sick. We started seeing entire families come down," lamented Dr. Sergio Segarra, chief medical officer of Baptist Hospital Miami. The Florida medical-center chain reported an increase of over 140% in the past two weeks in the number of people now hospitalized with the virus.

Biden had set a vaccination goal of 70% by the Fourth of July. That figure was the low end of initial government estimates for what would be necessary to achieve herd immunity in the U.S. But that has been rendered insufficient by the highly contagious delta variant, which has enabled the virus to come storming back.

There was no celebration at the White House on Monday, nor a setting of a new target, as the administration instead struggles to overcome skepticism and outright hostility to the vaccine, especially in the South and other rural and conservative areas.

The U.S. still has not hit the administration's other goal of fully vaccinating 165 million American adults by July 4. It is about 8.5 million short.

New cases per day in the U.S. have increased sixfold over the past month to an average of nearly 80,000, a level not seen since mid-February. And deaths per day have climbed over the past two weeks from an average of 259 to 360.

Those are still well below the 3,400 deaths and a quarter-million cases per day seen during the worst of the outbreak, in January. But some places around the country are watching caseloads reach their highest levels since the pandemic began. And nearly all deaths and serious illnesses now are in unvaccinated people.

The surge has led states and cities across the U.S. to beat a retreat, just weeks after it looked as if the

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country was going to see a close-to-normal summer.

Health officials in San Francisco and six other Bay Area counties announced Monday they are reinstating a requirement that everyone — vaccinated or not — wear masks in public indoor spaces.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said New York City airport and transit workers will have to get vaccinated or face weekly testing. He stopped short of mandating either masks or inoculations for the general public, saying he lacks legal authority to do so.

Denver's mayor said the city will require police officers, firefighters and certain other municipal employees to get vaccinated, along with workers at schools, nursing homes, hospitals and jails.

Minnesota's public colleges and universities will require masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. New Jersey said workers at state-run nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals and other such institutions must get the shot or face regular testing.

North Carolina's governor ordered state employees in the agencies under his control to cover up indoors if they are not fully vaccinated.

And McDonald's said it will require employees and customers to resume wearing masks inside some U.S. restaurants regardless of vaccination status in areas with high or substantial coronavirus transmission. The company didn't say how many restaurants would be affected by the new mask mandate.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said a nationwide vaccination requirement "is not on the table," but noted that employers have the right to take such a step.

The U.S. Senate saw its first disclosed breakthrough case of the virus, with Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina saying he has mild symptoms.

In Florida, it took two months last summer for the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 to jump from 2,000 to 10,000. It took only 27 days this summer for Florida hospitals to see that same increase, said Florida Hospital Association President Mary Mayhew.

She noted also that this time, 96% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients are unvaccinated and they are far younger, many of them in their 20s and 30s.

Amid the surge, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis doubled down on his anti-mask, anti-lockdown stance, warning in a fundraising email over the weekend: "They're coming for your freedom again."

While setting a national vaccination goal may have been useful for trying to drum up enthusiasm for the shots, 70% of Americans getting one shot was never going to be enough to prevent surges among unvaccinated groups. And when he announced the goal, Biden acknowledged it was just a first step.

It's the level of vaccinations in a community — not a broad national average — that can slow an outbreak or allow it to flourish.

Vaccination rates in some Southern states are far lower than they are New England. Vermont has fully inoculated nearly 78% of its adult population. Alabama has just cracked 43%.

## Children stopped at border likely hit record-high in July

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The number of children traveling alone who were picked up at the Mexican border by U.S. immigration authorities likely hit an all-time high in July, and the number of people who came in families likely reached its second-highest total on record, a U.S. official said Monday, citing preliminary government figures.

The sharp increases from June were striking because crossings usually slow during stifling — and sometimes fatal — summer heat.

U.S. authorities likely picked up more than 19,000 unaccompanied children in July, exceeding the previous high of 18,877 in March, according to David Shahoulian, assistant secretary for border and immigration policy at the Department of Homeland Security. The June total was 15,253.

The number of people encountered in families during July is expected at about 80,000, Shahoulian said. That's shy of the all-time high of 88,857 in May 2019 but up from 55,805 in June.

Overall, U.S. authorities stopped migrants about 210,000 times at the border in July, up from 188,829 in



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June and the highest in more than 20 years. But the numbers aren't directly comparable because many cross repeatedly under a pandemic-related ban that expels people from the country immediately without giving them a chance to seek asylum but carries no legal consequences.

The activity was overwhelmingly concentrated in the Border Patrol's Del Rio and Rio Grande Valley sectors in south Texas, accounting for more than seven of 10 people who came in families.

In the Rio Grande Valley sector, the "epicenter of the current surge," agents stopped migrants about 78,000 times in July, Shahoulian said, up from 59,380 in June and 51,149 in May.

The government disclosures came in a court filing hours after immigrant advocacy groups resumed a legal battle to end the government's authority to expel families at the border on grounds it prevents the spread of the coronavirus.

On Monday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention renewed those emergency powers, known as Title 42 and named for a 1944 public health law. The Homeland Security Department said it would continue to enforce the ban on asylum for single adults and families despite growing pressure from pro-immigration groups that it isn't justified on public health grounds. Unaccompanied children are exempt.

"Title 42 is not an immigration authority, but a public health authority, and its continued use is dictated by CDC and governed by the CDC's analysis of public health factors," the department said in a statement.

The final count for July border arrests isn't expected for several days, but preliminary numbers are usually pretty close. Over the first 29 days of July, authorities encountered a daily average of 6,779 people, including 616 unaccompanied children and 2,583 who came in families, Shahoulian said.

The number of people stopped in families is expected to hit an all-time during for the 2021 fiscal year that ends Sept. 30, Shaoulian said, adding it will likely be higher if courts order that the pandemic-related powers be lifted.

The rising numbers have strained holding facilities, Shahoulian said. The Border Patrol had 17,778 people in custody on Sunday, despite a "COVID-19 adjusted capacity" of 4,706. The Rio Grande Valley sector was holding 10,002 of them.

The American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups said Monday that they were ending settlement talks with the Biden administration over their demand to lift the pandemic-related ban on families seeking asylum.

The impasse resumes a legal battle before U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan in Washington.

"We are deeply disappointed that the Biden administration has abandoned its promise of fair and humane treatment for families seeking safety, leaving us no choice but to resume litigation," said Neela Chakravartula, managing attorney for the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies.

Since late March, the ACLU has been working with advocates to choose particularly vulnerable migrants stuck in Mexico for the U.S. government to allow in to seek asylum. ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt said the exemptions will continue for another week.

"Seven months of waiting for the Biden administration to end Title 42 is more than enough," Gelernt said.

The breakdown reflects growing tensions between advocates and the administration over use of expulsions and the government's decision last week to resume fast-track deportation flights for families to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Last week, the International Rescue Committee and HIAS also said they were ending efforts to help the administration choose asylum-seekers to exempt from the pandemic-related ban. The asylum advocacy groups had been working on a parallel track with the ACLU to identify particularly vulnerable migrants stuck in Mexico.

The CDC said Monday that the ban would remain until its director "determines that the danger of further introduction of COVID-19 into the United States from covered noncitizens has ceased to be a serious danger to the public health."

## Israel's Olympic gold victory raises Jewish identity debate

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

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JERUSALEM (AP) — Artem Dolgopyat fulfilled a lifelong dream when he won a gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics. But back home in Israel, his hopes of trading gold wedding bands with his longtime girlfriend seem to be an impossible dream.

The Ukrainian-born Israeli gymnast was hailed as a national hero for winning Israel's second-ever gold medal — and its first in artistic gymnastics. But the celebrations were tempered after his mother lamented that the country's authorities will not allow him to wed because he is not considered Jewish according to Orthodox law.

"The state doesn't allow him to marry," Dolgopyat's mother, Angela, told 103FM in an interview Sunday.

Her comments touched a raw nerve in this country, which has repeatedly struggled with balancing matters of religion and state since it was founded as a refuge for Jews 73 years ago.

Under its "Law of Return," anyone with at least one Jewish grandparent is eligible for Israeli citizenship. But while Dolgopyat's father is Jewish, his mother is not. Under "halacha," or Jewish religious law, one must have a Jewish mother to be considered Jewish.

This discrepancy has resulted in tens of thousands of people, many of them from the former Soviet Union, who live in the country and serve in its army but who are blocked from Jewish rituals such as weddings and funerals.

Israel does not have a system of civil marriage and Israeli law mandates that Jewish marriages must be conducted by a rabbi authorized by the Chief Rabbinate. Christian and Muslim couples must also get married within their faith.

Those who do not meet the Orthodox standards set by the rabbinate — including same-sex couples, interfaith couples, and Israelis not considered Jewish by halacha — cannot get married in Israel. Instead, they must travel abroad to marry.

Attempts to legalize civil marriage have repeatedly foundered due to opposition by politically powerful ultra-Orthodox parties.

Dolgopyat's mother told the radio station that her son and his girlfriend have lived together for three years, "but they can't marry. They need to go abroad, but they don't let him go abroad because he always needs to do sports."

The Olympic champion, for his part, tried to downplay the controversy. "These are things I have in my heart, it's not right to talk about this now," he told reporters in Tokyo.

But Dolgopyat's wedding woes have dominated public discourse, with politicians and a raft of op-ed articles debating the issue of bringing civil marriage to Israel.

A 2019 survey by the Israel Democracy Institute found that almost 60% of Israeli Jews support civil marriage.

"It's not that Dolgopyat is entitled to marry in Israel because of the rare sports accomplishment he made, rather because he is a citizen in a democratic country," Katya Kupchik, an activist with Israel Hofsheets wrote on the Hebrew news site Ynet. Israel Hofsheets advocates for civil marriages.

"He, like hundreds of thousands of others, ought not have to receive approvals or rejections from the Chief Rabbinate in order to exercise a basic right."

Conversely, Yishai Cohen wrote in the ultra-Orthodox newspaper Kikar Hashabbat: "I wouldn't want to live in a country that makes winning a sporting medal the standard for conversion" to Judaism. He said a conversion requires accepting "the yoke of Torah and the commandments."

Yair Lapid, Israel's foreign minister, said Monday at a faction meeting of his Yesh Atid party that he "will fight in every way possible so that there will be civil marriage" in order for Dolgopyat and others to marry in Israel.

"It's insufferable in my eyes that someone can stand on the podium, hear Hatikva, and get a gold medal in the name of Israel, and then not be able to wed here," he said, referring to the country's national anthem. "It's a situation that cannot continue, and we will fight for change."

**Graham 1st vaccinated senator to test positive for COVID-19**

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By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Sen. Lindsey Graham has become the first senator to disclose a breakthrough infection after being vaccinated against the coronavirus, saying Monday he is “very glad” he received the vaccine, without which his current symptoms would be “far worse.”

The news prompted several other lawmakers to get quick COVID-19 tests and report their status. A handful of Senate colleagues spent part of the weekend working and socializing with the South Carolina Republican, who attended a gathering on Sen. Joe Manchin’s houseboat the evening that he first developed symptoms.

In a statement issued Monday afternoon, Graham said he “started having flu-like symptoms Saturday night” and went to the doctor Monday morning.

After being notified of his positive test, Graham said he would quarantine for 10 days.

“I feel like I have a sinus infection, and at present time, I have mild symptoms,” the 66-year-old Graham said. “I am very glad I was vaccinated because without vaccination, I am certain I would not feel as well as I do now. My symptoms would be far worse.”

According to spokesman Kevin Bishop, Graham was among senators who attended Manchin’s event on Saturday. Sam Runyon, a spokeswoman for Manchin, said the West Virginia Democrat “is fully vaccinated and following the CDC guidelines for those exposed to a COVID positive individual.”

In the Capitol Monday evening, senators who attended the gathering were present and voting. Manchin said he had since tested negative and said the outdoor event, which lasted several hours and featured hamburgers, was “just trying to get people together.”

“We do everything in a bipartisan way, and that’s what we do,” Manchin said. “I talked to Lindsey today, he’s fine.”

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., told reporters that he was also on the boat, named “Almost Heaven,” and was awaiting test results. Sens. John Thune, R-S.D., and Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., were also there and were getting tested.

More senators have donned masks in recent weeks as coronavirus case counts have risen, but they aren’t required in the chamber, and some still choose not to wear them. The House has returned to a mask requirement.

Senate Democrats will switch back to a virtual caucus lunch Tuesday at the Capitol amid the virus surge. Republicans had been quicker to resume in-person meetings last year, but there was no word if their lunch plans would now change.

Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt, a Republican who is vaccinated, was not wearing a mask Monday and said he had not decided whether to put one back on. He said he’s concerned that reports of Graham’s illness will discourage some to get vaccinated.

On wearing a mask, Blunt said, “I think it actually is one of the reasons that people are encouraged to get the vaccine is they don’t have to.”

There’s no way to know just how risky it was for the people who were near Graham — vaccinated or not. Vaccinated people are at a much lower risk of being infected at all and for contracting a serious case. But the level of risk depends on whether Graham was masked, whether they were masked, how much virus his body was producing when they met, how close they were and for how long.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fully vaccinated people determined to have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 do not need to quarantine if they are asymptomatic but should be tested within five days and wear a mask indoors for 14 days or until testing negative.

Graham, who was vaccinated in December, has long been a proponent of vaccination, saying during a visit this spring to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston that “the sooner we get everybody vaccinated, the quicker we can get back to normal.”

Graham’s infection comes on the heels of updated CDC guidance urging even fully vaccinated people to return to wearing masks indoors in areas of high coronavirus transmission, citing the surge of the highly contagious delta variant. Recent analysis has shown that breakthrough cases of COVID-19, with mild or

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no symptoms, still remain rare.

Both congressional chambers have been adopting stricter face covering regulations amid a resurgence in COVID-19 cases across the country.

Graham, who was wearing a mask, did not answer questions from reporters on Capitol Hill earlier Monday, prior to the statement being issued. Because of Senate votes, Graham was not in attendance at Friday night's Silver Elephant dinner, the South Carolina Republican Party's signature annual fundraiser and an event attended by hundreds, including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, a headlining speaker.

## **\$1T infrastructure bill gets first action as senators dig in**

By KEVIN FREKING and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer sought to speed up consideration of a nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package Monday, promising that Democrats would work with Republicans to put together amendments for consideration this week. GOP senators cautioned that they need time to digest the massive bill.

Formally called the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the proposal clocked in at some 2,700 pages after a hurry-up-and-wait rare weekend session. The final product, unveiled late Sunday, was intended to follow the broad outline a bipartisan group of senators had negotiated for weeks with the White House. Schumer has said a final vote could be held "in a matter of days."

"Let's start voting on amendments," Schumer said as the Senate opened work on Monday. "The longer it takes to finish the bill, the longer we will be here."

A key part of President Joe 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 — one of the most substantial expenditures on the nation's roads, bridges, waterworks, broadband and the electric grid in years.

The Senate's Republican leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, has sided with those voting to allow debate to proceed, but he has not signaled how he will ultimately vote. He described the bill Monday as a "good and important jumping off point" for a robust, bipartisan amendment process. He warned Democrats against setting "any artificial timetable."

"Infrastructure is exactly the kind of subject that Congress should be able to address across the aisle," McConnell said.

The Senate overwhelmingly approved the first two amendments to the bill late Monday. Each was non-controversial and received far more than the 60 votes necessary to be added to the legislation. Other amendment votes, particular on the issue of how to pay for the new spending, are expected to be more spirited affairs.

Senators and staff labored behind the scenes for days to write the massive bill. It was supposed to be ready Friday, but by Sunday, more glitches were caught and changes made.

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

"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.

Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, a Republican negotiator, framed the legislation as something that would help the U.S. better compete with China and would make the "economy more efficient, more productive" after years of struggle getting a public works bill off the ground.

"People have talked about infrastructure in this city forever," Portman said.

As the amendment process gets underway, senators are weighing how much to try to change the package and how hard to try, knowing it will be difficult to reach the 60-vote threshold to approve any substantial changes.

Time is not limitless. Schumer has repeatedly warned that he was prepared to keep lawmakers in Wash-



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ington for as long as it took to complete votes on both the bipartisan infrastructure plan and 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.

Republicans counter that they just had a chance to begin fully reviewing the bill late Sunday.

"We shouldn't sacrifice adequate time on this bill merely because the Democratic leader would like to spend next week jamming a 100% partisan piece of legislation through the United States Senate," said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota.

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 to be \$55 billion for water and wastewater infrastructure as well as billions for airports, ports, broadband internet and electric vehicle charging stations.

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.

Some Republicans are wary of another large spending bill after a series of COVID relief measures have boosted the national debt.

"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 their August recess.

Last week, 17 GOP senators joined all Democrats in voting to start work on the bill. That support largely held, with McConnell 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 and 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.

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.

## In heat emergency, southern Europe scrambles for resources

By DEREK GATOPOULOS, MEHMET GUZEL and COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A heat wave baking southeast Europe has fueled deadly wildfires in Turkey and threatened the national power grid in Greece as governments scrambled Monday to secure the resources needed to cope with the emergency.

Temperatures reached 45 C (113 F) in inland areas of Greece and nearby countries and are expected to remain high for most of the week.

Battling deadly wildfires along its coastline for a sixth day, Turkey broadened an appeal for international assistance and was promised water-dropping planes from the European Union. The fires have been blamed for the deaths of eight people in recent days.

The help for residents in Turkey's fire-ravaged areas couldn't come soon enough. At the coastal village of Bozalan, resident Esra Sanli looked over at the blaze.

"It's burning. It's obviously burning. There's no plane, there's no helicopter, there are no (access) roads," she said, sobbing. "How is this going to be extinguished? How?"

In Greece, an emergency was declared in fire-hit areas on the island of Rhodes, which is near the Turkish coast. Workers with health conditions were allowed to take time off work, while Greek coal-fired power

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stations slated for retirement were brought back into service to shore up the national grid, under pressure due to the widespread use of air conditioning.

Pregnant and other vulnerable workers in North Macedonia were told to stay home.

Dann Mitchell, a professor of climate science at the University of Bristol, said the heat wave in southeast Europe "is not at all unexpected, and very likely enhanced due to human-induced climate change."

"The number of extreme heat events around the world is increasing year on year, with the top 10 hottest years on record all occurring since 2005," Mitchell told The Associated Press.

"This year, we have seen a number of significant events, including a particularly dramatic heat wave in western Canada and the U.S., that was extreme even for current levels of climate change," Mitchell said. "These black swan events have always happened, but now they sit on the background of a hotter climate, so are even more deadly."

As hot weather edged southward, Italy and Croatia were experiencing storms as well as wildfires. A small tornado in Istria, on Croatia's northern Adriatic coast, toppled trees that destroyed several cars, hours before a large wildfire erupted outside the nearby resort of Trogir, threatening homes and the local power supply.

Some 30 people were treated for light smoke inhalation in Italy's coastal city of Pescara after flames tore through a nearby pine forest. Beach-goers nearby had to be rescued by sea Sunday from that wildfire.

"That zone of pine forest is a nature reserve, and it's completely destroyed. It brings tears to see it. The environmental damage is incalculable. This is the heart of the city, its green lung and today it is destroyed," Pescara Mayor Carlo Masci said.

Cyprus, recovering from a major wildfire last month, kept water-dropping planes on patrol to respond to fires as they broke out.

"If you don't react right away with a massive response to any outbreak, things can turn difficult quickly," forestry service chief Charalambos Alexandrou told state-run media. "The conditions are war-like."

On a visit to the power grid operator Monday, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis urged members of the public to avoid daytime use of ovens, washing machines and other energy-demanding appliances to reduce the risk of blackouts. He described the weather conditions in Greece as the most severe since a deadly heat wave in 1987.

It was the year that Ioanna Vergou, deputy mayor of the northern Greek town of Skydra, was born. The town of 5,500 briefly ranked among the hottest in the country. She said municipal workers had been given earlier shifts and those needing public services were handed water and sent to an air-conditioned waiting area.

"Many people here have compared the heat wave to what happened in 1987," she said. "But hopefully it will be easier this time round. We are all just waiting for it to pass."

\_\_\_ Mehmet Guzel reported from Cokertme, Turkey and Colleen Barry reported from Milan, Italy. Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, Ayse Wieting in Istanbul, Dusan Stojanovic in Belgrade, Serbia, Menelaos Hadjicostis in Nicosia, Cyprus, and Konstantin Testorides in Skopje, North Macedonia also contributed. \_\_\_

Follow all AP stories about climate change issues at <https://apnews.com/hub/Climate>

## Turkey battles wildfires for 6th day; 10,000 are evacuated

By MEHMET GUZEL and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

BOZALAN, Turkey (AP) — Selcuk Sanli set his two cows loose, put his family's most treasured belongings in a car and fled his home as a wildfire approached his village near Turkey's beach resort of Bodrum, one of thousands fleeing flames that have coated the skies with a thick yellow haze.

For the sixth straight day, Turkish firefighters battled Monday to control the blazes that are tearing through forests near Turkey's beach destinations. Fed by strong winds and scorching temperatures, the fires that began Wednesday have left eight people dead. Residents and tourists have fled vacation resorts in flotillas of small boats or convoys of cars and trucks. Many villagers have lost their homes and farm animals and have had trouble breathing amid the heavy smoke.

Overall, some 10,000 people have been evacuated in Mugla province alone, Interior Minister Suleyman

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Soylu said Monday.

Sanli returned to check on his house Monday in Bozalan only to find that the fire had flared.

"Property is an important part of life but life itself comes first," he said as he prepared to leave once again.

Agriculture and Forestry Minister Bekir Pakdemirli said on Twitter that crews were still tackling nine fires in the coastal provinces of Antalya and Mugla that are popular tourist areas. Other active fires were in the provinces of Isparta, Denizli, Izmir and Adana.

Another fire in Tunceli, in southeast Turkey, was contained on Monday, the minister said earlier. In all, 137 fires that broke out in over 30 provinces since Wednesday have been extinguished.

"We are going through days when the heat is above 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit), where the winds are strong and humidity is extremely low," Pakdemirli said. "We are struggling under such difficult conditions."

In Bozalan, Esra Sanli sobbed as she pointed at a fire raging near the village.

"There's no plane, there's no helicopter, there's no roads. How is this going to be extinguished? How?" she said.

Firetrucks, with their sirens on, drove toward Bozalan, while villagers were seen herding cows away from the area.

On Sunday, residents were forced to evacuate the nearby village of Cokertme as flames neared. Some got on small boats and others left by cars as the fire got closer and closer — scenes that Ahmet Aras, the mayor of the nearby resort of Bodrum, described as "hell." Precautions were taken to protect two nearby thermal power plants.

An evacuation order was also issued for the town of Turunc, near the seaside resort of Marmaris in Mugla province. People carrying suitcases fled on small boats.

Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy said Monday that some tourists were able to return to their hotels after the threat dissipated.

The EU said it helped mobilize firefighting planes from Croatia and Spain to help Turkey. Planes from Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran have also been fighting the blazes. Spain said it was sending two water-dumping aircraft and one transport plane as well as 27 soldiers to help.

The EU announcement followed allegations that the Turkish government was compromising firefighting efforts by refusing help from Western nations. Pakdemirli refuted that, saying that the government had only refused offers for planes whose water-dumping capacities were less than five tons. A total of 16 planes, 51 helicopters and more than 5,000 personnel were tackling the fires, he said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has also been widely criticized for failing to purchase state-of-the-art firefighting planes.

In Marmaris, Mayor Mehmet Oktay said fires were still burning in two locations and estimated that 11,000 hectares (28,000 acres) of forest had been incinerated. On Monday, a fire reached the edge of the village of Hisaronu, burning a number of homes and descending down a mountainside toward a road as police evacuated ambulance crews and journalists.

"Our lungs have been burning for the past five days," Oktay told Haberturk television.

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

Soylu, the interior minister, said authorities were investigating the cause of the fires, including human "carelessness" and possible sabotage by outlawed Kurdish militants. He said one person was detained over allegations that he may have been paid by the group to start a fire.

Experts, however, mostly point to climate change as being behind the fires, along with accidents caused by people. Erdogan has 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 in Italy and Greece, where people had to be evacuated by sea to escape the flames.

**With evictions resuming, tenants scramble for assistance**

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By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The eviction system, which saw a dramatic drop in cases before a federal moratorium expired over the weekend, rumbled back into action Monday, with activists girding for the first of what could be millions of tenants to be tossed onto the streets as the delta variant of the coronavirus surges.

Landlords tired of waiting for federal rental assistance were in court hoping to evict their tenants, while families from Ohio to Virginia turned up before judges hoping for a last-minute reprieve. In Detroit, at least 600 tenants with court orders against them were at immediate risk.

"It's very scary with the moratorium being over," said Ted Phillips, a lawyer who leads the United Community Housing Coalition in Detroit.

The Biden administration allowed the federal moratorium to expire over the weekend and Congress was unable to extend it. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called for an immediate extension, calling it a "moral imperative" to prevent Americans from being put out of their homes during a COVID-19 surge.

The Biden administration had hoped that historic amounts of rental assistance allocated by Congress would help avert a crisis. But the distribution has been painfully slow: Only about \$3 billion of the first tranche of \$25 billion had been distributed through June by states and localities. A second amount of \$21.5 billion will go to the states.

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.

In Rhode Island on Monday, Gabe Imondi, a 74-year-old landlord, was in court hoping to get an eviction execution — the final step to push a tenant out of one of four housing units he owns in nearby Pawtucket.

Imondi said he and his tenant both filed forms for the billions in federal aid meant to help keep tenants in their homes but so far, he said, he hasn't seen a cent of the state's \$200 million share.

A retired general contractor, Imondi estimates he's out around \$20,000 in lost rent since September, when he began seeking to evict his tenant for non-payment. The eviction was approved in January.

"I don't know what they're doing with that money," Imondi said.

Meanwhile, Luis Vertentes was told by a judge he had three weeks to clear out of his one-bedroom apartment in nearby East Providence. The 43-year-old landscaper said he was four months behind on rent after being hospitalized for a time.

"I'm going to be homeless, all because of this pandemic," Vertentes said. "I feel helpless, like I can't do anything even though I work and I got a full-time job."

Outside the courtroom, Katie Barrington, a case manager with Crossroads Rhode Island, a nonprofit housing and homeless agency, signed him up with a housing counsellor to help him secure a new home and enrolled him for federal rental assistance.

In Columbus, Ohio, Chelsea Rivera showed up at Franklin County court Monday after receiving an eviction notice last month. A single mom, she's behind \$2,988 in rent and late fees for the one bed-room apartment she rents for herself and three young sons.

The 27-year-old said she started to struggle after her hours were cut in May at the Walmart warehouse where she worked. She's applied to numerous agencies for help but they're either out of money, have a waiting list, or not able to help until clients end up in court with an eviction notice.

Rivera said she's preparing herself mentally to move into a shelter with her children until her situation improves.

"We just need help," Rivera said, fighting back tears. "It's just been really hard with everyday issues on top of worrying about where you're going to live."

But there was more optimism in Virginia, where Tiara Burton, 23, learned she would be getting federal help and wouldn't be evicted. She initially feared the worst when the moratorium lifted.

"That was definitely a worry yesterday," said Burton, 23, who lives in Virginia Beach. "If they're going to start doing evictions again, then I'm going to be faced with having to figure out where me and my family are going to go. And that's not something that anyone should have to worry about these days at all."

She was relieved to be told by an attorney she had been approved for assistance through the Virginia



Rent Relief Program. Her court hearing was postponed for 30 days, during which time she and her landlord can presumably work things out.

"I'm grateful for that," she said. "Just hearing, 'Okay, we're going to push it back 30 days, but we're going to assist you still,' ... that's another weight lifted off of my shoulders."

Around the country, courts, legal advocates and law enforcement agencies were 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.

Some of the cities with the most cases, according to the Eviction Lab, are Phoenix with more than 42,000 eviction filings, Houston with more than 37,000, Las Vegas with nearly 27,000 and Tampa more than 15,000. Indiana and Missouri also have more than 80,000 filings.

While the moratorium was enforced in much of the country, there were places like Idaho where judges ignored it, said Ali Rabe, executive director of Jesse Tree, a non-profit that works to prevent evictions in the Boise metropolitan area.

The non-profit represented renters in about 800 evictions in the past year, and only once was the moratorium enforced, Rabe said. Statewide about 1,500 people were evicted in the past year, she said.

"Eviction courts ran as usual," she said.

That was much the way things played out in parts of North Carolina, where on Monday Sgt. David Ruppe knocked on a weathered mobile home door in Cleveland County, a rural community an hour west of Charlotte.

"We haven't seen much of a difference at all," he said. "We would still have evictions issued from the court and we would still serve them as if it happened pre-COVID."

He waited a few minutes on the porch scattered with folding chairs and toys. Then a woman opened the door.

"How are you?" he asked quietly, then explained her landlord had started the eviction process. The woman told Ruppe she'd paid, and he said she'd need to bring proof to her upcoming Aug. 9 court date.

Ruppe, who has two young sons, said seeing families struggle day-after-day is tough.

"There's only so much you can do," he said. "So, if you can offer them a glimmer of hope, words of encouragement, especially if there's kids involved. Being a father, I can relate to that."

## Judge denies new trial request in Mollie Tibbetts case

By DAVID PITT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A judge on Monday rejected a convicted man's request for a new trial in the 2018 killing of University of Iowa student Mollie Tibbetts, whose body was found in a cornfield weeks after she disappeared while out for a run near her small hometown.

Judge Joel Yates' ruling cleared the way for sentencing to proceed Aug. 30 in the trial of Cristhian Bahena Rivera, who was convicted in May of first-degree murder in Tibbetts' death. The former farmhand, who came to the U.S. illegally as a teenager, faces a sentence of life in prison.

Yates rejected efforts by Bahena Rivera's attorneys to implicate others, saying much of the evidence they presented after he was convicted was known to them before the verdict was handed down. To grant a new trial, any additional evidence would have to be new and revealed after the verdict, he wrote.

The judge also said many of the new allegations conflicted with trial testimony and evidence presented by Bahena Rivera's own witnesses.

"In reviewing the evidence and testimony provided at trial, the court finds the verdict was not contrary to the weight of the evidence," Yates wrote.

During questioning by police, Bahena Rivera acknowledged that he encountered Tibbetts as she was running near her small eastern Iowa hometown of Brooklyn and he led investigators to the field where her body lay hidden under cornstalks.

But during his trial, he claimed publicly for the first time that two masked men kidnapped him at gunpoint from his trailer, forced him to drive to where Tibbetts was running on a rural road, killed her, put

her body in his trunk and made him dispose of it. He said he didn't tell investigators about the two men earlier because they had threatened to kill his ex-girlfriend and young daughter.

Bahena Rivera was to be sentenced last month. But toward the end of the testimony portion of his trial, two new witnesses came forward independently of one another and told police that a local 21-year-old man told them he had killed Tibbetts. Defense lawyers requested a new trial based on that and other newly discovered information, and Yates agreed to postpone sentencing while he considered their request.

At a hearing last week, Bahena Rivera's lawyers sought to link Tibbetts' death to another young woman's report of having been kidnapped and sexually assaulted at an area home used for sex trafficking in the summer of 2018, and the recent disappearance of an 11-year-old boy from the same county. A 50-year-old suspected methamphetamine dealer has been investigated in both cases but hasn't been charged in either, and prosecutors say he has no ties to Tibbetts.

Prosecutors have said they were confident that Bahena Rivera killed Tibbetts and they pointed out that his own account of what happened didn't align with what the two new witnesses told police.

"We are pleased that the judge upheld the jury's verdict and we look forward to moving to sentencing," said Lynn Hicks, a spokesman for the state attorney general.

Attorneys for Bahena Rivera did not immediately reply to messages seeking comment.

## Poland grants visa to Belarus Olympian who fears for safety

By GRAHAM DUNBAR Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Poland granted a visa Monday to a Belarusian Olympic sprinter who said she feared for her safety and that her team's officials tried to force her to fly home, where the autocratic government was accused of diverting a flight to arrest a dissident journalist.

An activist group that is helping athlete Krystsina Tsimanouskaya told The Associated Press that it bought her a plane ticket to Warsaw for the coming days.

The current standoff apparently began after Tsimanouskaya criticized how officials were managing her team — setting off a massive backlash in state-run media back home, where authorities relentlessly crack down on government critics. The runner said on her Instagram account that she was put in the 4x400 relay even though she has never raced in the event.

The runner was then apparently hustled to the airport but refused to board a flight for Istanbul and instead approached police for help. In a filmed message distributed on social media, she also asked the International Olympic Committee for assistance.

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

The rapid-fire series of events brought international political intrigue to an Olympics that have been more focused on operational dramas, like maintaining safety during a pandemic and navigating widespread Japanese opposition to holding the event at all.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said: "What is important is that everyone who asks for protection, for refugee status, is afforded that opportunity. ... The Japanese authorities have done what they can to protect her, and I think that is the most important part. No one should be forced to go home under threat or under force."

Belarus' authoritarian government has relentlessly targeted anyone even mildly expressing dissent since a presidential election a year ago triggered a wave of unprecedented mass protests. And it has also gone to extremes to stop its critics, including the recent plane diversion that European officials called an act of air piracy.

In this context, Tsimanouskaya feared for her safety once she saw the campaign against her in state media, according to the Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation, the activist group that is helping her.

"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 foundation, told the AP in an interview.

State media have continued to come down hard on Tsimanouskaya. Presenters on state TV channel

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Belarus 1 called her decision to seek asylum "a cheap stunt" and "a disgusting act," and described her performance at the Olympics as a "failure."

Tsimanouskaya 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.

She was due to compete again in the Olympic 200-meter heats on Monday, but she said her team barred her from participating in a complaint filed with the Court of Arbitration for Sport. She asked the court to overturn that decision, but the body declined to intervene.

Tsimanouskaya's next steps were not clear. Szymon Szykowski vel Sek, a Polish deputy foreign minister, said the runner asked for the humanitarian visa for now and can still seek refugee status once in Poland. Vadim Krivosheyev, of the activist sports foundation, said she planned to seek asylum.

Another Polish deputy foreign minister, Marcin Przydacz, told the Onet.pl news portal that once in Poland, Tsimanouskaya will be free to choose whether to stay there or to go to "another safe country."

Tsimanouskaya's husband, Arseni Zdanevich, meanwhile, confirmed to the Russian Sport Express newspaper that he left Belarus for Ukraine.

Athletes seeking asylum at global sporting events is nothing new — though Tsimanouskaya's circumstances differ from the typical situation. Requests for asylum were especially frequent during the Cold War but they have also happened occasionally in the decades since. As many as 117 athletes defected at the Munich Olympics in 1972, according to reports at the time. At least four Romanians and a Soviet associated with the Olympics defected at the Montreal Games in 1976. And Cuban athletes have frequently done so.

Underscoring the seriousness of the allegations, several groups and countries say they are helping the runner. Poland and the Czech Republic offered assistance, and Japan's Foreign Ministry said it was working with the International Olympic Committee and the Tokyo Olympics organizers.

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.

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

Many critics of Belarus' government have fled to Poland. A top Belarusian dissident in the country, Pavel Latushka, said Tsimanouskaya and those supporting her had sought assistance from various European governments, but Poland was the quickest to respond.

Przydacz said on Twitter that in addition to granting the humanitarian visa, Poland would also help the runner to continue her sports career. "Poland always stands for Solidarity," he said.

Several hours after she entered the Polish embassy, Tsimanouskaya was still believed to be inside.

Czech Foreign Minister Jakub Kulhanek also tweeted that the Czech Republic has offered her asylum.

The Belarus National Olympic Committee has been led for more than 25 years by authoritarian 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 during the crackdown following the wave of anti-government protests over the last year.

"Lukashenko perceives all criticism as part of a plot by Western countries," said Valery Karbalevich, an independent Belarusian political analyst. "Tsimanouskaya's protest is viewed as part of a broader movement of hundreds of Belarusian athletes who stood against the beatings of peaceful demonstrators and for a year have been taking part in street rallies."

The standoff over Tsimanouskaya comes just months after the dramatic diversion of a passenger plane flying between two EU countries. Belarusian authorities ordered the plane to land in Minsk — and pulled journalist and activist Raman Pratasevich and his Russian girlfriend off the flight.

The elder Lukashenko maintained that there was a bomb threat against the plane and that's why a fighter jet was scrambled to force it to land, but the move was roundly criticized by Western leaders.

Pratasevich, who ran a channel on a messaging app used to organize demonstrations against Lukashenko's rule, left his homeland in 2019. He has been charged with fomenting mass unrest and is under

house arrest while he awaits trial.

## US expands Afghan refugee program as Taliban violence rises

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Monday expanded its efforts to assist at-risk Afghan citizens flee Taliban violence as fighting intensifies ahead of the U.S. military pullout at the end of the month.

The State Department said it is widening the scope of Afghans eligible for refugee status in United States to include current and former employees of U.S.-based news organizations, U.S.-based aid and development agencies and other relief groups that receive U.S. funding. Current and former employees of the U.S. government and the NATO military operation who don't meet the criteria for a dedicated program for such workers are also covered.

However, the move comes with a major caveat that may severely limit the number of people who can benefit: applicants must leave Afghanistan to begin the adjudication process that may take 12-14 months in a third country, and the U.S. does not intend to support their departures or stays there.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken acknowledged the difficulties that applicants would face but said the U.S. remains committed to seeking a peaceful and secure Afghanistan.

"This is incredibly hard," he told reporters. "It is hard on so many levels, it's hard to pick up and leave everything you know (and) it's hard to get yourself to a place where you can take advantage of what opportunities exist to see to apply for refugee status. And we recognize that this is. Alas, this is the case for millions of people around the world who find themselves in very difficult situations and particularly in Afghanistan now."

Relief agencies said Monday's gesture was insufficient, pointing out significant, and in some cases insurmountable, hurdles that successful applicants would face. InterAction, an umbrella organization for scores of international relief and development groups, was highly critical.

"InterAction feels that this is unacceptable, as several critical border crossing checkpoints are now under Taliban control and Afghanistan's neighbors may not necessarily welcome these individuals and their families," it said. "Requiring at-risk Afghans to first become internationally displaced before applying for visas further endangers the Afghan people who have partnered with the United States."

Nevertheless, the State Department said the move means that "many thousands" of Afghans and their immediate families will now have the opportunity to be permanently resettled in the U.S. as refugees that they did not previous have. The department could not offer a more specific number of how many might be eligible.

"The U.S. objective remains a peaceful, secure Afghanistan," the department said in a statement. "However, in light of increased levels of Taliban violence, the U.S. government is working to provide certain Afghans, including those who worked with the United States, the opportunity for refugee resettlement to the United States."

The creation of a "Priority 2" category for Afghans within the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is intended for Afghans and their immediate families who "may be at risk due to their U.S. affiliation" but aren't able to get a Special Immigrant Visa because they did not work directly for the U.S. government or didn't hold their government jobs long enough.

To qualify for the Priority 2 category, Afghans must be nominated by a U.S. government agency or by the most senior civilian U.S. citizen employee of a U.S.-based media outlet or nongovernmental organization.

The first group of Afghan Special Immigrant Visa applicants — most of whom served as translators or did other work for U.S. troops or diplomats — who have cleared security vetting arrived in the U.S. on Friday. That group of 221 people are among 2,500 who will be brought to the U.S. in the coming days.

Another 4,000 SIV applicants, plus their families, who have not yet cleared the security screening are expected to be relocated to third countries ahead of the completion of the U.S. withdrawal. Roughly 20,000 Afghans have expressed interest in the program.



## US employers ratchet up the pressure on the unvaccinated

By ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Employers are losing patience with unvaccinated workers.

For months, most employers relied on information campaigns, bonuses and other incentives to encourage their workforces to get the COVID-19 shot. Now, a growing number are imposing rules to make it more onerous for employees to refuse, from outright mandates to requiring the unvaccinated to undergo regular testing.

Among employers getting tougher are the federal government, the state governments of California and New York, tech giants Google and Facebook, the Walt Disney Co. and the NFL. Some hospitals, universities, restaurants, bars and other entertainment venues have also started requiring vaccines.

But the new measures are unlikely to affect many of the millions of unvaccinated Americans.

Many of the companies that are requiring shots have mostly office workers who are already largely vaccinated and are reluctant to work alongside those who aren't.

In contrast, major companies that rely on low-income blue-collar workers — food manufacturers, warehouses, supermarkets and other store chains — are shying away from mandates for fear of driving away employees and worsening the labor shortages such businesses are facing.

Tyson Foods, for instance, said about half of its U.S. workforce — 56,000 employees — has received shots after the meat and poultry processor hosted more than 100 vaccination events since February. But the company said it has no plans to impose a mandate to reach the other half.

Walmart and Amazon, the country's two largest private employers, have also declined to require its hourly workers to get vaccinated, continuing to rely on strategies such as bonuses and onsite access to shots. But in a potentially powerful signal, Walmart said employees at its headquarters will be required to get vaccinated by Oct. 4.

The biggest precedent so far has come from the federal government, the nation's largest employer. President Joe Biden announced last week that all federal employees and contractors must get vaccinated or put up with weekly testing and lose privileges such as official travel.

The federal government has said it will cover the costs of the weekly tests. As for other employers, insurance may pay for such testing at some workplaces but not others.

Biden's decision could embolden other employers by signaling they would be on solid legal ground to impose similar rules, said Brian Kropp, chief of research at consulting firm Gartner's human resources practice.

But Kropp said some companies face complicated considerations that go beyond legalities, including deep resistance to vaccines in many states where they operate.

Retailers like Walmart might have a hard time justifying vaccine requirements for their workers while allowing shoppers to remain unvaccinated, Kropp added. Stores have mostly avoided vaccine requirements for customers for fear of alienating them and because of the difficulty in trying to verify their status.

In surveys by Gartner, fewer than 10% of employers have said they intend to require all employees to be vaccinated.

But a shift is building amid frustration over plateauing vaccination rates and alarm over the spread of the more contagious delta variant.

On Monday, the U.S. finally reached Biden's goal of dispensing at least one shot to 70% of American adults — but a month late and amid a fierce surge that is driving hospital caseloads in some places to their highest levels since the outbreak began. The president had hoped to reach his target by the Fourth of July.

The Union Square Hospitality Group, a group of New York City restaurants and bars founded by Danny Meyer, is now requiring employees and customers to be vaccinated by Sept. 7.

The San Francisco Bar Owner Alliance, a group of about 300 bars, made a similar decision following a meeting where "the thing that stood out was anger and frustration" toward vaccine holdouts, said founder Ben Bleiman.

While some companies fear vaccine mandates will drive workers away, the pandemic itself is also causing absenteeism. Bleiman said he recently had to close his bar for a night after his bartender, who was fully

vaccinated, tested positive and a replacement couldn't be found.

Some employers are concluding that requiring vaccines is simpler than trying to come up with different rules on masks and social distancing for the small number of unvaccinated employees.

BlackRock, the global investment manager, is allowing only vaccinated workers into its U.S. offices for now and said people will be free to go maskless, as local health guidelines allow, and sit next to each other and congregate without restrictions. The firm said 85% of its U.S. employees are vaccinated or in the process of getting shots.

Matthew Putman, CEO of New York-based high-tech manufacturing hub Nanotronics, said he agonized over his decision to impose a vaccine mandate on his more than 100 employees. As it turned out, nearly all of them were already vaccinated, though he dreads the prospect of having to fire any holdouts.

"I hate the thought. But if it has to happen it has to happen," Putman said. "I lost a ton of sleep over this but not as much sleep as I've lost over the fear of infection."

Other mandates could provide a clearer test of the potential for employee backlash.

Hospitals and nursing home chains, for instance, are increasingly requiring the vaccine. So far, such mandates have survived legal challenges. More than 150 employees at a Houston hospital system who refused to get the COVID-19 shot were fired or resigned after a judge dismissed an employee lawsuit over the requirement.

Atria Senior Living, which operates more than 200 senior living communities across the country, was among the first to mandate vaccines for its staff in January.

It worked. Nearly 99% of Atria's 10,000 employees are vaccinated, and only a tiny fraction quit over the requirement, said CEO and Chairman John Moore.

"Our residents deserve to live in a vaccinated environment. Our staff deserves to work in a vaccinated environment," Moore said.

## **Their town wiped out by a mudslide, people of La Reina mourn**

By RODRIGO ABD and ALBERTO ARCE Associated Press

EL ENCANTO, Honduras (AP) — Dr. Claudia Lazo is asked: How many of your patients are depressed?

"All of them," she answers.

"All of them. All of them. All of them. All of them. All of them."

The patients at her modest rural health center suffer from solastalgia -- sadness and pain provoked by the loss of their environment. They've lost their physical homes and their psychological well-being.

On the night of Nov. 24, 2020, their town -- La Reina -- was wiped from the face of the earth.

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This story is part of a series, *After the Deluge*, produced with support from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

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Home to about 1,000 people, the town in western Honduras was hit by two powerful hurricanes within three weeks, natural disasters made far worse by local deforestation and climate change. La Reina was buried by a landslide.

No one died. But seven months later, La Reina's people remain homeless, and adrift. They are alive, but their place in the world is gone -- the place where they lived, loved, dreamed, had children, grew coffee, corn and beans.

Here, they had invested their savings and money sent home from relatives in the United States, transforming a mountainside into a town of 300 homes. Nature has taken it all back.

Olga Ondina, 52, suffers from insomnia, unable to sleep in an unfamiliar house. "I wake up at midnight and try to go to my old bathroom, but it isn't there anymore," she says.

She gathers red flowers from the site of the home where she raised her five children, to be displayed in the homes of relatives who have taken her family in. "I realize I'm not at home, and I cry. My parents lived and died here, my children were born here. Today I came to cry."

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Over the decades, Julio Villanueva Melgar, 70, raised a family and made a living in La Reina. Villanueva feels as if he's been hurled into a new and more hostile universe.

"One becomes crazy, disoriented," Villanueva says. "You don't fit in anymore."

Orlando Perdomo, muscular from working the land for much of his 56 years, sits and spends the afternoon with a group of friends alongside a lake born of the same rainfall and landslide that devoured his hometown.

"When the first cracks in the earth opened after Hurricane Mitch (in 1998), my father said the he wouldn't live to see it, but that we would see the town disappear, that the future would bring death," Perdomo recalls.

Lazo has treated nearly all of La Reina's people, and he's seen a lot of tears.

"They sit in front of me and I ask them, 'How are you?' They start to cry."

Their own actions are partly the cause of their predicament. For decades, the people of La Reina cut cedar and cinnamon trees from the highest slopes of surrounding mountains to expand their coffee plantations and get timber to build their homes.

The severed roots rotted, and no longer fixed the soil on the hillside. Pelted by days of intense rain from hurricanes Eta and Iota, the earth rose up and devoured La Reina within hours, burying its remains beneath tons of slick, slippery mud.

Lazo cautions against blaming the victims. "They didn't deforest the countryside because they wanted to, but because of poverty," he says. "They needed to warm themselves, to build, and the country gave them no option other than cutting down the forest."

Now, Lazo tries to piece these broken people together again. "Medicine can help some sleepless nights, but it doesn't cure collective depression in a country with a humble, rural population without psychological or psychiatric services," he says.

"How do you cure what cannot be cured?" the doctor asks.

## Olympics Latest: Krajewski wins individual eventing 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:

Julia Krajewski of Germany won individual eventing gold after countrymate and two-time defending champion Michael Jung stumbled during the cross country segment.

Jung broke a frangible pin that cost him 11 penalty points and a shot at a medal.

Krajewski suffered a combined 0.80 penalties over cross country and both jumping rounds, earning her first individual Olympic medal. She also won silver in the team event with Germany in 2016.

Tom McEwen earned the individual silver hours after helping Britain to its record fourth team eventing gold. Australia's Andrew Hoy, competing at an eighth Olympic Games, earned the bronze.

Jake Gibb and substitute teammate Tri Bourne lost to Germany on Monday night in the beach volleyball round of 16, ending their shotgun partnership after just two weeks.

Bourne was a last-minute swap after Gibb's original partner, Taylor Crabb, tested positive for COVID-19 when he arrived in Japan. The pair had just three practices before their first match, but they made it out of pool play with a 2-1 record.

Julius Thole and Clemens Wickler beat Bourne and Gibb 17-21, 21-15, 15-11 to advance to the quarter-finals. They will play Russians Viacheslav Krasilnikov and Oleg Stoyanovskiy.

The Americans trailed 16-14 in the first set before scoring seven of the next eight points. After losing the second 21-15, they fell behind 12-6 in the third and could only get back within three points.

### MEDAL ALERT

Discus thrower Valarie Allman won the first track and field gold medal for the United States at the Tokyo Games.

Allman's winning throw went 68.98 meters (226 feet, 3 inches) to hold off Kristin Pudenz of Germany in a competition that was delayed by rain. Yaime Perez of Cuba captured the bronze.

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The 26-year-old Allman's winning throw was on her first attempt. She went to high school in Colorado, college at Stanford and trains in Texas.

## MEDAL ALERT

Sifan Hassan of the Netherlands started her bid to win three medals at the Tokyo Games by earning gold in the 5,000 meters.

Hassan pulled away with about 250 meters to go and cruised to the win in a time of 14 minutes, 36.79 seconds. She beat Hellen Obiri of Kenya by nearly two seconds. Gudaf Tsegay of Ethiopia was third.

Earlier in the day, the 28-year-old Hassan had a scare when she fell on the final lap in the opening round of the 1,500. She picked herself up, caught the pack and won her heat to advance. She's also entered in the 10,000 meters.

Hassan won the 1,500 and 10,000 at the 2019 world championships.

## MEDAL ALERT

Denmark's Viktor Axelsen has won gold in men's singles badminton, denying a repeat title to the Olympic defending champion, China's Chen Long, in convincing fashion 2-0.

Axelsen, who won bronze at the 2016 Rio Games, was aggressive from the start, taking the first game 21-15, and then overwhelming Chen in the second 21-12.

Both players routinely mixed incredibly fast precision smashes along the edges of the court with delicate touch shots near the net. Some of the rallies approached a minute in length. Chen had been trying to become the second Chinese man in a row to win back-to-back Olympics in the sport. Lin Dan won at the 2008 Beijing and 2012 London Games.

Chen's loss will be keenly felt in China, which has had two spotty Olympics after a long reign of dominance.

Earlier Monday, Indonesia's Anthony Sinisuka Ginting won the bronze medal, ending the surprising run of Kevin Cordon of Guatemala, which is not a traditional power in badminton.

## MEDAL ALERT

Li Wenwen has taken the gold medal in women's over-87-kilogram weightlifting for China's seventh victory in the sport at the Tokyo Games.

Li was far ahead of her challengers as she lifted a total 320 — 140 in the snatch and 180 in the clean and jerk.

Emily Campbell became the first British woman to win an Olympic weightlifting medal with silver on a total 283kg.

Hair dyed red and blue, Campbell let out a scream of delight on her final lift and bowed to the audience. Sarah Robles of the United States repeated her bronze from 2016 with 282kg. She was challenging for silver but had her last lift ruled invalid for elbow movement.

Transgender weightlifter Laurel Hubbard was also competing but didn't finish after three invalid lifts.

Overwhelming favorites Svetlana Romashina and Svetlana Kolesnichenko of Russia are leading artistic swimming after the duet free routine preliminaries.

Romashina and Kolesnichenko received marks totaling 97.9000 points for a routine that was accompanied by the music "Spiders." They were followed by China's Huang Xuechen and Sun Wenyan with 96.2333 and Ukraine's Marta Fiedina and Anastasiya Savchuk at 94.9333.

The 31-year-old Romashina is going for her record sixth gold medal. She is currently tied for the most in the sport's Olympic history with fellow Russians Anastasia Davydova and Natalia Ishchenko.

Romashina teamed with Ishchenko to win duet gold at the 2016 Rio Games. Now, she's seeking to repeat with a new partner at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

The Russians have dominated the sport formerly known as synchronized swimming for more than two decades. Their last Olympic loss came at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

The 22 teams will compete again Tuesday in the technical routine preliminaries. The pairs with the top



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12 combined scores advance to Wednesday's final.

The American duo of Anita Alvarez and Lindi Schroeder tied for 13th with 86.5333.

## MEDAL ALERT

Soufiane el-Bakkali of Morocco has won the 3,000-meter steeplechase to end more than 40 years of Kenyan Olympic dominance.

El-Bakkali won in 8 minutes, 8.90 seconds on a wet track at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo. He finished well clear of Lamecha Girma of Ethiopia, who took the silver.

Benjamin Kigen claimed a bronze for Kenya after Ethiopia's Getnet Wale, who was third heading to the final straight, fell. Wale struggled back to his feet and clung on for fourth.

The 25-year-old el-Bakkali was fourth at the last Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and on the podium at the last two world championships, but this was his first major title.

Kenya had won nine straight Olympic golds in the 3,000 steeplechase since 1980. Kenya's Conseslus Kipruto, the leading star of the steeplechase, didn't defend his Olympic title in Tokyo after failing to make the Kenyan team at the national trials.

## MEDAL ALERT

Germany's Aline Rotter-Focken has beaten American Adeline Gray 7-3 in the 76-kilogram wrestling final. Gray was trying to join Helen Maroulis as the only two U.S. women's wrestling gold medalists.

Gray was the No. 1 seed and Rotter-Focken was No. 2. The two are long-time friends who have competed since their teenage years.

Rotter-Focken scored an early point for Gray's inactivity. She countered a shot by Gray to go up 3-0, then scored four points on a throw to go up 7-0.

Gray finally got on the board on a stepout with just over a minute to go and scored two on a takedown with about 30 seconds left. That was all she could manage.

This was Gray's first Olympic medal and just the sixth for a U.S. women's wrestler. She finished a disappointing seventh in Rio while fighting through injuries that kept her out of action for a year after the Games. China's Qian Zhou and Turkey's Yasemin Adar earned bronze medals.

Transgender weightlifter Laurel Hubbard made her mark by competing in the women's weightlifting at the Tokyo Olympics but couldn't complete a lift.

Hubbard is not the only transgender athlete competing at the Tokyo Games, but she has been the focus of attention as a medal contender in weightlifting.

The New Zealander overbalanced on her opening weight of 120 kilograms, taking the bar behind her shoulders.

Hubbard's second effort of 125 kilograms was ruled invalid on a majority decision by the referees. The third attempt was almost a repeat of the first, ruling Hubbard out of medal contention in the women's over-87-kilogram division.

Athletes are eliminated if they do not record at least one valid lift in each of the two parts of the competition.

## MEDAL ALERT

Cuba's Mijain Lopez became the first man to win four Olympic gold medals in wrestling by defeating Georgia's Iakobi Kajaia 5-0 in the Greco-Roman 130-kilogram final.

The 38-year-old was unscored upon in his four matches. He joins Japan's Kaori Icho as the only wrestlers to claim four Olympic golds. Icho won freestyle gold medals in 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016. Lopez won gold at 120 kg in 2008 and 2012 and 130 kg in 2016 before his victory Monday.

Lopez got a point for passivity by Kajaia, then scored two points on a gut wrench. He scored another point on passivity and another on a step out to go up 5-0.

Lopez defeated Turkey's Riza Kayaalp 2-0 in the semifinals Sunday in a rematch of the 2016 gold medal

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match.

Kayaalp won bronze by defeating Iran's Amin Mirzazadeh 7-2. The Russian Olympic Committee's Sergey Semenov won the other bronze, defeating Chile's Yamani Acosta Fernandez.

It was Cuba's second gold medal of the night in Greco-Roman. Luis Orta Sanchez defeated Japan's Kenichiro Fumita 5-1 in the 60 kg final.

## MEDAL ALERT

Cuba's Luis Orta Sanchez has beaten Japan's Kenichiro Fumita 5-1 in the men's Greco-Roman 60-kilo-gram final.

Orta Sanchez led 4-0 at the break, then held on for the victory.

Fumita, trying to win in his home country, was the No. 1 seed and a two-time world champion.

Bronze medalists were the Russian Olympic Committee's Sergey Emelin and China's Sailike Walihan.

## MEDAL ALERT

Shin Jaehwan of South Korea has won the gold in men's vault.

Jaehwan earned the gold in a tiebreaker with Denis Abliazin. Both men averaged 14.783 on their two vaults. Jaehwan claimed the top spot because he had the single highest vault score. The 14.833 he received for his second vault was higher than Abliazin's top score of 14.800.

The silver was the third straight on the event at the Olympics for Abliazin, who is competing for the team representing the Russian Olympic Committee. Abliazin won a gold earlier in the Games while helping ROC to the team title.

Artur Davtyan of Armenia earned bronze.

## MEDAL ALERT

Britain has won its record fourth Olympic gold medal in team eventing at Tokyo's Equestrian Park.

It's the first gold in the event for Great Britain since 1972. It's 11 medals in team eventing trail only the United States (12) for most. Riders Tom McEwen, Laura Collett and Oliver Townend combined for 86.30 penalties, easily exceeding the 100.20 by silver-winning Australia.

McEwen rode without penalties through the cross country and jumping events. Collett and Townend also completed cross country without penalty.

The Aussies narrowly edged France for second — the French had a final score of 101.50.

Jessie Feming scored on a penalty kick in the 74th minute and Canada knocked the United States out of gold medal contention in the Olympic women's soccer competition with a 1-0 semifinal victory.

Canada will face the winner of the late semifinal in Yokohama between Sweden and Australia. The gold medal match is set for Friday at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo.

It was the second time the United States has been knocked out of medal contention at the Olympics. At the 2016 Games, it was defeated by Sweden in the quarterfinals.

Canada had not won against the United States since 2001.

The U.S. had an uncharacteristically uneven tournament, starting with a 3-0 loss to Sweden that snapped a 44-game unbeaten streak, and a scoreless draw with Australia in the group stage.

## MEDAL ALERT

American gymnast Jade Carey has won the gold medal on floor exercise.

The 21-year-old from Arizona bounced back from a frightening stumble during the vault final on Sunday to claim the top spot on floor with a score of 14.366. The medal is the fifth claimed by the U.S. women's gymnastics team in Tokyo even with star Simone Biles sitting out four finals to focus on her mental health.

Italian Vanessa Ferrari, fourth at both the 2008 and 2016 Olympics, claimed silver. The 30-year-old's dramatic performance drew a roar from the various federations inside the Ariake Gymnastics Centre.

Angelina Melnikova of the team representing the Russian Olympic Committee and Mai Murakami of Japan

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ted for bronze with a score of 14.166. The gymnasts had both the same difficulty score and execution score in their routines.

## MEDAL ALERT

The Chinese women's cycling sprint team of Bao Shanju and Zhong Tianshi beat the German duo of Lea Sophie Friedrich and Emma Hinze in the finals to win the gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

Bao and Zhong built a lead of .325 seconds by the midway point of the sprint race, but the German team came on strong at the end. The margin was just 85 thousandths of a second with China stopping the clock in 31.895.

China also won the gold medal at the 2016 Rio Games and was relegated to silver at the 2012 London Games.

In the race for bronze, Daria Shmeleva and Anastasiia Voinova, representing the Russia Olympic Committee, beat Laurine van Riessen and Shanne Braspenninx of the Netherlands. The Russian duo won silver in Rio.

## MEDAL ALERT

China's Zhang Changhong set a world record in men's 25-meter three-position rifle at the Tokyo Games, leaving Russian Sergey Kamenskiy just short of gold for the second straight Olympics.

The 21-year-old Zhang, a former race walker shooting in his first Olympics, finished with 466.0 points, breaking the record of 465.3 set by countryman Yang Hoaran in 2018.

Kamenskiy just missed gold at the 2016 Rio Games, finishing 0.3 points behind Italy's Niccolo Campriani. The 33-year-old hit at least 10.1 on his final five shots, but Zhang had a 10.9 with three shots to go to surge ahead.

Kamenskiy finished with 464.2 points.

Serbia Milenko Sebic took bronze after finishing 11th at the Rio Olympics.

The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee says shot putter Raven Saunders' gesture during her medals ceremony "was respectful of her competitors and did not violate our rules related to demonstration."

After receiving her silver medal at the Olympics on Sunday, and after the Chinese national anthem played for winner Gong Lijiao, Saunders lifted her arms above her head and formed an "X" with her wrists.

Asked by The Associated Press what that meant, she explained: "It's the intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet."

During the International Olympic Committee's press briefing Monday morning, spokesman Mark Adams said the IOC was in contact with the USOPC regarding the episode.

The USOPC confirmed that it was "in discussion" with the IOC and World Athletics, which governs the sport. World Athletics President Seb Coe has previously said he didn't anticipate sanctioning demonstrations if the decision were left up to the federation.

The USOPC has stated it will not sanction athletes who demonstrate on the podium. The IOC reviewed its long-standing policy but kept the rule in place that bars demonstrations on the medals stand.

The U.S. women's soccer team was hurt early in its semifinal game against Canada when goalkeeper Alyssa Naehler came down awkwardly trying to go up for the ball.

Naehler was attended to by trainers for some five minutes while backup Adrianna Franch warmed up.

Naehler tried to stay in the game but struggled. She was replaced by Franch, making her Olympic debut, in the 30th minute.

Naehler was key for the U.S. against the Netherlands in the quarterfinals, with a penalty save during regulation and two more in a shootout. The U.S. advanced 4-2 on penalties after a 2-2 draw.

The game was scoreless at the half in Kashima.

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China has taken the top two spots in the preliminaries of the men's 3-meter springboard diving. Wang Zongyuan totaled the highest score over six dives with 531.30 points. Teammate Xie Siyi ranked second at 520.90. The pair already teamed up to win the 3-meter synchro title in Tokyo.

The Chinese have won four of the first five Olympic diving events. They took silver in men's 10-meter platform synchro.

Rommel Pacheco Marrufo of Mexico was third at 479.25.

Japan's Ken Terauchi qualified in 10th. He's competing in his sixth Olympics at age 40 and is trying to win the host country's first diving medal.

Andrew Capobianco of the United States advanced in 17th. The other American, Tyler Downs, finished 23rd. Only the top 18 moved on to the semifinals on Tuesday.

Germany's Patrick Hausing, a three-time Olympic medalist, was in contention after two dives, but fell out over his last four and finished 21st. He and partner Lars Rudiger had already earned bronze in 3-meter synchro.

## MEDAL ALERT

Liu Yang of China edged teammate You Hao to capture gold in men's still rings.

The 26-year-old put together a spectacular routine to post a score of 15.500, just ahead of You's 15.300. Liu's 9.0 execution score from the judges was the highest of the eight men in a tight event final.

The win was an upset of sorts for Liu, who finished fourth in Rio de Janeiro five years ago. He captured gold in the event at the 2014 world championships but had never finished higher than third at any major competition until Monday.

Defending Olympic champion Elftherios Petrounias of Greece took bronze. The 30-year-old Petrounias, a five-time world champion, didn't even secure a spot in Tokyo until winning a World Cup event in June.

Samir Ait Said of France, who broke his left leg while competing on the vault at the 2016 Olympics, finished fourth.

## MEDAL ALERT

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 150kg in the clean and jerk for a total 270kg.

Tamara Salazar won the silver for Ecuador with a total 263kg. She is Ecuador's second ever female medalist, one day after teammate Neisi Dajomes became the first with a gold in the 76kg event.

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

Simone Biles is returning to competition in Tokyo.

The 2016 Olympic champion will compete in the balance beam finals on Tuesday, a little over a week after stepping away from the meet to focus on her mental health.

"We are so excited to confirm that you will see two U.S. athletes in the balance beam final tomorrow — Suni Lee AND Simone Biles!! Can't wait to watch you both!" USA Gymnastics said in a statement.

The 24-year-old Biles won bronze on beam in Rio de Janeiro five years ago and qualified for the eight-woman final at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre on the first weekend of the Games.

She removed herself from the team final on July 27 after a shaky performance on vault during the first rotation. She watched from the sidelines as her three American teammates completed the meet without her; the U.S. took silver behind the team known as the Russian Olympic Committee.

Biles later said she was dealing with issues surrounding air awareness, referred to as "the twisties" in her sport.

Biles qualified for all five individual event finals but took herself out of four of them: the all-around, vault, floor exercise and uneven bars. Lee earned the gold in the all-around, becoming the fifth straight American to claim the sport's marquee title.



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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.

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

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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.

## Transgender weightlifter Hubbard makes history at Olympics

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH and SALLY HO Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Transgender weightlifter Laurel Hubbard finally got to compete at the Tokyo Olympics. It didn't last long, but it was significant. Hubbard couldn't complete any of her first three lifts on Monday night, ruling her out of medal contention in the women's over-87-kilogram division that ultimately was won by China's Li Wenwen.

Hubbard made a heart gesture to the audience with her hands before leaving the competition arena. Even without completing a lift, she was a pioneer for transgender athletes.

While the New Zealander isn't the only transgender athlete competing at the Tokyo Games, she has been out for years and has been the focus of attention as a medal contender in weightlifting.

"Of course, I'm not entirely unaware of the controversy which surrounds my participation in these Games," Hubbard said after exiting the competition. "And, as such, I'd particularly like to thank the IOC, for, I think, really affirming their commitment to the principles of Olympism, and establishing that sport is something for all people. It is inclusive. It is accessible."

Hubbard also thanked the International Weightlifting Federation, because "they too have shown that weightlifting is an activity that's open to all of the people in the world," and the people of Japan for hosting the Games under extraordinary circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hubbard received applause and also applauded her fellow athletes when they were introduced on stage. Returning to compete, she took a moment to close her eyes, smile and take a deep breath. She overbalanced on her opening weight of 120 kilograms, taking the bar behind her shoulders.

Her second effort of 125 kilograms — a weight Hubbard has often managed in previous competitions — was ruled invalid on a majority decision by the referees. With New Zealand teammates and staff calling out encouragement, the third attempt was almost a repeat of the first.

Athletes are eliminated if they do not record at least one valid lift in each of the two parts of the competition.

Li's victory gave China its seventh gold medal in weightlifting at the Tokyo Games. Her rivals never got close to the 320-kilogram winning total, with Emily Campbell finishing 37 kilograms behind to take silver. She became the first British woman to win a weightlifting medal.

Sarah Robles of the United States repeated her bronze from 2016 with 282, becoming the first U.S. woman with two weightlifting medals. Robles was challenging for second place, but had her last lift ruled invalid for elbow movement. "The refs should be doing their jobs so they're doing it. It is really, really strict but if there's anytime to be strict, it should be at the Olympics," Robles said.

The International Olympic Committee in 2015 drew up a set of recommendations for including transgender athletes. Many sports bodies, including the IWF, have implemented similar policies based on those recommendations. Different sports are allowed to set their own specific policies.

In weightlifting, that includes a requirement for athletes to show their testosterone is below a certain level after transitioning, a requirement which Hubbard met. She won a silver medal at the 2017 world championships but had not competed for 1 1/2 years before Tokyo because the coronavirus pandemic hit the competition schedule.

"My performance wasn't what I had hoped but I'm humbled by the support I've received from so many people around New Zealand," Hubbard said in a statement released by the New Zealand team.

The IOC will release a new "framework" for transgender athletes' eligibility in the coming months. That document is expected to take into account newer scientific studies published since the last major review

in 2015. That will form a basis for sports to draw up their own updated policies.

The New Zealand Olympic Committee recognized the sometimes-bitter discussions over what conditions should apply for transgender athletes to compete.

"We acknowledge that gender identity in sport is a highly sensitive and complex issue requiring a balance between human rights and fairness on the field of play," the NZOC said.

"The New Zealand team is committed to supporting all eligible New Zealand athletes at the Olympic Games, ensuring their mental and physical wellbeing as they compete on the world stage." Earlier Monday, Wang Zhouyu won the women's 87-kilogram category for the first of China's two weightlifting gold medals of the day. Wang won with a total of 270 kilograms. Tamara Salazar won the silver for Ecuador with a total 263, and Crismery Santana took the bronze with 256 for the Dominican Republic.

## 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 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 kingmaker 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. Candidate Ruth Edmonds, a Black minister and former Columbus NAACP president is endorsed by religious conservative James Dobson and Ken Blackwell, a former Ohio elections chief who served on Trump's transition team.

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



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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.”

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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."

## Jade Carey's long road to the Olympics ends with gold

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Jade Carey traveled the world for a spot in the Olympics. Germany. Qatar. Azerbaijan. Australia.

A lot of long flights. A little bit of jet lag. One unrelenting vision of what could be possible.

She wasn't going to let a little thing like a sticky patch of carpet get in her way.

The 21-year-old American gymnast soared to gold in the women's floor exercise Monday night, her powerful and precise routine capping a roller-coaster 24 hours in which she narrowly avoided serious injury during the vault finals when her right foot caught just as she was preparing her entry.

Carey's score of 14.366 gave the U.S. women's team its fifth medal of the Games and assured that each of the six athletes who came to Tokyo — Carey, Simone Biles, Sunisa Lee, Jordan Chiles, Grace McCallum and MyKayla Skinner — will be checking some serious bling in customs when they return home.

Considered one of the favorites after coming in second during vault qualifying, Carey was thundering down the blue runway Sunday when she tripped. Her planned Cheng vault instead became a simple back tuck, her medal chances evaporating in the process.

Stunned, she recovered in time to complete her second vault but finished well off the podium before quietly retreating to the waiting arms of her father Brian, her lifelong coach, and the comfort of her teammates.

Knowing his daughter had less than a day to regroup in time for the floor finals, Brian Carey turned off the "coach" switch and flipped on the "dad" one.

"I told her, 'You know, right now, you feel like yesterday was the worst day in your life, but today can be your best day. So just don't give up. Keep going,'" Carey said. "And she killed it."

Stomped it, more like.

Carey doesn't leap off the floor as much as she explodes. Her tumbling is as dynamic as anyone in the world not named Simone Biles, and she's working on a triple-twisting double-layout element that — if she ever completes it in international competition — will be given the single-highest difficulty value of anything currently being done in the sport.

While it's not quite ready to be unveiled when it counts, Carey also didn't need it. A day after her meandering road to the Ariake Gymnastics Centre nearly ended in disaster, she responded with what she called the best routine of her career.

Carey could hear teammates roaring from the stands during her routine, Biles perhaps the loudest of them all.

"They were honestly the best teammates ever, especially (Sunday) night," Carey said.

Even if they aren't teammates, at least, not technically. Carey earned a spot in Tokyo by taking advantage of what turned out to be a one-time-only offer by the International Gymnastics Federation. The sport's governing body made a provision for the 2020 Games that allowed athletes to lock up an individual nominative spot if they racked up enough points at World Cup events.

So the Careys spent 16 months flying to different continents, piling up podiums on vault and floor exercise along the way. They formally accepted the spot on the eve of the U.S. Olympic Trials, even though they knew it meant she was giving up a shot at making the four-woman team that ended up winning silver during the team competition last week.

Sound confusing? It is. The FIG has already abandoned the practice and is returning the team sizes to five women per country for the 2024 Games in Paris.

Yet all the paperwork and the politics and the patience paid off with a performance that brought her

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teammates to their feet and her father to near tears.

"It was definitely hard sometimes," Jade Carey said. "I'm really glad that we stuck with our decision and did what we did. It was for the better."

Vanessa Ferrari of Italy earned silver, the 30-year-old's first Olympic medal after near misses in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and London in 2012. Her dramatic routine — one that would fit right in at La Scala opera house in Milan — gave Italy its first women's gymnastics medal since 1928 and capped a long comeback from a torn Achilles tendon four years ago.

"I am super happy with this medal," said Ferrari, who is considering retirement. "I was hoping this would finally be my Olympics."

Angelina Melnikova of the team representing the Russian Olympic Committee and Mai Murakami of Japan were awarded the bronze after finishing with identical scores. Their 14.166 included the same difficulty (5.9) and execution scores (8.266). The medal was the third in Tokyo for Melnikova, who earned gold in the team competition and bronze in the all-around.

Shin Jeah-wan of Korea beat ROC's Denis Abliazin in a tiebreaker to claim gold on men's vault. The gold is the 10th for Korea in gymnastics and fifth on vault. Shin won the tiebreak because he recorded the highest-scoring single vault between the two. Artur Davytyan of Armenia took bronze.

China's Liu Yang edged past teammate You Hao to claim gold on still rings. Greece's Eleftherios Petrounias took the bronze to go with the gold he captured in Brazil.

Five years removed from a horrific broken left leg suffered in Rio de Janeiro, Samir Ait Said of France came in fourth, sticking his dismount on the leg once so mangled it appeared his career was in jeopardy. Said admitted he's dealing with a left bicep injury so severe his coach tried to convince him to opt out. Instead, he pressed on.

Asked if he believes bad luck is following him around at the Olympics, the 31-year-old shook his head.

"No," he said.

Why?

"Because I'm going to win in Paris in three years."

## At an extraordinary Olympics, acts of kindness abound

By SALLY HO Associated Press

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.

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"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 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%."

## Canada upsets US with 1-0 win in women's soccer

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

KASHIMA, Japan (AP) — Carli Lloyd, clutch in so many critical moments for the U.S. women's soccer team, failed to connect against Canada on Monday night and the Americans won't play for a fifth Olympic gold medal.

Lloyd's look in the 86th minute with the United States trailing by a goal hit the crossbar as Canada won 1-0 and dropped the Americans into the bronze medal match. It is the second straight Olympics that the U.S. failed to reach the gold medal game.

The Americans were bounced from the 2016 Rio Games by Sweden in the quarterfinals.

As Canada celebrated wildly at Ibaraki Kashima Stadium, Lloyd knelt to the turf with her head in her hands.



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"That wasn't good enough," said Lloyd, the oldest player on the U.S. team at 39 and playing in what was likely her last major tournament with the national team.

The U.S. lost starting goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher when she came down awkwardly after going up for the ball around the 20th minute. Trainers attended to her for some five minutes as backup Adrianna Franch warmed up on the sideline.

Naeher tried to stay in the game, but was replaced by Franch in the 30th minute.

Canada pounced in the 74th minute on Jessie Fleming's penalty kick, which gave Canada its first win against the United States since 2001.

Fleming booted her PK past a diving Franch and took off toward the sideline, sliding on her knees before teammates swarmed around her.

The U.S. will play for the bronze on Thursday in Kashima against Australia.

Canada will play for the gold Friday at Tokyo's Olympic Stadium against Sweden, which downed the Australians 1-0 in Yokohama.

Canada features Quinn, a midfielder who will become the first openly transgender athlete to win an Olympic medal.

Quinn won bronze in 2016 before coming out as transgender.

It is the second straight Olympics that the Americans, the two-time defending World Cup champions, will not play for the gold medal. The team was uncharacteristically uneven in Japan, starting with a 3-0 loss to Sweden that snapped a 44-game unbeaten streak.

The Americans bounced back to beat New Zealand but then came a scoreless draw with Australia in the group stage. A 4-2 penalty shootout against the Netherlands on Friday advanced the U.S. to the semifinals.

The loss of goalkeeper Naeher clearly hurt the U.S. She was key to the victory over the Dutch in the quarterfinals, with a penalty save during regulation and two more in the deciding shootout. After the semifinal loss, she was on crutches.

The previous time the U.S. played neighbor Canada in the Olympics was 2012 in a controversial semifinal match that went to overtime. Canadian star Christine Sinclair scored three goals, but the United States won it 4-3 on Alex Morgan's header in the 123rd minute.

The controversy stemmed from questionable calls, including a rare six-second violation against Canadian goalkeeper Erin McLeod late in regulation. That touched off the sequence that resulted in the tying goal.

"For those of us that were part of the 2012 team, it's nice to get a little revenge in an Olympic semifinal," Sinclair said.

After her celebrating teammates had started to leave the field, Sinclair laid down on the field in relief.

"I was just sitting there thinking how proud I am of this team," she said. "It's a very unique group. It's a special group and I'm so proud to be a part of it."

The Canadians have won the bronze medal in the past two Olympics.

"I think this is my first loss ever to Canada," Megan Rapinoe said. "It sucks not to be able to compete for a gold medal, which is what we wanted. Not a great performance, either. That's the most frustrating thing."

U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski has been creative with his lineups throughout the tournament. On Monday, Lynn Williams, originally an alternate, started her second straight game. Lloyd, Rapinoe and Samantha Mewis were on the bench to start.

Lloyd actually had two attempts against Canada. She fired off a shot in the 65th minute that forced Canadian goalkeeper Stephanie Labbe to leap to push it over the crossbar. A short time later, Labbe stopped Julie Ertz's header off a corner from Rapinoe as the United States increased the pressure.

"Definitely had a bit of a momentum shift there in the second half, and came on strong," Labbe said. "I think for us it was about staying tight defensively and that's something we've done all tournament."

Fridolina Rolfo scored in the 46th minute for Sweden in its victory over Australia. The Swedes also went to the final in the 2016 Olympics, but fell to Germany and took home the silver.

**German court sets trial date for former Nazi guard, aged 100**

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By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A German court has set a trial date for a 100-year-old man who is charged with 3,518 counts of accessory to murder on allegations he served as a Nazi SS guard at a concentration camp on the outskirts of Berlin during World War II.

A spokeswoman for the Neuruppin state court said Monday that the trial is set to begin in early October. The centenarian's name wasn't released in line with German privacy laws.

The suspect is alleged to have worked at the Sachsenhausen camp between 1942 and 1945 as an enlisted member of the Nazi Party's paramilitary wing.

Authorities say that despite his advanced age, the suspect is considered fit enough to stand trial, though the number of hours per day the court is in session may have to be limited.

"A medical evaluation confirms that he is fit to stand trial in a limited way," court spokeswoman Iris le Claire said.

The Neuruppin office was handed the case in 2019 by the special federal prosecutors' office in Ludwigsburg tasked with investigating Nazi-era war crimes. The state court in Neuruppin is based northwest of the town of Oranienburg, where Sachsenhausen was located.

The defendant is said to live in the state of Brandenburg outside of Berlin, local media reported.

Sachsenhausen was established in 1936 just north of Berlin as the first new camp after Adolf Hitler gave the SS full control of the Nazi concentration camp system. It was intended to be a model facility and training camp for the labyrinthine network that the Nazis built across Germany, Austria and occupied territories.

More than 200,000 people were held there between 1936 and 1945. Tens of thousands of inmates there died of starvation, disease, forced labor and other causes, as well as through medical experiments and systematic SS extermination operations including shootings, hangings and gassing.

Exact numbers on those killed vary, with upper estimates of some 100,000, though scholars suggest figures of 40,000 to 50,000 are likely more accurate.

In its early years, most prisoners were either political prisoners or criminal prisoners, but also included some Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals. The first large group of Jewish prisoners was brought there in 1938 after the Night of Broken Glass, or Kristallnacht, an antisemitic pogrom.

During the war, Sachsenhausen was expanded to include Soviet prisoners of war — who were shot by the thousands — as well as others.

Like in other camps, Jewish prisoners were singled out at Sachsenhausen for particularly harsh treatment, and most who remained alive by 1942 were sent to the Auschwitz death camp.

Sachsenhausen was liberated in April 1945 by the Soviets, who turned it into a brutal camp of their own.

In a different case, a 96-year-old woman will go on trial in late September in the northern German town of Itzehoe. The woman, who allegedly worked during the war as the secretary for the SS commandant of the Stutthof concentration camp, has been charged with over 10,000 counts of accessory to murder earlier this year.

Her case and the charges against the 100-year-old suspect both rely on recent legal precedent in Germany establishing that anyone who helped a Nazi camp function can be prosecuted for accessory to the murders committed there.

## American star Simone Biles to return for balance beam finals

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Simone Biles is back.

The 2016 Olympic gymnastics champion will return to competition in the balance beam final on Tuesday, a little over a week after stepping away from the meet to focus on her mental health.

"We are so excited to confirm that you will see two U.S. athletes in the balance beam final tomorrow — Suni Lee AND Simone Biles!! Can't wait to watch you both!" USA Gymnastics said in a statement.

The 24-year-old Biles won bronze on beam in Rio de Janeiro five years ago and qualified for the eight-woman final at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre on the first weekend of the Games.

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She removed herself from the team final on July 27 after a shaky performance on vault during the first rotation. She watched from the sidelines as her three American teammates completed the meet without her; the U.S. took silver behind the team known as the Russian Olympic Committee.

The six-time Olympic medalist later said she was dealing with issues surrounding air awareness, referred to as "the twisties" in her sport.

Biles qualified for all five individual event finals but took herself out of four of them: the all-around, vault, floor exercise and uneven bars. Lee earned the gold in the all-around, becoming the fifth straight American to claim the sport's marquee title.

Considered to be the greatest gymnast of all time and the unquestioned face of the U.S. Olympic movement when she arrived in Japan, Biles continued to train and be evaluated daily by the USA Gymnastics staff after opting out of multiple finals. She has also been a fixture in the stands supporting Lee, MyKayla Skinner and Jade Carey while they competed in the event finals.

She went into extensive detail about "the twisties" last week, explaining she lost the confidence of knowing what her body was going to do in midair. It's not the first time Biles dealt with the problem, though she did say the issues followed her to both uneven bars and beam.

Previous bouts with the phenomenon were limited to floor exercise and vault, where more twisting elements are required.

"I'm really proud of her for coming back," said American Jade Carey, who won gold on floor exercise Monday while Biles watched surrounded by the rest of the U.S. women's team. "She's been through a lot this Olympics so I'm really proud and happy to see her going after beam."

Finishing her second Olympics — and perhaps her career — on balance beam is poetic justice of sorts for Biles. She got bronze in Rio despite grabbing the 4-inch piece of wood that's 4 feet off the ground when she almost slipped mid-routine. It was her fifth medal at the Games. The other four were gold.

Biles has called the bronze the medal she earned in Brazil that she's proudest of, and she's taken to task those who called it a disappointment, using it as proof to the double standard she believes follows her whenever she competes.

Athletes from all over — both at the Olympics and elsewhere — have rallied around her over the past week, praising her courage for speaking up about the importance of mental health.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 3, the 215th day of 2021. There are 150 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 3, 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the first of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he took the 100-meter sprint.

On this date:

In 1914, Germany declared war on France at the onset of World War I.

In 1949, the National Basketball Association was formed as a merger of the Basketball Association of America and the National Basketball League.

In 1966, comedian Lenny Bruce, whose raunchy brand of satire and dark humor landed him in trouble with the law, was found dead in his Los Angeles home; he was 40.

In 1972, the U.S. Senate ratified the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union. (The U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the treaty in 2002.)

In 1981, U.S. air traffic controllers went on strike, despite a warning from President Ronald Reagan they would be fired, which they were.

In 1993, the Senate voted 96-to-three to confirm Supreme Court nominee Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

In 1994, Arkansas carried out the nation's first triple execution in 32 years. Stephen G. Breyer was sworn in as the Supreme Court's newest justice in a private ceremony at Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's

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Vermont summer home.

In 2004, the Statue of Liberty pedestal in New York City reopened to the public for the first time since the 9/11 attacks.

In 2005, fourteen Marines from a Reserve unit in Ohio were killed in a roadside bombing in Iraq.

In 2014, Israel withdrew most of its ground troops from the Gaza Strip in an apparent winding down of a nearly monthlong operation against Hamas that had left more than 1,800 Palestinians and more than 60 Israelis dead.

In 2018, Las Vegas police said they were closing their investigation into the Oct. 1 shooting that left 58 people dead at a country music festival without a definitive answer for why Stephen Paddock unleashed gunfire from a hotel suite onto the concert crowd.

In 2019, a gunman opened fire at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, leaving 22 people dead; prosecutors said Patrick Crusius targeted Mexicans in hopes of scaring Latinos into leaving the U.S., and that he had outlined the plot in a screed published online shortly before the attack. (A man who was wounded in the shooting died in April 2020 after months in the hospital, raising the death toll to 23. Crusius has pleaded not guilty to state murder charges; he also faces federal hate crime and gun charges.)

Ten years ago: Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak denied all charges against him as he went on trial for alleged corruption and complicity in the deaths of protesters who'd helped drive him from power. (Mubarak and his security chief were sentenced to life in prison for failing to prevent the killing of hundreds of protesters; they were cleared by a higher court, but Mubarak was later sentenced to three years for corruption.) The Muscular Dystrophy Association announced that Jerry Lewis was no longer its national chairman and would not be appearing on the Labor Day telethon. Former NFL star and actor Bubba Smith died at age 66.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama cut short the sentences of 214 federal inmates, including 67 life sentences, in what the White House called the largest batch of commutations on a single day in more than a century. An Emirates Boeing 777 crash-landed in Dubai and caught fire; all 300 people on board survived, but one firefighter was killed.

One year ago: The St. Louis Cardinals became the second team sidelined by the coronavirus since the shortened baseball season began July 23; seven Cardinals players and six staff members tested positive, causing the team's four-game series at Detroit to be postponed. (The Miami Marlins would resume play the following day after missing a week of games.) A Norwegian cruise ship line halted all trips after a coronavirus outbreak on one ship infected more than 40 people on board, most of them crew members; the cruise line had been one of the first companies to resume sailing during the pandemic.

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall of Fame coach Marv Levy is 96. Singer Tony Bennett is 95. Actor Martin Sheen is 81. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Lance Alworth is 81. Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart is 80. Singer Beverly Lee (The Shirelles) is 80. Movie director John Landis is 71. Actor JoMarie Payton is 71. Actor Jay North (TV: "Dennis the Menace") is 70. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Marcel Dionne is 70. Actor Philip Casnoff is 67. Actor John C. McGinley is 62. Rock singer-musician Lee Rocker (The Stray Cats) is 60. Actor Lisa Ann Walter is 60. Rock singer James Hetfield (Metallica) is 58. Rock singer-musician Ed Roland (Collective Soul) is 58. Actor Isaiah Washington is 58. Country musician Dean Sams (Lonestar) is 55. Rock musician Stephen Carpenter (Deftones) is 51. Hip-hop artist Spinderella (Salt-N-Pepa) is 50. Actor Brigid Brannagh is 49. Actor Michael Ealy is 48. Country musician Jimmy De Martini (Zac Brown Band) is 45. NFL quarterback Tom Brady is 44. Actor Evangeline (ee-VAN'-gel-eeen) Lilly is 42. Actor Mamie Gummer is 38. Olympic gold medal swimmer Ryan Lochte is 37. Country singer Whitney Duncan is 37. Actor Jon Foster is 37. Actor Georgina Haig is 36. Actor Tanya Fischer is 36. Pop-rock musician Brent Kutzle (OneRepublic) is 36. Rapper Shelley FKA DRAM is 33.