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Death Notice: Anna Rix

Anna Rix, 93 , of Groton passed away August 7, 2021 at her home. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, August 8, 2021

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

Monday, August 9, 2021

PEO - outside group 7:30 PM

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM

VBS - Dive into Oceans of Fun! 5:00 PM

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

VBS - Dive into Oceans of Fun! 5:00 PM

Sunday, August 15, 2021

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

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Aug. 8, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship

Monday, Aug. 9, 2021

6:30 a.m.: Bible Study

Tuesday, Aug. 10, 2021

7 p.m.: Council Meeting

Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021

6 p.m.: Sarah & Nigeria Circle potluck/bible study.

Sunday, Aug. 15, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship/Communion
3 p.m.: Avantara

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30pm Groton

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

Weekday

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

Sat 10am Newman Center

Confessions:

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

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

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Aug. 8, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study

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

11 a.m.: Zion's Worship

Sunday, Aug. 15, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study

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

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

To submit your monthly or weekly church calendar, email to
news@grotonsd.net

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State B American Junior Legion Baseball Tournament Early Lead For Groton Seals Fate For Lennox

Lennox watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in a 7-4 loss to Groton on Saturday. Groton scored on a double by Brandin Althoff, a fielder's choice by Dillon Ablen, and a fielder's choice by Cole Simon in the second inning. The Groton win at the state tournament in Redfield will advance the team to a fifth place game with Lake Nordon at 1 p.m. today followed by the third place game between Clark/Willow Lake and Winner/Colome. The championship game will follow between Belle Fourche and Redfield.

In the second inning, Groton got their offense started when Althoff doubled on a 1-1 count, scoring one run.

Groton scored four runs in the fourth inning. Groton big bats were led by Andrew Marzahn, Ryan Groeblichhoff, Colby Dunker, and Tate Larson, all knocking in runs in the inning.

Althoff earned the victory on the mound for Groton. The pitcher lasted six and two-thirds innings, allowing six hits and three runs while striking out six and walking one. Simon threw one-third of an inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Braeden Wulf took the loss for Lennox. Wulf allowed five hits and seven runs over three innings, striking out four.

Wulf led Lennox with three hits in three at bats.

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Sat, Aug 07

11:00AM CDT Start

Lake Norden

@ Elk Point

LKNR 3, ELKP 1 Final

At American Legion Field, I

Sat, Aug 07

1:30PM CDT Start

Groton

@ Lennox

GRTN 7, LNX 4 Final

At American Legion Field, I

Sat, Aug 07

5:00PM CDT Start

Belle Fourche

@ Clark Willow Lake

BLFR 11, CLRK 1 Final

At American Legion Field, I

Sat, Aug 07

7:30PM CDT Start

Redfield

@ Winner Colome

RDFL 9, WNRC 1 Final

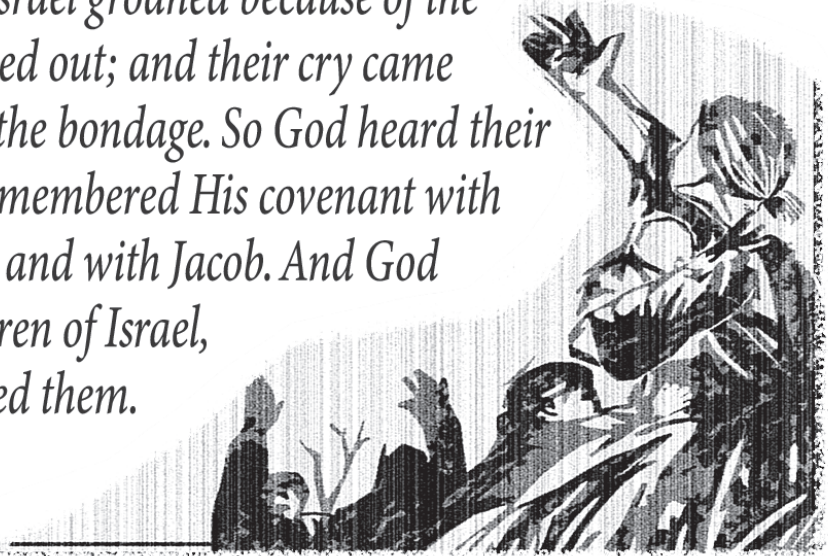
At American Legion Field, I



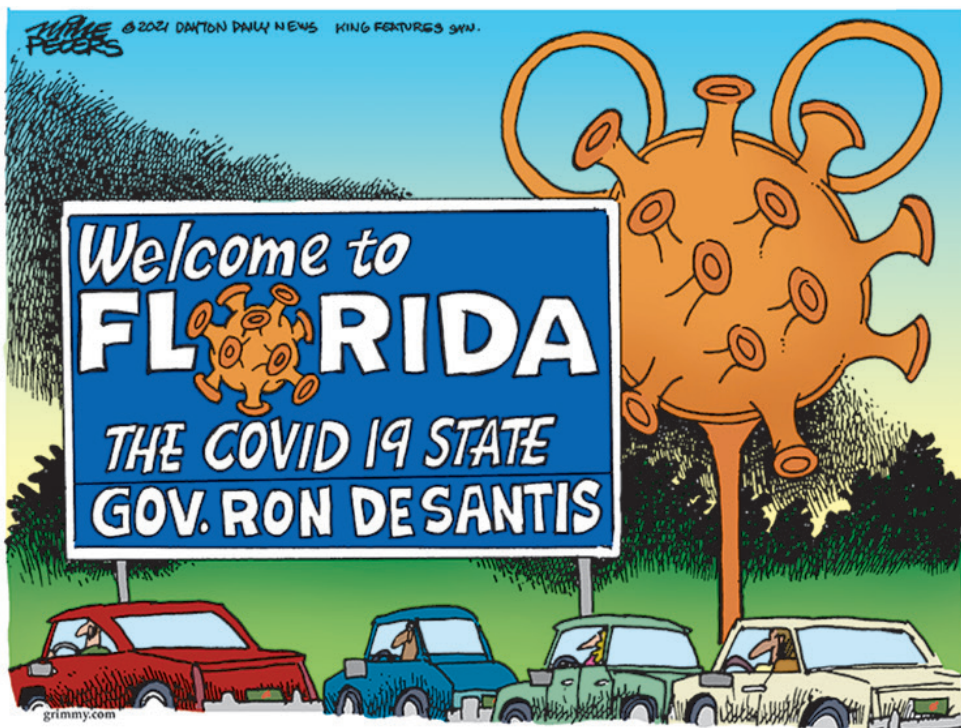
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

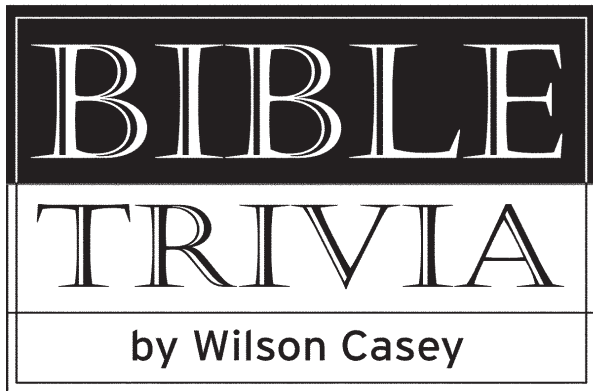
Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.

EXODUS 2: 23-25 



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

2. In Matthew 12:9-14, what does Jesus tell the Pharisees it is lawful to do on the Sabbath? *Tend to sick, Pray out loud, Feast together, Do good (well)*

3. What did Saul use a couple of times in attempts to kill David? *Poison, Spear, Mallet, Sling*

4. From Judges 8, which city refused to give food to Gideon's army? *Succoth, Thessalonica, Tarsus, Gaza*

5. Why did David meet Goliath without armor? *Faith in God, Not used to wearing, Too poor to buy, Size not handy*

6. Who was the mother of Gad and Asher? *Jezebel, Anna, Rachel, Zilpah*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Do good (well); 3) Spear; 4) Succoth; 5) Not used to; 6) Zilpah

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

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Banana-Raspberry Custard Treats

Did you know that the botanical name for bananas is *Musa sapientum*, which means fruit of the wise men? If you're a wise person, you'll stir up this tasty, healthy and easy recipe featuring bananas, which are loaded with potassium and vitamin C.

- 1 cup (one medium) diced banana
- 1 1/2 cups fresh red raspberries
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 2/3 cups water
- 1 teaspoon coconut extract
- 1/4 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping
- 4 teaspoons flaked coconut

1. In a medium bowl, combine diced banana and raspberries. Evenly spoon fruit into 4 parfait or dessert dishes.

2. In a medium saucepan, combine dry pudding mix, dry milk powder and water. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in coconut extract. Spoon hot pudding mix evenly over fruit.


3. Refrigerate for at least one hour. Top each serving with 1 tablespoon whipped topping and garnish with 1 teaspoon coconut flakes. Serves 4.

* Each serving equals: 137 calories, 1g fat, 5g protein, 27g carb., 181mg sodium, 3g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Fruit, 1/2 Skim Milk, 1/2 Starch.

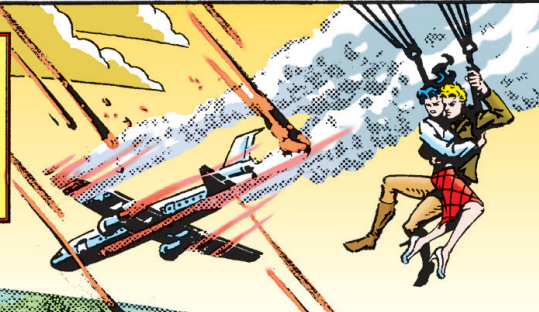
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Character Profile:
Dale Arden



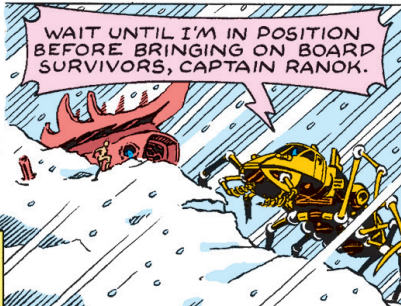
AN AIRPLANE IS TORN ASUNDER BY A FREAK METEOR SHOWER!

THAT FATEFUL FLIGHT BRINGS RAVEN-HAIRED BEAUTY DALE ARDEN INTO THE ARMS OF WORLD-RENOWNED ATHLETE FLASH GORDON.

SINCE THEN THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN BOUND TOGETHER... FACING ADVENTURES UNDREAMED OF IN THE HOPES OF SAVING A WORLD ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION!



8-1
By JIM KEEFE



WAIT UNTIL I'M IN POSITION BEFORE BRINGING ON BOARD SURVIVORS, CAPTAIN RANOK.

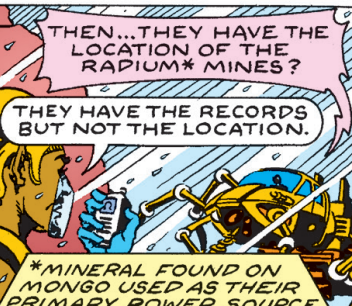
AFTER LONG HOURS OF PERILOUS CLIMBING, DALE FINALLY REACHES THE DOWNED CRAFT.



AFTER YOU GET THE CREW BOARDED WE'LL NEED THE SHIP'S LOG.

NO CAN DO, MISS ARDEN.

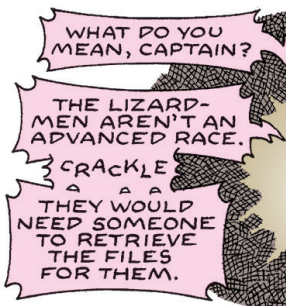
THE LIZARD-MEN STRIPPED AWAY ALL THE COMPONENTS FROM THE COMPUTERS.



THEN...THEY HAVE THE LOCATION OF THE RADIUM* MINES?

THEY HAVE THE RECORDS BUT NOT THE LOCATION.

*MINERAL FOUND ON MONGO USED AS THEIR PRIMARY POWER SOURCE.




WHAT DO YOU MEAN, CAPTAIN?

THE LIZARD-MEN AREN'T AN ADVANCED RACE.


CRACKLE... THEY WOULD NEED SOMEONE TO RETRIEVE THE FILES FOR THEM.



I GUESS IT TAKES SOMEONE FROM AN "ADVANCED RACE" TO BROADCAST THEIR COMMUNICATIONS FOR ANYONE ON THE MOUNTAIN TO HEAR.



WHAT DID THEY THINK... WE'D JUST THROW AWAY THE DEVICES TAKEN FROM OUR QUARRY?





FETCH THE REMAINING SURFACE DWELLER. IT SEEMS HE MAY STILL BE OF USE TO US...

TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

CONFIDENCE IN YOUR SHOT-MAKING ABILITY IS OFTEN THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN MATCH PLAY WHEN YOUR ADVERSARY IS AN IMMEDIATE PRESENCE RATHER THAN A VAGUE ABSTRACTION.





YOU'LL FIND CONFIDENCE MOSTLY ON THE PRACTICE TEE, BUT ALSO FROM YOUR PREVIOUS SUCCESSFUL COMPETITIVE EXPERIENCES. THE LESS OF THE LATTER YOU CAN CLAIM, THE MORE OF THE FORMER YOU NEED - AND DON'T FORGET TIME ON THE PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN ALSO!



Can Lyme Disease Lead to Parkinson's

DEAR DR. ROACH: Can Lyme disease send a person into Parkinson's disease? I tested positive for Lyme -- I had the bulls-eye rash, fever and terrible headaches. After a month on doxycycline, my left arm started shaking and my neurologist diagnosed me with Parkinson's. The doctor said it had nothing to do with the Lyme disease. What is your opinion? -- S.M.

ANSWER: I can absolutely understand why you might suspect that the neurologist could be wrong. The coincidence seems too much to believe. However, I think your neurologist is probably correct. The different types of neurological complications of Lyme disease are many and varied. The

most common are any combination of meningitis symptoms (inflammation of the lining of the brain, with headache, fever, stiff neck and light sensitivity); disorders of the cranial nerves (especially the facial nerve, so people with neurological Lyme disease can look like they have Bell's palsy); and damage to peripheral nerves, causing pain and weakness or numbness, often resembling sciatica (but may include other parts of the body).

A detailed neurological exam by a neurologist would look for signs of Parkinson's disease -- not just the tremor you describe, but also muscle rigidity and changes in gait. These would be very unusual in Lyme disease. I did find cases resembling some aspects of Parkinson's disease, but they improved with treatment. It is possible that the stress of the Lyme disease hastened the onset of Parkinson's disease you were destined to get.

I say your neurologist is "probably correct" because what I found -- absence of data to support a correlation -- does not mean that there is no correlation, and it is possible that time may prove Lyme disease is connected to Parkinson's. However, I think it's unlikely.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Ever since my mother became ill, my father's health has gone downhill. He has trouble walking and getting up from a sitting position, and he has hardly any feeling in his hands. It has gotten so bad that he has to pick things up with the webbing of his fingers then manipulate it to the correct position.

His doctor claims that this is old age, but I fear it could be a bone issue. A friend of mine many years ago found that she could not raise her arm past her shoulders and subsequently had neck surgery at the age of 80 to correct it. My father is 77 and was fine until recently. Is this really "old age," or could something else be wrong? -- J.P.

ANSWER: It is NOT "old age."

It's a problem with his nervous system, but I can't tell you what exactly without a more comprehensive evaluation. There are several likely possibilities, including carpal tunnel syndrome, but many others as well. He should have an evaluation. A neurologist would be an excellent place to start.

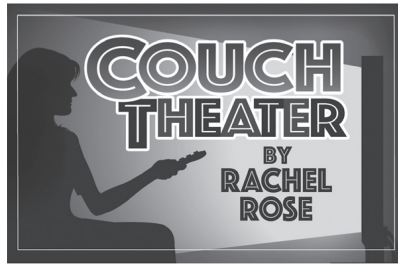
DR. ROACH WRITES: A recent column on itchy ears generated a lot of letters from readers, mostly asking whether this was due to allergies. One person found that it was the dye from shampoo that seemed to cause the symptom. Several people wrote in that treatment with medicated selenium shampoo helped solve their problem.

As always, I appreciate helpful suggestions from readers.

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

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Drunk History UK (Seasons 1-3) — Just like the American version of “Drunk History,” but with accents! British comedians imbibe just enough alcoholic drinks to reach the point of giddiness and slurred speech, but before anger and depression set in. Then they recount various events in history for narrator Jimmy Carr, which may or may not be factually accurate. The fun really comes to life when actors reconstruct scenes from these historical events based directly on the drunkard’s storytelling. The Great Fire of London has never been funnier! Swearing is most definitely involved, so this might not be the best add-on for your kid’s homeschooling curriculum. (Paramount+)

Together Together (R) — This isn’t the first movie to use pregnancy surrogacy as its plot line, but it is the first to have a single straight man as the main character and parent-to-be. Ed Helms once again plays an awkward and sometimes inappropriately funny guy named Matt. In the midst of mid-life yearning, he contracts with a 20-something single woman, Anna (Patti Harrison), to carry his baby. She wants to keep the arrangement private; he wants to experience all of the typical pregnancy events like baby showers and, well, telling people about it. Throughout the nine months both characters ponder the state of their relationship with each other. Are they friends, platonic soulmates or merely contractual co-signers? (Hulu)

In Case You Missed It

Quartet (PG-13) — Inspired by the true story of how Italian opera composer Verdi bequeathed his mansion to retired musicians who couldn’t pay their rent later in life, this 2012 release is set at the Beecham House for Retired Musicians. English act-

ing legend Dame Maggie Smith stars in this sweet and sincere story about old rivalries, old friendships and facing the trepidation that comes with rekindling one’s true joy in the golden years of life. Dustin Hoffman’s directorial debut. (Netflix)

Aquamarine (PG) — What could possibly make two 13-year-old best-friend girls even more giddy and excited than summer break spent at the beach? Finding a third best friend who happens to be a mermaid, of course. The mermaid, named Aquamarine, swam away from home and is on a quest to find true love on land.



Paramount+

Sara Paxton in “Aquamarine”

But all three girls have their eyes on the same hunky lifeguard. And so does another mean girl, because that’s how complicated tween love is. This 2006 film is predictable and a little corny, but still a fun and lighthearted summer flick. (Disney+)

A Different World — Dropping this week is the “Cosby Show” spinoff sitcom that aired from 1987-93. Set at fictional historically black university, Hillman College, it originally starred Lisa Bonet (Denise Huxtable from “Cosby”) as she navigated her first year of higher education and budding adulthood. Dorm drama, new friendships and life away from home were typical storylines, but the show often tackled relevant social issues from race relations to date assault and homelessness. With a smartly written script and a range of likable characters, the cast included future Academy Award-winner Marisa Tomei, a teenaged Jada Pinkett and Kadeem Hardison. (HBOMax)

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1. Name the first artist to release "She's a Lady."
2. Which group released "Doesn't Somebody Want to Be Wanted"?
3. "Almost Paradise," "Holding Out for a Hero" and "Waiting for a Girl Like You" were all used in the soundtrack for what film?
4. Who released "Rock This Town"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Why should I keep loving you when I know that you're not true? And why should I call your name when you're to blame for making me blue?"

Answer

1. Paul Anka, the song's writer, in 1970. Tom Jones followed with a cover the following year, and the two released a duet in 2013 with rewritten lyrics.
2. The Partridge Family, in 1971. Lead singer David Cassidy was so embarrassed by the song that he begged the record company not to release it. The video was even more cringe-worthy.
3. "Footloose," in 1984.
4. The Stray Cats, in 1982.
5. "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights," by Freddy Fender. Fender originally wrote the song at the start of his career in 1959. He eventually released the song in 1975 when his career was rejuvenated. It was a major hit in New Zealand, spending a record 12 weeks at No. 1.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT

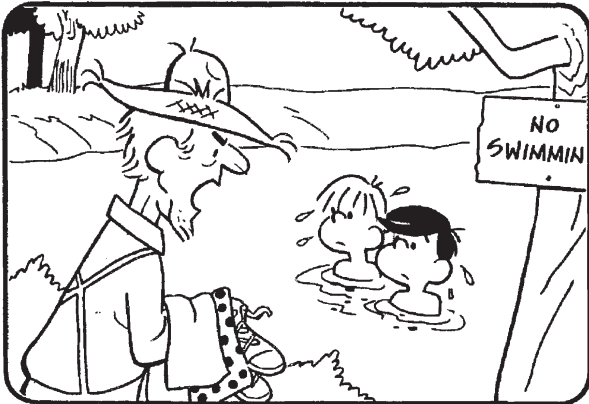


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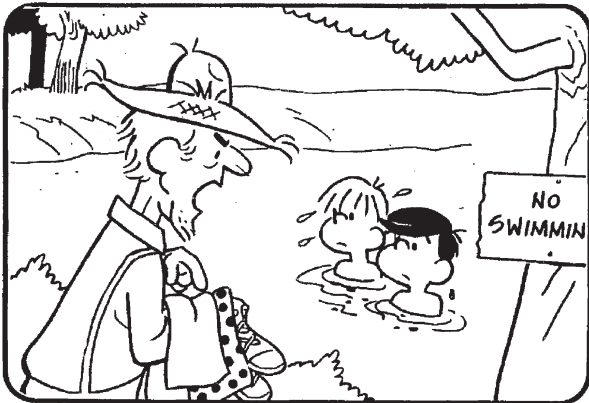
"HA-HA-HA-HA-HA! ... Man, I hate to shred this!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Suspenders are different. 2. Shoelace is missing. 3. Sign is lower. 4. Drop of water is missing. 5. Hand is showing. 6. Leaves are added.



- Stuck zippers can be loosened with graphite powder, or simply by tracing a pencil lead over the zipper.

- “The best way to get a bloodstain out of clothing is by dousing the stain with hydrogen peroxide and washing as usual. For clay stains, you absolutely must have a Fels-Naptha bar. It looks like a bar of soap, and you wet the material and rub in the soap. It’s magical. This, coming from a softball mom whose daughter loves to slide.”
— *A.A. in Florida*

- Clear bins make it easy to group like items in your pantry. You can remove the bin, get what you need and replace it, rather than digging through cans and boxes on a shelf and having to straighten it back up when you’re done.

- A better use for soda: Use it to scrub your pots and pans. If you have grime and slime, try letting the acids in soda pop work it out for you. Pour enough soda to cover the bottom of the pots or pans and let soak for 5-10 minutes. Then scrub away.

- “If you have a retractable cord on your vacuum, try this trick. Clip a clothespin at the optimum length, and the cord will not retract past that point. So, no more snapping right out of the outlet, which used to happen to me.”
— *P.L. in Tennessee*

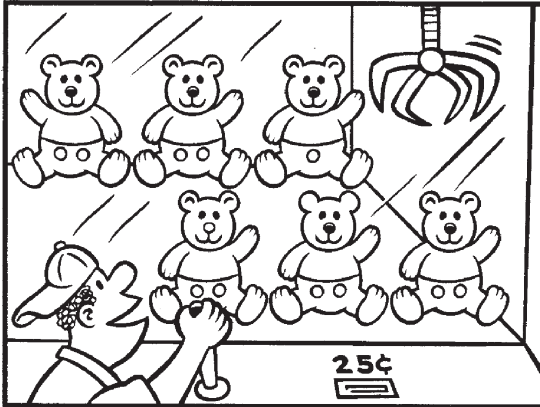
- Use rubbing alcohol to clean window frames. It evaporates quickly with no residue left behind.

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

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A BEAR FOR BEN! While Ben runs through his money, can you spot two bears that are exactly alike? It's up to you to decide.

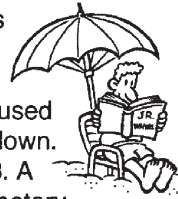
IT'S DICEY! With your back to the table, ask a friend to roll three dice and total the numbers. Have him turn over one die and add the bottom number to the total. Then tell him to roll this same die again, and add this number to the total. You now turn around and tell him the total.

SECRET: Add 7 to the total of the three dice on the table.



LET'S GO TO THE BEACH! At right is a word square. You are challenged to find the four five-letter words that match the definitions below. All words used must read the same both across and down.

1. A heavy rope.
2. An Alaska native.
3. A sandy place (BEACH, in place).
4. Monetary reward.
5. An anesthetic.

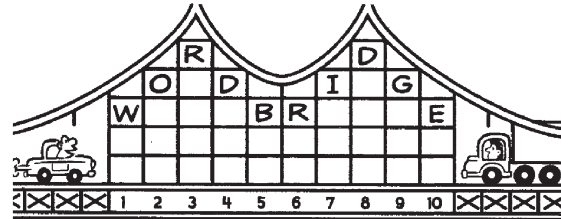


1	2	3	B	4	5
2			E		
3	B	E	A	C	H
4			C		
5			H		

1. Cable. 2. Aleut. 3. Beach. 4. Lucre. 5. Ether.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



A WORD-BRIDGE!

The bridge at left contains 10 supporting words. We give you the first letter of each word plus plenty of hints:

1. Deep distress.
2. Units of electrical resistance.
3. An Indian prince.
4. Finger-paint.
5. Where cranberries grow.
6. Beam.
7. Type of worm.
8. Train station.
9. A lavish party.
10. A long period of time.

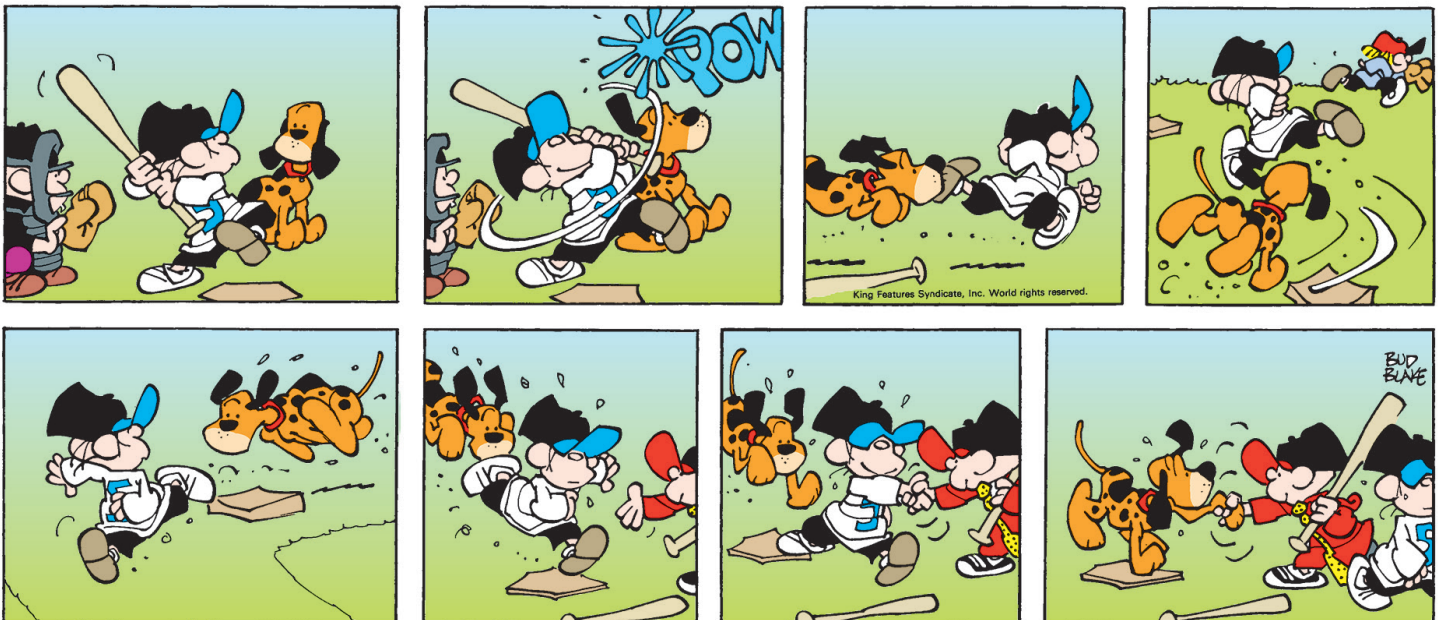
1. Woe. 2. Ohms. 3. Rajah. 4. Daub. 5. Bog. 6. Ray. 7. Inch. 8. Depot. 9. Gala. 10. Eon.

Illustrated by David Coulson

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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Scepter
- 4 Israeli airline
- 8 Staffer
- 12 Brit. record label
- 13 The Big Easy acronym
- 14 Not worth debating
- 15 Picnic crasher
- 16 Bird with yellow plumage
- 18 Popular take-out entree
- 20 Use a shovel
- 21 Golden Fleece ship
- 24 Atkinson of "Mr. Bean"
- 28 Wood pigeon
- 32 Long tale
- 33 Mil. morale booster
- 34 Gladden
- 36 Decay
- 37 Lost traction
- 39 Pink wading bird
- 41 King of Judea
- 43 Faux pas
- 44 Belly
- 46 Tribal emblem
- 50 Coastal diving bird
- 55 Chopper
- 56 — mater
- 57 Bassoon's kin
- 58 Director

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16				17				
18			19				20					
			21		22	23		24		25	26	27
28	29	30					31		32			
33				34				35		36		
37			38		39				40			
41				42		43						
			44		45			46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54			55		
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

- Burton
- 59 Longings
- 60 See to
- 61 Packed away
- DOWN**
- 1 Harvest
- 2 Hotel chain
- 3 Bubblehead
- 4 Fencer's cry
- 5 Brit's restroom
- 6 100 percent
- 7 "Shane" star
- 8 Juan's pals
- 9 Charged bit
- 10 Medico
- 11 Ordinal suffix
- 17 Fragrant tree
- 19 Abrupt turn
- 22 Michelle Wie's game
- 23 Cameo shapes
- 25 Tip off
- 26 Awestruck
- 27 Peacekeeping org.
- 28 Hurry
- 29 Capri, for one
- 30 Pinot — (Lat.)
- 35 Sent forth
- 38 Doctrines
- 40 Wall St. debut
- 42 Pair
- 45 Jog
- 47 "Toodle-oo!"
- 48 Way out
- 49 Viral web phenomenon
- 50 Low isle
- 51 Flamenco cheer
- 52 LBJ's successor
- 53 Copper head?
- 54 "Smoking or —?"

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

R	O	D		E	L	A	L		A	I	D	E	
E	M	I		N	O	L	A		M	O	O	T	
A	N	T		G	O	L	D	F	I	N	C	H	
P	I	Z	Z	A				D	I	G			
				A	R	G	O		R	O	W	A	N
R	I	N	G	D	O	V	E		S	A	G	A	
U	S	O		E	L	A	T	E		R	O	T	
S	L	I	D		F	L	A	M	I	N	G	O	
H	E	R	O	D		S	L	I	P				
				G	U	T			T	O	T	E	M
C	O	R	M	O	R	A	N	T		A	X	E	
A	L	M	A		O	B	O	E		T	I	M	
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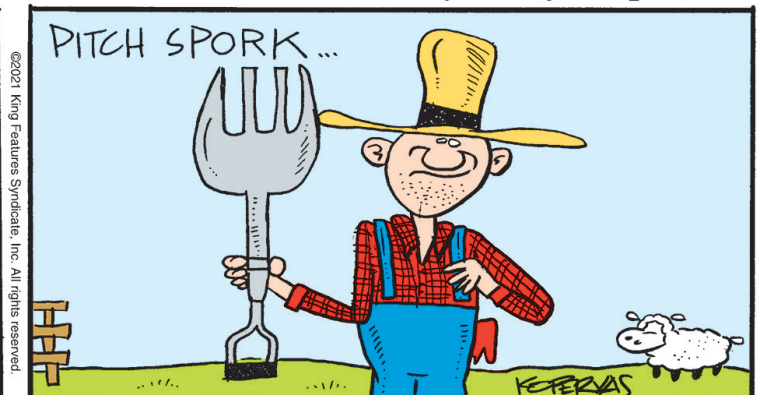
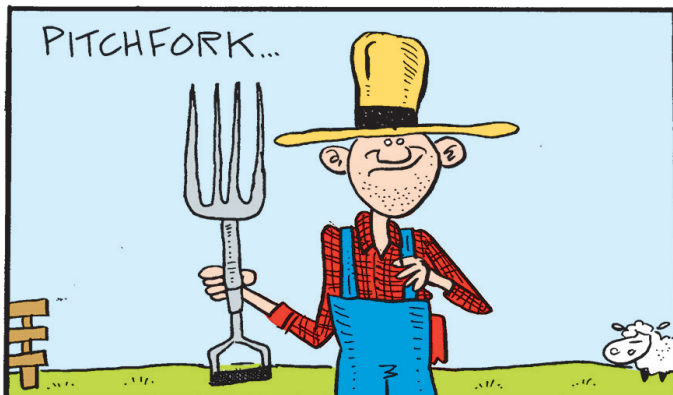
LAFF - A - DAY



"I keep remembering her age and forgetting her birthday."

Out on a Limb

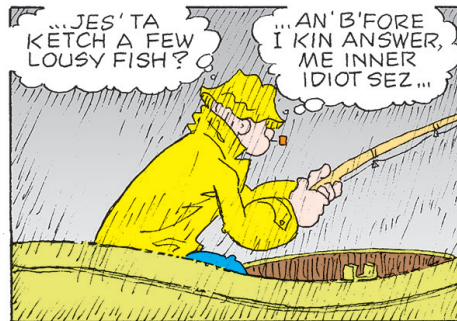
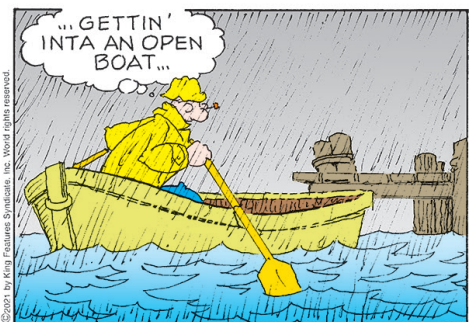
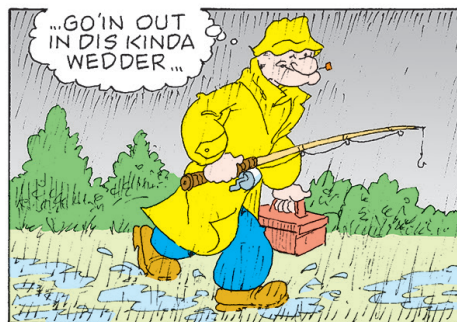
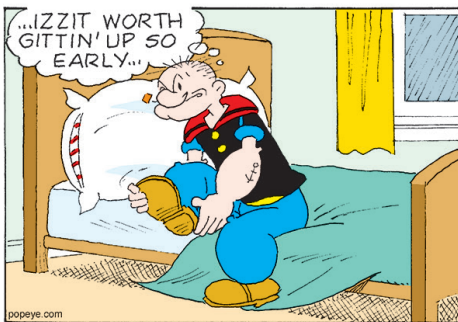
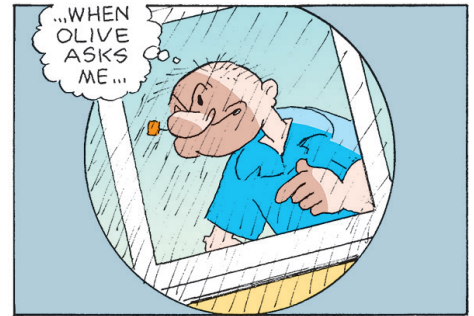
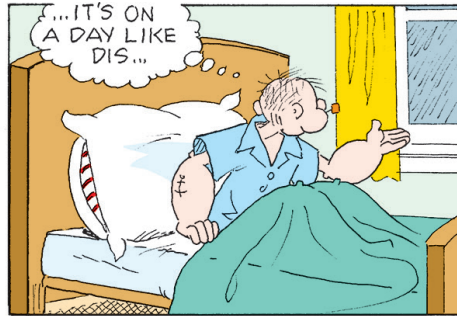
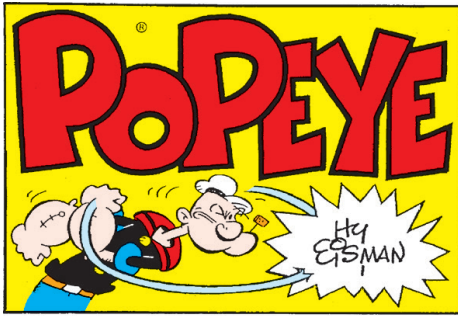
by Gary Kopervas



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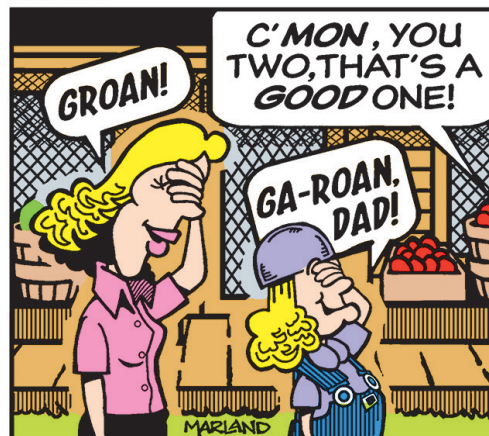
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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HAL FOOTER'S BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ
Prince Valiant

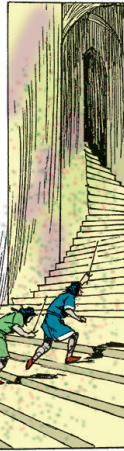
SILBUG POINTS TO A LOFTY TOWER. 'T' WOULD BE PREFERABLE IF HUMANS DEALT WITH THEIR OWN.



"HORRIDUS IS THERE - WITH YOUR WOMEN." VAL IS ALREADY IN MOTION...



...ORDERING IG AND PRUDENCE TO STAY PUT. HE AND GAWAIN SPRINT UPWARD.



BUT HORRIDUS' REMAINING GUARD WILL NOT GIVE UP THEIR LEADER EASILY. A RAIN OF IRON SHATTERS GAWAIN'S LEFT ARM!

VAL HESITATES BESIDE HIS FALLEN COMRADE - DESPITE HIS AGONY, GAWAIN SEES AN APPROACHING SHADOW AND WARNS THE PRINCE.



VAL REMAINS CALM. HAVE NOT THE THUATHA PROVEN THEMSELVES TO BE FLIMSY WARRIORS?



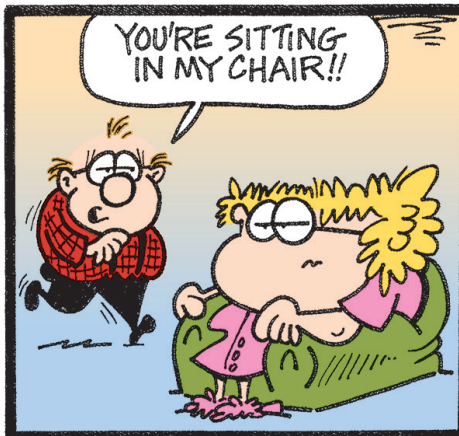
THE AUTHOR OF THIS SHADOW, HOWEVER, IS SOMETHING MORE SOLID... AND HAMMERS VAL WITH THE STRENGTH OF AN OX!



next: **Battered**

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Exercise Can Reduce Risk of Alzheimer's

Can we do this? Exercise twice a week for 10 minutes each time to prevent Alzheimer's disease? Of course we can.

Researchers examined the records and followed the progress of 250,000 patients who had mild cognitive impairment. They concluded that moderate physical activity more than once a week reduced the risk of Alzheimer's disease by 18%.

We need to do more for our brain health than work the daily crossword puzzle or brush up on our chess skills. Physical exercise protects the brain, too, per the study. The key is that it should be moderate to vigorous exercise.

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, examples of moderate exercise include walking 3-4 mph (a brisk walk while you're still able to hold a conversation), vacuuming and washing windows, mowing the lawn and doubles tennis. Other sources are more specific: water aerobics for 30 minutes and raking leaves for 30 minutes.

For comparison, examples of light exercise include washing dishes and using a computer. Vigorous exercises are things like shoveling, singles tennis and playing basketball or soccer.

Having said that, there are more parts of our bodies that need exercise than just our brains. That's where more time in an activity comes into play. Instead of a mere 10 minutes per day, we're told to shoot for 150 minutes of exercise per week, or 30 minutes on five days.

One place to start developing an exercise plan is [Mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org). Type "moderate exercise" in the search box and scroll down the results until you find something interesting. Among the 600 choices are frequency of workout, using weighted hula hoops, Zumba, secrets to a healthy heart and so much more.

The earlier in life we start exercising for our brains and bodies, the longer we'll stay healthy as we age.

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1. Nicknamed "Lady Magic," what Basketball Hall of Famer played for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury in 1997 at the age of 39?

2. What is the nickname of Xavier University's athletic teams?

3. The Rowdies Cup is the trophy awarded in the annual college soccer derby between which two Florida teams?

4. Point guard Sam Cassell won three NBA championships as a member of which two teams?

5. Lawyer and superfan Laurence Leavy became famous for attending major sports events and conspicuously donning the bright orange apparel of what team?

6. What did Italian-born bodybuilder Angelo Siciliano legally change his name to in 1922?

7. Who was head coach of the USC Trojans baseball team that won 11



College World Series titles from 1948-78?

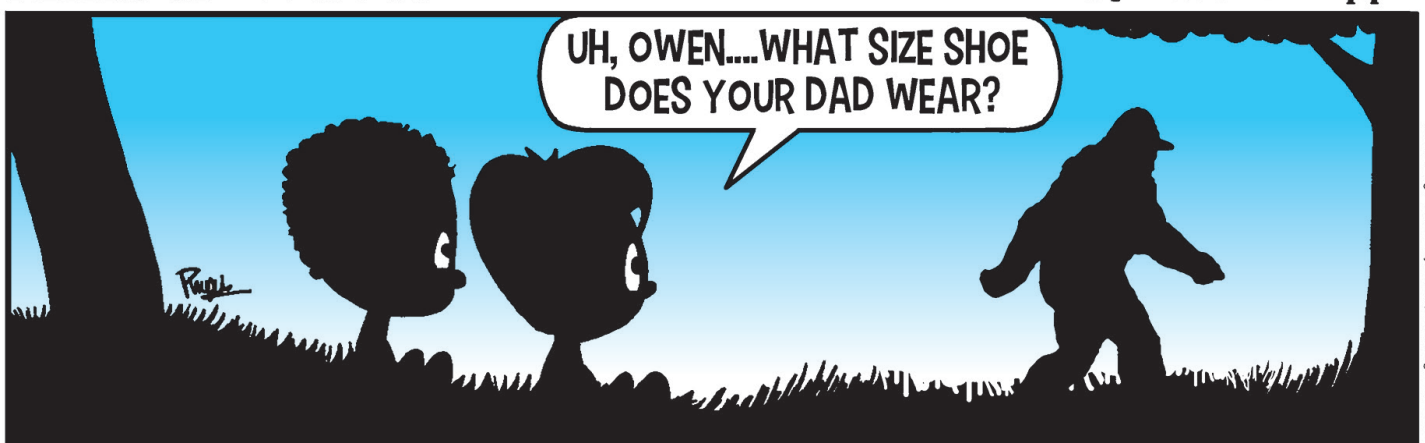
Answers

1. Nancy Lieberman.
2. The Musketeers.
3. The South Florida Bulls and Tampa Spartans.
4. The Houston Rockets (1994-95) and Boston Celtics (2008).
5. The Miami Marlins.
6. Charles Atlas.
7. Rod Dedeaux.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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Heatstroke Almost Killed Her Dog

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I never keep my dog "Alfie" in the car, even on cool days. Last Sunday, I took Alfie to the park to get some exercise. It was hot, and after a short while Alfie came back to me, panting heavily. He was still panting on the drive home and seemed lethargic, so I called his veterinarian, who said to take him to the emergency vet immediately. There, he was diagnosed with heatstroke! They treated him and he's doing much better, but I was shocked at how quickly Alfie developed a heat injury from being outside. Please warn your readers that dogs are very vulnerable to summer heat. — *Chris in Portland, Oregon*

DEAR CHRIS: You are so right! I'm glad Alfie is doing well and that tragedy was averted by your instinct to con-

tact the vet.

Just like humans, dogs need to acclimate to their environment. Sudden weather extremes like excessive heat or freezing cold are very difficult to adjust to. Dogs have far fewer sweat glands than humans; they manage their body temperature in other ways, such as panting when it's hot. So if we're feeling the heat, dogs are feeling it even more!

It's important to watch for signs of heat injury, especially when outdoors. Excessive panting is a key sign, as is lethargy and excessive drooling. Other symptoms include reddened gums, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of coordination and collapse. Immediate treatment is needed to prevent serious injury or death.

Keep plenty of cool water on hand for your dog to drink, both indoors and out. Never leave them in the car, even for a minute. At home, keep the air moving with fans, and cool down the environment with an air conditioner.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* In a practice called sexual death feigning, female dragonflies play dead to avoid sex. Why? A scientist at the University of Zurich observed that, when faced with aggressive males, female moorland hawk dragonflies will freeze in mid-air, fall to the ground and lie motionless in an attempt to avoid injury and sometimes even death that can result from being coerced into mating. Four other species, including the spider and praying mantis, are known to do this as well.

* When Victor Hugo was facing a tight publication schedule for "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," he

asked his valet to confiscate his clothes so he wouldn't be able to leave the house.

* For several decades, Vincennes University in Indiana offered a degree in Bowling Management that allowed students to gain entry-level jobs in the bowling industry by offering classes on sales, pinsetter mechanics and pro shop operations.

* President John F. Kennedy was buried without his brain. The original reason given was that it had been "lost" during his autopsy, but in 2018, newly released U.S. government documents revealed that his brother, Robert Kennedy, ordered the brain secretly destroyed to ensure that it would never be displayed in a museum.

* Eating Kentucky Fried Chicken on Dec. 25 is such a popular tradition in Japan that the chain asks customers to place their orders at least two months in advance. The custom started in 1974 when it was introduced to Japan for visitors who were looking for a dinner that resembled a traditional holiday meal.

* Aside from being the first commercially successful 3D game, Battlezone also was used by the U.S. Army to train tank gunners.

Thought for the Day: "Take a walk outside -- it will serve you far more than pacing around in your mind."
-- Rasheed Ogunlaru

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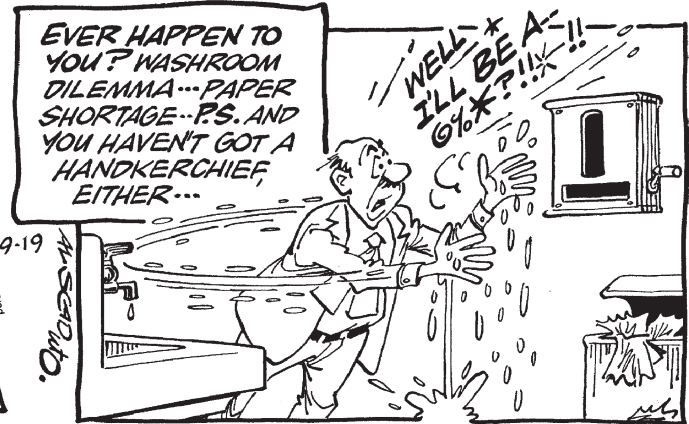
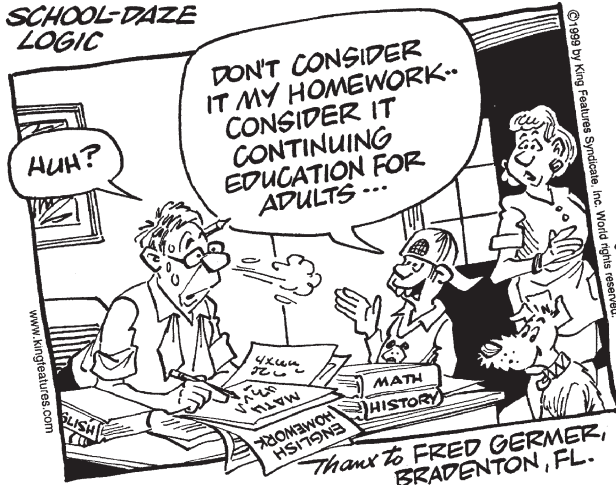
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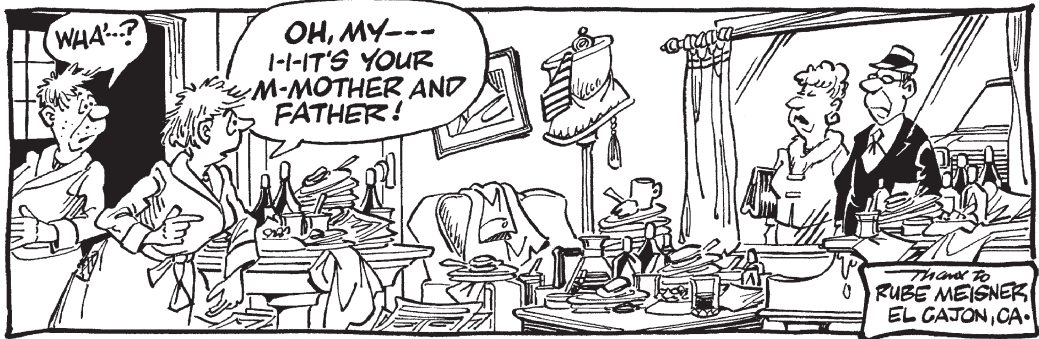
THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO

SCHOOL-DAZE LOGIC



PERFECT TIMING DEPT— (NEWLY WED DIV.) WHEN DO YOUR HUBBY'S FOLKS DROP BY FOR THEIR FIRST VISIT? WHY, THE MORNING AFTER YOUR DRAG-OUT WINGDING BLAST... OH, YEAH! OF COURSE!



The Garden Bug



Stay hydrated in the heat

Drink an hour or two *before* you begin your work. Do higher-intensity garden chores during cooler morning hours, and easier work (or rest) during the middle of the day. You should drink 8 ounces of fluid every 40 minutes or so. For working outside less than 40 minutes, water is sufficient. For anything over 40 minutes, you will need sugar and salt in your fluid, as is found in sports drinks.

Source: webmd.com

— Brenda Weaver

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

All Hands on Deck

The older veterans were arrayed along the back parking lot, watching the construction of two tiny homes for Veterans Village. My mission, which I accepted, was to sidle up to one of them, the very elderly Frank, and see how I thought he was doing.

I reported back to Sarge: “Well, for starters, I couldn’t tell you the last time he washed his clothes or took a shower. Looks sad.”

Sarge nodded and stabbed numbers into his phone. I overheard his end of the conversation with his granddaughter.

“Baby girl, this is Granddad. You up for a spy mission?” He gave her the particulars, and when she called back 15 minutes later he put her on speaker phone.

“His wife has been in rehab for over a week, chest congestion, not COVID, getting better. Your guy Frank hasn’t answered his phone this whole time. She’s frantic and nobody at rehab will help.”

“Can you jump in?” he asked.

Sarge’s lovely granddaughter volunteered at the senior center and knew everybody. Even more valuable, she knew how to wheedle info out of people. Within 24 hours she called back with the sitrep: She’d paid a visit to Frank, and it was all now under control. Frank had been told he couldn’t visit his wife due to COVID restrictions. His wife had their only phone charger cord. The water heater had quit, and the repair guy was on vacation. And on and on. Poor Frank.

Sarge’s granddaughter took him home for dinner (her mom knew to never be surprised), made a grocery run, put Frank on the phone to his wife in rehab, gave him a spare phone charger and called another plumber.

Today she had a snarling conversation with the director of the rehab place, after which Frank’s wife was wheeled out to the sunlit inner courtyard, where she was allowed a socially distant half-hour with Frank. He was heard laughing.

Sarge’s granddaughter is 17 years old.

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



Time for Recess!

Just like any school-aged kid, I love recess. But recess in Congress looks a little different than recess in elementary school.

Every August, Congress “recesses” for the month and members head back to their respective districts for an intensive district work period. For me, that means returning to the great state of South Dakota. While the colloquial term for this August work period is recess, it’s not a break – it’s a time to hear from fellow South Dakotans so I can bring their stories back to Congress. As our state’s sole representative in the House, I strive every day to work as hard as I know so many of you do.

You may remember the summer of 2019 when I hosted more than twenty “Inside Scoop” town halls at local ice cream shops around the state. Over the coming weeks, I will be hosting nine “Inside Scoop” town halls across the state where I will answer questions, address concerns, and listen to the issues you care about, all while enjoying a tasty ice cream treat. I also take the opportunity to share the biggest issues I’m working on in D.C.

Additionally, I will be hosting over a dozen Vietnam Veteran Commemorative Pinning ceremonies throughout the month to recognize our Vietnam veterans who were not properly welcomed home. I take great honor in being able to look these heroes in the eye and thank them for their service—an act that’s long overdue.

In between the Inside Scoops and Vietnam veteran ceremonies, I’m looking forward to attending Dakota Fest, Central States Fair, and the Sioux Empire Fair, as well as touring various businesses and speaking with community groups.

Sitting down with local business owners, chambers of commerce, agriculture producers, educators and healthcare workers really does inform my work in Washington. Just yesterday, I met with healthcare professionals from the Mobridge Regional Hospital, and we discussed my legislation to combat the mental health crisis in America. Hearing about their patients will arm me with the stories to encourage other representatives to sign onto this much-needed proposal and get it across the finish line.

It’s a jam-packed month, but there’s nothing better than being back in South Dakota full-time. I look forward to meeting you this August—I hope you’ll join me!

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Back-to-School for students, teachers, and parents

It's back-to-school season; a busy time filled with excitement for students and teachers, as well as parents eager to snap those "first day of school" photos. The outpouring of positivity for students at every grade level has always been a great way to kickstart the school year.

With that positivity also comes a heightened sense of responsibility. Now, more than ever, parents have a greater understanding of how and what their children are learning. From school safety to the important benchmarks for curriculum, every aspect of how we educate the next generation is under new scrutiny.

As a mother, I know the importance of engaging children and their teachers throughout the school year. Educators train students on the tools to excel in the future, including the skills required for math, reading, writing, sciences, and the arts.

These tools are bolstered when parents or guardians lay a strong foundation of core values taught within a family unit. Where these values play a crucial role is in the learning, comprehension, and study of civics and history. Until recently, civics and history classes across the United States focused on the study of major events, including the leaders who shaped our country. That remains the focus in South Dakota. I am fighting to ensure the study of historical facts and figures remains free of ideological influence. We also are improving standards that add context to enhance a student's understanding of historical events.

As governor, I have become increasingly concerned about a growing movement throughout the country to reject patriotic education and downplay the positive revolution in human affairs set in motion by our Founders. This is why I support resisting Critical Race Theory and action civics from our schools. That's also why I recently signed an executive order to block federal grants for Critical Race Theory and action civics in our state.

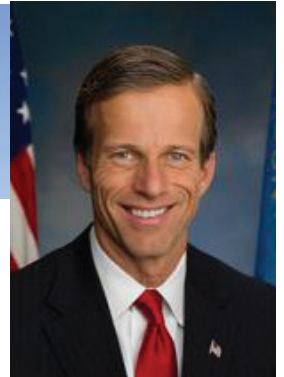
Fortunately, it does not appear that this revisionist history is being taught in South Dakota, and I intend to work with lawmakers in the next legislative session to keep it that way. This week, the South Dakota Board of Regents issued guidance consistent with my position, calling for a series of actions to ensure our public universities remain places for learning, study, and exploration, and not platforms to advance ideological or political agendas.

History is an important piece of the educational puzzle -- our triumphs and failures have shaped this nation and allowed America to become a beacon of freedom and democracy around the world.

As we prepare for the start of school, I encourage parents to talk with their children daily about what they are learning. Engage with teachers about the progress you are seeing at home and ways to improve your child's learning capabilities. And approach every engagement with positivity so the focus remains on strengthening our children's self-worth, in part, through academic achievement.

When parents, teachers, and our children work together, we ensure a brighter future for all of South Dakota.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Weathering the South Dakota Weather

Our farmers and ranchers carry a huge burden on their shoulders. They work day in and day out, in heat and frost, to help feed billions of people across the world. It is only because of farmers and ranchers that our grocery store shelves stay stocked. Even through an unprecedented global pandemic, while other industries shifted or slowed, our producers pushed forward to keep Americans fed.

On top of this burden, farmers face unimaginable stress just keeping their operations going through unpredictable weather, trade uncertainties, challenging market conditions, burdensome government regulations, and much more.

Currently, almost every corner of South Dakota is facing a drought. In fact, more than half of our state is officially classified as experiencing severe or extreme drought.

Drought can have devastating impacts on farmers and ranchers. Right now, cattle producers are quickly running out of hay to feed their livestock. Without adequate forage, some cattle producers are being forced to sell off their herds. This is devastating for many of our producers who've spent years building their herds.

Thankfully the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has tools in its arsenal to help producers through damaging weather conditions like the ones we're facing today. Allowing emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, of which there are more than 1 million in South Dakota, can help alleviate forage shortages for cattle ranchers during drought years when it's allowed in a timely manner.

I am a longtime advocate of CRP, which supports both production agriculture and outdoor recreational activities like hunting in South Dakota. These acres provide critical habitat for pheasants and other wildlife, contributing significantly to our state's economy. But haying and grazing CRP acres can also provide a lifeline for South Dakota agriculture producers during droughts like this one.

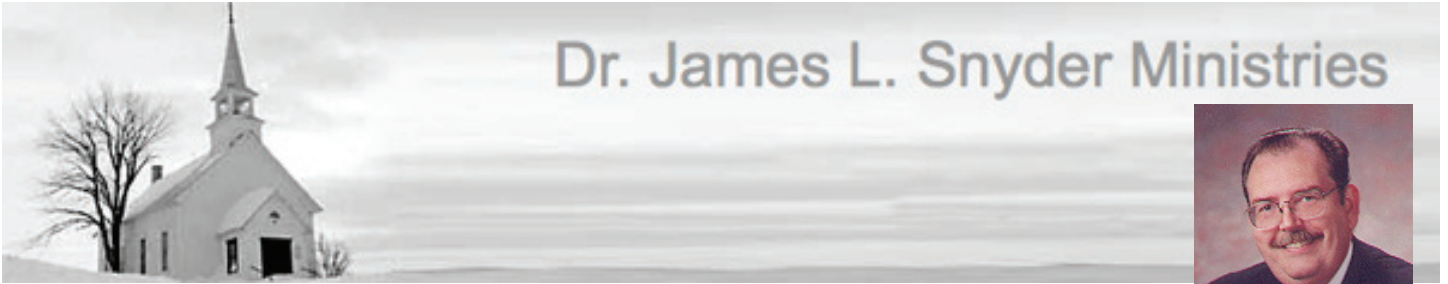
I've been urging USDA to make as many additional CRP acres available as possible for emergency haying and grazing to help South Dakota producers, many of whom are in desperate need of assistance. And I continue pressing the department to provide ranchers with more flexibility on when they can use these acres for these emergency purposes.

I recently led many of my ag-state colleagues in introducing legislation that would improve USDA's ability to allow for timely emergency haying. Right now, emergency haying on CRP acres is not allowed until after the primary nesting season, which ended on August 1 in South Dakota. My CRP Flexibility Act would address this by allowing emergency haying on CRP acres earlier than August 1 if certain conditions are met and in a manner that ensures CRP vegetative cover is maintained.

Agriculture is a tough business, and our producers have had to endure a tremendous amount over the past few years, from bad weather conditions to the COVID-19 pandemic. No matter the hardship, I'm always in their corner. I will keep doing everything I can to ensure their needs are met so they can continue to help feed our state, nation, and world.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



Temptation Is Oh So Tempting

At the beginning of the week, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage informed me that she and some of her friends would be going thrift store shopping on Thursday.

I nodded my head and smiled, not knowing where she was going with this.

"Now," she said, "you will have to take care of your lunch. You think you can do that?"

I was smiling so hard on the inside I could hardly keep it from my face.

"Well," I said as calmly as possible, "I think I can take care of it. No problem."

That meant I could eat my lunch when I wanted to eat it. My wife is very strict with rules and regulations. Everything has to be done at a certain time and in a certain way.

Thursday morning, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "Do you remember what's going to happen today?"

Did I remember? How in the world could I ever forget?

I soberly looked at her and said, "If I remember, you and some of your friends are going thrift store shopping."

She smiled and then said, "Are you sure you can get your own lunch?"

"I'll be able to manage," I said, still trying to hide the giggly smile inside.

I walked her to the door, waved very happily as she drove out of the driveway and disappeared into the sunset.

In my mind, I had prepared for this moment. I planned to go to McDonald's and get a bunch of double cheeseburgers, French fries, and milkshakes to help me through the day.

Ah yes, McDonald's has one of my favorite desserts, Apple Fritters. Although I'm not permitted to bring them home, today was different so I decided to get two Apple Fritters.

Just before lunch, I went to McDonald's and purchased my luxurious lunch, including the Apple Fritters.

I was very excited to get home and indulge in a lunch which would not make my wife very happy. But since she isn't here, and I'm not telling her, I'm going to have the time of my life for lunch. Especially those delicious Apple Fritters.

I got home and set up the table for my lunch, and began the process of enjoying.

I got to most of my lunch and approached that wonderful point of delving into a delicious Apple Fritter.

Laying those two Apple Fritters on my plate, I just enjoyed looking at the beauty of a perfect dessert.

Just as I went to pick one up, the telephone rang. That's all I needed.

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Answering the phone, the person on the other end introduced themselves and began their sales pitch on my auto warranty. My auto warranty, according to them, had run out, and this was their "last" call for me to renew this warranty.

I jumped in and politely said, "No, thank you. I don't need your warranty." Then I hung up the phone.

I took a deep breath and went back to the table and looked at my Apple Fritters, and reveled in the delightful experience of eating them. Then, just as I was ready to pick up the first one, the telephone rang again.

Very hesitantly, I got up and went to answer the phone. This time it was a recorded message about a warrant that has been issued for my arrest somewhere in Texas. So all I needed to do was push number 1.

I hung up very angrily and went back to the table, sat down and took a deep breath, and once again looked at those wonderful Apple Fritters.

Before I could even clear my mind, the telephone rang again. By this time, there was a swirl of anger bubbling up in my mind.

I answered the phone, someone introduced themselves and said they are sending me a diabetic machine according to my doctor. And, it was FREE.

Is it wrong to give someone a piece of your mind? And, which piece am I going to give this person?

Not dwelling on this very long, I just opened up and gave this person a piece of my mind that I have never used before. I was so tempted to say things that would be very inappropriate. I was expressing my anger as I have never expressed it before.

For someone to come between my Apple Fritter and me is a very dangerous place to be. So I explained to the person on the phone what a stupid idiot they were, as if they didn't know already, and how I did not appreciate them calling me, particularly at this time of the day.

Then I heard the magical sound of "click." He was no longer on the phone.

Sitting back at the table, I looked at my Apple Fritters, and as I took my first bite, I thought of a verse of Scripture that means a lot to me.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

There is a hymn that says, "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin." Temptations are there all the time, but God can give me the strength not to yield to them. I can't control the temptation but I can the yielding part.

EARTHTALK ™

Is it true that we've done such a good job bringing back bald eagles that they've become pests now?

-- D. Maguire, Winston-Salem, NC

It's hard to believe the bald eagle was on the brink of extinction in the Lower 48 United States just a half century ago, given how common the majestic birds are all over the country nowadays. While their population rebound is indeed a great source of pride for the environmental movement, some American farmers are wondering if maybe we have too much of a good thing, given a recent uptick of eagles' preying on livestock.



Bald eagles have come back from the brink of extinction in the Lower 48, but some wonder if there are too many of them around nowadays. Credit:

Anthony, Pexels.com.

While bald eagle populations fell drastically in the first half of the 20th century mostly due to hunting, it wasn't until the 1960s that people started to realize how big a threat the insecticide DDT was to supporting healthy eagle populations. The synthetic chemical was successful in keeping insects down. But when eagles ingested the chemical, it made their egg shells fragile and prone to cracking prematurely, dooming the chick inside to a premature death. Rachel Carson's landmark 1962 book *Silent Spring* highlighted the plight of eagles and other birds as victims of DDT poisoning.

In 1963, there were just 417 known mating pairs of bald eagles within the U.S. In 1972, the federal government banned DDT, and eagle populations started to rebound within a few years, with no looking back. By 2017, researchers believe 70,000 bald eagles inhabited the Lower 48; a 2021 survey estimates that number has now grown to over 300,000 individual bald eagles.

This exponential growth has sparked a call for officials to reconsider protection for the species. The presence of too many bald eagles has been a problem for decades in Alaska, where the birds were able to hold on better than in the Lower 48. In 1917, bald eagles were causing so many issues for the Alaskan fishing industry that the government placed a bounty on the birds. An editorial in 1920 from *Douglas Island News* in Alaska stated that: "Sentimentally, [the bald eagle] is a beautiful thing, but in life it is a destroyer of food and should be and is killed wherever found."

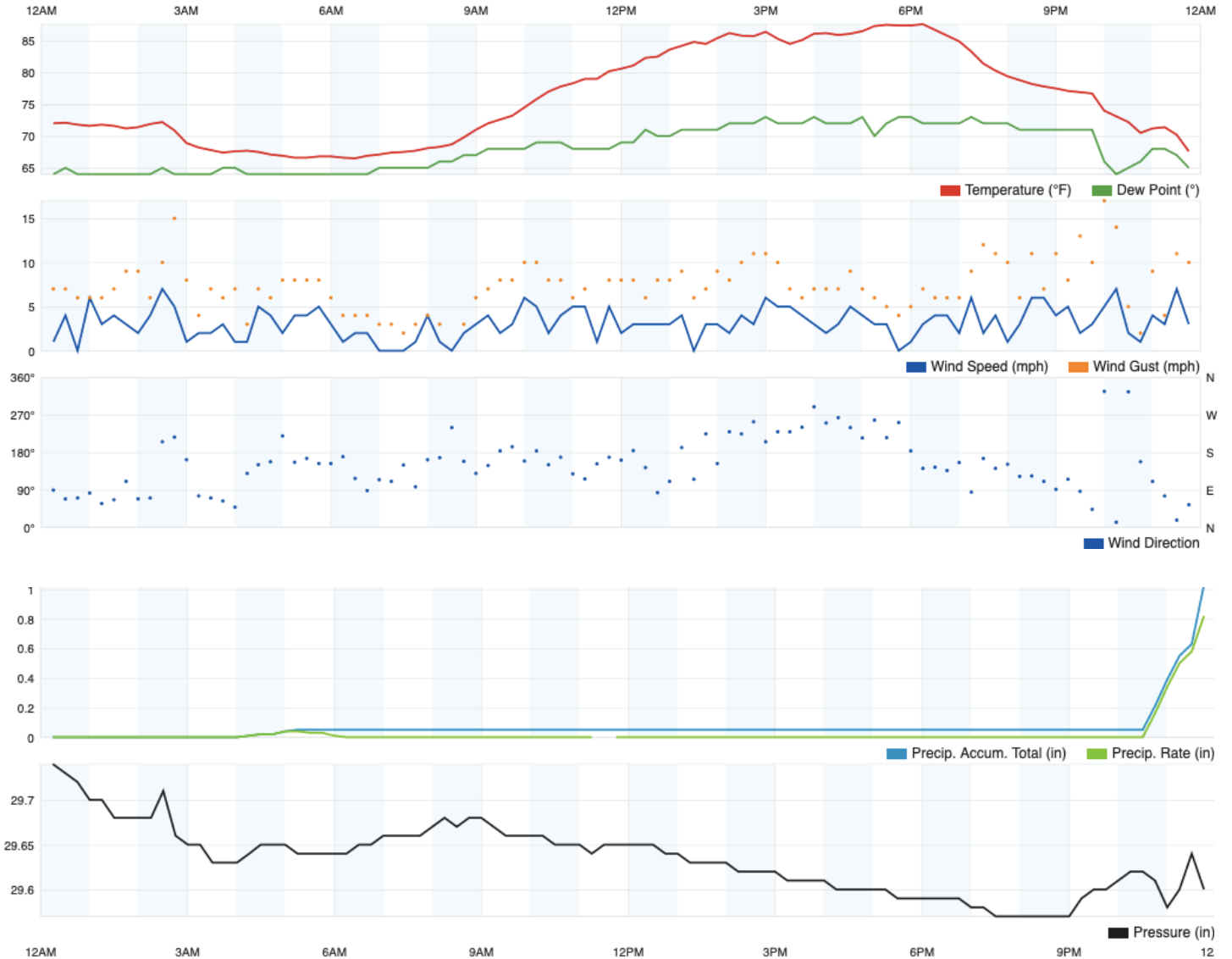
Similar situations could start to become more common in the Lower 48, where bald eagles have grown so much in population that they pose a significant threat to farms and pastures where chickens, ducks and other animals roam. Farmers don't know what to do about it, though, as shooting a bald eagle is a \$100,000 fine along with a year of jail time.

One option for farmers is to get an "eagle-depredation" permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if the birds have become "injurious to wildlife, agriculture or other personal property, or human health and safety." Once granted, non-lethal deterrents like air horns, scarecrows and pyrotechnics can be used to scare them off, though farmers have little recourse if these tactics fail. In the end, we're just going to have to get used to having so many of these majestic creatures around, reminding us not only of our freedom and national pride but also of what good stewards we can be for nature when we set our hearts and minds to it.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Decreasing
Clouds

High: 87 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 64 °F

Monday



Hot

High: 93 °F

Monday
Night



Chance
Showers

Low: 62 °F

Tuesday



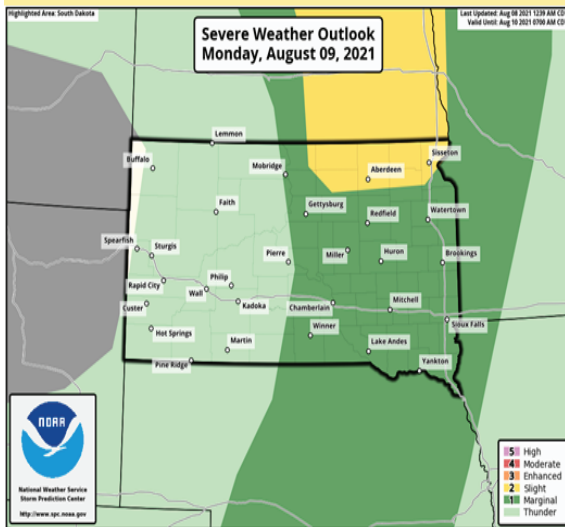
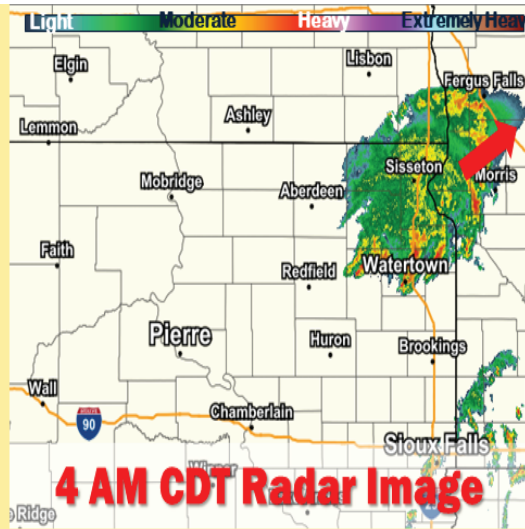
Mostly Sunny

High: 84 °F

**Exiting system
followed by a dry
Sunday afternoon...**

Highs:
Mid 90s West of the Mo R.
Mid to Upper 80s East

Winds:
Generally less than 10 mph



**...Storms Return
Monday**

**Storms possible Monday
into Tuesday, some may
be severe.**



Showers and thunderstorms over northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota will gradually exit the region this morning. Locally heavy rainfall is possible. Otherwise dry conditions are expected for the rest of the afternoon. Less humid air will move into areas west of the Missouri River, but humid conditions will persist east. The next chance for thunderstorms is Monday into Tuesday.

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Today in Weather History

1878 - The temperature at Denver, CO, soars to an all-time record high of 105 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1881 - A cloudburst and flash flood occurred at Central Springs, CO, and Idaho Springs, CO. (David Ludlum)

1882 - An August snowstorm was reported by a ship on Lake Michigan. A thick cloud reportedly burst on the decks covering them with snow and slush six inches deep. Snow showers were observed at shore points that day. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1983 - The temperature at Big Horn Basin, WY, reached 115 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorm rains in eastern Nebraska sent the Wahoo River and Ithica River above flood stage. Thunderstorm rains in western Iowa sent the Nishnabotna River over flood stage. Up to seven inches of rain deluged the Council Bluffs area Friday evening and Saturday morning. Thunderstorms produced 4.4 inches of rain in three hours Friday evening, along with golf ball size hail. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a slow moving cold front produced severe weather from central Kansas to southern Wisconsin late in the day. Thunderstorms in Iowa produced hail three inches in diameter at Vinton, and produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Donohue and near Mount Pleasant. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A total of ninety-nine cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Alpena MI with a reading of 40 degrees. Mount Mitchell NC was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 35 degrees. Early evening thunderstorms around Las Vegas NV produced wind gusts to 116 mph. The high winds damaged or destroyed about eighty- two aircraft at Henderson Sky Harbor Airport and McCarran International Airport, causing fourteen million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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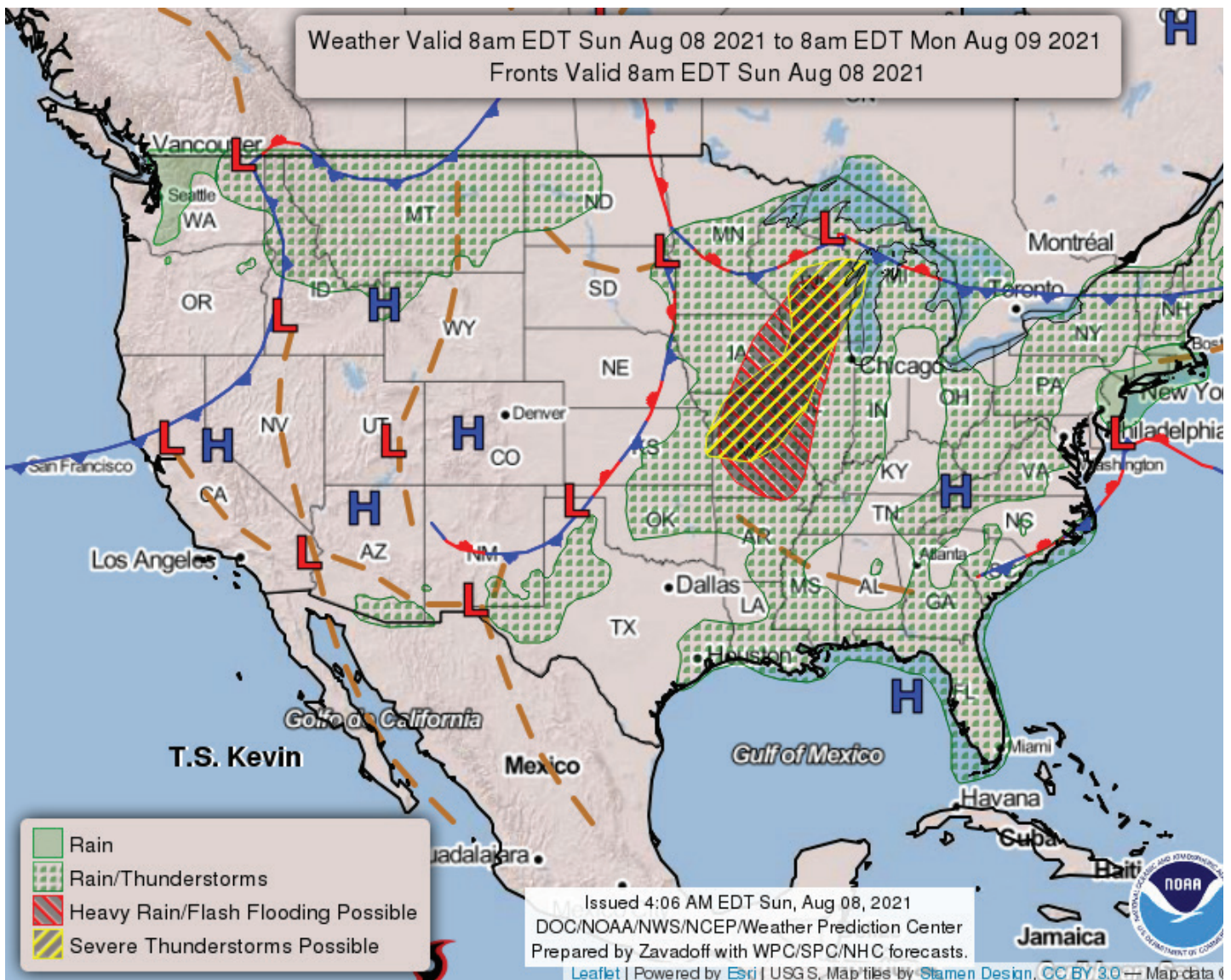
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 87.6 °F at 6:15 PM
Low Temp: 66.5 °F at 6:30 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 10:00 PM
Precip: 1.05

Today's Info

Record High: 102° in 1949
Record Low: 42° in 1921
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 0.44
Precip to date in Aug.: 1.12
Average Precip to date: 14.54
Precip Year to Date: 8.39
Sunset Tonight: 8:53 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:26 a.m.



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HOPE'S FOUNDATION

Many of us have struggled through difficult times and painful days in years gone by. We recall with pleasure what God has done for us in the past with gratitude – knowing that it was His love, mercy and grace that enabled us to get through lengthy days and long nights. Because of those memories when He graciously lavished His love on us, we can if we chose to, view our future in, through, and with Him, with hope and optimism.

In Psalm 85 our author is apparently reflecting on a loss suffered by Israel in a military battle. They looked at their loss as punishment from God. But the Psalmist does not focus on the loss, he focuses on the fact that God has brought them out of captivity in the past, forgave them of their sins, and promised them a future. So with confidence and boldness he said, "Restore us again, O God, our Savior."

The message for us to take away from this Psalm is that in times of depression, defeat, and darkness, we must remember God's grace, gifts, and goodness in our past and pray in the present for His restoration and renewal in the present, as we face our future.

Sometimes when we look at our past and are overwhelmed with the guilt of our sins we are fearful of going to God and asking for "more forgiveness, please!" We feel that we are undeserving and unworthy. We approach His throne of grace in fear and trembling, wondering if we have any right to ask for more forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration.

But when these thoughts plague us, we must remember that God's judgment is always tempered by His love and mercy and He will always forgive us, restore us, and revive us again. Forgiveness is one prayer away, and always available when we ask for it!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to remember Your blessings in the past as we pass through the problems we face today. Surely, "My grace is sufficient for you." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 85:4a Restore us again, God our Savior,

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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
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:

Dakota Cash

15-22-24-25-33

(fifteen, twenty-two, twenty-four, twenty-five, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$37,000

Lotto America

02-06-34-38-41, Star Ball: 8, ASB: 5

(two, six, thirty-four, thirty-eight, forty-one; Star Ball: eight; ASB: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.3 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$208 million

Powerball

07-24-36-54-60, Powerball: 23, Power Play: 2

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

Estimated jackpot: \$226 million

Porcupine man sentenced to 20 years for molesting 2 girls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 73-year-old South Dakota man has been sentenced to 20 years in federal prison for sexually molesting two young girls five years ago.

Leonard Brings Plenty, of Porcupine, pleaded guilty in December 2020 to abusive sexual contact. He was accused of molesting a 4-year-old girl and 6-year-old girl in 2016 at his residence on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Viken also ordered Brings Plenty to serve five years of supervised released. The case was investigated by the FBI.

Vermillion mayor wants more COVID-19 reports as school nears

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — The mayor of the city that's home to the University of South Dakota says the state needs to publish COVID-19 data more than once a week.

Vermillion Mayor Kelsey Collier-Wise says virus numbers from the South Dakota Department of Health are especially crucial as the city prepares for an influx of college students.

"We really need full information to be able to make these important decisions and for people to be able to make important individual decisions," she says.

Collier-Wise says there are no specific COVID-19 regulations at the University of South Dakota.

"No, they are not required to be vaccinated," she said. "I know there is going to be a big push as they come on to campus and we're looking at ways we can help with that and participate in trying to encourage students to get vaccinated."

Health department officials could not be reached for comment on Saturday.

Collier-Wise is anticipating 5,000 to 7,000 students moving to Vermillion this fall, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

Yankton domestic calls continue trend started with COVID-19

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Yankton police say the upward trend of domestic incident calls reported in the middle of COVID-19 lockdowns last year is continuing to manifest itself in 2021.

Police Chief Jason Foote says Yankton police answered a total of 292 domestics in 2020, up more than 50 from the year before and something he believes "could be due to issues associated with COVID." Midway through this year, the city has fielded 180 such calls, the Yankton Press and Dakotan reported.

Nationwide, domestic violence reports rose sharply when the pandemic arrived.

"I can't say that there a specific factor to the increase, but I believe COVID has caused tension during this time but this is not the only factor," Foote said. "Making the public aware of domestic violence and that it should not be tolerated could be a factor in the increased calls for service getting law enforcement to intervene before things turn to physical assault."

In that respect, the number of cases being referred to the state's attorney office is trending downward, Foote says.

Foote says the police department continues to work with its community partners such as the River City Domestic Violence Center to help tackle the problem. He added the public can also play its part in addressing what is an ongoing issue.

"With the community's support, we can partner to help end domestic violence because no one should have to live in fear," Foote says.

A cruising memorial: Mourners honor 3 young accident victims

By ANNIE TODD Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The sting of diesel gas and cigarette smoke tinged the air as people gathered. To passersby, it might have looked like a regular car meet, where people come to ogle at fast cars with paper tags still attached. But, this community came to celebrate the young lives of three of their own.

Car windows were decorated in red, white, blue and the occasional green, all with the same statement "RIP Sean, Bree, Kali, Gone But Never Forgotten 7-22-21." There were heart-shaped stickers with Sean, a birthdate, and a death date, on rear windows.

"This is something else, this makes me happy," Carollena Kaultman-Fuler, 19, said in response to the nearly 70 people gathered at Spencer Park on July 31 to remember the life of her cousin, Sean Morck, as well as Breeanne Gaffin and Kali Johnson, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

Morck, 22, Gaffin, 18, and Johnson, 16, died in a rollover crash on I-229 on the evening of July 22.

At the memorial, people popped the hoods of the tricked-out cars and the Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth song "See You Again" blared from car speakers.

Kaultman-Fuler, Sean's cousin, said he was a caring person. Others echoed that sentiment.

"He was a really good friend. He was an encourager, he helped me through a lot of stuff," 29-year-old Amber Snook said. She said they would go for drives around Sioux Falls and talk about life.

Kali Johnson's father remembers his oldest daughter as the Mother Goose-type.

"Very protective of all her friends and family," Kasey Johnson said. From her friends at church to those at the car club, she was fiercely protective of her little brother, making sure when they were younger that he never got too close to the edge of the park.

Johnson and his girlfriend laughed as they remembered how loud Kali could be especially when she was looking for strawberries in the fridge, or when she laughed at her own jokes.

"She always had something to say," Johnson said.

Jason Huston had known Bree Gaffin since she was 16 and had started hanging out with their car club.

Bree "always had a smile on her face," Huston, 48, said. "She wanted everyone to have fun and not be stupid. One of my greatest memories is she'd walk up and just hug you and say 'smile.' She's just a sweetheart.

"I got to see a part of her and she definitely lived life to the fullest," Huston said. "She was the motto YOLO, and she'll just be really, really, really missed. It's different without her being here."

Huston also lives with his family near the area where the rollover happened and says that something needs to be done about the curve northbound on I-229 near the Cliff Avenue exit.

"This corner here could have better guardrails, I mean I think if it had semi-style guardrails they would

still be here with us," he said. "We live over there and seen several car accidents on that corner."

Later in the evening, around 9:15, people began making their way to their cars. Engines roared and one of the organized had to shout to be heard over the noise to make room in the caravan for Sean, Bree and Kali's families.

Police closed off the portion of Cliff Avenue near Spencer Park so the caravan could get on I-229 and have a cruise to the spot of the crash. Horns honked and emergency lights flashed as everyone took off in a line down the highway, going for one last ride with the members of their car family.

Greek firefighters battle huge wildfires with reinforcements

By NICOLAE DUMITRACHE and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

GOUVES, Greece (AP) — Pillars of billowing smoke and ash blocked out the sun above Greece's second-largest island and turned the sky orange as a days-old wildfire devoured pristine forests and triggered more evacuation alerts Sunday while residents appealed for additional firefighting help.

The fire on Evia, an island of forested mountains and canyons laced with small coves of crystalline water, began Aug. 3 and cut across the popular summer destination from coast to coast while burning out of control for five days. Scores of homes and businesses have been destroyed, and thousands of residents and vacationers were evacuated.

The blaze currently is the most severe of dozens that broke out in Greece in the wake of the country's most protracted and intense heat wave in three decades, which sent temperatures soaring to 45 degrees Celsius (113 F) and created bone-dry conditions.

The Greek coast guard said three patrol boats, four navy vessels, one ferry, two tourist boats and numerous fishing and private boats were on standby to carry out potential evacuations from the seaside village of Pefki, on Evia's northern tip.

Around 350 people already boarded the ferry, the coast guard said, while towering flames cut off possible escape routes on roads. Evacuation orders were issued for four villages, including Pefki, but some residents refused to leave, hoping to save their properties.

Residents in other nearby villages and north Evia's main harbor, Aidipsos, were urged to shut windows, doors and chimneys to prevent burning embers from entering houses.

Overnight, the coast guard and ferries evacuated 83 people from beaches in northern Evia. On Friday night, ferries evacuated more than 1,000 people from beaches and a seaside village in apocalyptic scenes as flames raged on the hillsides behind them.

Local officials and residents in north Evia called in to television news programs on Saturday, appealing for more firefighters and water-dropping planes.

The fire department said 575 firefighters with 35 ground teams and 89 vehicles were battling the Evia wildfire, including 112 Romanian and 100 Ukrainian firefighters sent to Greece as reinforcements. Four helicopters and three planes, including a massive Beriev-200 plane leased from Russia, provided air support.

Three more major fires were also burning Sunday in Greece's southern Peloponnese region, while a massive fire that ravaged forests, homes and businesses on the northern fringes of the Greek capital appeared to be on the wane. That fire burnt through large tracts of a national park on Mount Parnitha, the largest forested area remaining near Athens that still bore deep scars from a fire in 2007.

One volunteer firefighter died Friday north of Athens after suffering head injuries from a falling electricity pole, while at least 20 people have been treated for fire-related injuries, including two firefighters who were hospitalized in intensive care.

The causes of the fires are under investigation. Three people were arrested Friday — in the greater Athens area, central and southern Greece — on suspicion of starting blazes, in two cases intentionally.

Another person, a 47-year-old Greek, was arrested Saturday afternoon in the Athens suburb of Petroupoli for lighting two fires in a grove and setting four dumpsters on fire, police said.

Ten countries have already sent personnel and firefighters equipment such as aircraft to Greece, while another eight are sending further reinforcements.

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Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis visited the fire department's headquarters in Athens Saturday and expressed his "deep sadness" for the volunteer firefighter's death. He later visited the airport from which firefighting planes take off and thanked the pilots, both Greek and French.

Securing aid for everyone affected by the wildfires will be "my first political priority," the prime minister said, promising that all burnt areas would be reforested.

"When this nightmarish summer has passed, we will turn all our attention to repairing the damage as fast as possible, and in restoring our natural environment again," Mitsotakis said.

Greek and European officials have blamed climate change for the large number of fires that burned through southern Europe in recent days, from Italy to the Balkans, Greece and Turkey.

Massive fires also have been burning across Siberia in northern Russia for weeks, forcing the evacuation Saturday of a dozen villages. In all, wildfires have burned nearly 15 million acres this year in Russia.

In the U.S., hot, dry, gusty weather has also fueled devastating wildfires in California.

The Perseverance Games: Surreal Olympics approach their end

By JENNA FRYER AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The cauldron will be snuffed Sunday on the exhausting, enlightening, sometimes enraging 2020 Tokyo Olympics — held, actually, in 2021. These are the Games that were to be tolerated, not celebrated.

They will be both.

Imperfect but not impossible, these Olympics — willed into existence despite a pandemic that sparked worldwide skepticism and hard-wired opposition from Japan's own citizens — just might go down as the Games that changed sports for good.

These became the Olympics where the athletes had their say. The Olympics where mental health became as important as physical. The Olympics where tales of perseverance — spoken, documented and discussed loudly and at length — often overshadowed actual performance.

It wasn't only those who stood on the medals stand at the hyper-scrutinized pressure cooker in Tokyo, where spit tests for COVID-19 and sleeping on cardboard-framed beds were part of the daily routine. It was all of them.

Their voices were heard, in big ways and small, through hundreds of reminders that their mental and physical health were not for sale, not even to the \$15.5 billion behemoth that underwrites many of their grandest dreams.

Those voices were notably reflected in the words of Simone Biles, who, early on, reset the conversation when she pulled out of the gymnastics meet, declaring her well-being was more important than medals.

"It was something that was so out of my control. At end of the day, my mental and physical health is better than any medal," said Biles, who benched herself while battling "the twisties."

And by Naomi Osaka, the tennis player who lit the cauldron on Day 1, but only after spending the summer insisting that the world listen to her — really listen — instead of only watching her on the court. The planet's highest-paid female athlete and the host country's poster girl, she faced expectations that were hard to handle.

"I definitely feel like there was a lot of pressure for this," said Osaka.

Hundreds of athletes found some way to use their voices in ways they hadn't considered until the Tokyo Games — and the seismic 18 months that led up to it — all but commanded it.

They learned to talk about what it felt like to make sacrifices and accommodations for four years, then five, to come to the Games without friends and family, to put themselves out there, and to know they will be judged not on who they are but on how fast they run, how well they shoot, or whether they stick the landing.

"I've been afraid that my worth is tied to whether or not I win or lose," Allyson Felix wrote the morning before her bronze-medal run in the 400 meters made her the most decorated female track athlete in Olympic history. "But right now I've decided to leave that fear behind. To understand that I am enough."

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They came in all shapes and sizes. A transgender weightlifter, a nonbinary skateboarder, and Quinn, the first openly transgender Olympian to win a gold medal. Teenage skateboarders, and surfers seeking gnarly waves — most of whom never dreamed of being on the Olympic stage, hugging and sharing tips and reminding us all that this is supposed to be fun.

They wove tales about sportsmanship: the high jumpers headed for a tension-filled tiebreaker for first, who stepped back and told a track official they should both win a gold.

And about advocacy: soccer players looking at a midday gold-medal game in the searing heat of the Olympic Stadium and deciding they deserved better.

The world's top tennis players demanding their matches be rescheduled, a request that went unheeded until Paula Badosa left the court in a wheelchair with heatstroke and Daniil Medvedev told the chair umpire, "I can finish the match but I can die. If I die, are you going to be responsible?"

And about mental health: During a teary post-race interview, sprinter Noah Lyles conceded he came as much to run as to spread the gospel that became the slogan of these fraught Games held during fraught times: It's OK not to be OK.

And about gender equity and inclusion: The International Olympic Committee added five new sports and 18 new events for Tokyo to create an equal number of women and men for every sport, excluding baseball and softball. But when Britain's first female Black swimmer was denied use of a cap that fit her voluminous afro, the conversation on a lack of diversity in the pool became louder.

"I just want people to know that no matter your race or background, if you don't know how to swim, get in and learn to swim," Alice Dearing, co-founder of the Black Swimming Association, said after the women's open water marathon. "Don't let anyone tell you it's not for you."

IOC president Thomas Bach said two days before the close that the Tokyo Games "far exceeded my personal expectations," because when spectators were barred as a pandemic precaution he feared "these Olympic Games could become an Olympic Games without soul."

Instead, Bach said, he found the intimacy in the empty venues made for an intense atmosphere. "In many cases you did not realize that there were no spectators," he said. "Maybe in some cases you could even experience the feelings of the athletes closer and better than being surrounded by so many spectators."

It is Bach's job to call the Olympics a success. Maybe, though, that goal was met in Tokyo just by reaching the finish line. But of course there were highlights along the way.

— Italy shockingly establishing itself as a sprint power with a surprise win by Marcell Jacobs in the men's 100 meters followed by "four Ferraris" teaming to win the 4X100 relay for another gold medal.

— Lydia Jacoby, the first swimmer from Alaska in the Olympics won gold, and Caeleb Dressel collecting five golds in the pool.

— Sunisa Lee, the first Hmong American Olympian, winning gold in the women's all-around. And in these games where social media use soared and TikTok became the platform of choice for the Olympians, Lee blaming her bronze on the uneven bars from the distractions created by her new Internet fame.

— Streaming use surging among viewers, and NBC reporting that 3 billion minutes of content watched on its platforms were digital.

"I think the whole world will be quite happy that this event is going on in sports, in the times that we're living in right now," said Alexander Zverev after winning gold in men's singles tennis for Germany in front of countryman Bach.

Though there were intermittent protests — a group of 10 or so outside the tennis final, loud enough that the players could hear and another small crowd outside Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremony and before track and field events — the Japanese did have reason to celebrate. The host nation set a goal to win 30 medals in Tokyo and nearly doubled that number with 58 when events concluded.

Outside the Olympic bubble, COVID-19 cases soared in Tokyo to daily record highs, although Bach exonerated the Olympics because 11,000 athletes were placed away from the population and regular testing for everyone else produced extremely low rates of positives.

The pandemic still rages, and the Beijing Winter Games are set to open a mere six months from now.

And COVID-19 is just one of the issues facing the next scheduled Olympics — the IOC has rejected several recent demands to move the Games from China over allegations of human rights violations.

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

The IOC did get involved when Belarus attempted to return sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya to her country after she criticized coaches on social media. It helped intervene as she instead went to Poland with a humanitarian visa. Then it booted two Belarus coaches from the Olympics, their credentials revoked for their role in the Tsimanouskaya saga.

The Games, of course, will go on. They always do. Japan will hand the Summer Olympics flag to France on Sunday for the 2024 Paris Games. Tokyo organizers will end with a “Worlds We Share”-themed ceremony designed to make athletes and viewers “think about what the future holds” and “expresses the idea that each of us inhabits their own world.”

The athletes did that already in Tokyo, where the Olympics will be forever remembered as the Games that persevered.

Olympic Latest: Serbia wins water polo for Games’ last medal

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

MEDAL ALERT

Filip Filipovic and Serbia have won their second straight gold medal in men’s water polo, beating Greece 13-10 in the final event of the Tokyo Olympics.

Nikola Jaksic scored three goals on three shots and Filipovic made several big plays as Serbia earned its fourth straight win since it lost to Croatia in group play. Serbia finished third in Group B, but it raised its game to another level when the quarterfinals rolled around — just like it did when it won gold in 2016.

Filipovic’s tiebreaking goal with 26 seconds remaining lifted Serbia to a dramatic 10-9 victory over Spain in the semis.

Serbia became the first country to repeat as Olympic champion since Hungary won three in a row from 2000 to 2008. It earned its fourth medal in its fourth appearance in the Olympics’ oldest team sport.

Dimitrios Skoumpakis, captain Ioannis Fountoulis and Angelos Vlachopoulos scored two goals apiece for Greece, which earned its first medal in men’s water polo. Its previous best finish was fourth in 2004.

Greece also matched the country’s best result in a team sport at the Olympics, joining a silver medal in women’s water polo at the Athens Games.

MEDAL ALERT

France has beaten the Russian Olympic Committee 30-25 for the gold medal in women’s handball.

Scores were level at 16-16 midway through the second half before six straight goals for France and a string of saves by goalkeeper Cleopatre Darleux took the game out of the Russians’ reach.

France’s Pauletta Foppa and Allison Pineau had seven goals each, and so did Russian player Polina Vedkhina.

France also won the men’s tournament in Saturday’s final against Denmark and becomes the first country to win both handball events at the same Olympics since Yugoslavia in 1984.

Norway matched its women’s bronze from 2016 with a commanding 36-19 win over Sweden on eight goals each from Nora Mork and Kari Brattset Dale.

MEDAL ALERT

Bakhodir Jalolov of Uzbekistan has won gold at super heavyweight in the final boxing match of the Tokyo Olympics, dominating a 5:0 victory over Richard Torrez Jr. of the United States.

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The 6-foot-7 Jalolov towered over nearly every other fighter in the Olympic sport's largest weight class, yet he also has the stiff jab of a much smaller man. He dominated all four of his bouts in Tokyo, sweeping every judge's decision in three fights and winning by stoppage in the semifinals.

Jalolov is an 8-0 professional boxer who lives in California and fights mostly in North America. He became the most experienced pro to win gold in the second Olympics after professionals were allowed to qualify.

He also won the only boxing medal in Tokyo for the disappointing Uzbek team, which sent 11 fighters to Tokyo after topping the medal table in Rio de Janeiro.

Torrez claimed the third silver for the U.S., which had its most successful Olympics since 2000 in terms of total medals. The Americans are the most successful boxing nation in Olympic history, but they haven't won a men's gold medal since 2004.

Frazer Clarke of Britain and Kamshybek Kunkabayev won super heavyweight bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Lauren Price of Britain has won gold in the women's middleweight division, beating China's Li Qian 5:0 in a one-sided bout.

Price claimed Britain's second gold medal and sixth medal overall in Tokyo with a solid performance against Li. Price is the first woman to win gold at middleweight after Claressa Shields, the American two-time champion.

Nouchka Fontijn of the Netherlands and Zemfira Magomedalieva won bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

The United States won its first Olympic gold medal ever in women's volleyball by beating Brazil in straight sets.

The U.S. had won silver three times and bronze twice previously for the most medals by any country that hadn't won gold. But the Americans finally completed that quest by beating the country that denied them gold in the final match in both 2008 and 2012.

The victory allowed U.S. coach Karch Kiraly to join China's Lang Ping as the second person to win gold as a player in volleyball and then lead a country to gold as coach. Kiraly won gold indoor as a player in 1984 and '88. He also won gold in beach volleyball in 1996.

Serbia beat South Korea for the bronze medal.

MEDAL ALERT

Hungary has won the bronze medal in men's water polo, topping Spain 9-5 at the Tokyo Olympics.

Marton Vamos scored two goals and Viktor Nagy made eight saves as Hungary rebounded from a disappointing 9-6 loss to Greece in the semifinals.

Hungary is the winningest program in men's water polo with nine golds, but the bronze in Tokyo was its first medal since its run of three straight Olympic titles from 2000 to 2008. It finished fifth in London and Rio de Janeiro.

Hungary's women's water polo team also won bronze, beating the Russian team 11-9 on Saturday.

Spain dropped its last two games in Tokyo after opening with six straight wins. It lost 10-9 to Serbia on Friday night on Filip Filipovic's tiebreaking goal with 26 seconds left.

Alberto Munarriz Egana scored two goals for Spain, and Daniel Lopez Pinedo had eight saves.

Serbia plays Greece for gold later Sunday.

MEDAL ALERT

Andy Cruz has won Cuba's fourth boxing gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, beating U.S. lightweight Keyshawn Davis 4:1 in the final at the Kokugikan Arena.

Cruz beat Davis for the fourth consecutive time in their amateur careers, but he had to rally with an impressive third round after Davis swept the second on all five judges' cards.

Cruz and Davis both showed off the hand speed and athleticism that made them two of the most im-

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pressive fighters in Tokyo, but Cruz's technical skills impressed the judges.

Cruz joined two-time Olympic gold medalists Roniel Iglesias, Arlen Lopez and Julio Cesar La Cruz with championships in Tokyo.

The American team has just one shot left to end its 17-year men's gold medal drought when super heavyweight Richard Torrez Jr. fights Uzbekistan's Bakhodir Jalolov in the final bout of the Olympics.

Armenia's Hovhannes Bachkov and Australia's Harry Garside won lightweight bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Kellie Anne Harrington of Ireland has won gold in the women's lightweight division, beating Beatriz Ferreira of Brazil 5:0 in a close bout at the Kokugikan Arena.

Harrington is a 31-year-old career amateur who spent the past half-decade waiting for her shot to follow in the footsteps of Katie Taylor, who won gold for Ireland at the inaugural women's Olympic boxing tournament in London.

Harrington's technical precision contrasted sharply with Ferreira's aggressive, exciting style. Harrington swept the third round on all five judges' cards to win.

Finland's Mira Potkonen and Thailand's Sudaporn Seesondee won bronze.

Bahraini runner Sadik Mikhou has tested positive for a blood transfusion at the Tokyo Olympics and has been provisionally suspended.

The Moroccan-born Mikhou ran in the 1,500-meter heats on Tuesday but did not advance to the final.

The International Testing Agency says the suspected doping violation was reported on Friday.

Mikhou was previously banned for blood doping but his suspension expired in December.

The IOC has given itself more power to remove sports from the Olympic program.

The decision voted in by International Olympic Committee members comes during prolonged issues with the leadership of weightlifting and boxing.

The IOC can now remove a sport if its governing body does not comply with a decision made by the Olympic body's executive board or if it "acts in a manner likely to tarnish the reputation of the Olympic movement."

Weightlifting could lose its place at the 2024 Paris Olympics because of long-term doping problems and governance issues. The International Weightlifting Federation was led for two decades until last year by longtime IOC member Tamas Ajan.

Boxing at the Tokyo Games was taken out of the International Boxing Association's control in 2019 after doubts about the integrity of Olympic bouts and IOC concerns about its presidential elections.

MEDAL ALERT

The Russian rhythmic gymnastics juggernaut collapsed in Tokyo, with the country's team losing the gold medal to Bulgaria a day after losing the individual competition to Israel.

Russia claimed silver medals in both.

Russia has been dominant in the sports for decades. It has won gold medals in both the group and individual competitions in every Olympics since 2000, but the winning streak ended this year.

Linoy Ashram of Israel won gold in the individual competition Saturday, edging out a pair of Russian identical twins who were the favorites heading into Tokyo.

On Sunday, Bulgaria's five-woman team won gold by beating the Russians in the group final, a two-part competition beginning with routines where performers dance with balls, followed by a set of hoops and clubs. Italy placed third.

MEDAL ALERT

Jennifer Valente got up from a crash in the omnium-ending points race to hang on for the gold medal, capping what had been an otherwise frustrating and disappointing Olympics for American cycling.

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Valente won the opening scratch race, picked up three sprints in the points race and performed well in the elimination race to take an eight-point lead into the points race, where points are awarded for sprints every 10 laps.

Valente won the first sprint to pad her lead, then got up from a crash with 30 laps left to keep from losing any ground on her pursuers. She wound up taking second in the final sprint to secure the gold medal.

Yumi Kajihara took silver for Japan. Kirsten Wild earned bronze for the Netherlands.

MEDAL ALERT

Brittney Griner scored 30 points, and the United States won its seventh straight gold medal in women's basketball, beating Japan 90-75.

Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi have been part of five of those gold medals. Nobody has played more Olympic games for the U.S. than Taurasi with 38. Bird is second with 36 in her final Olympics.

This golden streak started in 1996 in Atlanta with Dawn Staley a player. Staley joins the late Anne Donovan as the only Americans to help the U.S. win gold as players, assistants and then head coaches.

A'ja Wilson added 19 points and Breanna Stewart scored 14 as the Americans dominated inside again. The U.S. extended its Olympic winning streak to 55 consecutive games dating to the 1992 bronze medal game.

Japan finished with the silver in the host nation's first appearance in the medal round. Japan finished eighth at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

World Athletics president Sebastian Coe says it's "inevitable" that questions will be asked about the integrity of breakthrough track and field results at the Tokyo Olympics.

Coe was asked at a news conference if it was frustrating that some doubted whether the surprise win by men's 100-meter champion Marcell Jacobs had been clean.

Italian and British media reported that Jacobs cut ties this year with a nutritionist who was linked to a police investigation of steroid distribution.

Coe said he would not speak about a specific case, though he acknowledged that after "performances that are outstanding, it is inevitable people will always ask questions."

The two-time 1,500-meter gold medalist says: "Am I surprised about anything in athletics? Not really."

He suggests people doubted his own rapid career progress from a "relatively modest athlete" in 1978 to an Olympic champion two years later.

Megan Rapinoe says she's enjoying the greatest gift she doesn't deserve: being able to stick around and watch fiancée Sue Bird play for a fifth Olympic gold medal.

Rapinoe finished up her Olympic commitment Thursday night when the U.S. won bronze in women's soccer, with Rapinoe scoring twice in the win. Athletes return home quickly after their final competition under coronavirus pandemic protocols at the Tokyo Games.

Rapinoe says she's thankful that someone arranged for her to be a few rows off courtside, able to support and watch Bird, knowing this will be her last Olympics. Rapinoe says she feels "super lucky" to be able to attend the game because of all the restrictions.

The U.S. men and their coach, Gregg Popovich, also are in the stands watching the American women play for their seventh consecutive gold medal. The U.S. men won gold Saturday. The teams are flying home on the same plane.

MEDAL ALERT

Jason Kenny has become Britain's most decorated Olympian by defending his gold medal in the keirin. That gave Kenny seven golds to break a tie with cyclist Chris Hoy and nine overall to break a tie with Bradley Wiggins.

Azizulhasni Awang of Malaysia outsprinted Dutch rider Harrie Lavreysen for the silver medal.

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Kenny slotted in behind the motorized pacing bike for the first three laps, then began sprinting the moment it ducked off the track. Nobody reacted to his audacious flyer, and that allowed Kenny to build nearly a quarter-lap lead.

He held it all the way to the finish, raising his arms in triumph after crossing the line.

MEDAL ALERT

Kelsey Mitchell of Canada has won gold in the women's sprint event in track cycling, sweeping past Olena Starikova of Ukraine at the Izu Velodrome.

Mitchell upset reigning world champion Emma Hinze of Germany in the semifinals before facing off with Starikova, who likewise had upset 2019 world champion Lee Wai Sze of Hong Kong in her semifinal match.

Mitchell led wire-to-wire against Starikova in the first of their best-of-three final. Then, she held Starikova off in a drag race to the finish to win Canada's second gold in the event after Lori-Ann Muenzer's at the 2004 Athens Games.

Lee easily swept past Hinze to win the bronze medal.

An on-track official has been removed from the track inside the Izu Velodrome on a stretcher after he was knocked over by a rider during a massive crash near the end of the scratch race in the women's omnium.

The official, who has not been identified, was standing on the track apron near the first turn when Elisa Balsamo of Italy hit Emily Kay of Ireland as they took the bell for the final lap. Both went down, and that set off a chain reaction that took down five more riders, including two-time defending champion Laura Kenny.

The rider from Egypt, Ebtissam Zayed Ahmed, rode right over Balsamo and into the track official.

Serbia is going home with an Olympic medal in women's volleyball for the second straight Games.

The Serbians beat South Korea in straight sets to win the bronze medal in Tokyo. Serbia won its first medal in the sport five years ago, a silver in Rio de Janeiro.

South Korea fell short in its quest for a second women's volleyball medal after winning bronze in 1976.

The United States is taking on Brazil for the gold medal.

MEDAL ALERT

Eliud Kipchoge pulled away late and no one could come close to catching him as the 36-year-old from Kenya defended his Olympic marathon title.

Kipchoge finished in 2 hours, 8 minutes, 38 seconds on a breezy and humid Sunday along the streets of Sapporo. It was more than 80 seconds ahead of runner-up Abdi Nageeye of the Netherlands. Bashir Abdi of Belgium earned bronze to close out the track and field portion of the Tokyo Games.

On a day with plenty of cloud cover, Kipchoge cruised. The temperature was around 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25 Celsius) at the start and climbed to 84 (29). The men's race kept with its original start time a day after the women's race was moved up an hour to avoid the heat.

Humidity was at 81% as the runners wound their way through Sapporo, which is located about 500 miles (about 830 kilometers) north of Tokyo. The race was moved to escape the extreme heat, but it was about the same temperature Sunday in Tokyo — and rainy.

Kipchoge smiled along the way and even fist-bumped a fellow racer. Kipchoge becomes the third athlete to win multiple gold medals in the men's marathon, joining Abebe Bikila (1960, '64) and Waldemar Cierpinski ('76, '80).

To shake hands or not? An age-old human gesture now in limbo

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

As the pandemic took hold, a Kansas City-area meeting and event planning business began hawking "I Shake Hands" stickers to help ease awkward social encounters.

"We didn't want the sticker to say, 'We Don't Shake Hands' because that is kind of off-putting," said John

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DeLeon, vice president of operations and sales at MTI Events, adding that the idea was that anti-shakers could simply choose not to wear one of the stickers. "But if someone had the sticker on in that group, then that was the indication that it was OK."

Now, as workers return to the office, friends reunite and more church services shift from Zoom to in person, this exact question is befuddling growing numbers of people: to shake or not to shake?

The handshake has been around for centuries. A widely held belief is that it originated to prove to someone that a person was offering peace and not holding a hidden weapon. But hands can be germy — coated with fecal matter and E. coli.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious disease expert, cautioned last year, "I don't think we should ever shake hands ever again, to be honest with you."

On the other side is Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease specialist at Johns Hopkins University. He thinks the whole shaking controversy is overblown. The solution, he says, is simple: "If you are worried about COVID, the best way to make handshakes safe is to be fully vaccinated. And for any other things that might be on people's hands, just wash your hands before you touch your face. That is what hand sanitizer is for."

The greeting is almost instinctual and hard to deny. But remote workers who have been holed up in makeshift kitchen and bedroom offices have been denied it for months. Meetings, birthdays, retirement parties and even funerals have been shifted onto Zoom. The loss of connections has been heartbreaking, and the resurgence of the delta variant is raising fresh questions about the return to something resembling normal.

DeLeon isn't sure the handshake is ever coming back. The stickers his company sold were never hot sellers. Other companies hawked signs and stickers that more firmly discouraged handshaking — including one featuring a skeleton hand and another covered with COVID-19 germs.

"I played golf with a guy the other day, who I had never met and we got along really well. And on the 18th green it is traditional that you stick your hand out and you take your hat off and you shake hands with who you played with," he said. "And we just kind of stared at each other and fist-bumped and walked off."

Not so fast, say etiquette experts and businesspeople like Dave McClain, 52, of Overland Park, Kansas. McClain recalls coming across one of the "I Shake Hands" stickers at a networking event and slapping it onto his shirt.

"You can make phone calls all you want and you can meet with people online via Zoom call but it is just not the same as being able to reach out your hand and shake their hand, look them in the eye and really establish that rapport," he said.

Diane Gottsman, a national etiquette expert and author of "Modern Etiquette for a Better Life," also doesn't think the handshake will be a casualty of the pandemic but said to take it slowly.

"Don't be the first to extend your hand, even if you are comfortable," instructed Gottsman, who lives in San Antonio, Texas. "Watch the other person and allow them to extend their greeting of choice."

Former President Donald Trump, a self-described germaphobe who has said publicly that he dislikes the custom and even described it as "barbaric," faced criticism in the early days of the pandemic when he continued shaking hands.

The administration of President Joe Biden initially took a much more socially distanced approach to the pandemic. But following the relaxation of federal guidance on masks and more widespread availability of vaccines, handshakes and even hugs have returned.

Lizzie Post, the great-great-granddaughter of the late etiquette maven Emily Post, said the country is entering an awkward time similar to the start of the pandemic, when people were trying to evaluate how much others were socially distancing before getting close to them.

Now the question is whether family, friends and business associates are vaccinated. Her approach is to announce up front that she is, then ask bluntly whether a hug or handshake is desired.

She doesn't think the handshake is going away.

"It is a really hard greeting to deny because it has been so ingrained since we were kids or young adults,"

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said Post, who lives in Burlington, Vermont. "And I see that being more powerful than the past year of not practicing it because for many people that past year also was spent just so not in contact with anyone they would shake a hand. It is not like you and your roommate shake hands every time you walk in the door."

But she said that also is getting questions about how to ditch the shake on the podcast she produces with her cousin, Daniel Post Senning, called "Awesome Etiquette."

"Our advice to them is to get comfortable with letting people know, because I think the rude thing to do would be to stand there and act like you are ignoring an outstretched hand," she said. "If the outstretched hand comes to you and you do not want to shake hands, you want to acknowledge that by saying, 'I actually don't shake hands' or 'I am sorry that I don't shake hands, but I am so pleased to meet you.'"

Business Law Southwest, which advises businesses in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas, offered at the beginning of the pandemic to help create new workplace guidelines — such as a no-handshake policy. But there wasn't interest, said Kristy Donahue, a company spokeswoman.

"At the end of the day, people crave human interaction and human touch, and you know that psychology experiment where they have the monkeys and there were some monkeys they never petted and some that they did. And the monkeys that weren't being handled kind of withered away," she said. "We haven't evolved that much from there."

Belarus sees a year of fierce repression after disputed vote

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Belarusian authorities long ago removed the makeshift memorial to a protester shot by police at the start of last year's massive protests against the country's autocratic president, replacing flowers and placards with a garbage can.

Alexander Taraikovsky died as protests swelled, a day after President Alexander Lukashenko's reelection to a sixth term in the Aug. 9, 2020, presidential vote that the opposition denounced as rigged. Police dispersed the peaceful demonstrators with rubber bullets, stun grenades and clubs in a stunningly brutal crackdown.

Lukashenko earned the nickname of "Europe's last dictator" in the West for his relentless repression of dissent since taking the helm in 1994. But when last year's protests presented him with an unprecedented challenge, he responded with an unusual ferociousness. That turned out to be the opening salvo in a year of intense repression, the most shocking example of which was the arrest of a journalist after his flight was forced to divert to Belarus.

Authorities first claimed that Taraikovsky, 34, was killed when an explosive device he intended to throw at police blew up in his hands, but Associated Press video showed that he had no explosives when he fell to the ground. Officials later acknowledged that Taraikovsky might have been killed by a rubber bullet. But they never opened an inquiry.

"It was a premeditated murder, but they don't want to recognize it," Taraikovsky's partner, Elena German, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from Minsk, Belarus' capital.

"There is no law. We haven't yet received a formal refusal to open a criminal case, so we can't even appeal," she said. "They didn't even return the clothes Sasha (Taraikovsky) was wearing when he left home on that day."

Even as Belarusian authorities responded with mass arrests and beatings, peaceful demonstrations, some of which drew up to 200,000 people, continued for months. Eventually, relentless repressions — and winter weather — took their toll, and the protests withered. Opposition leaders have been either jailed or forced to leave the country, and authorities have moved methodically to stamp out any sign of dissent.

People were regularly arrested simply for putting the opposition's red-and-white flag in their windows or even for dressing in red-and-white colors. In December, two people were handed two-year prison sentences for writing, "We will not forget!" on the pavement where Taraikovsky was killed.

"I think our main mistake was that we underestimated the cruelty of the regime," Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the main challenger to Lukashenko in last year's election, told The Associated Press in an interview

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in Vilnius, Lithuania, earlier this week. "We believed maybe that if there were hundreds of thousands of people in the streets, the regime would at least hear people."

The West has refused to recognize the election and sanctioned Belarusian officials it accuses of involvement in vote-rigging and the crackdown.

Western powers further ramped up pressure on Belarus after it diverted a passenger plane in May that was flying from Greece to Lithuania and ordered it to land in Minsk, where authorities arrested dissident journalist Raman Pratasevich.

Lukashenko alleged there was a bomb threat against the flight and that is why it was diverted. But the European Union called it air piracy and barred Belarusian carriers from its skies and cut imports of the country's top commodities, including petroleum products and potash, a common fertilizer ingredient.

A furious Lukashenko retaliated by tossing an agreement with the EU on countering illegal migration. Officials in neighboring Lithuania accused Belarusian authorities of encouraging thousands of migrants, most of them from Iraq, to cross into its territory as part of their "hybrid war" against the West.

In the latest drama to seize the world's attention, Belarusian Olympic sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya fled to Poland this week, saying she feared reprisals back home after a dispute with her coaches at the Tokyo Games.

After a year of relentless repressions, public protests are nearly impossible to organize, but opposition leaders remain confident that Lukashenko's rule is doomed.

"The system is rotten," said Tsikhanouskaya, who left for Lithuania under pressure a day after last year's election. "It's already impossible to make this system monolithic again because so many people ... really want changes."

Tsikhanouskaya suggested that the country's growing isolation could help raise pressure on the country's elite — and even make them join the cause against Lukashenko.

But some analysts cautioned that Lukashenko could hold out for some time.

"Western sanctions inflict significant pain on the Belarusian regime by hitting its economic foundation," said Artyom Shraybman, head of Sense Analytics, an independent analysis firm. "But such regimes can exist in international isolation because they are capable of distributing whatever scarce resources they have to the benefit of armed services."

"The goal behind the latest wave of repressions is to show the West that sanctions don't work, and repressions against civil society will only escalate in response to sanctions," argued Shraybman, who was forced to leave Belarus fearing arrest.

Indeed, Belarusian authorities in recent weeks have escalated their crackdown on independent journalists, civil society activists and others whom they consider disloyal or suspicious. Lukashenko denounced the activists as "bandits and foreign agents" and vowed to continue what he called a "mopping-up operation" against them.

A total of 29 Belarusian journalists are currently in custody, serving their sentence or awaiting trial. More than 50 NGOs are facing closure, including the Belarusian Association of Journalists, the biggest and most respected media organization in the country, and the Belarusian PEN Center, an association of writers led by Svetlana Alexievich, the winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in literature.

Andrey Dynko, a journalist from the Nasha Niva online newspaper that was shut by authorities, spent 13 days in prison in gruesome conditions.

"I feel like I came back from the abyss," Dynko told the AP in a telephone interview from Minsk. "I have an item that I cherish most now — a plastic bottle that I drank from, used to wash myself and slept on instead of a pillow for 13 days."

German, Taraiovsky's partner, said that she has "learned to be strong" over the past year but acknowledged that she has little hope and energy left.

"Many of my acquaintances have gone abroad, and, frankly speaking, I have a similar desire," said German, who has two daughters. "I don't see any future for my children here, and I don't want them to be educated through propaganda."

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Amid the growing Western pressure, Lukashenko has relied on political and financial support from Russia, Belarus' main sponsor and ally. The Kremlin has provided Belarus with a \$1.5 billion loan to keep its Soviet-style economy afloat and strongly condemned Western sanctions.

Independent analyst Valery Karbalevich said that while the Russian money has buttressed Lukashenko's rule for now, the broad discontent smolders and could spill over at any moment.

"It's quite obvious that Lukashenko has lost the support of the majority of the country's urban population, and the protest sentiments were stifled by repressions but didn't disappear," Karbalevich said.

US rolls to women's hoops gold medal in Bird's last Olympics

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

SAITAMA, Japan (AP) — Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi walked off the basketball court together, arm-in-arm, one last time at the Tokyo Games.

They started their journey together five Olympics ago and ended it in the same fashion as always — with gold medals hanging around their necks.

"All of what we've done for USA Basketball, we've done together. It's fitting," Bird said after the 90-75 win over Japan on Sunday.

And now it's over — at least for the 40-year-old Bird.

"The best comparison is college since you know it's the end," Bird said. "Now I always have a wonderful feeling and a great taste in my mouth my senior year. That's how it is with USA Basketball."

All she and Taurasi have done on the international stage is win and now the pair stands alone with five gold medals — the first basketball players ever to accomplish that feat.

"It's 20 years and people only get to see these moments," Taurasi said. "We're on these trips every day together. every conversation. this means a lot to us."

While Bird is retiring from international basketball, Taurasi left the door open after the game in her on-court interview that she'll play in Paris in 2024.

She isn't actually certain she'll play, saying: "We'll see."

But, Bird threw a quick jab at her 39-year-old friend for even considering it.

"Hahaha, idiot," Bird said laughing while standing next to Taurasi and talking with The Associated Press.

The U.S. has now won the last seven Olympic gold medals matching the country's men's program for the most ever in a row. The men did it from 1936-68.

With Bird orchestrating the flow of games and Taurasi's scoring, they have been a constant force for the U.S., providing stability for the women's program since the 2004 Athens Games. They have won all 38 of the games at the Olympics they've competed in.

The names have changed around the pair, including greats Lisa Leslie, Sheryl Swoopes, Tina Thompson, Tamika Catchings and Sylvia Fowles, but the results haven't.

The Americans are on a 55-game Olympic winning streak dating back to the bronze medal game of the 1992 Barcelona Games.

The U.S. let Japan know that wasn't going to change on Sunday.

The Americans jumped out to a 18-5 lead behind a dominant first quarter by Brittney Griner. The team lead 23-14 after one as Griner had 10 points, taking advantage of the undersized Japanese team. Japan was able to get within six in the second quarter before the Americans went up 11 at the half and never looked back.

As the final buzzer sounded, Bird and Taurasi embraced and then proceeded to hug all of their teammates and the coaching staff.

Griner finished with 30 points, making 14 of her 18 shots. It was the most points ever by a U.S. player in a gold medal game, surpassing the 29 by Leslie in 1996.

While Bird has said she is moving on, the future is bright for the U.S. behind Griner, Breanna Stewart and the six newcomers on this year's team. That included A'ja Wilson, who will be counted on to keep the streak going three years from now at the 2024 Paris Games. Wilson, who celebrated her 25th birthday on

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Sunday, made her presence felt in her Olympic debut, scoring 19 points in the gold medal game.

But there were other milestones of note Sunday besides Bird's farewell.

The victory also made Dawn Staley, the first Black women's basketball coach for the U.S., the second woman to win a gold medal as a player, assistant and head coach joining Anne Donovan. Staley said after the game that she won't come back to coach in Paris.

Staley said being part of six Olympics is enough for her, "I'm full."

The game also marked the end of Carol Callan's run as the national team director. She started right before the Americans won the first gold of this streak in 1996 and has been the architect for this unprecedented run.

Japan, which was the only one of the 11 other teams to ever have beaten the U.S. in an Olympics, won a medal for the first time in the country's history. The team's best finish before Sunday was fifth.

The host nation has been on the rise since it hired coach Tom Hovasse. He said when he got the job 4 1/2 years ago that his team would be playing against the U.S. for the gold at the Tokyo Games — and would beat them.

He was half right.

The teams met in preliminary pool play and the U.S. won by 17 points after trailing by two after the first quarter. Just like that game, the Americans used their dominant post advantage to control the title game. Japan's biggest player was 6-foot-1 — no match for the imposing front line led by Griner, who is 6-9.

While the general public and family members couldn't attend the games because of the coronavirus pandemic, Bird did have fiancée Megan Rapinoe in the stands cheering her on. Bird came over and embraced Rapinoe after the game. She helped the U.S. women's soccer team win a bronze medal earlier this week, scoring two goals in that game.

A large contingent of Japanese volunteers, who had been in the Saitama Super Arena for the entire tournament sat and applauded their team. No actual cheering was allowed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Once lagging, Europe catches up to the US in vaccinations

By RAF CASERT and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Despite a sluggish start, the European Union's COVID-19 vaccination drive has caught up to that of the United States, where the slowdown of the country's once-vaunted campaign has contributed to the virus's deadly comeback.

In mid-February, less than 4% of people living in the 27-nation EU were at least partially vaccinated against the coronavirus, compared with nearly 12% in the U.S, according to Our World in Data, an online science publication connected to the University of Oxford.

Now the EU has surpassed the U.S. by that same measure, with some 60% of the bloc's residents receiving at least one dose, versus less than 58% of Americans.

In Italy, where roughly 63% of people 12 and older are fully protected, Premier Mario Draghi took a victory lap this past week.

"I said that I don't want to celebrate successes, but it must be said that Italy has inoculated more doses per 100 inhabitants than France, Germany, the United States," he said as the country's vaccine verification program went into effect Friday.

People in Italy must now show proof they have had at least one vaccine dose, recovered from COVID-19 or recently tested negative for the virus if they want to dine indoors, use gyms or go to concerts, theaters, museums and tourist sites such as the Colosseum.

European authorities attribute success in Italy and elsewhere to nationalized health care and a history of public confidence in the safety of immunizations.

The EU's slow process for approving the vaccinations set the bloc back at the beginning, but that is now paying dividends because it is instilling more confidence in the rapidly developed formulas, said Dr. Peter Liese, a European Parliament member from Germany.

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While the U.S. and Britain issued emergency authorizations of vaccines to get shots into arms quickly, the EU went through the longer process of granting full approvals, putting it weeks behind.

"I am convinced that we have a good argument to explain to people still hesitating that the vaccine was properly tested in Europe," Liese said recently. "Now it becomes clear that not only the pace of vaccination in the first months but also the long-term strategy is important."

The turnaround in Spain has been pronounced. In mid-April, when nearly a quarter of all Americans were fully vaccinated, only 7% of Spaniards were similarly protected, according to Our World in Data. Now, nearly 60% of Spain's roughly 47 million people are fully vaccinated, while about half the U.S. is.

Portugal, with around 10 million people, had fully vaccinated around a third of its population by the end of June. Now officials say it is on track to reach 70% by the end of the summer.

Like the American vaccination drive, the European Union effort started around Christmas and struggled to meet initial demand. But it quickly turned into a major political embarrassment for European officials, as the U.S. and Britain jumped ahead.

The major factor holding back the EU initially was its decision to purchase vaccines as a bloc instead of as individual countries. The move ensured smaller member nations weren't left out, but it ended up taking more time to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies, said Giovanna De Maio, a visiting fellow in international relations at George Washington University.

The U.S. was also more efficient in distributing the vaccine, quickly setting up large-scale vaccination sites and also supplying shots to neighborhood pharmacies, groceries and other places, while the EU initially focused on hospitals and other medical facilities, she said.

EU nations were also overly confident manufacturers would deliver. As it turned out, Astra-Zeneca failed to produce its shots on time and delivered a paltry number of doses. Concerns over its safety and effectiveness also contributed to vaccine skepticism. But with the major rollout of the Pfizer shot, things turned around.

Meanwhile, the U.S. vaccination effort peaked and then dropped off dramatically in the face of significant hesitancy and outright hostility, fueled by misinformation and partisan politics.

As of the end of July, the U.S. was dispensing under 600,000 shots a day on average, down from a peak of over 3.4 million a day in April. The highly contagious delta variant has sent new daily cases soaring over the past month to levels not seen since February. The vast majority of those hospitalized were not vaccinated.

Still, not all is well within the EU. Discrepancies between member states are huge. For example, in the Netherlands, 85% of adults have received at least one dose. In Bulgaria, it is less than 20%.

There are also troubling signs that Europe's campaign is losing steam.

In Germany, where 54% of the population is fully vaccinated, the number of shots being dispensed per day has declined from more than 1 million in May to about 500,000.

Officials there have begun pushing for more vaccinations at megastores and in city centers and are offering incentives. A vaccination drive in Thuringia state included free bratwurst, while sites in Berlin planned to have DJs play music this weekend in hopes of encouraging young people to get inoculated.

De Maio said she believes nationwide vaccine mandates like her native Italy's Green Pass program could help EU nations avoid America's fate.

"European politicians see it coming and they're taking these measures," she said of the potential for vaccination efforts to stall in Europe. "They're desperate trying to avoid that because Europe can't afford another lockdown, given the big economic toll COVID has already taken."

Californians endure intense weekend of wildfire fears

By DAISY NGUYEN and NOAH BERGER Associated Press

GREENVILLE, Calif. (AP) — After four years of homelessness, Kesia Studebaker thought she finally landed on her feet when she found a job cooking in a diner and moved into a house in the small community of Greenville.

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She had been renting for three months and hoped the stability would help her win back custody of her 14-year-old daughter. But in just one night, a raging wildfire tore through the mountain town and “took it all away,” she said.

Fueled by strong winds and bone-dry vegetation, the Dixie Fire grew to become the largest single wildfire in state history. Residents of the scenic forestlands of Northern California are facing a weekend of fear as it threatens to reduce thousands of homes to ashes.

“We knew we didn’t get enough rainfall and fires could happen, but we didn’t expect a monster like this,” Studebaker said Saturday.

The fire incinerated much of Greenville on Wednesday and Thursday, destroying 370 homes and structures and threatening nearly 14,000 buildings in the northern Sierra Nevada. It had engulfed an area larger than the size of New York City.

The Dixie Fire, named for the road where it started, spanned an area of 700 square miles (1,813 square kilometers) Saturday night and was just 21% contained, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Four firefighters were taken to the hospital Friday after being struck by a fallen branch. More 20 people were initially reported missing, but by Saturday afternoon authorities had contacted all but four of them.

The fire’s cause was under investigation. The Pacific Gas & Electric utility has said it may have been sparked when a tree fell on one of its power lines. A federal judge ordered PG&E on Friday to give details by Aug. 16 about the equipment and vegetation where the fire started.

Cooler overnight temperatures and higher humidity slowed the spread of the fire and temperatures topped 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius) instead of the triple-digit highs recorded earlier in the week.

But the blaze and its neighboring fires, within several hundred miles of each other, posed an ongoing threat.

Studebaker sought shelter at an evacuation center before setting up her tent in a friend’s front yard.

She is counting on returning to her job if the restaurant where she works stays open. Her boss also evacuated when the town of Chester, northwest of Greenville, lost power and the smoke was so thick that it made it hard to breathe.

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

Near the Klamath National Forest, firefighters kept a close watch on small communities that were ordered evacuated in the path of the Antelope Fire, which earlier threw up flames 100 feet (30 meters) high as it blackened bone-dry grass, brush and timber. It was just 20% contained.

Further northwest, about 500 homes scattered in and around Shasta-Trinity National Forest remained threatened by the Monument Fire and others by the McFarland Fire, both started by lightning storms last week, fire officials said.

About a two-hour drive south from the Dixie Fire, crews had surrounded nearly half of the River Fire that broke out Wednesday near the town of Colfax and destroyed 68 homes and other buildings. Evacuation orders for thousands of people in Nevada and Placer counties were lifted Friday. Three people, including a firefighter, were injured, authorities said.

Smoke from the fires blanketed Northern California and western Nevada, causing air quality to deteriorate to very unhealthy and, at times, hazardous levels.

Air quality advisories extended through the California’s San Joaquin Valley and as far as the San Francisco Bay Area to Denver, Salt Lake City and Las Vegas, where residents were urged to keep their windows and doors shut. Denver’s air quality ranked among the worst in the world Saturday afternoon.

California’s fire season is on track to surpass last year’s season, which was the worst fire season in recent recorded state history.

Since the start of the year, more than 6,000 blazes have destroyed more than 1,260 square miles (3,260 square kilometers) of land — more than triple the losses for the same period in 2020, according to state fire figures.

California's raging wildfires were among 107 large fires burning across 14 states, mostly in the West, where historic drought conditions have left lands parched and ripe for ignition.

Senate slog to pass infrastructure bill goes on over weekend

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators will resume a weekend session toward passage of a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package after running into opposition from a few Republicans who want to drag out final votes on one of President Joe Biden's top priorities.

The measure would provide what Biden has called a "historic investment" in public works programs, from roads and bridges to broadband internet access, drinking water and more. In a rare stroke of bipartisanship, Republicans joined Democrats to advance the measure and more votes are expected Sunday. If approved, the bill would go to the House.

Despite the overwhelming support, momentum has dragged as a few Republican senators refused to yield 30 hours of required debate before the next set of procedural votes, which could delay swift passage of the package and result in a dayslong slog.

"We can get this done the easy way or the hard way," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Saturday. But as the hours ticked away with no deal struck to quicken the process for considering amendments and final votes, Schumer said senators would resume at noon Sunday.

Senators were meeting for the second consecutive weekend to work on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which is the first of Biden's two infrastructure packages. Once voting wraps up, senators immediately will turn to the next item on Biden's agenda, the budget outline for a \$3.5 trillion package of child care, elder care and other programs that is a much more partisan undertaking and expected to draw only Democratic support.

Schumer has vowed to keep senators in session until they finish up the bipartisan bill and start the initial votes on the next big package.

For some Republican senators, the back-to-back voting on Biden's big priorities is what they are trying to delay, hoping to slow or halt what appears to be a steady march to achieve the president's infrastructure goals.

Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn., an ally of Donald Trump and the former president's ambassador to Japan, was among those leading the effort for the Senate to take as much time as needed to debate and amend the bill.

"There's absolutely no reason to rush," Hagerty said during a floor speech Saturday.

Trump himself has weighed in including a statement Saturday criticizing Biden, senators of both parties and the bill itself, though it's not clear whether the former president's views hold sway over the lawmakers.

Biden has encouraged senators on, saying the bipartisan package offered an investment on par with the building of the transcontinental railroad or interstate highway system. Vice President Kamala Harris arrived on Capitol Hill for meetings on the bipartisan legislation.

Overcoming the 60-vote hurdle was a sign that the tenuous alliance between Republicans and Democrats could hold on the public works package. In all, 18 Republicans joined Democrats on the 67-27 vote to push the measure past a filibuster, a robust tally.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has so far allowed the bill to progress, despite the broadsides and name-calling coming from the former president. His vote Saturday — another "yes" — was closely watched. "This is a compromise," McConnell said.

Senators have spent the past week processing nearly two dozen amendments to the 2,700-page package, but so far none has substantially changed its framework.

More amendments could be debated Sunday with senators considering revisions to a section on cryptocurrency, a long-shot effort by defense hawks to add \$50 billion for defense-related infrastructure and a bipartisan amendment to repurpose a portion of the untapped COVID-19 relief aid that had been sent to the states.

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For senators who have been slogging through debate — and months of give-and-take negotiations — the bipartisan bill is a chance not only to send federal dollars to their states, but also to show the country that members of Congress can work together in a bipartisan way to solve problems.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said the needs in her state were obvious — including money for water systems in remote villages without running taps for handwashing during the COVID-19 pandemic. But as one of the negotiators, she also wants to demonstrate that lawmakers can unite.

“I’m really worried that everybody believes that we’re as dysfunctional as we appear to be, and so to prove otherwise, it’s kind of important,” she said. “The Senate needs some demonstrated acts of bipartisanship.”

Senators have found much to like in the bill, even though it does not fully satisfy liberals, who view it as too small, or conservatives, who find it too large. It would provide federal money for projects many states and cities could not afford on their own.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said, “America has not seen this type of infrastructure investment in 30 years.”

An analysis of the bill from the Congressional Budget Office drew concerns, particularly from Republicans. It concluded that the legislation would increase deficits by about \$256 billion over the next decade.

But the bill’s backers argued that the budget office was unable to take into account certain revenue streams — including from future economic growth. Additional analysis released Saturday by the budget office suggested infrastructure spending overall could boost productivity and lower the ultimate costs.

Paying for the package has been a pressure point throughout the months of negotiations after Democrats objected to an increase in the gas tax paid at the pump and Republicans resisted a plan to bolster the IRS to go after tax scofflaws.

Unlike Biden’s bigger \$3.5 trillion package, which would be paid for by higher tax rates for corporations and the wealthy, the bipartisan package is funded by repurposing other money, including untapped COVID-19 aid, and other spending cuts and revenue streams.

The House is in recess and is expected to consider both Biden infrastructure packages when it returns in September.

Off-script Olympics: Wins, losses, and a whole lot of improv

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Every two years, when an Olympics convenes, its organizers harness billions of dollars to make sure the entire affair is tightly, carefully scripted, clearing the way for one realm — and one realm only — to be genuinely unpredictable: the athletes’ performances and, by extension, the results of the events in which they compete.

It never quite works out that way, of course. Be it drugging or diplomatic incidents, bad behavior or political upheaval, the event rarely unfurls in exactly the way the International Olympic Committee so fervently hopes. But even viewed through that prism, this Pandemic Olympics has been the most off-script Games in history.

“This isn’t a story that fits our society’s desire to have complete historical context by the time we refresh our phones,” NBC’s Mike Tirico said a week into Japan’s fourth Olympic Games.

It was delayed by a devastating pandemic for an entire year, to the point where they’re still referring to an Olympics held in 2021 as the “2020 Tokyo Games” — another nod to powerful scripts that resist overturning. Cascading resignations — due to everything from financial corruption to bullying to sexual harassment — plagued the organizing committee.

Three of the world’s best-known athletes — Simone Biles, Naomi Osaka and Novak Djokovic — didn’t end up doing anywhere near what they were expected to do in Tokyo, and the ensuing (and productive) conversation about emotional health, mental pressure and learning how to take care of one’s self suffused the rest of the Games.

If the Olympics is, as they like to say, one of the planet’s biggest stages, there was a lot of improv going on.

It was jarring, and understandably so, even beyond the spectatorless stands. The sharply drawn nar-

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rative of winners and losers has fueled Olympic storytelling for generations — either-or storylines only occasionally interrupted by eruptions and controversies. But this time around, the storylines seemed both more subtle and a lot more disruptive.

That perhaps says less about the Olympics than it does about the times in which we live — a confusing, complex, intricate era that resists easy solutions as much as it is filled with people who want to impose them.

Consider the United States, a key Olympic player that has trended toward binary thinking for most of its history. For Americans, sometimes to their detriment, things historically often come down to black or white, yes or no, winners or losers. There's often a strong aversion to seeing and discussing shades of grey.

Most American big-media storylines follow that sensibility — particularly when it comes to the sharply drawn coverage of an Olympic Games, which sometimes can resemble a bustling factory for churning out heroes.

That expectation for hero-making is revealed in this endearing remark from U.S. athlete Isaiah Jewett, who picked up Botswana's Nijel Amos after they both fell in the semifinals of the men's 800-meter. "All the superhero anime that I watch," Jewett said, "regardless of how mad you are, you have to be a hero at the end of the day."

And for what he did, he became one. But what he said also reflected that American and Olympic commitment that sharp, epic endings represent the best and most memorable outcomes. So when something like these Olympics — and, frankly, this era in general — comes hurtling at people weaned on binary storytelling, things can get confusing.

Look at NBC, where surely producers were asking some form of this question: How do you deploy a half-century-old architecture of telling network-television sports stories that's built for winners and losers and use it for a more subtle set of storylines like mental health and coronavirus fear that don't necessarily have distinct outcomes?

Nuance doesn't necessarily equal viewership. In general, the prevailing sentiment runs more toward what 13-year-old Japanese skateboarder Momiji Nishiya said after getting her gold: "I want to be the famous one who everyone in the world knows."

If you look at what went off the scripted rails at these Games, though, it's only fair to look at what stayed on book as well. After all, managerial success is measured — or should be — not only by what happens but by what doesn't. And even within this jumbled valley of Olympic unpredictability, it's worth noting where the script endured.

There has been no major outbreak of COVID within the Olympic bubble, which was organizers' greatest fear. In fact, since July 1, barely more than 400 Olympic-related COVID cases have been documented out of tens of thousands of tests — even as the country around the Games declared increasingly wide states of emergency to offset alarming spikes in virus numbers.

The one political eruption — the defection-like flight of Belarus sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya to Vienna, then Poland, when she felt she was under threat — was less disarray and more sharp thinking on behalf of Japanese authorities, who interceded when officials from the country's Olympic committee tried to hustle her on a plane home.

And in the conversation about mental health that emerged after Biles' winding Olympic road, the IOC not only tolerated but even fostered further scrutiny of the issue, part of what cleared the way for athletes to come forward and make the intricate and deeply personal topic an indelible part of the Tokyo 2020 script.

For Tokyo in mid-2021, maybe "Tokyo 2020" was, in fact, the pitch-perfect moniker. Because these were, in the end, a Games that, if they didn't follow the Olympics' script, followed 2020's perfectly — fear and disease and suspicion all around, curveballs galore, unimaginable obstacles to overcome.

And, just like the storyline of 2020, lots of good stuff between it all that managed to shine through. A modern Hollywood ending, if you will.

Hall of Fame class has something for everybody

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By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — From bone-rattling tacklers Troy Polamalu, Steve Atwater and Cliff Harris to hard-charging runner Edgerrin James to the pass-catching brilliance of Isaac Bruce and Harold Carmichael, the Pro Football Hall of Fame class of 2020 has something for everyone.

Add in blocking dynamos Steve Hutchinson and Jim Covert, Steel Curtain stalwart safety Donnie Shell and such as leaders as former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue and coaches Bill Cowher and Jimmy Johnson.

They all entered the hall Saturday night, a year late due to the COVID-19 pandemic, yet just as rewarding. "If you told me after I graduated from the University of Michigan that I'd be excited standing in Ohio in the middle of August," Hutchinson joked, "...to me, there's no place better than Canton, Ohio."

Certainly all 12 men enshrined on this night felt that way.

"I am humbled and honored to wear this gold jacket," Atwater said before looking around at the other Hall of Famers on the stage. "What a group we have up here."

Indeed.

Polamalu had a 12-season career filled with spectacular performances, leadership and, well, winning with the Steelers. The 16th overall draft pick in 2003 from Southern California, he played in three Super Bowls, winning two, and made the NFL's 2000s Team of the Decade.

"I love football. It was my entire life as long as I can remember," said Polamalu, who missed festivities earlier this week after testing positive for COVID-19; he was medically cleared to attend Saturday. The crowd of 18,383 cheered long and loud for him, delaying his speech.

He then talked about the "willingness to push beyond what the brain says is possible for the body. Football challenged me mentally, physically and spiritually. I had to succeed to quench this desire."

Atwater, who won two Super Bowls with Denver, might have been the most physical defensive back of his era, just as the Cowboys' Harris and Shell might have been in theirs.

Shell was a linebacker at South Carolina State who went undrafted, was shifted to safety in Pittsburgh and became a tackling machine. With veterans on strike in his rookie year of 1974, Shell made such an impression that coach Chuck Noll inserted him as a starting safety. He spent 14 seasons as a fixture for the Steelers.

With hundreds of Terrible Towels waving, Shell recognized Steeler Nation and then said of being an undrafted free agent from South Carolina State, "When facts get in the way of your goal, you must go against the grain to achieve your goal."

It was a big night for Pittsburgh as Shell, Polamalu and Cowher were enshrined as Steelers, and Covert went to Pitt, where he blocked for Dan Marino.

"What a weekend for the Pittsburgh Steelers," Cowher said as Terrible Towels waved throughout the stadium. "It is unbelievable to me to go in the Hall of Fame with two guys you drafted: Troy Polamalu and Alan Faneca. Also with Donnie Shell and the late, great Bill Nunn."

Cowher also paid tribute to "the only head coach I ever worked for," the late Marty Schottenheimer, predicting "one day you will be in the Hall of Fame."

Hutchinson was a five-time All-Pro and member of the NFL 2000s All-Decade Team. Along with strong work as a pass protector, he opened holes for rushers who averaged just under 1,400 yards and 14 touchdowns a season.

After joking about potentially being uncomfortable in Hall of Fame Stadium, Hutchinson then told his son not to "fear failure but fear to have not given my all."

Tagliabue often was passed over for the hall, but his resume as a commissioner is impressive. He was faced with such obstacles as the outbreak of the Gulf War to 9/11 to Hurricane Katrina during his stewardship from 1989-2006. His skills at overcoming those tests, keeping labor peace, guiding the NFL through expansion, significantly increasing revenues and helping pass the Rooney Rule have led to his induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame as part of the centennial class.

"This is like a dream come true," Tagliabue said. "The centennial class spans pro football history."

Carmichael dominated defensive backs with his 6-foot-8, 225-pound size and great hands. The Eagles star from 1971-83 had three 1,000-yard seasons in an era when the passing game was not as prominent

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as it is today. He averaged a touchdown every 7 1/2 catches and made the NFL 1970s All-Decade Team. Carmichael was the league's Man of the Year in 1980.

"Whew, Baby," Carmichael said when his bust was revealed. "I am so, so honored to be a part of this brotherhood, this fraternity, with love. What a journey."

Bruce recognized his 14 siblings during his speech.

"Coming from the heart tonight," Bruce said. He then spoke of "the defensive backs that baptized me — and the ones I baptized."

James had the best line of the night. After opening his gold jacket to note he was "inmate No. 336 in the Hall of Fame," the man Peyton Manning called "the best teammate I ever played with" concluded with: "My career started with gold teeth and ended with this gold jacket."

Manning will be enshrined Sunday night along with the other members of the Class of 2021: Charles Woodson, Calvin Johnson, Faneca, John Lynch, Tom Flores, Drew Pearson and Nunn.

Wildfires rampage in Greek forests, cut large island in half

By ELENA BECATOROS, DEMETRIS NELLAS and MICHAEL VARAKLAS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Three large wildfires churned across Greece on Saturday, with one threatening whole towns and cutting a line across Evia, the country's second-largest island, isolating its northern part. Others engulfed forested mountainsides and skirted ancient sites, leaving behind a trail of destruction that one official described as "a biblical catastrophe."

A flotilla of 10 ships — two Coast Guard patrols, two ferries, two passenger ships and four fishing boats — waited at the seaside resort of Pefki, near the northern tip of Evia, ready to evacuate more residents and tourists if needed, a Coast Guard spokeswoman told The Associated Press, on customary condition of anonymity.

Firefighters were fighting through the night to save Istiaia, a town of 7,000 in northern Evia, as well as several villages, using bulldozers to open up clear paths in the thick forest.

The fire on Evia forced the hasty Friday night evacuation of about 1,400 people from a seaside village and island beaches by a motley assortment of boats after the approaching flames cut off other means of escape.

The other dangerous fires were one in Greece's southern Peloponnese peninsula, near Ancient Olympia and one in Fokida, in the Central Greece Region, north of Athens. The fire in Ancient Olympia moved east, away from the ancient site, threatening villages in a sudden flare-up Saturday afternoon.

North of Athens, the fire on Mount Parnitha, a national park with substantial forests, was still burning with occasional flare-ups, but a Fire Service spokesman told the AP late Saturday that containment efforts were "going well." Deputy Civil Protection Minister Nikos Hardalias told reporters Saturday night that firefighters hoped to contain the fire Sunday.

Smoke from that fire was still spreading across the Athens basin. Earlier, the blaze had sent choking smoke across the Greek capital, where authorities set up a hotline for residents with breathing problems.

One volunteer firefighter died Friday and at least 20 people have been treated in hospitals over the last week during Greece's most intense heat wave in three decades. Temperatures soared up to 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit).

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Saturday visited the fire department's headquarters in Athens and expressed his "deep sadness" for the firefighter's death. He later visited the airport, west of Athens, from which firefighting planes take off and thanked the pilots, Greek as well as French, who arrived to support the firefighting effort.

Securing aid for everyone affected by the wildfires will be "my first political priority," he said, promising that all burnt areas would be reforested.

"When this nightmarish summer has passed, we will turn all our attention to repairing the damage as fast as possible, and in restoring our natural environment again," Mitsotakis said.

A local official in the Mani area of southern Peloponnese, south of Sparta, estimated the wildfire there

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had destroyed around 70% of her area.

"It's a biblical catastrophe. We're talking about three-quarters of the municipality," East Mani Deputy Mayor Eleni Drakoulakou told state broadcaster ERT, pleading for more water-dropping aircraft.

Other officials and residents in southern Greece phoned in to TV programs, appealing live on air for more firefighting help.

Greece requested help through the European Union's emergency support system. Firefighters and aircraft were sent from France, Spain, Ukraine, Cyprus, Croatia, Sweden, Israel, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the United States.

On Saturday alone, Germany's Disaster Assistance agency tweeted that 52 firefighters and 17 vehicles from Bonn and 164 firemen and 27 vehicles from Hessen were heading to Athens to help. Egypt said it was sending two helicopters, while 36 Czech firefighters with 15 vehicles left for Greece.

The causes of the fires are under investigation. Three people were arrested Friday — in the greater Athens area, central and southern Greece — on suspicion of starting blazes, in two cases intentionally.

Another person, a 47-year-old Greek, was arrested Saturday afternoon in the Athens suburb of Petroupoli for lighting two fires in a grove and setting four dumpsters on fire, police said.

Greek and European officials also have blamed climate change for the large number of fires burning through southern Europe, from southern Italy to the Balkans, Greece and Turkey.

Fires described as the worst in decades have swept through stretches of Turkey's southern coast for the past 10 days, killing eight people. The top Turkish forestry official said 217 fires had been brought under control since July 28 in over half of the country's provinces, but firefighters still worked Saturday to tame six fires in two provinces.

In Turkey's seaside province of Mugla, a popular region for tourists, some fires appeared to be under control Saturday but the forestry minister said blazes were still burning in the Milas area. Environmental groups urged authorities to protect the forests of Sandras Mountain from nearby fires.

Further north, at least six neighborhoods were evacuated due to a wildfire in western Aydin province, where shifting winds were making containment efforts difficult, Turkish media reported.

Municipal officials in Antalya, on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, said a wildfire was still burning around the Eynif plain, where wild horses live.

Massive fires also have been burning across Siberia in northern Russia for weeks, forcing the evacuation Saturday of a dozen villages. In all, wildfires have burned nearly 15 million acres this year in Russia.

In the U.S., hot, bone-dry, gusty weather has also fueled devastating wildfires in California.

Hurry up and wait in the Senate on infrastructure

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate moved closer to passing a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package Saturday after lawmakers from both parties came together and voted to clear a key procedural hurdle, but the action soon stalled out as a few Republican opponents refused to speed up approval of one of President Joe Biden's top priorities.

The measure would provide a massive injection of federal money for a range of public works programs, from roads and bridges to broadband internet access, drinking water and more. In a rare stroke of bipartisanship, Republicans joined the Democrats to overcome the 60-vote threshold needed to advance the measure toward final votes. The vote was 67-27, a robust tally. If approved, the bill would go to the House.

But momentum dragged as a few Republican senators refused to yield 30 hours of required debate before the next set of procedural votes, which could delay swift passage of the package and result in a dayslong slog.

"We can get this done the easy way or the hard way," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said as the Senate opened on Saturday.

Despite the overwhelming support for the package, by evening there was no deal struck to quicken the process for considering amendments and final votes. Schumer said senators would resume at noon Sunday.

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This is the second consecutive weekend senators are meeting to work on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which is the first of Biden's two infrastructure packages. Once voting wraps up, senators immediately will turn to the next item on Biden's agenda, the budget outline for a \$3.5 trillion package of child care, elder care and other programs that is a much more partisan undertaking and expected to draw only Democratic support.

Schumer has vowed to keep senators in session until they finish up the bipartisan bill and start the initial votes on the next big package.

For some Republican senators, the back-to-back voting on Biden's big priorities is what they are trying to delay, hoping to slow or halt what appears to be a steady forward march to achieve the president's infrastructure goals.

Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn., an ally of Donald Trump and the former president's ambassador to Japan, was among those leading the effort for the Senate to take as much time as needed to debate and amend the bill.

"There's absolutely no reason to rush," Hagerty said during a floor speech Saturday.

Trump himself weighed in Saturday with a statement criticizing Biden, senators of both parties and the bill itself, though it's not clear whether the former president's views hold sway over the lawmakers.

As hours ticked away Saturday, senators seemed resigned to the long haul. "Impasse," said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas.

Biden has encouraged senators on, saying the bipartisan package offered a potentially "historic investment," on par with the building of the transcontinental railroad or interstate highway system. Vice President Kamala Harris arrived on Capitol Hill for meetings on the bipartisan legislation.

Overcoming the 60-vote hurdle was a sign that the tenuous alliance between Republicans and Democrats could hold on the public works package. At least 10 Republicans were needed to join all Democrats to push the measure past a filibuster — and in the end 18 Republican senators voted to advance the package.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has so far allowed the bill to progress, and his vote — "yes" — was closely watched. "This is a compromise," he said before the vote.

Senators have spent the past week processing nearly two dozen amendments to the 2,700-page package, but so far none has substantially changed the framework of the public works package. Some senators are insisting on more amendments — including one on cryptocurrency, and a longshot effort by defense hawks to add \$50 billion for defense-related infrastructure and a bipartisan amendment from Cornyn and others to repurpose a portion of the untapped COVID-19 relief aid that had been sent to the states.

For senators who have been slogging through debate — and months of give-and-take negotiations — the bipartisan bill is a chance not only to send federal dollars to their states, but also to show the country that Congress can work together in a bipartisan way to solve problems.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said the needs in her state were obvious — including money for water systems in remote villages without running taps for handwashing during the COVID-19 pandemic. But as one of the negotiators, she also wants to demonstrate that lawmakers can unite.

"I'm really worried that everybody believes that we're as dysfunctional as we appear to be, and so to prove otherwise, it's kind of important," she said. "The Senate needs some demonstrated acts of bipartisanship."

Senators have found much to like in the bill, even though it does not fully satisfy liberals, who view it as too small, or conservatives, who find it too large. It would provide federal money for projects many states and cities could not afford on their own.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said, "America has not seen this type of infrastructure investment in 30 years."

An analysis of the bill from the Congressional Budget Office drew concerns, particularly from Republicans. It concluded that the legislation would increase deficits by about \$256 billion over the next decade.

But the bill's backers argued that the budget office was unable to take into account certain revenue streams — including from future economic growth. Additional analysis released Saturday by the budget office suggested infrastructure spending overall could boost productivity and lower the ultimate costs.

Paying for the package has been a pressure point throughout the months of negotiations after Democrats objected to an increase in the gas tax paid at the pump and Republicans resisted a plan to bolster

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the IRS to go after tax scofflaws.

Unlike Biden's bigger \$3.5 trillion package, which would be paid for by higher tax rates for corporations and the wealthy, the bipartisan package is funded by repurposing other money, including untapped COVID-19 aid, and other spending cuts and revenue streams.

The House is in recess and is expected to consider both Biden infrastructure packages when it returns in September.

Rice pizza, noodle ices: Food shows Japan's punk rock soul

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP) — Countries' foods are also windows on their souls.

Take hamburgers. Hand-held, quick to assemble and wolf down, they embody a quintessentially American idea that founding father Benjamin Franklin put to paper in 1748 and which still powers the ambitious on Wall Street and beyond. "Remember," Franklin wrote, "that time is money."

In China, food is so omnipresent in the national psyche that people greet each other with the phrase "chi fan le ma?" — have you eaten? And French food snobbery prompted the famously omnivorous President Jacques Chirac to once quip unkindly of the British that: "One cannot trust people whose cuisine is so bad."

Which leads us to the Cup Noodles Museum in Yokohama, Japan.

Yes, there is such a place. And, yes, instant noodles have plenty to say about Japanese traits of inventiveness, risk-taking and an openness to adapting and upgrading foreign influences that helped Japan recover after World War II to become an economic, cultural — and gastronomic — titan.

Some of those same traits have, these past two weeks, also helped Japan pull off the improbable feat — or folly, the jury is out — of hosting the Olympic Games in the midst of the pandemic. Allowing 11,000 athletes to come from around the world, some bringing the coronavirus with them, testified to Japanese resilience, hospitality and flexibility.

Now back to ramen, with — excuse the pun — a potted history.

The Japanese cribbed noodles from neighbor China, where they are called "lamian." Over the years, Japanese chefs elevated ramen into an art, a tastebud-blowing spectrum of flavors, textures and choices.

In short, Japan absorbed a foreign influence and improved on it. The same would later be true with automobiles, gadgetry and — for fans of "Demon Slayer," "One Piece" and other mangas — cartoons, to name just those few.

Back to noodles, though. Horrified by food shortages that ravaged post-war Japan, impoverished former credit union worker Momofuku Ando hit upon the idea of turning surplus American wheat into ramen that hungry people could prepare with just hot water and a few minutes.

Ando's eureka moment came while watching his wife deep-fry tempura. That gave birth to the idea of flash-frying noodles to dehydrate them. Ando's first instant noodles were launched in 1958.

Cup Noodles followed in 1971. The brainchild for that idea came on a fact-finding trip that Ando made to the United States in 1966, when he saw consumers of his instant noodles rehydrate and eat them from paper cups. This according to Nissin Foods, the company Ando founded. Worldwide cumulative sales of Cup Noodles surpassed the 40-billion mark in 2016.

Ando died in 2007, at age 96. But his inventive spirit lives in what must rank as one of the world's most unique flavor experiences: the Cup Noodle ice cream.

Served only at the Cup Noodles Museum, in its fourth floor cafeteria, it's made with the same powdered soup and freeze-dried toppings — onion, shrimp, chunks of egg and meat — used in actual Cup Noodles.

Museum visitor Noriyuki Sato, who tried it, described it as "salty-sweet," neither here nor there. "I'm not sure if that word makes sense to foreigners," he said. "It's not sweet and it's not salty, either."

But it is a monument to thinking out of the box and to a Japanese knack for fusing together seemingly incompatible things to make wholly new ones. It's hard to imagine an Italian gelato maker veering so audaciously off the beaten track.

Nissin Foods spokesperson Kahara Suzuki says the ice cream — having tasted it, one hesitates to call it a dessert — embodies "what I would call a punk rock spirit that many Japanese people have."

"Who would ever come up with an idea like this? I mean it's very unique," Suzuki said. "You can see that punk rock spirit in every aspect of Japanese life."

Certainly on Japanese plates. A few other examples include fruit sandwiches sold in corner stores and popular rice burgers. Since May, they and their likes have been joined by rice pizzas — developed by Sachie Oyama, an innovation chef and manager of the Menu Innovation Department at Domino's Pizza Japan Inc.

The Domino's Deluxe version is, in effect, a pizza built on a base layer of compressed, pre-cooked Japanese-cultivated white rice, instead of a usual base of pizza dough. The rice base is then smothered with rich tomato sauce and topped with traditional pizza ingredients: mozzarella cheese, onions, peppers, pepperoni and Italian sausage. Domino's sells the product line only in Japan. Oyama calls it "a pizza you can eat by yourself," rather than sharing slices.

"Japanese people are good at rearranging things," she said. "A combination with pizza and rice is not a weird thing at all."

Perhaps not. But foods like that do help explain why Japan seems to never stand still. After all, there are always new tastes to invent.

Biden praises Olympians for inspiring Americans with courage

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Joe Biden praised U.S. Olympians for navigating the difficulties of a coronavirus-tarnished games with "moral courage" that made Americans' "hearts swell" with pride.

Biden, along with first lady Jill Biden, spoke with Team USA in a Zoom call Saturday evening from their home near Wilmington, Delaware. The couple extended an invitation to the athletes to visit the White House in the fall to celebrate their accomplishments.

The Bidens heaped praise on the athletes for their accomplishments in their respective sports but also honed in on remarkable moments in the games when they said the athletes set an example for their fellow Americans.

"You handled yourself with such grace and such decency," the president told the athletes. "You made me so damn proud."

Biden told gymnast Simone Biles that her decision to withdraw from events at the Tokyo Games to focus on her mental health set an important example for others. She later came back to win a bronze in the balance beam final.

"You had the courage to say, 'I need some help,'" Biden said. "And you gave an example to everybody. And guess what, by the way, you got back up on that damned beam!"

Biden also said that he was heartened by how runner Isaiah Jewett carried himself after he and Botswana's Nijel Amos became tangled during a semifinal heat of the 800 meter and both fell to the track.

Jewett and Amos helped each other to their feet, put their arms around each other and finished together 54 seconds after the winner. Biden said the moment of sportsmanship had "profound impact around the world."

"America when it leads the world leads not by the example of our power but by the power of our example," Biden said. "That's the God's truth. And you are an epitome of that, and we thank you for it."

Kool & the Gang co-founder Dennis Thomas dead at age 70

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Dennis "Dee Tee" Thomas, a founding member of the long-running soul-funk band Kool & the Gang known for such hits as "Celebration" and "Get Down On It," has died. He was 70.

He died peacefully in his sleep Saturday in New Jersey, where he was a resident of Montclair, according to a statement from his representative.

Thomas was the alto sax player, flutist and percussionist. He served as master of ceremonies at the

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band's shows. His last appearance with the group was July Fourth at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

Born Feb. 9, 1951, in Orlando, Florida, Thomas was known for his prologue on the band's 1971 hit, "Who's Gonna Take the Weight." Known for his hip clothes and hats, he was also the group's wardrobe stylist. In the early days, he served as their "budget hawk," carrying their earnings in a paper bag stuffed into the bell of his horn, the statement said.

In 1964, seven teen friends created the group's unique blend of jazz, soul and funk, at first calling themselves the Jazziacs. They went through several iterations before settling on Kool & the Gang in 1969. The group's other founders are brothers Ronald and Robert Bell, Spike Mickens, Ricky Westfield, George Brown and Charles Smith.

Ronald Bell died Sept. 9, 2020, at home in the U.S. Virgin Islands at age 68.

The band has earned two Grammy Awards and seven American Music Awards. They were honored in 2014 with a Soul Train Lifetime Achievement Award. Their music is heavily sampled and featured on film sound tracks, including those for "Rocky," "Saturday Night Fever" and "Pulp Fiction."

Among those Thomas is survived by are his wife, Phynjuar Saunders Thomas, daughter Tuesday Rankin and sons David Thomas and Devin Thomas.

US averaging 100,000 new COVID-19 infections a day

By TERRY SPENCER and KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The COVID-19 outbreak in the United States crossed 100,000 new confirmed daily infections Saturday, a milestone last exceeded during the winter surge and driven by the highly transmissible delta variant and low vaccination rates in the South.

Health officials fear that cases, hospitalizations and deaths will continue to soar if more Americans don't embrace the vaccine. Nationwide, 50% of residents are fully vaccinated and more than 70% of adults have received at least one dose.

"Our models show that if we don't (vaccinate people), we could be up to several hundred thousand cases a day, similar to our surge in early January," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Rochelle Walensky said on CNN this week.

It took the U.S. about nine months to cross 100,000 average daily cases in November before peaking at about 250,000 in early January. Cases bottomed out in June, averaging about 11,000 per day, but six weeks later the number is 107,143.

Hospitalizations and deaths are also increasing, though all are still below peaks seen early this year before vaccines became widely available. More than 44,000 Americans are currently hospitalized with COVID-19, according to the CDC, up 30% in a week and nearly four times the number in June. More than 120,000 were hospitalized in January.

The seven-day average for deaths rose from about 270 deaths per day two weeks ago to nearly 500 a day as of Friday, according to Johns Hopkins University. Deaths peaked at 3,500 per day in January. Deaths usually lag behind hospitalizations as the disease normally takes a few weeks to kill.

The situation is particularly dire in the South, which has some of the lowest vaccination rates in the U.S. and has seen smaller hospitals overrun with patients.

In the Southeast, the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients jumped 50% to a daily average of 17,600 over the last week from 11,600 the previous week, the CDC says. Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky represent 41% of the nation's new hospitalizations, the CDC says, twice their overall share of the population.

Alabama and Mississippi have the lowest vaccination rates in the country: less than 35% of residents are fully inoculated, according to the Mayo Clinic. Georgia, Tennessee and the Carolinas are all in the lowest 15 states.

Alabama saw more than 65,000 doses wasted because health providers couldn't find people to take them before they expired, according to State Health Officer Scott Harris. That represents less than 1.5% of the more than 5 million coronavirus vaccines doses that Alabama has received.

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"Sixty-five thousand doses have been wasted. That's extremely unfortunate when we have such a low vaccination rate and of course, there are so many people in the world that still don't have access to vaccine," Harris said.

Florida has been especially hard hit. It makes up more than 20% of the nation's new cases and hospitalizations, triple its share of the population. Many rural counties have vaccination rates below 40%, with the state at 49%. The state again set a record Saturday, reporting 23,903 new cases.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, while encouraging vaccinations, has taken a hard line against mask rules and other restrictions. Running for reelection next year and eyeing a 2024 Republican presidential bid, he and President Joe Biden have verbally sparred in recent days. DeSantis has accused the Democratic president of overreach, while Biden has said DeSantis should "get out of the way" of local officials if he doesn't want to fight the outbreak.

Some people have been scared off from the vaccine by bogus warnings on social media and from some non-medical media personalities.

Miami-area real estate agent Yoiris Duran, 56, said her family was swayed by the misinformation, although doctors and public health officials have almost universally encouraged people to get vaccinated. After she, her husband and 25-year-old son got seriously ill with COVID-19 and were hospitalized, she's now encouraging friends and family to get vaccinated.

"I don't want people to go through what we have gone through," she said in a video interview with Baptist Health Systems.

In some parts of the U.S., hospitals are scrambling to find beds for patients.

Dr. Leonardo Alonso, who works in several emergency rooms in Jacksonville, one of Florida's hardest-hit areas, said some hospitals are sending some COVID-19 patients home with oxygen and a monitor to free beds for sicker people.

"The ICUs, the hospitals are all on a near what we call mass casualty incident. They're almost at protocols where they're overflowing," Alonso said.

In Texas, Houston officials said some patients were transferred out of the city — one as far as North Dakota.

Dr. David Persse, Houston's chief medical officer, said some ambulances were waiting hours to offload patients because no beds were available. Persse said he feared this would lead to prolonged response times to 911 medical calls.

"The health care system right now is nearly at a breaking point. ... For the next three weeks or so, I see no relief on what's happening in emergency departments," Persse said Thursday.

Hezbollah leader vows retaliation for future Israeli attacks

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The leader of the militant Hezbollah group said Saturday his group will retaliate against any future Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon, a day after his supporters fired a barrage of rockets toward Israel.

Hassan Nasrallah said it would be wrong to assume Hezbollah would be constrained by internal divisions in Lebanon, or the country's harsh economic crisis.

Nasrallah's comments came a day after his group fired rockets toward Israel, calling it retaliation for Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon a day earlier.

Thursday's airstrikes — the first in years — were in response to mysterious rockets that were fired from Lebanon toward Israel on Wednesday.

Friday's rocket fire was the third day of attacks along the volatile border with Lebanon, a major Middle East flashpoint where tensions between Israel and Iran, which backs Hezbollah, occasionally play out.

"Any airstrike by Israel's airforce on Lebanon will be retaliated in a suitable way because we want to protect our country," Nasrallah said in a televised speech marking the 15th anniversary of the end of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

Israel and Hezbollah are archenemies and have fought several wars in the past, the last of which ended

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in August 2006. The 34-day conflict ended with a draw that left 1,200 dead in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 160 dead Israelis, mostly soldiers.

"Don't miscalculate by saying that Hezbollah is busy with Lebanon's problems," Nasrallah said, adding that the firing of rockets was a "clear message."

He added that Hezbollah had fired 20 rockets toward open fields only, because the Israeli airstrikes on Thursday had themselves hit open fields.

Lebanon is passing through its worst economic and financial crisis in its modern history, which the World Bank describes as among the worst the world has witnessed since the mid 1800s.

Israel estimates Hezbollah possesses over 130,000 rockets and missiles capable of striking anywhere in the country. In recent years, Israel also has expressed concerns that the group is trying to import or develop an arsenal of precision-guided missiles.

"We always used to say that we are not looking for war and we don't want war but we are ready for it," Nasrallah said.

Nasrallah in his speech harshly criticized the judge leading the investigation into last year's massive blast in Beirut's port that killed and wounded many people. Nasrallah said the work of judge Tarek Bitar is "politicized."

Nasrallah asked why Bitar filed charges against outgoing Prime Minister Hassan Diab, but not the premiers who preceded him.

NBC presses on after rough start in transitional Olympics

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — On the penultimate day of the Tokyo Olympics, NBC Universal got the kind of picture that it pays for: Kevin Durant, draped in the American flag, exulting in the U.S. men's basketball team's gold medal victory over France.

The team persevered after losing its first game in Tokyo and so did NBC, pressing on after an admittedly shaky start at a pandemic Olympics that began with more trepidation than anticipation.

It was in many ways a transition Olympics for the media company, where the old ways in which America has consumed the Games are fading fast and new ways still taking hold.

"They are different, and we have never shied away from that," said Pete Bevacqua, NBC Sports chairman. "We said this was a different Olympics, necessarily so, but it's still wonderful, it's still great and it's still the best 17 days in sports."

He said NBC Universal will make money on the Games, though he wouldn't say how much. NBC has hustled to schedule "make goods," meaning giving advertisers extra commercials because TV viewership was lower than expected, and Bevacqua predicted 99% of the obligations will be completed at Olympics' end.

The Olympics began with COVID-19 worries, some unexpected losses by Americans and the withdrawal from most events by gymnastics star Simone Biles. With the performance by Americans improving, NBC largely avoided the drop in consumer interest that traditionally comes during the second week of the Olympics.

There's no sugarcoating the dramatic decline in the broadcast network's prime-time show, the flagship of Olympics coverage. For many nights, NBC's audience was half what it was for the Rio de Janeiro Games five years ago.

"When you look at the numbers, it's hard to be pleased with them," said Andy Billings, director of the sports communications program at the University of Alabama. "It's probably NBC's worst-case scenario, but it's probably a worst-case scenario that they would have been able to predict months ago."

With the explosion of streaming and video on demand, live television viewership is way down across the board. That actually provides a measure of financial protection; NBC's rival networks are down, too, and few events reach an audience as large as the Olympics, even in a diminished state.

Americans approached the Games with a collective shrug. Thirty-six percent of those polled in late July

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by Monmouth University in New Jersey said they had less interest in the Olympics than usual, and 3% had more interest.

One reason given for diminished interest, particularly by Republicans, was disgust about athletes making political statements, said Patrick Murray, director of Monmouth's polling institute. There was little of that in Tokyo. There was, however, an odd eruption of social media glee among some American conservatives, and former President Donald Trump's statement that "woke means you lose," when the U.S. women's soccer team lost its chance at the gold medal.

Consumers are following the Olympics in different ways. Cable ratings rose. NBC had its Olympics website and the Peacock streaming service — the latter for the first time.

Many young people, in particular, kept up to date through video clips on their devices. More than 1.4 billion minutes of highlights and clips have been streamed, a 37% increase from the Rio Games, Bevacqua said.

A study from the 2018 Winter Games found that one-sixth of the Olympics content consumed by Americans was streamed on devices, and that percentage was likely larger in Tokyo, Billings said. In China, 40% of consumption four years ago was on devices.

"You can follow it on Instagram or Snapchat," Billings said. "But I don't think anyone has cracked the code on this to remotely make the money that you can on television."

NBC Universal said it now has 52 million people signed up for Peacock, exceeding its expectations. The coming months will see if some of the new customers stay. Billings said NBC needed to do a better job making Peacock a central gathering place for the Games.

NBC, which in years past faced some criticism for not showing enough Olympic events, had the opposite issue in Tokyo. So much was shown that fans had trouble making sense of it all, and knowing where they should go to see something specific.

Wrote critic Aaron Timms in the Guardian: "Viewers have been able to see everything at any given moment (provided you have the Peacock streaming service) while understanding fundamentally nothing about what's going on."

Bevacqua conceded the need to improve the navigation experience. "I think we've done a better job since the Games started," he said. "We've responded to that."

NBC also took steps to diversify its prime-time menu, though it was still dominated by gymnastics, swimming and diving, and track and field.

The lack of spectators was jarring at first. One awkward moment was when an NBC volleyball announcer, during a key moment when a judge reviewed a call, said, "you can hear a pin drop in this arena." The venue was largely empty.

But spectators rarely play a role in Olympics events, and there was some charm in the way NBC used video conferencing to connect athletes to family and fans back home. The pandemic also seemed to pull athletes together, and NBC adeptly picked up on the scenes of sportsmanship.

"I think it was a psychological lift that the country needed and has responded to," Bevacqua said.

Now the company faces a short turnaround. The Winter Olympics in Beijing is scheduled to start in six months.

Texas Democrats continue holdout, don't show for new session

By ACACIA CORONADO and PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas Democrats still refused to return to the state Capitol on Saturday as Gov. Greg Abbott began a third attempt at passing new election laws, prolonging a monthslong standoff that ramped up in July when dozens of Democratic state lawmakers left the state and hunkered down in Washington, D.C.

"A quorum is not present," said Republican House Speaker Dade Phelan, who then adjourned the chamber until Monday.

More than 50 Democrats last month bolted to the nation's capital, but the precise whereabouts of each of them is unclear. In a joint statement Saturday, Democrats said 26 of them would remain "part of an

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active presence in Washington maintained for as long as Congress is working.”

But there were also signs the stalemate may be thawing. Two of the Democrats who decamped last month returned to Austin Saturday, and one of them said enough of his colleagues may also begin trickling back to secure a quorum next week. And, notably, Republicans did not invoke a procedural move that would give Phelan the authority to sign arrest warrants for missing lawmakers, as they did when the Democrats left town.

Democratic state Rep. Eddie Lucio III said those who might return were feeling the pull of personal and professional demands.

“I was encouraged that the baton would be carried by my Washington colleagues at the federal level, that there would be sweeping reform nationwide,” Lucio III said.

Republican state Rep. Jim Murphy, chairman of the House Republican Caucus, also believed that more Democrats would come back in the coming days.

“People are talking to their friends, and we think we’re going to see quite a few more,” he said.

It was not just Democrats who were absent Saturday: Six Republicans were also out, including one who recently tested positive for COVID-19.

Heading into the weekend, Democratic leaders had not committed to sitting out the entire 30-day session, leaving open the possibility that enough could return at some point to end the standoff. Republicans want to advance an overhaul of elections in Texas under legislation that largely remains the same despite the months of walkouts and protests by Democratic lawmakers.

Texas would ban 24-hour polling locations, drive-thru voting and give partisan poll watchers more access under the bill that Republicans were on the brink of passing in May. But that effort was foiled by Democrats abruptly leaving the Capitol in a late-night walkout.

Democrats made a bigger gambit — by decamping to Washington on chartered jets — to run out the clock on the GOP’s second try. Democrats had hoped to exert pressure on President Joe Biden and Congress to pass federal voting rights legislation, but a Senate Republican filibuster continues to block such a measure.

Democrat Jasmine Crockett, one of the state representatives remaining in Washington, said she would be disappointed if enough of her colleagues returned to give Republicans a quorum next week. She said their group is not “naive” and knows they don’t have the votes to permanently hold off passage of a bill in Texas, but are still hoping for movement in Congress.

“I’m not giving up on anything. I’m not going home until the fat lady sings,” Crockett said.

Biden never met with the Texas Democrats in Washington. The group was quickly forced to change some plans after several of their members tested positive for COVID-19. Reports that two Democrats snuck away to Europe also led to bad headlines and invited mockery from Republicans back home.

There has been a recent sharp surge in COVID-19 infections in Texas, where the number of people hospitalized with the virus stands at more than 8,500 patients, the highest number since February. But Abbott is adamant that Texas will not bring back pandemic restrictions or mask mandates and has prohibited schools from requiring face coverings. Many of the state’s 5 million students are scheduled to return to classrooms this month.

California GOP nixes endorsement fight in Newsom recall

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The California Republican Party voted overwhelmingly Saturday not to endorse any candidate in the looming recall election that could remove Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom from office, sidestepping a potentially nasty fight over a GOP favorite that threatened to divide Republicans and depress turnout in the nationally watched race.

The lopsided vote to skip an endorsement — supported by about 90% of delegates attending at a virtual party meeting -- reflected concerns that an internal feud among candidates and their supporters would cleave party ranks and sour Republicans who wouldn’t bother to vote if their candidate of choice

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was snubbed.

There are 24 Republicans on the recall ballot, with leading contenders including talk radio host Larry Elder, former San Diego mayor Kevin Faulconer, businessman John Cox, state legislator Kevin Kiley, former Olympian and reality TV personality Caitlyn Jenner and former congressman Doug Ose.

Two of the state party's most powerful figures -- Republican National Committee members Harmeet Dhillon and Shawn Steel -- earlier helped set the stage for an endorsement vote. But they reversed course Friday and urged delegates to avoid it.

"The polls are showing that the recall is in a statistical tie, and we cannot afford to discourage voters who are passionate about a particular candidate, yet may not vote because their favored candidate didn't receive the endorsement," they warned in an email obtained by The Associated Press.

In the recall election, voters will be asked two questions: First, should Newsom be removed, yes or no? The second question will be a list of replacement candidates from which to choose. If a majority votes for Newsom's removal, the candidate who gets the most votes on the second question becomes governor.

Republicans feared that fallout from an endorsement squabble could sap support from the critical first question on the ballot -- whether or not to remove Newsom. If that vote fails to reach a majority, the results on the second question are irrelevant and the governor retains his job.

The party's decision was not without risk. Republican voter registration in the heavily Democratic state is a paltry 24%. Some party leaders believed the best route to victory in the Sept. 14 election was concentrating the GOP's money and volunteers behind a single candidate.

Some will see the decision as a setback for Faulconer, who was considered an early favorite for the endorsement. Faulconer had been seeking the nod, but his campaign later shifted gears, saying he no longer believed it was in the party's interest to back a single candidate.

Cox, a conservative, earlier accused party insiders of trying to steer the endorsement to Faulconer, a political centrist elected in Democratic San Diego who some saw as a more viable statewide candidate in strongly Democratic California. Cox, in protest of what he viewed as a rigged process, said he wouldn't seek the endorsement.

In a statement Saturday, Cox praised the delegates' decision, adding that "the Republican Party must be united to recall Gavin Newsom. Nothing is more important."

Kiley said in a statement that "all candidates are on the same team as we make the case that California deserves so much better than Gavin Newsom."

Newsom, meanwhile, has been stepping up his campaign activity with polls showing the race could go either way, as coronavirus cases again climb and populous areas of the state bring back mask rules loathed by many.

The recall grew out of widespread frustration during the depths of the pandemic over whipsaw stay-at-home orders, crushing job losses from business closures and long-running school closures that together upended life for millions of Californians.

Republican candidates have depicted Newsom as an incompetent fop whose bungled leadership inflicted unnecessary financial pain during the pandemic. Democrats have sought to frame the contest as driven by far-right extremists and supporters of former President Donald Trump.

COVID survivor: 'Have to start my life all over again'

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As her father lay dying last August from the coronavirus at a Georgia hospital, Lindsay Schwarz put her hands on his arms and softly sang him lines from their favorite songs.

Eugene Schwarz had been admitted three weeks earlier, but the hospital had not allowed his daughter to visit him for fear of spreading the virus. The 72-year-old looked nothing like the ebullient, crisply dressed cardiologist who used to kiss her on the forehead before heading off to work.

"I was hugging my father, and it didn't really feel like my father," Schwarz said.

Less than an hour after she was allowed to see him, he died.

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Schwarz recalled the painful experience in a phone interview on Friday to raise awareness about the devastating impacts of COVID-19. She and other victims of the virus, including people who were infected months ago and are still experiencing severe symptoms, organized rallies in Atlanta, New York, Washington D.C., Denver and more than a dozen other cities around the country on Saturday to encourage people to get vaccinated and wear a mask.

Tanya Washington, who organized the Atlanta rally of COVID Survivors for Change, told about 50 people gathered outside a downtown church on Saturday that "COVID is still very much a part of our lives."

"If it saves one person from hurting, just one person, it would have been worth it," said Washington, who lost her father to the coronavirus in March.

She earlier recalled her harrowing final moments with him.

"Never in a million years did I think that I would have to take my dad off of oxygen dressed from head to toe in PPE and say goodbye to him," she said. "I couldn't touch him except through gloves. I couldn't kiss him except through a mask."

The rallies came amid a surge in infections around the country that are again straining hospitals, particularly in the South, where vaccination rates remain low. COVID survivors and those who have lost loved ones to the disease say they are frustrated by ongoing resistance to vaccines and misinformation about the virus.

"It has become a political issue, and it's not about that. It's a real virus, and it's killing everybody no matter what political thoughts you have," said Paula Schirmer.

Schirmer, 50, of Marietta, Georgia, her husband and three children contracted the virus in March 2020, but her symptoms have not gone away even more than a year later. She has difficulty remembering appointments and words — key to her job as an interpreter — and suffers from intestinal problems. The virus also took a toll on her mental health.

Schirmer's husband was hospitalized for nearly two months, and she twice received calls from nurses informing her that he was in a critical state. The experience has left her with post-traumatic stress disorder, she said.

"It was awful not knowing what was going to happen," she said.

The rallies also aimed to push lawmakers for financial and medical help for COVID victims.

Marjorie Roberts, 60, said she continues to require regular medical care for damage from COVID. She has lung and liver problems and lost seven teeth. She can now barely walk several blocks and sometimes has no energy hours after waking up.

"I was living my life like it was golden. I was traveling," she said. "I literally have to start my life all over again."

Because of the pandemic, Schwarz has put off traveling to New York to bury her father's ashes at a cemetery where other members of the family have been laid to rest. That's made it hard to move forward.

"It's delayed closure," she said. "I don't want people to go through that."

For 4th week, protesters in France decry virus pass rules

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Thousands of people marched in Paris and other French cities Saturday for a fourth consecutive week of protests against the COVID-19 health passes that everyone in the country will need shortly to enter cafes, trains and other venues.

The demonstrations came two days after France's Constitutional Council upheld most provisions of a new law that expands the locations where health passes are needed to enter.

Starting Monday, the pass will be required in France to access cafes, restaurants, long-distance travel and, in some cases, hospitals. It was already in place for cultural and recreational venues, including cinemas, concert halls, sports arenas and theme parks with a capacity for more than 50 people.

With French riot police on guard, a largely peaceful crowd walked across Paris carrying banners that read: "Our freedoms are dying" and "Vaccine: Don't touch our kids." Some were also upset that the government has made COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for health care workers by Sept. 15.

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Dozens of street protests took place in other French cities as well, including Marseille, Nice and Lille. The French Interior ministry said there were 237,000 protesters nationwide, including 17,000 in Paris.

Opponents say the virus pass limits their mobility and implicitly renders vaccines obligatory.

Polls, however, show that most people in France support the health passes, which prove that people are vaccinated, have had a negative recent test or have recovered from COVID-19.

Muriel, 55, a Parisian who declined to give her last name, told The Associated Press that she especially protests "the disguised mandatory vaccination ... it's an incredible blow to our fundamental freedoms."

A separate protest organized by far-right politician Florian Philippot gathered thousands near the Health Ministry in central Paris. Many held French flags and called for French President Emmanuel Macron to resign.

"Here, you don't have COVID, but you have rage!" Philippot told the crowd, calling for a boycott of places requiring the pass.

In Reunion island, a French territory in the Indian Ocean that is under a partial lockdown amid a surge in infections, thousands turned out to protest the virus pass.

France is registering over 21,000 new confirmed virus cases daily, a steep climb from a month ago. More than 112,000 people with the virus in France have died since the pandemic began.

Over 36 million people in France — about 54% of the population — are fully vaccinated. At least 7 million have gotten their first vaccine shot since Macron announced the health pass requirement on July 12.

A growing number of European countries have implemented virus passes, each with different rules.

Italy's "Green Pass" took effect on Friday. Denmark pioneered vaccine passes with little resistance. In Austria, the pass is needed to enter into restaurants, theaters, hotels, sports facilities and hairdressers. In Germany, anti-virus pass protests in Berlin last weekend led to some violent clashes with police.

No home, mentally ill: California case shows system's flaws

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The big brother Suzette Chaumette remembers was witty and kind, an aspiring historian at the University of California, Berkeley whose promise was derailed by mental illness. Over the decades, he struggled with bipolar disorder, cycling in and out of hospitals and halfway homes and into homelessness.

In June, she saw him on the local news, lying on the ground and under arrest for allegedly throwing a water bottle at California Gov. Gavin Newsom. Authorities called the 54-year-old man "aggressive." It was the first time she had seen him in years.

"I never thought he would be that guy, but he is that guy," she said, crying. "He's not a bad guy. He's got great intentions and really would take the help if he was in the right place."

In California, a quarter of the 161,000 people experiencing homelessness also have a severe mental illness. An estimated 37,000 people pinball between nonprofits and public agencies, cycling through ERs, jails and the streets, sometimes for decades, with no one monitoring their overall care in a fractured system that nobody entirely knows how to fix.

There aren't enough places for people like Suzette's brother, Serge Chaumette, who likely require long-term clinical care, says Paul C. Webster, director of Hope Street Coalition. People with brain disorders need a range of living situations where they can "step down" from oversight as they improve.

But government reimbursement for that kind of care is low to nonexistent, he says. Medicaid, for example, will not pay for treatment in "institutions for mental disease" that have more than 16 beds.

"The public just doesn't know. They're mad about all the encampments and people on the streets because they don't understand what it takes to deal with this other than to clear them out," said Margot Dashiell, vice president of the East Bay chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Meanwhile, families suffer quietly. Suzette Chaumette debated talking to The Associated Press about a private pain that spilled into public view only after a chance encounter with the state's top elected official.

"Mental health is a family issue," she said. "It does not live in isolation."

The June encounter between the governor and Chaumette was brief.

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Newsom, 53, was in downtown Oakland to promote small businesses when he was "approached by an aggressive individual," said Fran Clader, spokeswoman for the California Highway Patrol, which provides security for the governor. Newsom appeared unharmed and joked about the incident.

Chaumette was booked into jail and released within a day. He has no cellphone, and his family did not know where he was.

He didn't appear at arraignment hearings the following month in a separate case in which he allegedly spat at an officer in March while being taken to a county-run psychiatric hospital on an involuntary hold.

On Friday, Alameda County deputy public defender Jeff Chorney said Chaumette is receiving care for his illness and that all charges should be dropped.

"We cannot continue to treat people with mental health issues by locking them in a cage," he said in a statement.

Governments at all levels have been disinvesting in mental health for decades. John F. Kennedy wanted to replace state asylums with federal community clinics, but the transition never happened. States started shedding psychiatric beds, and those that are available are increasingly reserved for criminal defendants, the Treatment Advocacy Center in Virginia reported.

No state meets the gold standard in care, but some cities have innovative programs, said Elizabeth Sinclair Hancq, the center's research director. New York City has a pioneering mental health clubhouse that addresses social isolation, while Tucson, Arizona, uses a robust crisis center model to connect people to services and bypass jail.

Acknowledging such shortcomings, Newsom signed a \$12 billion spending plan this year dedicated to homelessness, including converting motel rooms for housing and enhancing facilities for people with addiction and mental illness. More than a quarter of the country's estimated 580,000 unhoused residents live in California.

"We've got to take accountability, responsibility to do more and do better, and that's what this budget intends to do," said Newsom, a Democrat.

Mental health experts say the U.S. needs more of everything: in-patient beds, out-patient treatment and longer-term housing. Yet that can seem fantastical with public health underfunded, social workers overwhelmed and housing prices out of reach, especially in the prohibitively expensive San Francisco Bay Area.

Teresa Pasquini is a former Contra Costa County mental health commissioner who has documented her family's struggle to get help for her son, who has schizoaffective disorder. She wondered about the man accused of hurling a bottle at the governor.

"Moms like me kind of go, 'Is that one of ours? It sounds like it is,'" she said. "There's nowhere for them to go and so they're being failed and jailed continuously, and it's a humanitarian crisis that nobody's talking about."

Chaumette grew up in Oakland, the only son of accountants who fled political unrest in Haiti when he was a baby. Like many immigrants, his parents worked hard to give him and his sisters a better life: Catholic schooling, music lessons and a comfortable home where the family conversed in French.

Bipolar disorder causes dramatic changes in thinking and behavior. He had his first manic episode in his early 20s, cutting up clothes and smearing car oil inside the house, his sister said.

"That's when my mom and my sisters and I looked at each other and said, 'This isn't normal,'" she said.

It took a long time to get the correct diagnosis, and while her brother had periods of stability, it never lasted. He bounced around agencies, the people tasked with his care did not communicate or left, and there was little consistency, his sister said. Records show he tried to continue his education at UC Berkeley, where he was enrolled off and on from 1987 to 2003.

The last time the siblings hung out regularly was when he lived in a dilapidated Oakland halfway house. But the building burned in 2017, killing four people. Chaumette was among those who became homeless in a city where the average monthly rent for an apartment is \$2,700.

"The public's perception is often that the family threw the individual out, or the family doesn't care, but very often that's not the case," said Sinclair Hancq, the research director. "The family has tried."

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In Alameda County, where Chaumette was arrested, a Mental Health Advisory Board is calling for more housing, licensed beds and coordination. Board Chair Lee Davis, who also has bipolar disorder, says she's lucky she responds to medication and can maintain a home and job.

But living with the disorder also can mean repeatedly screaming a racial slur to rid it from the universe, thinking her cats' napping will make up for her lack of sleep, or smashing a window because the "inside and outside needed to merge."

Mania shouldn't be criminalized, she says. "Why is there no number to call to report a mental health crisis?"

Chaumette has been in and out of the criminal justice system for decades, largely for misdemeanors that resulted in probation. It's unclear what kind of help he may have received through the courts, as health records are confidential and off-limits even to family.

Suzette Chaumette is skeptical of promises by politicians.

"His life is so much more than the mental illness that has gripped him his whole life," she said, adding she wants people to "see him as a human being, not just a case — that he's really given a chance at life."

Chopra wins India's 1st gold in Olympic track and field

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Neeraj Chopra held a corner of the India flag in each hand and raised it over his head.

A half-hour later, the tri-color was flying at the top of the mast at Tokyo's Olympic Stadium and Chopra was standing atop the medal podium, feeling on top of the world.

A first gold medal in Olympic track and field for a nation of 1.3 billion, its first in any sports since a shooting title in 2008, had to be cause for celebration.

Chopra won the javelin title at the Tokyo Games with a personal-best throw of 87.58 meters on Saturday night, securing the title with a throw to spare.

"It feels unbelievable," he said. "This is our first Olympic medal for a very long time, and in athletics it is the first time we have gold, so it's a proud moment for me and my country."

India's only previous medals in Olympic track and field were two silvers won by Norman Pritchard in the 200 meters and the 200-meter hurdles at Paris in 1900.

Historians have debated whether the results for Pritchard should be recorded for India or Britain. He was born in India to a British colonial family, moved to London before qualifying for the Paris Olympics and later moved to the U.S. and embarked on an acting career.

There's no disputing this one.

Chopra, a junior officer in the Indian army with the Rajputana Rifles, made his first mark on international athletics with a world junior title in 2016. Two years later, he became the first Indian athlete to win the javelin at the Asian Games and at the Commonwealth Games.

He set a new benchmark in Tokyo, holding off Jakub Vadlejch (86.67) and Vitezslav Vesely (85.44), both of the Czech Republic.

India has won eight Olympic gold medals in field hockey, more than any other nation, and the return of the men's team to the medal podium at the Tokyo Games — a bronze — after a 41-year drought prompted widespread celebrations.

A first gold medal in track and field is set to make Chopra a star in India.

It didn't take long before the rewards started flowing in and he was on the phone with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Cricket is the all-consuming sport in India, and all of its powerbrokers were watching.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India quickly announced a cash reward for the Olympic medal winners. Military leaders chimed in, too.

Chopra was ranked fourth heading into the Olympics and had some issues with his technique in the hot and steamy conditions.

"But in my second throw I feel it's my PB," he said. "Finally I'm an Olympic champion."

He knew there'd be plenty of sports fans watching on TV at home, flicking between India's cricket test

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match in England and the Olympics.

"So proud moment for India and for me because they're supporting me a lot," said Chopra, the son of a farming family. "Today they're all in front of the TV and they're supporting me — so thank you India."

Former world champion Johannes Vetter of Germany was favored to win, but placed ninth after the first three attempts and was out of contention early. He had praise for Chopra.

"He's a really talented guy, always really friendly," Vetter said. "I'm happy for him."

Chopra said he'd given everything he had in the competition.

"I hope after me India can win more medals in athletics," he said. "I don't have anything left — I gave my 100% on the field."

'Reservation Dogs' smashes stereotypes of Indigenous people

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Two Indigenous filmmakers are smashing the caricatures and stereotypes of Native Americans, who since the earliest days of film and TV have often played supporting roles or been portrayed as bloodthirsty killers standing in the way of white, westward expansion.

Sterlin Harjo, a Seminole and Muscogee filmmaker from Oklahoma, teamed up with Taika Waititi, a Maori director from New Zealand, on "Reservation Dogs," a new series debuting Monday on FX on Hulu that features four rough-and-tumble teenagers who cuss, fight and steal their way toward adulthood in a rural Oklahoma town. Filmed entirely on the Muscogee Nation reservation in eastern Oklahoma, the network says the half-hour comedy is the first show on cable TV in which all the writers, directors and regular characters on the series are Indigenous.

"To be able to tell a real story about real people through comedy, it's about time," Harjo, who directed "Mekko" and "Barking Water," said during a premiere of the series this week in Tulsa. "There's been 130-something years of cinema and we're finally showing ourselves as human beings, which shouldn't be radical, but it is pretty radical today."

Devery Jacobs, a Mohawk actor from Quebec, Canada, who plays one of the show's lead characters, said working on a set with so many Indigenous actors and crew was a breath of fresh air.

"On a lot of projects, I was the only Indigenous person for miles," Jacobs said. "Stepping on the set of 'Reservation Dogs' and seeing my community around me, a community of fellow Indigenous folks from different backgrounds, it was truly being welcomed home."

"I'd never experienced it before, and it just meant so much to me, and I know it's going to mean so much to audiences across Turtle Island and beyond," she said, using a term many Indigenous people, mainly in the northeastern part of North America, use to refer to the continent.

Waititi and Harjo, longtime friends collaborating for the first time, said the series arose out of discussions about the kind of show they'd like to see, and before they knew it had "come up with this idea about these kids who had turned into vigilantes and wanted to clean up their community," recalled Waititi, the Oscar-winning writer and director of "Jojo Rabbit," whose credits also include "Thor: Ragnarok" and the TV series "What We Do in the Shadows."

"We weren't entirely sure where it would be and then it just struck us that setting it here would be perfect."

Filmed mostly in the small eastern Oklahoma town of Okmulgee, where the Muscogee Nation is headquartered, the show's restless young characters are familiar beyond Indigenous communities and small towns, Waititi and Harjo said.

"The idea of just wandering around the suburb or a small community with nothing to do, wondering what the hell's out there for me and what am I going to do with my life," Waititi said. "That's the heart of what drives these kids ... a lot of teenagers all over the world, they feel like that."

Although the characters aren't identified as members of a specific Native American tribe, the Muscogee Nation was heavily involved in helping to scout locations, and a public premiere at its River Spirit Resort and Casino in Tulsa drew close to 2,000 people.

"The real value in this show and the representation is the authenticity of it," said Jason Salsman, a Mus-

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cogee Nation spokesman. "There have been so many years and instances of invisibility, mischaracterization and misappropriation of Native culture in film and movies."

"This is a welcome change," he said.

Like many of the 39 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma, the Muscogee Nation has been diversifying its economy with the help of an infusion of cash from tribal gambling approved by voters in 2004. The U.S. Supreme Court also upheld the boundaries of the Nation's reservation — 3 million acres (12,100 square kilometers), including most of the city of Tulsa — in a landmark decision last year on tribal sovereignty.

The show's production in Oklahoma comes at a time when the film and television industry is booming in the state. The Oklahoma Film and Music Office estimates the 33 film and television productions, including "Reservation Dogs," that qualified for a state rebate on qualifying expenditures in the last year had a direct fiscal impact of more than \$161 million. Other films shot in Oklahoma include Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon," "Stillwater" starring Matt Damon and this year's Academy Award-winning film "Minari."

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, himself a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, signed into law earlier this year a bill that increases the cap on the film rebate from \$8 million to \$30 million annually, which is expected to draw more productions, diversify the state's workforce and beef up its film infrastructure.

That's welcome news for Oklahomans who work with the film industry, said Shane Brown, freelance photographer and videographer from Tulsa who was hired to work on "Reservation Dogs." Brown, who is also doing photo and video work for a couple of documentaries, said he's so busy he had to turn down job offers for work on other film productions.

"Everybody is busy," Brown said. "All of these independent, freelance positions, just whatever you need to crew up a film, everybody seems to have work."

Texans QB's sex assault cases highlight concerns amid #MeToo

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Lawyers fighting sexual assault and harassment allegations against Houston Texans quarterback Deshaun Watson face a predicament: Defending their client means working to discredit the claims of 22 women who are more likely to be believed in the #MeToo era.

Watson's lawyers have sought to balance their defense of the NFL star while simultaneously condemning sexual violence against women. They've said women who say they have been victims should be taken at their word. Just not these particular women.

The attorneys called the lawsuits against Watson a "money grab" and fired back that all 22 women who have filed suit are lying, a strategy some experts and advocates say relies on long-used tropes designed to minimize such accusations. A lawyer for Watson's accusers said some of them have faced criticism and even death threats, highlighting how sexual abuse cases — whether civil or criminal — still get pushback even four years into the #MeToo movement and remain difficult to prove in the legal system.

In their lawsuits, the 22 women accuse Watson of exposing himself, touching them with his penis or kissing them against their will during massage appointments. At least one woman alleges Watson forced her to perform oral sex.

Watson and his lawyers have denied the accusations. His lawyers have said "some sexual activity" happened during some of the appointments, but that he never coerced anyone. And they presented 18 other female massage therapists who said Watson never acted inappropriately when they worked with him.

Houston police are investigating some of the accusations, and the NFL has launched its own probe.

Rusty Hardin, Watson's lead attorney, said he believes that concern about sexual assault is "long overdue," and he condemned the attacks and threats against his client's accusers. But he also pushed back against claims that he's being insensitive, acknowledging the nature of his job in the legal realm puts him in a precarious position amid a societal sea change.

Because of #MeToo, there's a tendency by many to automatically assume such allegations are true, Hardin said.

"If Deshaun Watson comes out and says I never did this, is he attacking the women just by denying

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he committed the offense? That's where we've gotten to," said Hardin, a well-known Houston civil and criminal defense attorney who represented ex-pitcher Roger Clemens when he was acquitted in 2012 of charges that he lied to Congress by denying he used performance-enhancing drugs.

In court documents, Watson's legal team has called the lawsuits part of a "money grab" against the former Clemson University standout, who agreed to a \$160 million contract extension last year and became one of the highest paid players in the league. In recent years, the phrase "money grab" has been used as a defense in other high-profile sexual assault allegations, including by convicted former NFL player Kellen Winslow II and by a former San Diego County sheriff's deputy who was sent to prison for on-duty misconduct with 16 women.

Sarah Klein, an attorney who represents sexual abuse victims for the California-based Manly, Stewart & Finaldi law firm but who isn't connected to the Watson case, said she's disappointed that people who allege sexual assault are still met with efforts to shame them or to characterize their outcries as extortion.

"Mr. Hardin wants to have it both ways: 'I support women and survivors but these survivors in my client's case are liars and extortionists,'" said Klein, a former gymnast who was a sexual abuse victim of Larry Nassar, the former team doctor for USA Gymnastics.

But defending Watson and proclaiming general support for other women who allege sexual assault is "fair play," according to David Ring, an attorney for one of the women who accused disgraced and convicted movie mogul Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault in Los Angeles.

"Whether people look at that as staged or relevant ... I don't know," Ring said.

Tony Buzbee, the attorney representing the 22 women who are suing Watson, has said the litigation is not about money but "female empowerment" and stopping sexual assault.

Buzbee has handled various high-profile cases, including representing former Texas Gov. Rick Perry in an abuse-of-power case and settling lawsuits for 10 teenagers who had accused eccentric Texas millionaire Stanley Marsh 3 of paying them for sexual acts.

"I'm instead focused on the welfare of the women he had contact with and aggressively pursuing their cases in court," Buzbee said.

Buzbee and Hardin have said no settlement was pending and both were preparing for trial, the first of which might not be for another 1 1/2 years. Hardin said if there were any settlements, he would insist they be public to avoid the appearance that Watson was "buying silence, because we're not."

Watson's future with the Texans remains unclear, as do questions of how much the allegations will affect that future. Watson reported to the Texans training camp last month to avoid being fined. He asked to be traded before the lawsuits were filed, and he still wants to play for another team. The NFL has yet to interview Watson, Hardin said.

Olympic Latest: France earns gold for 1st volleyball medal

TOKYO (AP) — The Latest on the Tokyo Olympics, which are taking place under heavy restrictions after a year's delay because of the coronavirus pandemic:

MEDAL ALERT

France made sure its first Olympic volleyball medal would be gold, beating the Russians in five sets in a breakthrough win for a country that had no history of success.

The French had only qualified for the Olympics four times before this year and never made it past the quarterfinals. But they made it through the knockout stage to earn the gold despite being forced to a fifth set after blowing a 2-0 lead in the final.

Jean Patry rallied the French late in the fifth set with a kill and an ace to put them ahead 13-11. Antoine Brizard then surprised the Russians when he sent a soft shot over the net instead of setting it to give France match point and they won it 15-12 when Maxim Mikhaylov's shot went wide.

Argentina beat Brazil in five sets for the bronze medal.

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MEDAL ALERT

Malcom scored in the 108th minute and Brazil won its second consecutive gold medal in men's soccer with a 2-1 victory over Spain.

Brazil also won gold on home soil five years ago at the iconic Maracana Stadium. Neymar struck the winner in a 5-4 shootout after a 1-1 draw with Germany.

Brazil had a 1-0 lead at the half, but Mikel Oyarzabal tied it for Spain in the 61st minute off a cross from Carlos Soler.

The Brazilians won a penalty kick in the 37th minute after a collision between Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon and Matheus Cunha. Richarlison, who led the field in Japan with five goals, took the penalty, which sailed well over the goal to keep the game scoreless.

Brazil took the lead in first-half stoppage time when Davi Alves popped the ball high into the box to keep it in play and Cunha slotted it just inside the post.

Gil Bryan nearly scored in the 88th for Spain, but his shot hit the crossbar and the match went to extra time.

Spain won the gold medal in 1992 and was also seeking its second Olympic title.

Brazil advanced to the final 4-1 on a penalty shootout after a scoreless draw with Mexico in the semifinals while Spain got past host Japan 1-0 on Marco Asensio's goal in the 115th minute.

Mexico downed Japan 3-1 in the bronze medal match in Saitama on Friday.

MEDAL ALERT

France won the Olympic gold medal in men's handball by beating Denmark 25-23 in the final.

France led by six goals early in the second half before Denmark came back to make it a one-goal game in the final minute. Ludovic Fabregas managed a steal and empty-net goal with six seconds left to secure the victory.

France was playing its fourth consecutive men's Olympic final after winning in 2008 and 2012 and losing to Denmark in 2016. The French women's team plays the Russian team for gold on Sunday.

Spain beat Egypt 33-31 for the bronze medal.

MEDAL ALERT

Mariya Lasitskene won the Russian team's first gold medal in track and field at the Tokyo Games.

The three-time women's high jump world champion added an Olympic gold medal to her collection with a winning height of 2.04 meters.

Lasitskene moved into first place when she cleared 2.02 meters on her first jump. She had missed early attempts before clearing 1.96, 1.98 and 2 meters.

Nicola McDermott of Australia was leading until she missed her first attempt at 2.02. She cleared it on her next attempt for a national record but missed all three attempts at 2.04.

Yaroslava Mahuchikh of Ukraine finished with bronze after clearing 2 meters.

MEDAL ALERT

A Japanese team of All-Stars fulfilled a determined national mission to win the Olympic baseball gold medal for the first time, beating the United States 2-0 behind Munetaka Murakami's third-inning home run.

Masato Morishita and four relievers combined on a six-hitter, and the Japanese men (5-0) matched the accomplishment of the women's softball team, which upended the Americans for their second straight gold medal.

Several hundred people who appeared to be Olympic volunteers cheered on Japan in a largely empty 34,000-capacity Yokohama Stadium, some wearing orange Japan jerseys and matching facemasks on the warm and humid night.

America, the nation that introduced baseball to Japan in 1872, finished 4-2. Teams were denied access to all 40-man roster players and many eligible top prospects by Major League Baseball and its clubs, hindering the U.S. and other countries whose top players are in MLB.

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There were no bad exchanges this time as the U.S. men won their first gold medal in a track race at the Tokyo Games with a victory in the 4x400-meter relay.

The U.S. men didn't reach the final of the 4x100-meter relay, but the 4x400 team of Michael Cherry, Michael Norman, Bryce Deadmon and Rai Benjamin was never really in trouble as they completed four laps of the Olympic oval in 2 minutes, 55.70 seconds. It was a fifth gold for the U.S. men in the 4x400 since 1996.

The Netherlands took silver in a national record 2:57.18 and Botswana won bronze in 2:57.27.

MEDAL ALERT

Britain's Joseph Choong set an Olympic record to win the men's pentathlon Saturday, matching the gold medal won by Britain's Kate French in the women's event.

Choong finished third in the event's swimming, first in fencing, 14th in riding and 15th in laser-run to set a new Olympic mark of 1,482 points.

Egypt's Ahmed Elgendy won silver and Woongtae Jun of South Korea won bronze.

Britain is the first country to win the men's and women's individual modern pentathlon at the same Olympic Games.

MEDAL ALERT

Allyson Felix has won her 11th Olympic medal, combining with her American teammates to finish the 4x400-meter relay in 3 minutes, 16.85 seconds for a runaway victory.

The team of Felix, Sydney McLaughlin, Dalilah Muhammad and Athing Mu was never in jeopardy in this one.

Poland finished second, 3.68 seconds behind, and Jamaica finished third.

Felix, who became the most-decorated woman in Olympic track history when she won bronze in the 400 on Friday night, now passes Carl Lewis with the most track medals of any U.S. athlete. Of the 11 medals, seven are gold.

MEDAL ALERT

Iran's Sajad Ganjzadeh has won the Olympic gold medal in men's over-75 kilogram karate after final opponent Tareg Hamedi was given a disqualification penalty for kicking Ganjzadeh hard in the upper body or head.

Ganjzadeh left the Budokan tatami on a stretcher after falling motionless onto his back from the spectacular kick by Hamedi, who led the bout 4:1. Ganjzadeh moved his arms before he was carried away.

After the officials conferred, a hansoku penalty was issued to Hamedi and Ganjzadeh was declared the winner. Hamedi, who left the mat in tears, still won Saudi Arabia's second-ever silver medal, but missed out on its first gold.

Hamedi's amazing kick was the final strike of karate's Olympic debut tournament. The sport is not on the program for Paris in 2024, and its long-term Olympic future is up in the air.

Hamedi overcame Japan's Ryutarō Araga in the semifinals. Araga's bronze surprisingly was the host nation's only kumite medal in Tokyo. Karate proliferated in Japan and spread throughout the globe during the 20th century.

Uğur Aktaş of Turkey won the other bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Japan's Yui Susaki defeated China's Yanan Sun by technical superiority, 10-0, to win the women's free-style wrestling 50-kilogram final.

Susaki, 22, added Olympic gold to her two world titles. It was Japan's fourth Olympic gold in women's wrestling out of six weight classes.

Sun had won an Olympic bronze medal at 48kg in 2016.

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Azerbaijan's Mariya Stadnik won her fourth Olympic medal. She won her match for bronze by technical superiority, 10-0 over Mongolia's Namuuntsetseg Tsogt Ochir. She previously had won two silvers and a bronze.

American Sarah Hildebrand defeated Ukraine's Oksana Livach by technical superiority, 12-1, for the other bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Neeraj Chopra has won India's first gold medal in Olympic track and field with a throw of 87.58 meters to clinch the javelin title at the Tokyo Games.

India's only previous medals in Olympic track and field were two silver medals won by Norman Pritchard in the 200-meters and the 200-meter hurdles at the Paris Games in 1900.

Chopra was the first athlete from India to win gold in javelin at the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games and he has set a new benchmark in Tokyo. He held off athletes from the Czech Republic to finish atop the podium.

Jakub Vadlejch took silver and former world champion Vitezslav Vesely bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Feryal Abdelaziz of Egypt has won the first Olympic karate gold medal in women's over-61 kilogram kumite, beating Azerbaijan's Iryna Zaretska to win Egypt's second Olympic gold medal since 1948.

The 22-year-old Abdelaziz went ahead on a yuko with 28 seconds left in a cagey final bout. She scored again three seconds later and hung on for a 2:0 victory celebrated with a primal scream.

Egypt has been competing at the Olympics since 1912, but Greco-Roman wrestler Karem Gaber's gold in Athens in 2004 was the nation's only other gold in the past 73 years.

Gong Li of China and Sofya Berultseva of Kazakhstan won bronze.

Japan's Ayumi Uekusa was eliminated before the finals, ending a rough Olympic year for the karate champion. Uekusa spoke out earlier this year against Japanese karate official Masao Kagawa, saying he had bullied her and injured her with a bamboo sword. Kagawa resigned.

MEDAL ALERT

Sweden has defeated Jessica Springsteen and the U.S. jumping team in a jump off for the gold medal.

Springsteen and teammates Laura Kraut and McLain Ward each moved cleanly through the shortened jump-off course and did so with a combined time of 124.2 seconds.

Peder Fredricson, the final Swedish rider, needed to circle the track in 40.30 seconds or better without error and cruised to a time of 39.01 for the country's record fourth gold medal but first since 1924. The Americans also entered this week with three golds.

France had a clear line to a second straight gold when its final rider, Penelope Leprevost, took the course. Needing to finish with fewer than five points to win without a jump off, Leprevost's horse refused twice, disqualifying her and the rest of the French team.

That left the Americans and Swedes tied for the lead with eight penalties apiece, necessitating the jump off.

Springsteen, the daughter of rockers Bruce Springsteen and Patti Scialfia, gets a silver in her Olympic debut.

MEDAL ALERT

Jakob Ingebrigtsen of Norway surged ahead as he rounded the last curve and set an Olympic record to win the 1,500-meters at the Tokyo Games.

Ingebrigtsen ran behind world champion Timothy Cheruiyot for most of the race before kicking late to win the gold medal in 3 minutes, 28.32 seconds, beating the record of 3:31.65 set by Abel Kipsang of Kenya two days earlier in the heats.

Cheruiyot, who missed initial selection for the Olympics and was a late addition because another runner

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was cut from Kenya's team, took silver in 3:29.01.

Josh Kerr of Britain won bronze. Kipsang placed fourth.

MEDAL ALERT

The Russian Olympic Committee's Abdulrashid Sadulaev defeated American Kyle Snyder 6-3 in the men's freestyle 97-kilogram final.

Snyder was the Olympic gold medalist at 97kg in 2016 and is a two-time world champion. Sadulaev was the Olympic gold medalist at 86kg in 2016 and is a four-time world champion.

Sadulaev led 6-0 in the final minute. Snyder scored two on a takedown and one on a step-out to make it 6-3 before Sadulaev held on.

Cuba's Reineris Salas defeated Azerbaijan's Sharif Sharifov for bronze. Salas, 34, had never won a world title or an Olympic medal. Sharifov, 32, won Olympic gold in the 84kg category at the 2012 London Olympics and earned bronze at 86kg in 2016.

In the other bronze medal match, Italy's Abraham Canyedo Ruano defeated Turkey's Suleyman Karadeniz 6-2.

MEDAL ALERT

Russian Svetlana Romashina has won the seventh gold medal of her Olympic career, leading her team to gold in the artistic swimming team event.

Romashina has won or been on the winning team of every single event she's participated in at four Olympics.

The only other athletes who have won at least seven Olympic golds without ever claiming silver or bronze are Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt and American jumper Ray Ewry, who both won eighth golds in track and field.

The rest of the ROC team included: Vlada Chigireva, Aleksandra Patskevich, Marina Goliadkina, Svetlana Kolesnichenko, Alla Shishkina, Polina Komar and Maria Shurochkina.

Romashina teamed with Kolesnichenko to win the duet on Wednesday.

The Russians were heavy favorites in a sport they have dominated for more than two decades. Their last Olympic loss in what was then known as synchronized swimming came at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

Performing to "Parade of Planets" by Denis Gornizov, with planet designs on their swimsuits, ROC was awarded 98.8000 points for the free routine and finished with a total of 196.0979 points after also leading the technical routine.

China finished 2.5669 points behind to take the silver medal and Ukraine was 5.7961 behind for bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Sifan Hassan won the 10,000 meters for her second gold and third medal of the Tokyo Olympics after entering three long-distance races.

Hassan burst past world-record holder Letesenbet Gidey on the final turn and won in a time of 29 minutes, 55.32 seconds.

It completed an astonishing 5,000 and 10,000 double for the Ethiopian-born runner, who now competes for the Netherlands. She also won a bronze in the 1,500 meters. Her victory in the 10,000 was her sixth race in eight days in Tokyo.

Kalkidan Gezahegne of Bahrain took silver in 29:56.18 and Gidey, having led for most of the race, faded for the bronze as she had no answer to Hassan's finish.

Four runners didn't finish race on another humid night at the Olympic Stadium.

MEDAL ALERT

Japan's Takuto Otoguro defeated Azerbaijan's Haji Aliyev 5-4 to win the men's freestyle wrestling 65-kilogram final.

Otoguro's best result had been a world title in 2018.

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Aliyev was a 2016 Olympic bronze medalist at 57kg and a three-time world champion. Bronze medalists were the Russian Olympic Committee's Gadzhimurad Rashidov and India's Bajrang Punia.

Jessica Springsteen's final ride at her first Olympics has put the American team in medal contention at the Equestrian Park.

Springsteen's horse, Don Juan van de Donkhoeve, front-hoofed a rail for a four-point penalty but was otherwise lightning quick and clean around the course.

Springsteen's ride followed a perfect circuit from Olympic veteran Laura Kraut for the Americans, and the U.S. entered the final round tied with Sweden and Belgium for second with four points. France leads with two.

The 29-year-old Springsteen -- daughter of rockers Bruce Springsteen and Patti Scialfa -- failed to qualify for the finals in the individual event earlier this week. She's picked up four penalty points in each of her three runs spanning the individual and team competitions.

German world champion Jonathan Horne has left the Budokan tatami on a stretcher after getting hurt in his elimination-round kumite bout in men's 75-kilogram Olympic karate.

Horne withdrew from the Olympic tournament about 30 minutes later.

Horne appeared to injure his arm during a sparring exchange with Georgia's Gogita Arkania. The 32-year-old karateka collapsed to the mat in pain and was eventually taken away for medical attention.

Horne was the world champion at 84 kilograms in 2018, and he won the European title at the same weight earlier this year. He was among the favorites in this lower division in the Olympic debut of karate, which concludes its three-day run Saturday night.

MEDAL ALERT

Israel's Linoy Ashram won the gold medal in the rhythmic gymnastics individual competition, ending Russia's decades-long dominance in the sport.

Ashram, 22, edged out a pair of Russian identical twin sisters who were the favorites heading into Tokyo. Dina Averina, 22, placed second and her sister, Arina, fell to fourth place. Alina Harnasko of Belarus won the bronze medal.

Russia has swept the rhythmic gymnastics gold medals in every Olympics since 2000.

But Ashram's victory Saturday, her country's first ever in rhythmic gymnastics, breaks their streak. Her nearly flawless performance included a club routine set to Beyonce's "Crazy in Love" and dancing with a ribbon to a techno remix of the Jewish folk song "Hava Nagila" while dressed in a blue and white feathered leotard.

MEDAL ALERT

The Danish team of Lasse Norman Hansen and Michael Morkov won the return of the men's Madison to the Olympics for the first time since 2008.

Hansen and Morkov won just three of the 20 sprints but were consistent enough through the 200-lap race to finish with 43 points. That was three more than Britain, which earned silver on a tiebreaker, and France, which took the bronze.

The much-loved Madison, once a staple of track cycling, returned to the Olympics for the first time since the 2008 Beijing Games. In fact, three riders who took part in the last Madison were still around 13 years later for its return: Morkov of Denmark, Kenny de Ketele of Belgium and Germany's Roger Kluge.

The race involves teams of two whipping each other around in a relay. One rider is considered in the race at a time, though they can switch at any juncture, and points are awarded to the top four finishers in each 10-lap segment.

MEDAL ALERT

The U.S. has won its third consecutive gold medal in women's water polo, pounding Spain 14-5 in the

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final at the Tokyo Olympics.

Maddie Musselman scored three times and Ashleigh Johnson made 11 saves as the U.S. improved to 134-4 since it won gold at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. After falling 10-9 to Hungary in group play in its first loss at the Olympics since the 2008 final, the U.S. ripped off four straight wins by a combined score of 63-26.

The U.S. joins the men's teams from Britain (1908-1920) and Hungary (2000-2008) as the only countries to win at least three straight water polo titles at the Olympics. The U.S. is the only team to medal in each of the six editions of the women's tournament at the Games.

Maica Garcia had two goals for Spain, which also lost to the U.S. in the 2012 final. The silver medal matches the country's best finish in the women's competition.

MEDAL ALERT

Cao Yuan became the first diver to win gold medals in three different Olympic events with a thrilling duel off the 10-meter platform at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Cao completed another dominating performance by the mighty Chinese team, which was nearly perfect at these games. Yang Jian took the silver, just 1.95 points behind his teammate in a scintillating capper.

Yang nailed his final dive, receiving a string of 9.0s and 9.5s for a forward 4 1/2 somersaults with a 4.1-degree of difficulty -- the hardest dive that anyone attempted.

Yang came up out of the water, pumping his fists.

But Cao was the final diver to go off the tower. While his dive wasn't as difficult, his marks were even better -- two perfect 10s, every other score a 9.5. That was enough to give him the gold with 582.35 points, with Yang taking the silver with 580.40.

Britain's Tom Daley was the only diver who gave the Chinese a real challenge before finishing with 548.25 for the bronze. He now had four Olympics medals in his career -- one gold and three bronze.

China's only slip-up in Tokyo came in the 10-meter synchronized, where Cao and Chen Aisen settled for silver behind Daley and Matty Lee by a mere 1.23 points. That miniscule margin was the only thing stopping a perfect run at the Tokyo pool by the world's greatest diving nation..

The Chinese were 1-2 in all four individual events, to go along with three golds and a silver in synchronized.

The 26-year-old Cao added to the golds he won on the 3-meter springboard at the 2016 Rio Games and in 10-meter synchro at the 2012 London Olympics. He also became only the second man to win medals in all four Olympic diving events after Russia's Dmitry Sautin.

Americans Jordan Windle and Brandon Loschiavo finished ninth and 11th, respectively.

A German coach has been suspended after she was filmed hitting an uncooperative horse during the Olympic women's modern pentathlon competition.

TV footage showed Kim Raisner leaning over a fence to strike the horse Saint Boy, which refused to jump the fences in the showjumping round. That cost German athlete Annika Schleu a chance at winning the gold medal.

The International Modern Pentathlon Union says it reviewed footage showing Raisner "appearing to strike the horse ... with her fist" and that "her actions were deemed to be in violation of (the rules)."

Raisner's suspension only applies for the rest of the Tokyo Olympics, which end Sunday. It wasn't immediately clear if she had been supposed to have any role in Saturday's men's competition in modern pentathlon.

Argentina won its second Olympic medal ever in men's volleyball, rallying to beat in five sets in the bronze medal game on Saturday.

The only other medal the Argentinians won in the sport came in Seoul in 1988 when they also beat Brazil for the bronze.

The Russians play France for the gold medal.

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MEDAL ALERT

Busenaz Sürmeneli of Turkey has won the women's welterweight gold medal in Tokyo, persevering through a difficult final against China's Gu Hong to win Turkey's first-ever boxing gold.

Sürmeneli won the final 3:0 with two even scorecards after a bout filled with holding and awkward exchanges. They were caused almost completely by Gu, whose awkward, hold-heavy style confounded opponents on her way to silver. Gu was docked a point early in the second round for holding, but would have won the fight on two judges' scorecards without the deduction.

Sürmeneli battered Gu late in the second round with the power and athleticism that made her arguably the most impressive fighter in the 100-woman Tokyo field. Turkey had won only two silvers and two bronzes in gold in its Olympic history before Sürmeneli's run to the first Olympic title at women's welterweight, one of two women's divisions added to the Olympics in Tokyo.

Oshae Jones of the United States and Lovlina Borgohain of India won bronze. Jones is one of four medalists for the most successful U.S. boxing team since 2000, while Borgohain is the third boxing medalist in India's Olympic history.

MEDAL ALERT

Brazil's Hebert Sousa won the men's middleweight boxing gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics in shocking fashion when his bout with Ukraine's Oleksandr Khyzhniak was stopped by a third-round knockdown.

The top-seeded Khyzhniak thoroughly dominated Sousa for the first two rounds and appeared to be cruising to Ukraine's fifth-ever boxing gold. But Sousa caught Khyzhniak with a counter left hook during an exchange in the third, and Khyzhniak went to the canvas hard.

The referee waved off the bout while Khyzhniak got up begged to continue, adding another instance to a series of Tokyo stoppages that would be considered far too early in professional bouts.

Sousa, who beat second-seeded Gleb Bakshi of Russia in the semifinal, joins lightweight Robson Conceição as the only boxing gold medalists in Brazil's Olympic history. Conceição won his historic gold at home in Rio de Janeiro.

Bakshi and Eumir Marcial of the Philippines won bronze medals in likely the most talent-stacked division in Tokyo.

Hungary has earned the country's first medal in women's water polo, beating the Russian team 11-9 for bronze at the Tokyo Olympics.

Vanda Valyi scored three times for Hungary, which finished fourth in each of the last three Games. Rita Kesthelyi had two goals.

Hungary was clinging to a 10-9 lead in the final seconds when Alda Magyari stopped a long shot by the Russian Olympic Committee's Nadezhda Glyzina. Magyari then threw the ball into the open net for the clinching goal.

Hungary beat the U.S. in group play, handing the Americans their first loss at the Olympics since the 2008 final. It outlasted the Netherlands in the quarterfinals before losing to Spain.

Spain plays the U.S. for gold later Saturday.

Hungary's men's team — the winningest country in the the Olympics' oldest team sport with nine gold medals — also plays for bronze Sunday against Spain.

Glyzina, Anastasia Simanovich and Ekaterina Prokofyeva each scored two goals for the Russian team, which won bronze in 2016. Anna Karnaukh made six saves.

MEDAL ALERT

The International Olympic Committee has closed a potential disciplinary case against two Chinese gold medalists who wore pin badges of Mao Zedong on the Olympic podium.

International Olympic Committee spokesman Christian Klaue says Chinese team officials gave assurances the athletes were warned and the incident will not be repeated.

At the medal ceremony Monday for the women's track cycling sprint, Bao Shanju and Zhong Tianshi

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wore pin badges of Mao, the founding leader of communist China.

The gesture tested the limits of Olympic Charter Rule 50, which prohibits political statements on the podium at the Tokyo Games. The rule will also apply at the 2022 Beijing Winter Games.

MEDAL ALERT

Stoyka Krasteva of Bulgaria has capped her impressive run through the Tokyo Olympics with the women's flyweight boxing gold medal. She beat top-seeded Buse Naz Cakiroglu of Turkey 5:0.

The 36-year-old Krasteva, a 2012 Olympian who returned to boxing in 2019 after a break, dominated her final four opponents to win Bulgaria's fifth-ever boxing gold and its first since Daniel Petrov in 1996. Bulgaria had won just one bronze in boxing since 2004.

Cakiroglu lost the final decisively, but still won Turkey's third-ever silver medal in boxing and sixth medal overall. Teammate Busenaz Surmeneli has another shot at Turkey's first boxing gold in the welterweight final later Saturday.

Huang Hsiao-wen of Taiwan, the 2019 world champion, and Tsukimi Namiki of Japan won bronze in the lightest women's weight class.

MEDAL ALERT

Galal Yafai has won Britain's first boxing gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, beating Carlo Paalam of the Philippines 4:1 in the flyweight final.

Yafai, the 28-year-old younger brother of two professional boxers from Birmingham, is a two-time Olympian who had an impressive run in Tokyo. He finished by knocking down Paalam in the first round of the gold medal bout and going on for a comfortable win.

Britain's powerhouse team has won two silvers and two bronzes to go with Yafai's gold in Tokyo. Middleweight Lauren Price fights Sunday for another gold.

Paalam fell just short of winning the first Olympic boxing gold medal in the history of the Philippines after knocking off defending gold medalist Shakhobidin Zoirov on his way to the final. The Filipino team is still heading home from Tokyo with two silver medals and a bronze after winning just five boxing medals in their entire previous Olympic history.

Ryomei Tanaka of Japan and Saken Bibossinov of Kazakhstan won bronze medals. Yafai beat Bibossinov in a thrilling semifinal.

MEDAL ALERT

Nelly Korda has given the Americans a sweep of gold medals in golf, holding on for a one-shot victory in a thrill-a-minute finish to the Olympic women's golf competition.

Korda led by as many as three shots on the back nine. In the end, she needed two putts from just inside 30 feet on the 18th hole for par and a 2-under 69.

Mone Inami of Japan made bogey from a plugged lie in the bunker on the 18th hole and faced a playoff against Lydia Ko of New Zealand for the silver medal.

For the 23-year-old Korda, it was another glittering moment in her dream season. She won her first major championship six weeks ago and rose to No. 1 in the world for the first time. Now she has an Olympic gold medal and leaves no doubt who's the best in women's golf.

Xander Schauffele won the gold for the men last Sunday.

Aditi Ashok of India delivered one of the great putting performances to stay in reach. She had a 25-foot birdie putt on the 18th that slid by the hole and kept her off the podium by one shot.

MEDAL ALERT

The U.S. has won its fourth straight Olympic men's basketball gold medal, holding off France 87-82.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points for the Americans and joined Carmelo Anthony as the only three-time gold medalists in men's basketball.

Durant already became the leading scorer in U.S. men's history in this tournament. He scored 30 points

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in the gold-medal games in 2012 and 2016, and nearly got there again this time.

France defeated the U.S in the teams' opening game in this tournament, snapping the Americans' 25-game winning streak in the Olympics.

The French almost beat them again Saturday while attempting to win their first gold in men's basketball. They had to settle for a third silver, having also finished second to the U.S. in 1948 and 2000.

Slovenia and Australia will play later Saturday for the bronze medal.

MEDAL ALERT

Germany has won the men's kayak four 500 meters to make Ronald Rauhe the first man to medal in canoe sprint in five Olympic Games.

The 39-year-old Rauhe is also the second-oldest gold medal winner in men's canoe sprint. Only Sweden's Gert Fredriksson was older at 40 in 1960.

The German kayak was trailing Spain at the 250-meter mark before rallying to win by 0.226 seconds. Spain won silver and Slovakia won bronze.

The men's kayak four 500 at the Tokyo Games replaced the kayak four 1,000, which was held from 1964 to 2016.

MEDAL ALERT

Hungary has won the gold medal in the women's kayak four 500 meters. New Zealand's Lisa Carrington missed a fourth medal of the Tokyo Games when the Kiwi boat finished fourth.

Hungary finished 0.61 seconds clear of silver medalists Belarus and Poland won the bronze. The New Zealand kayak was in medal position halfway through the race before fading late.

Carrington had already won three gold medals, in the single 200 and 500 and 500 pairs. She has five gold medals in her Olympic career and six overall.

MEDAL ALERT

Christian Sorum and Anders Mol beat Russia in the men's beach volleyball gold medal match, earning Norway's first medal in the sport.

The top-seeded Norwegians beat the reigning world champions 21-17, 21-18 in an intermittent rain at the Shiokaze Park venue overlooking Tokyo Bay. With Qatar's victory over Latvia for the bronze earlier Saturday, all three countries on the podium -- and all six players -- are first-time medalists.

In fact, the only repeat medalist in either the men's or women's divisions was American April Ross, who won gold with Alix Klineman on Friday. Ross had also won silver in London and bronze in Brazil.

Viacheslav Krasilnikov and Oleg Stoyanovskiy led 8-4 before giving up six straight points, including one when Mol landed on Krasilnikov's foot. The Russians called timeout and limped to their bench for treatment, but the match resumed and Norway extended the lead to 15-11.

The second set was tied 12-12 before Norway scored four points in a row and never trailed again.

MEDAL ALERT

Brazil's Isaquias Queiroz dos Santos won the men's 1,000 meters canoe sprint and Moldova's Serghei Tarnovschi took the bronze medal five years after his similar result in Rio de Janeiro was stripped because of a performance-enhancing drug violation.

China's Liu Hao, the 2019 world champion, won the silver medal.

Queiroz dos Santos was the Olympic silver medalist in 2016.

Tarnovschi was suspended for four years after his doping violation. He was able to return to the Olympics in Tokyo because of the one-year delay caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

China's Cao Yuan is on track to become the second man to win Olympic medals in all four diving events. Cao and his teammate, Yang Jian, led 12 men into the final of men's 10-meter platform diving on Saturday. Cao totaled 513.70 points for six dives. Yang was second at 480.85. The Chinese had some of the high-

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est degree of difficulty in the semifinals.

Cao already owns Olympic medals in 10-meter platform synchro, individual 3-meter springboard, and 3-meter springboard synchro.

Russia's Dimitriy Sautin was the first man to win medals in all four Olympic diving events.

Britain's Tom Daley, the 2012 bronze medalist, advanced to the final later Saturday in fourth.

American Jordan Windle finished ninth and his teammate, Brandon Loschiavo, was 10th to reach the 12-man final.

MEDAL ALERT

China's Mengya Sun and Shixiao Xu have won the country's first medal in women's canoe sprint by winning the gold in the canoe double 500 at the Sea Forest Waterway.

The 2019 world champions finished 2 seconds clear of Ukraine's Anastasiia Chetverikova and Liudmyla Luzan. It was the second medal for Luzan, who took bronze in the single 200.

Canada's Laurence Vincente Lapointe and Katie Vincent took the bronze medal in third. Vincent won the silver medal in the 200.

MEDAL ALERT

Qatar has won the bronze medal in men's beach volleyball, the first medal in the sport for the country — or any country in the Middle East.

Cherif Younousse Samba and Ahmed Tijan beat Latvia 21-12, 21-18 in the third-place match on Saturday morning at the Shiokaze Park venue. Younousse knuckled the winning point over Edgar Tocs' block attempt, then ran toward the stands pointing at the few fans who were there to cheer him on.

Then he dropped to his knees and planted his forehead in the sand.

Martins Plavins was trying to earn his second bronze medal, to go with the one he won in London. Instead, he and Tocs finish fourth -- just as the Latvian women did a day earlier.

MEDAL ALERT

Peres Jepchirchir led a 1-2 Kenyan finish in the women's marathon, withstanding the heat and humidity while running through the streets of Sapporo.

Jepchirchir finished in a time of 2 hours, 27 minutes, 20 seconds in a race moved up an hour to avoid the heat. A smattering of fans lining the course applauded as the Tokyo Games moved north for the marathons and race walks. Her teammate Brigid Kosgei was second and American Molly Seidel, a relative newcomer to the marathon stage, took home the bronze.

A race that was moved to Sapporo to avoid the extreme heat in Tokyo found little relief on a winding course through the city. The starter's gun went off a minute after 6 a.m. local time under sunny skies and with a temperature reading of 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25 Celsius). It climbed to nearly 86 degrees (30) near the finish, with a humidity of around 65%.

There were 88 runners entered in the field, with more than a dozen recording a did not finish. That included world champion Ruth Chepngetich of Kenya.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Aug. 8, the 220th day of 2021. There are 145 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 8, 1974, President Richard Nixon, facing damaging new revelations in the Watergate scandal, announced he would resign the following day.

On this date:

In 1814, during the War of 1812, peace talks between the United States and Britain began in Ghent,

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Belgium.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte set sail for St. Helena to spend the remainder of his days in exile.

In 1937, during the Second Sino-Japanese War, Japan completed its occupation of Beijing.

In 1942, during World War II, six Nazi saboteurs who were captured after landing in the U.S. were executed in Washington, D.C.; two others who cooperated with authorities were spared.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman signed the U.S. instrument of ratification for the United Nations Charter. The Soviet Union declared war against Japan during World War II.

In 1963, Britain's "Great Train Robbery" took place as thieves made off with 2.6 million pounds in banknotes.

In 1973, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew branded as "damned lies" reports he had taken kickbacks from government contracts in Maryland, and vowed not to resign — which he ended up doing.

In 1994, Israel and Jordan opened the first road link between the two once-warring countries.

In 2000, the wreckage of the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley, which sank in 1864 after attacking the Union ship Housatonic, was recovered off the South Carolina coast and returned to port.

In 2003, the Boston Roman Catholic archdiocese offered \$55 million to settle more than 500 lawsuits stemming from alleged sex abuse by priests. (The archdiocese later settled for \$85 million.)

In 2009, Sonia Sotomayor was sworn in as the U.S. Supreme Court's first Hispanic and third female justice.

In 2017, singer Glen Campbell died in Nashville, Tennessee, at the age of 81; he had announced in 2011 that he'd been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Ten years ago: Eager to calm a nervous nation, President Barack Obama dismissed an unprecedented downgrade by Standard & Poor's of the U.S. credit rating from AAA to AA-plus, declaring: "No matter what some agency may say, we've always been and always will be a triple-A country."

Five years ago: A fire and power outage at a Delta Air Lines data center in Atlanta resulted in the cancellation of 2,300 flights over a four-day period. At the Rio Olympics, Ryan Murphy gave the Americans their sixth straight gold medal in the men's 100-meter backstroke, winning with a time of 51.97 seconds; Lilly King of the United States won gold in the women's 100-meter breaststroke in 1 minute, 4.93 seconds.

One year ago: A fire inside a police union building led authorities in Portland, Oregon, to declare a riot and force protesters away from the office as violent demonstrations continued in the city. The Mid-American Conference became the first of the conferences competing at college football's highest level to cancel its fall schedule because of the coronavirus. (The conference later became the last to reverse course, scheduling a six-game regular football season.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Nita Talbot is 91. Actor Dustin Hoffman is 84. Actor Connie Stevens is 83. Country singer Phil Balsley (The Statler Brothers) is 82. Actor Larry Wilcox is 74. Actor Keith Carradine is 72. Movie director Martin Brest is 70. Radio-TV personality Robin Quivers is 69. U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is 68. Percussionist Anton Fig is 68. Actor Donny Most is 68. Rock musician Dennis Drew (10,000 Maniacs) is 64. TV personality Deborah Norville is 63. Rock musician The Edge (U2) is 60. Rock musician Rikki Rockett (Poison) is 60. Rapper Kool Moe Dee is 59. Middle distance runner Suzy Favor Hamilton is 53. Rock singer Scott Stapp is 48. Country singer Mark Wills is 48. Actor Kohl Sudduth is 47. Rock musician Tom Linton (Jimmy Eat World) is 46. Singer JC Chasez ('N Sync) is 45. Actor Tawny Cypress is 45. R&B singer Drew Lachey (lah-SHAY') (98 Degrees) is 45. R&B singer Marsha Ambrosius is 44. Actor Lindsay Sloane is 44. Actor Countess Vaughn is 43. Actor Michael Urie is 41. Tennis player Roger Federer is 40. Actor Meagan Good is 40. Rock musician Eric Howk (Portugal. The Man) is 40. Actor Jackie Cruz (TV: "Orange is the New Black") is 37. Britain's Princess Beatrice of York is 33. Actor Ken Baumann is 32. Chicago Cubs first baseman Anthony Rizzo is 32. Pop singer Shawn Mendes is 23. Actor Bebe Wood (TV: "The Real O'Neals") is 20.