

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 1 of 90

- [1- Girls soccer team wins](#)
- [1- Bridal Shower](#)
- [2- Weekly Church Calendar](#)
- [3- Sunday Extras](#)
- [22- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [23- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [25- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [26- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [28- EarthTalk -Prius downfall](#)
- [29- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [30- Weather Pages](#)
- [34- Daily Devotional](#)
- [35- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [36- News from the Associated Press](#)

Girls Soccer Team beats Vermillion

The first half was scoreless, but the action picked up in the second half as Groton Area's girls soccer team ended up defeating Vermillion, 3-2.

Riley Leicht scored first to give Groton a 1-0 lead and that was quickly followed up with a score by Laila Roberts to make it 2-0. Vermillion would score to make it 2-1. Roberts would score again to make it 3-1. Vermillion countered to make it 3-2 and Groton Area hung on to win.

Groton Area, now 4-0, will host Tea Area on Saturday.

The boys team ended up tying with Vermillion, 4-4. The boys, now 1-2, will host Tea Area on Saturday.



BRIDAL SHOWER

OPEN HOUSE BRIDAL Shower for Melynda Sletten, bride-to-be of Lance Larsen, will be held Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton. No RSVP needed. Hosted by aunts of the groom. They are registered at Amazon, Target, Wayfair and Menards Gift Cards.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 2 of 90

United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, August 29, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM
Kurtz Baptism 11:00 AM
Kurtz using fellowship hall 12:00 PM

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Bible Study - Really Bad Girls of the Bible Starts
10:00 AM

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

Saturday, September 4, 2021

Fliehs Baptism

Sunday, September 5, 2021

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

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship/Communion/
Blessings of the backpacks

Monday, Aug. 30, 2021

6:30 a.m.: Bible Study

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30pm Groton
Sunday 8:30am Groton & 11:00am Turton

Weekday

Tues 5:00pm Turton, W-F 8:30am Groton
Sat 10am Newman Center

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. 29, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study
9 a.m.: St. John's Worship
11 a.m.: Zion's Worship

Sunday, Sept. 5, 2021

Holy Communion Sunday
8 a.m.: Bible Study
9 a.m.: St. John's Worship
11 a.m.: Zion's Worship

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 3 of 90



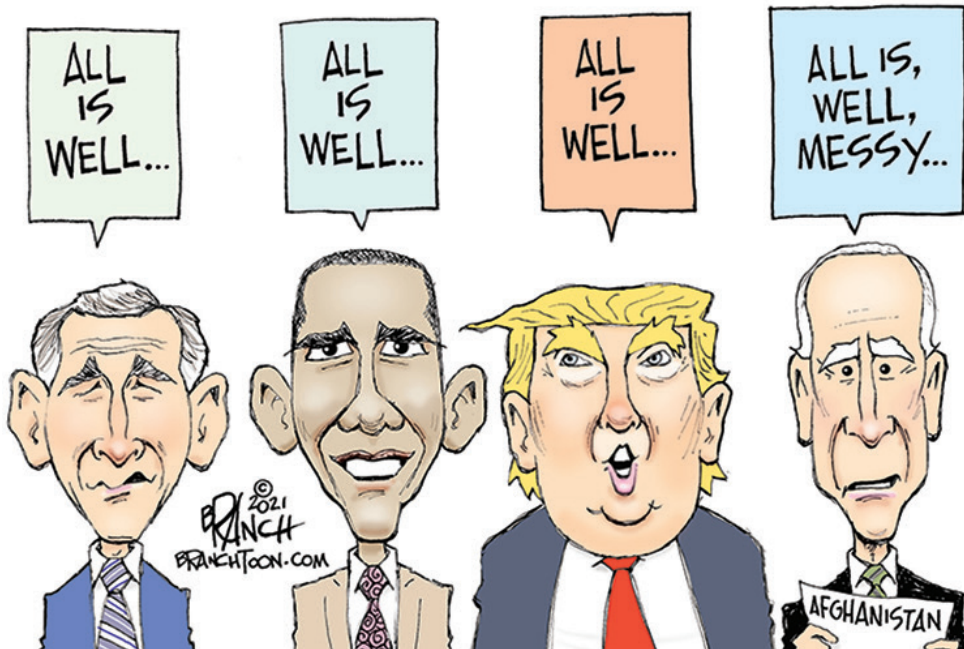
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



*The ravens brought him bread
and meat in the morning, and
bread and meat in the evening;
and he drank from the brook.*

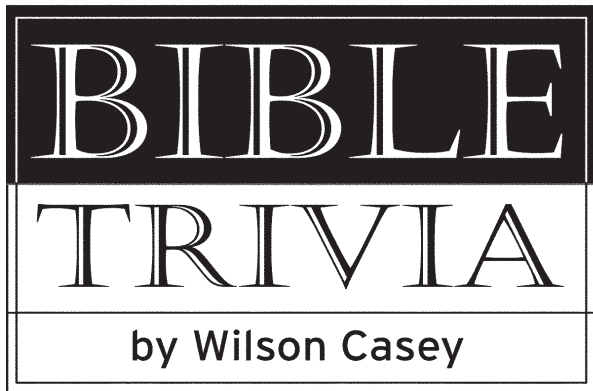
1 KINGS 17:6

© 2021 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 4 of 90



Party Pasta Salad

The last days of summer are upon us. Maybe you'll choose one last visit to the beach, a trip to a state park or maybe even your own backyard. Wherever you choose to "party," be sure to take this easy pasta dish along. It's sure to please.

- 1/2 cup fat-free French dressing
- 2 tablespoons fat-free mayonnaise
- 3 cups cold cooked rotini pasta, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup finely chopped celery
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley

1. In a large bowl, combine French dressing and mayonnaise. Add pasta, celery, onion and parsley. Mix well to combine.

2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Gently stir again just before serving. Makes 6 (3/4 cup) servings.

* Each serving equals: 132 calories, 0g fat, 4g protein, 29g carb., 259mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch, 1/2 Vegetable.

(c) 2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

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

2. From Acts 20:35, "That so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words, it is more ____ to give than to receive." Righteous, Understanding, Blessed, Bountiful

3. Ecclesiastes 3:13 states, "And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the ____ of God." Will, Gift, Guidance, Law

4. From Proverbs 14:23, "In all labor there is profit: but the ____ of the lips tendeth only to penury." Whispering, Closing, Talk, Howling

5. In Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his ____." Brothers, Soul, Might, Hands

6. From Exodus 20:9, how many days shalt thou labor and do all thy work? Two, Four, Six, Seven

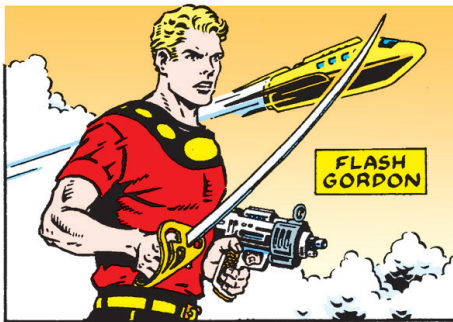
ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Blessed; 3) Gift; 4) Talk; 5) Hands; 6) Six

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

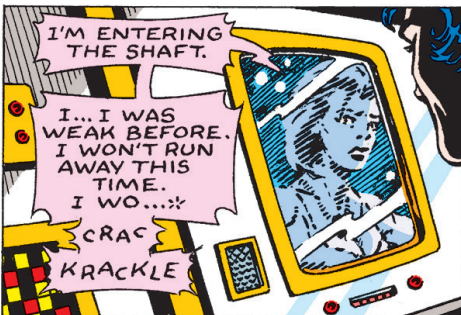
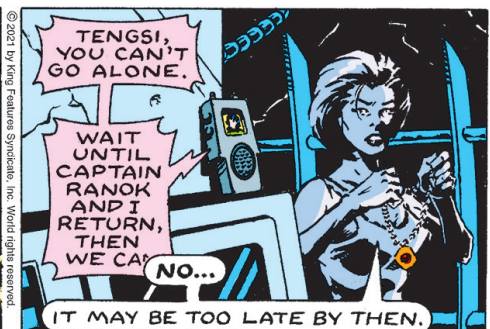
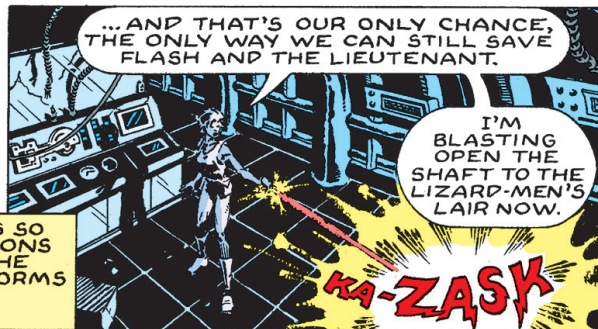
© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

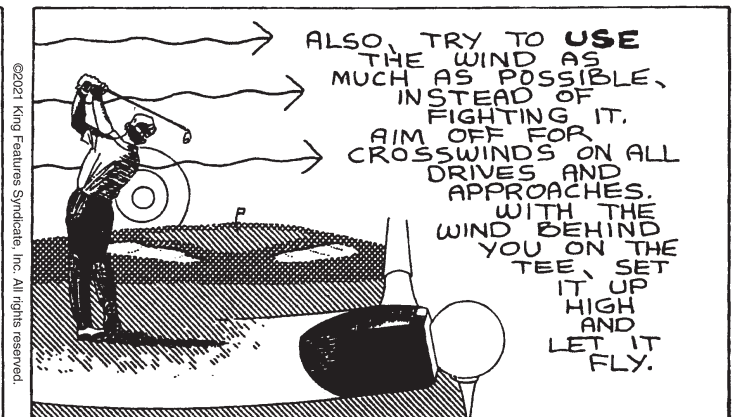
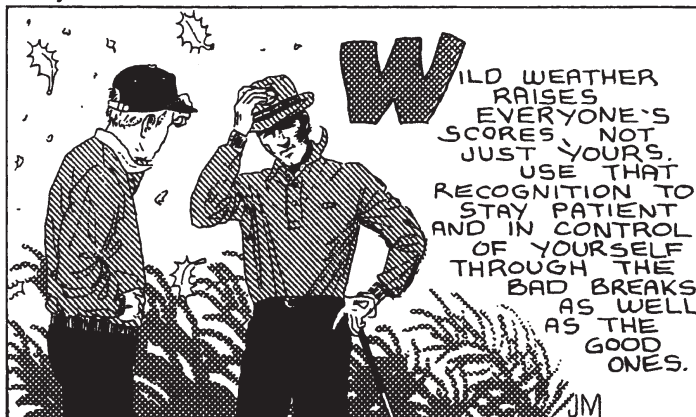
Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 5 of 90



CHANGING FREQUENCIES SO THAT HER COMMUNICATIONS AREN'T PICKED UP BY THE LIZARD-MEN, TENGSI INFORMS BASE CAMP OF HER DESPERATE PLAN.



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 6 of 90



Alkaline Diet May Help Boost Cancer Treatment

DEAR DR. ROACH: What is your opinion of the alkaline diet? I have several friends who have battled cancer, and they have adopted alkaline diets as adjuncts to their cancer treatments. Do alkaline diets assist in the treatment and prevention of cancers, or is it just another urban myth? -- T.F.C.

ANSWER: A diet high in fruits and vegetables may have a beneficial effect on cancer treatment, in combination with the best cancer treatments available, whether they are surgical, chemotherapeutic or radiation-based. Some of the "alkaline diets" I have read about do emphasize fruits and vegetables, and they may help and certainly will not hurt. However, there

is no diet that is a substitute for comprehensive cancer care.

The body has powerful mechanisms for maintaining an exact pH, regardless of the acidity (or alkalinity) of the food you eat. Both the lungs and the kidneys work together to maintain the body's pH at a slightly alkaline 7.4. Only with severe illness will the body's pH come out of its narrow range of normal, and when it does, that portends a poor outcome without immediate treatment.

The mechanism by which fruits and vegetables have been shown to benefit some cancers is not precisely known, but it probably has to do with healthful components of the food, not through any effect on body alkalinity.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 67-year-old male in excellent physical health. The only issue I have is occasional bouts of vertigo. These episodes started when I was about 44 years old. My symptoms are varying degrees of dizziness and, with extreme episodes, nausea. The frequency has increased the past couple of years to about every two weeks.

I do the Epley maneuver to relieve the symptoms, which go away one or two days after doing so. Epley is the only treatment available that works for me. Is there any new research or treatments for this? I am also curious about what foods might be contributing to the onset of vertigo. -- R.W.

ANSWER: Vertigo is a sensation of movement when there isn't any. Most often, people will describe a spinning sensation. Others say the world is spinning, but swaying or tilting are other descriptors. Although dizziness is a very nonspecific term, vertigo has a fairly limited number of diagnostic possibilities. Further, the fact that you get better with the Epley maneuver (more on that below) tells me the diagnosis is very likely to be benign paroxysmal peripheral vertigo.

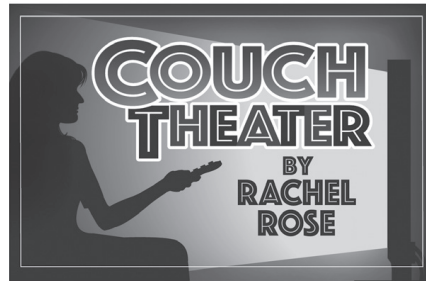
Each ear contains an organ of balance, also called the semicircular canals, which work by the movement of hair cells inside those fluid-filled bony structures. Sometimes small crystals (called otoconia) form in one semicircular canal. These press on the hair cells and cause the two organs of balance to send conflicting signals to the brain about movement, which is perceived as vertigo. Diet is not likely to have a significant effect on causing or treating BPPV.

The Epley maneuver, like other repositioning maneuvers, is designed to move the crystals out of the semicircular canals. Recurrence of vertigo after a successful Epley maneuver is not uncommon, but recurrences as often as every two weeks for over 20 years is outside my experience. I have read about surgical options for refractory BPPV, but I have had success referring patients to vestibular rehabilitation, performed by trained occupational or physical therapists.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 7 of 90



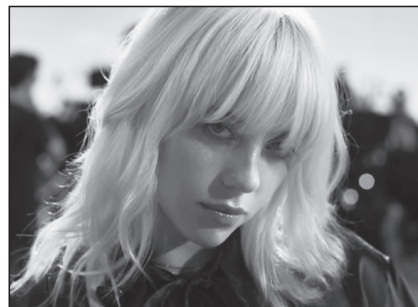
Happier Than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles — With in-person concerts still in the sketchy zone of safety, recording phenom Billie Eilish graces us with a fancy concert to watch from home. Filmed at the Hollywood Bowl, Eilish performs every song, in order, on her soon-to-be-released “Happier Than Ever” album. Accompanied by the L.A. Philharmonic and featuring the Los Angeles Children’s Chorus, she touts the concert as a tribute to her hometown. The production incorporates extensive animated visuals as part of the storytelling, along with iconic backdrops of the city. Premiering Sept. 3. (Disney+)

Hart to Heart — I will be the first to admit that in the pool of celebrities who could potentially carry a talk show, Kevin Hart did not make my short list (pun not intended). But the comedian’s new venture is surprisingly watchable. His first celebrity guest for the hour-long Peacock original was singer/actress Miley Cyrus, and the two established a great rapport and played off each other smoothly. Even the show’s set design is fresh and interesting. Upcoming guests include fellow show hosts Jimmy Kimmel and Kelly Clarkson, which should make for relatively clever banter. Call this one the season’s surprise hit. (Peacock)

Only Murders in the Building — The comedy team of Steve Martin and Martin Short is together again, now with the added bonus of Selena Gomez. The trio play neighbors who are strangers to each other until they’re informed of a murder in their building. Their shared obsessions with true-crime mysteries turn them into a band of amateur sleuths, suspecting everyone in the building of the crime, including each other. What follows is

a silly quest of on-the-sly, CSI-type probing and their own true-crime podcast. This 10-episode series also includes appearances by more big names like Nathan Lane, Tina Fey and Sting (yes, really ... Sting!). (Hulu)

The Dawn Wall — Rock climbers are a special kind of athlete. Not only can they scale the flat side of a mountain using only their fingertips and toes, but they possess a unique internal



Vertical Entertainment

Billie Eilish in “Happier Than Ever: A Love Letter to Los Angeles”

drive for pursuing their sport. After experiencing two significant events that would have made most people give up climbing on the spot and never look back, Tommy Caldwell managed to turn anguish and tragedy into his strongest motivator yet. His ultimate goal of successfully completing a never-before-climbed face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park was thought impossible. Even if climbing isn’t your thing, watch this documentary for the incredible scenery. (Netflix)

In Case You Missed It

Late Night — Emma Thompson plays a seasoned nighttime talk show host about to lose her gig unless she conjures up some new excitement for her show. Enter Mindy Kaling as the young new writer in a roomful of men (she also wrote the movie). You can probably guess how the plot unfolds from here. Kaling is comedically perfect, and her chemistry with Thompson is dynamic. Sure, this 2019 film is a little formulaic in its storyline, but still worth a watch. John Lithgow and Hugh Dancy also star. (Prime Video)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 8 of 90



1. Which group released "Down By the Lazy River"?
2. "Giving It All Away" was the debut single for which artist?
3. Who wrote and released "You Saved My Soul"?
4. Who released the 1987 version of "I Still Believe"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I'd like to know when she's not with me if she's still true to me, I'd like to know when we're kissing does she feel just what I feel."

Answers

1. The Osmond Brothers, in 1972. The song was used in 2021 on "The South Park Vaccination Special" on Comedy Central and MTV2. The show was a bit more popular than "The Pandemic Special" in 2020.

2. Roger Daltrey, lead singer for The Who, in 1973.

The song came out at the same time The Who was being sued for damages they'd caused to a hotel room. It reached No. 5 in the UK, the highest chart placement Daltrey would ever see as a solo artist.

3. Burton Cummings, in 1981.

4. Brenda K. Starr. Mariah Carey followed with a cover in 1988.

5. "A Lover's Question," by Clyde McPhatter in 1958, and written by Brook Benton. The song made it to No. 1 on the R&B chart.

(c) 2021 King Features Syndicate

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 9 of 90

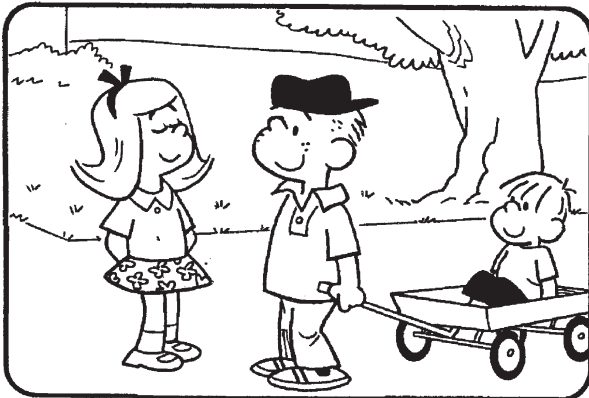
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

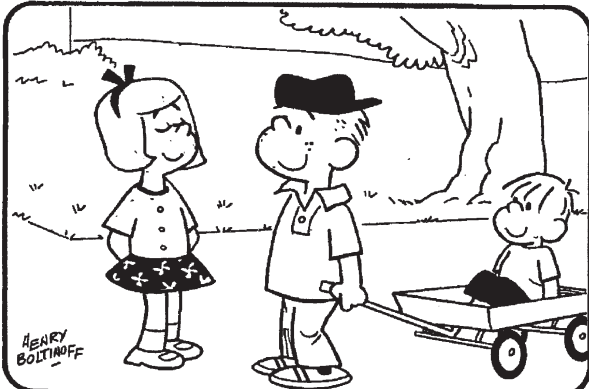


HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Skirt is different. 2. Wheel is missing. 3. Limb is removed. 4. Collar is different. 5. Buttons are added. 6. Hair is different.

GRIN and BEAR IT

Wagner



"This is not the result I asked for!"

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 10 of 90



- Use club soda on a damp rag to wipe down your stainless-steel sink. It will help bring back the shine.

- Fresh versus frozen in the seafood aisle: Unless you're at the docks, most seafood in the grocer's fresh fish case is thawed from frozen. Always ask. It's much cheaper to buy frozen and thaw it yourself.

- "My mother swears by wrapping her feet in a vinegar-soaked rag once a week to soften calluses. She does this before her bath, and uses a pumice stone to rid her heels of hardened spots on the skin. It seems to work for her, so I thought I would pass it on!" — *C.D. in Colorado*

- "If you need to keep your 1-year-old corralled in the bath, try using a

laundry basket. The water flows in, but she has only so much room to roam. And it lessens the odds she could slip away from you to the other side of the tub. Always stay with baby from the first drop to the last!" — *W.H. in Texas*

- To distinguish all the cords plugged into a power strip, write the appliance name (TV, DVD, speakers, etc.) on a plastic bread tab, and attach it to the cord at the plug. A quick look at the power strip, and you can unplug any appliance without having to follow the cord through the jungle behind your entertainment center!

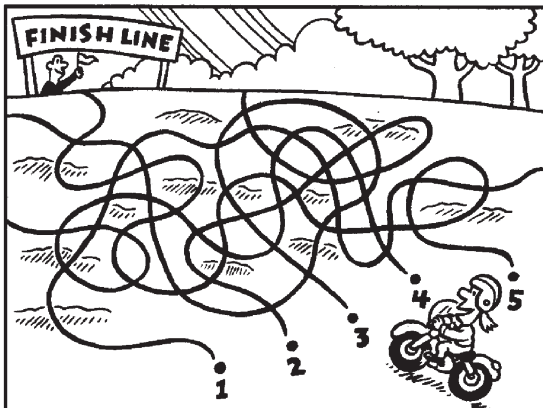
- "Save on children's clothes by buying after-season. Summer and winter clothes can be purchased a size or two ahead for next to nothing." — *M.M. in Idaho*

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

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

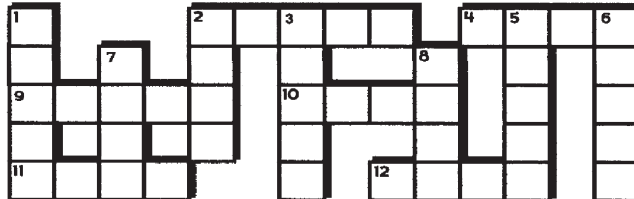
Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 11 of 90



A BUMPY RIDE! Which route will take this trail biker to the finish line? You're a winner if your first or second guess is correct.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



A FILL-IN PUZZLE!

Pictured at left is a crossword puzzle

grid. Below are the words that you'll need to complete the puzzle, using the trial-and-error method. Keep an eraser handy!

4-letter words

5-letter words

CHIN
DASH
ECHO
HALO
ICON
KNEE
PLOT

ABASH
EARTH
KHAKI
LATHE
RADAR
TANGO

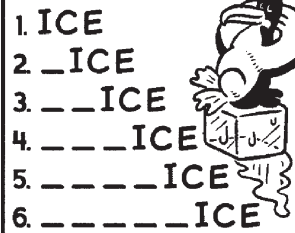
THICK AS A BRICK! Barney, a local bricklayer, asks the following question: "If a brick weighs 9 pounds and half a brick, what does a brick and a half weigh?"



27 pounds. One brick weighs 18 pounds, and half a brick weighs 9 pounds.

A COOL PROBLEM! Don't slip up on this one. In this puzzle, all of the words get progressively longer, and they all end in ICE. Use the following definitions:

1. ICE (in place).
2. Mickey and Minnie.
3. Fruit drink.
4. Place of business.
5. Ornamental molding.
6. A candy flavor.



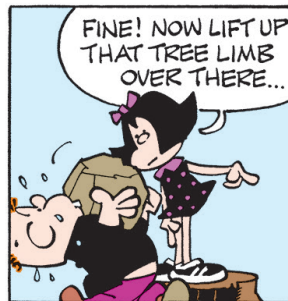
Illustrated by David Coulson

1. Ice. 2. Mice. 3. Juice. 4. Office. 5. Cornice. 6. Licorice.

Answers: (Across) 2. Earth. 4. Plot. 9. Abash. 10. Dash. 11. Icon. 12. Knee. (Down) 1. Khaki. 3. Radar. 5. Lathe. 6. Tango. 7. Halo. 8. Chin.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

BUD BLAKE

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Wee dollop
 4 "I smell —!"
 8 Lose it
 12 Single
 13 Only
 14 Chantilly, e.g.
 15 Vitamin stat
 16 Frost
 17 "—
 Misbehavin'"
 18 Improbable,
 unexpected
 wonders
 21 Existed
 22 Squid squirt
 23 Song of
 praise
 26 Frequently
 27 "Lion" actor
 Patel
 30 Intends
 31 Dinner for
 Dobbin
 32 Seethe
 33 Sample
 34 "Shoo!"
 35 Crazy Horse,
 for one
 36 Mountain
 pass
 37 Hot tub
 38 Insignificant
 sum
 45 Car
 46 "Who —?"
 47 Ultimate
 48 Leisurely
 49 Fashion mag-
 azine

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		

- 50 Multipurpose truck
 51 Bottom lines?
 52 Lushes
 53 Melancholy
 10 Teen's woe
 11 Favorites
 19 They give a hoot
 20 Busy insect
 23 Bit of butter
 24 Knightly address
 25 Actress Adams
 26 Feedbag morsel
 27 Pair with an air
 28 Outback bird
 29 Irritate
 31 Many Woodstock
 attendees
 32 Edict
 34 Guy's date
 35 Sudden bursts
 36 Radiates
 37 Long-legged shorebird
 38 Obi
 39 Stubborn beast
 40 Molecule part
 41 Norway's capital
 42 Burden
 43 Jazz singer James
 44 Molt

DOWN

- 1 Campus digs
 2 "The King —"
 3 Noggin
 4 Hindu retreat
 5 Hotel units
 6 Jai —
 7 Fill with intense fear
 8 Not taut
 9 Hammer target

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 13 of 90

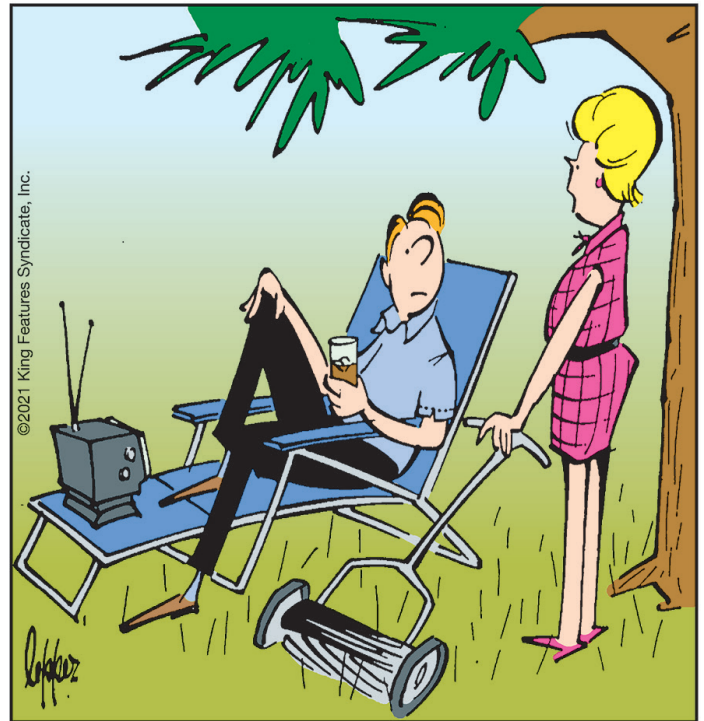
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

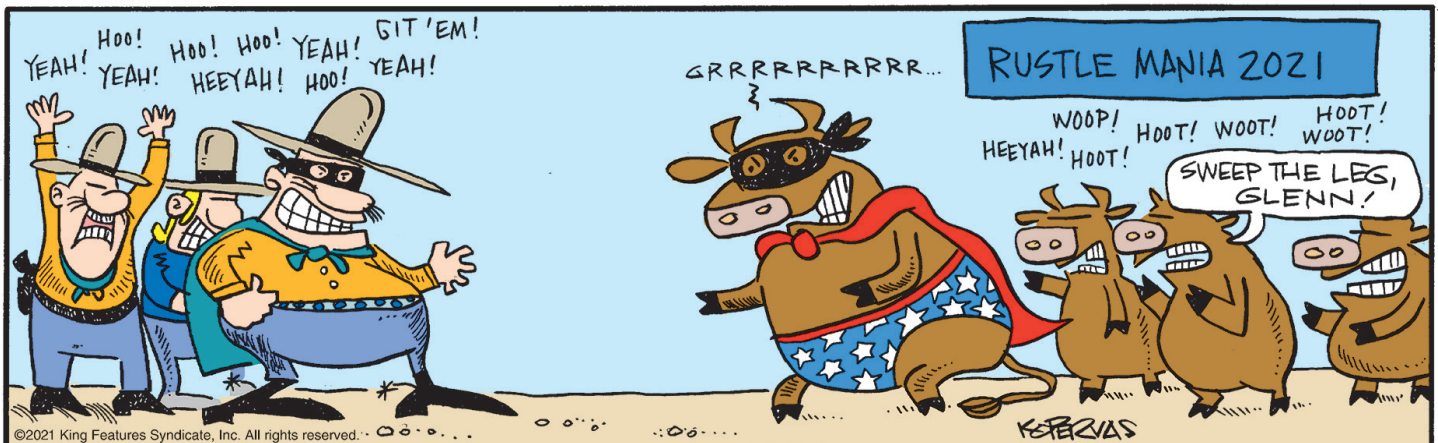
LAFF - A - DAY



"How about taking the lawn mower for a walk?"

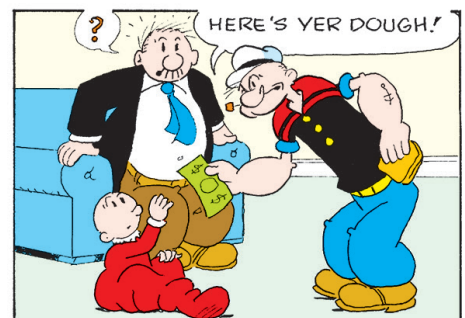
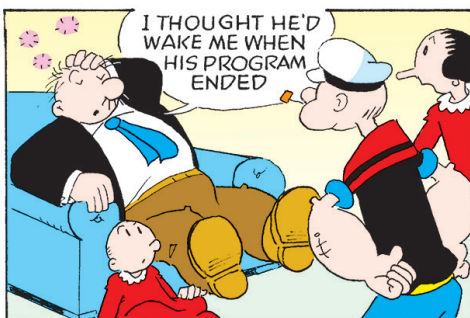
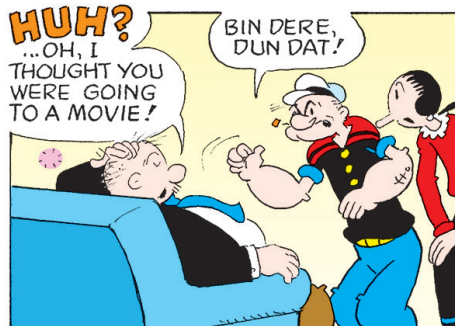
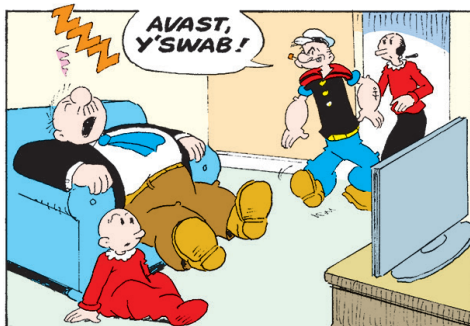
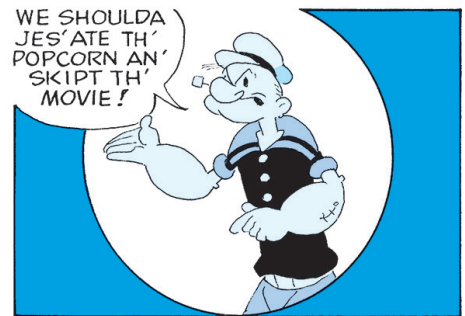
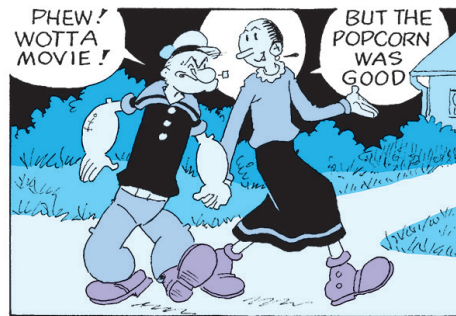
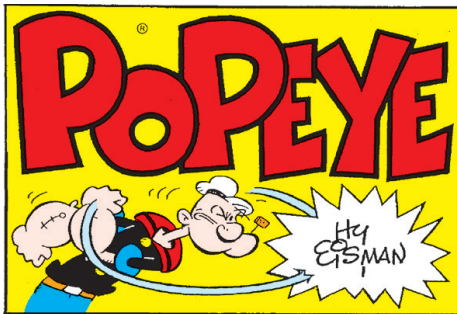
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



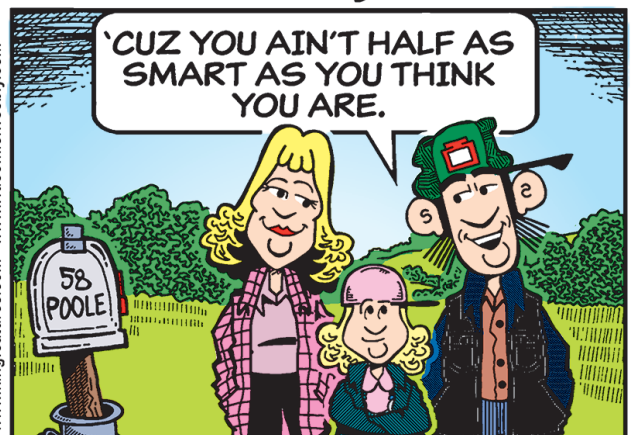
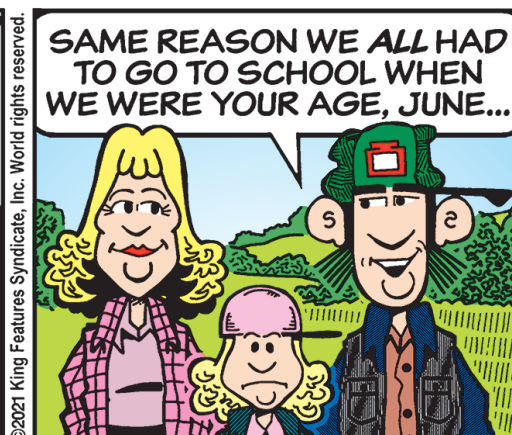
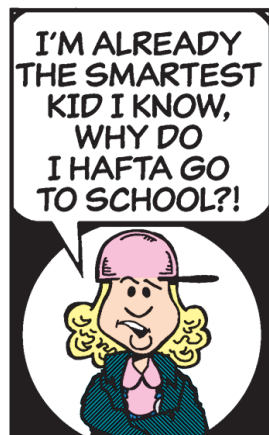
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 14 of 90



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 15 of 90

HORRIDUS, WHO USED TERROR, HATE AND KIDNAPPING TO FURTHER HIS SCHEMES OF POWER, IS DEAD BY ALETA'S HAND.



Hal Foster's BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ
Prince Valiant

VAL SHAKES HIS HEAD. "STRANGE - I SEEM TO HAVE FOUGHT HIM FOR YEARS, BUT NEVER FACE TO FACE..."

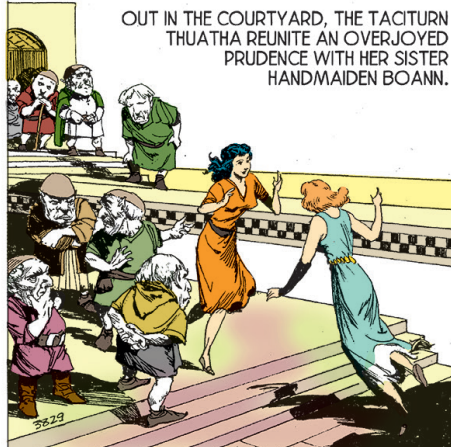
ALETA GLARES AT THE CORPSE. "HE DID NOT DESERVE A WARRIOR'S TRIAL BY ARMS. HIS COLOSSAL EGO AND LACK OF HONOR UNDOED HIM. HE KNEW ONLY CONTEMPT - ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN."



"TO HIM I WAS JUST A MEANS TO GAIN REVENGE UPON YOU. HE LOOKED PAST ME - HE WAS SO CONFIDENT IN HIMSELF - AND SO CARELESS."



OUT IN THE COURTYARD, THE TACITURN THUATHA REUNITE AN OVERJOYED PRUDENCE WITH HER SISTER HANDMAIDEN BOANN.



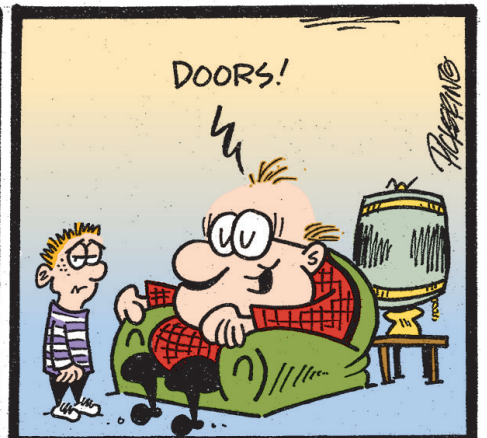
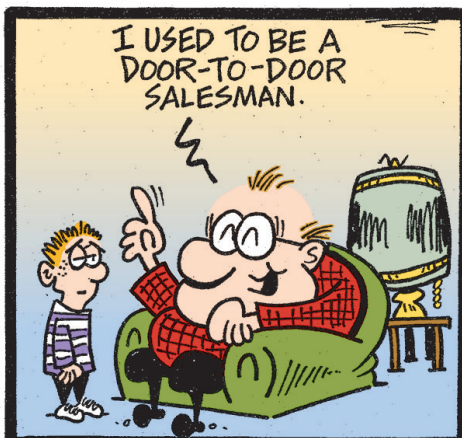
BUT WHAT OF THE SHATTERED GAWAIN? VAL AND ALETA MOVE OUTSIDE TO SEE A CROWD SWARMING OVER THE FALLEN KNIGHT...



NEXT:
**Thuathan
medicine**

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

On Our Wish List: Basketballs

The recreation center is open again! While they tried to do a “soft opening,” word traveled quickly.

Going to the rec center won’t be as it was before, of course. There used to be classes in the middle of the gym, which is surrounded by a long indoor track. Scattered around the interior were basketball hoops and exercise mats.

Now, we’re told, we’ll check in at the front door for a specified timeslot (one hour) on the track. At the end of our time period, the center will be emptied and the next group let in. There will be no classes, no use of mats, no basketball ... but we’ll have indoor walking.

This is the best news we’ve had around here in a very long time. Indoor walking, while not urgently needed right now, will be most welcome when cold weather arrives. Icy sidewalks send many of us to the rec center, which was closed last year, to walk in winter.

But, we’re told, we won’t be able to buddy up and walk with a friend, chatting as we do laps. We’ll walk alone in the right lane, passing in the left lane if we should overtake the person in front of us.

No, we won’t be able to use the mats for pre-walk stretching (they’re stacked in the storeroom), and no, the guys won’t be able to play basketball (the balls also are in the storeroom).

So, why, if there are so many restrictions about using the rec center, are we happy? We’re happy because it’s one small sign that maybe, just maybe, things are inching back to normal.

How will we know for sure? We’ll know, said one wit, if we walk into the rec center and the basketballs are on their racks at the center of the courts. That’s going to be our barometer: basketballs.

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 17 of 90

1. What Baseball Hall of Fame infielder, nicknamed “Old Shuffle-foot,” won the American League MVP award in 1948 as a member of the Cleveland Indians?

2. What name did Muhammad Ali give to his strategy of tiring out an opponent by repeatedly absorbing or evading his punches?

3. Norm Chow, the Tennessee Titans offensive coordinator from 2005-07, was head football coach for what college team from 2012-15?

4. Who was the last active NHL player to have played for the Quebec Nordiques?

5. What is the name of the official mascot of the NBA’s Orlando Magic?

6. What sports equipment and sportswear manufacturer was founded in Osaka, Japan, in 1906?



7. The United States led the medal table with a record 83 gold medals at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. What nation came in a distant second with 20 gold medals at those Games?

Answers

1. Lou Boudreau.
2. Rope-a-dope.
3. The University of Hawaii Warriors.
4. Adam Foote.
5. Stuff the Magic Dragon.
6. Mizuno.
7. Romania.

© 2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



©2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.



Should I Give My Dog a Lyme Disease Vaccine?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: A fellow dog owner mentioned to me at the dog park that he had given his spaniel a vaccine to prevent Lyme disease. I'm wondering if I should do the same for my dog. How old should a dog be to receive the vaccine? Does it really protect dogs? — *Clint F., Saco, Maine*

DEAR CLINT: While it's known that a Lyme vaccine (there are four different vaccines available today for dogs) does confer protection against contracting the disease from ticks, veterinarians are still debating whether it's necessary to vaccinate dogs.

You can read two vets' opinions on this in a recent issue of Today's Veterinary Practice (<https://todaysveterinarypractice.com/vaccinating-dogs-against-lyme-disease/>), with one for vaccination and the other not so sure.

If you live in an area where Lyme disease is frequently diagnosed, and your dog loves being outdoors, you may want to consider the vaccine for your dog. If you only take your pet to the dog park and otherwise don't spend much time exploring outside, a vaccine may not be necessary.

The vaccine can be given to dogs as young as 8 to 9 weeks, and booster shots are recommended after the first shot.

Even if you vaccinate your dog, you need to continue tick and flea prevention measures. Check your dog's coat after every jaunt outside and quickly remove ticks. Mow the lawn regularly to discourage ticks and other pests from hanging out; if they're still a problem, treat the lawn to deal with a flea or tick infestation.

Not all ticks carry Lyme disease, but some carry other serious diseases, so keeping them off your dog and out of your home is a good idea.

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

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Kite flying is an official sport in Thailand.

* It's not unusual to cry at weddings, but in certain parts of China, weeping is a required part of preparation for the big day. A month before they tie the knot, Tujia brides will cry for one hour each day. Ten days in, they're joined by their mothers; ten days after that, grandmothers, and eventually other female family members. The practice is said to date to China's Warring States era when the mother of a Zhao princess broke down in tears at her wedding.

* The Chinese soft-shelled turtle urinates from its mouth.

* Fashion designer Michael Kors' first project was a redesign of his own mother's wedding dress, at her second marriage. He was 5 years old at the time.

* Too much sunlight can damage the algae that live inside shallow-water coral and are the main source of its sustenance. To protect this algae, the corals fluoresce, creating proteins that essentially serve as a sunscreen.

* The Greek national anthem consists of 158 verses.

* We all know hiccups can be annoying, but at least they tend to pass quickly -- unless you were Charles Osborne, who began hiccupping in 1922 after a fall while attempting to weigh a hog before slaughtering it, and continued doing so for a total of 68 years. That's an estimated 430 million hiccups!

* Leeches have a brain in each of their 32 body segments.

* Looking to expand your ice-cream palate? Masiwa, a cafe chain in South Korea, offers a black-hued, squid ink-flavored version, served in glasses with an octopus mascot.

Thought for the Day: "The path of peace is not a passive journey. It takes incredible strength not to open a can of 'whoop-ass,' justifiably, when one's button is pushed." -- T. F. Hodge

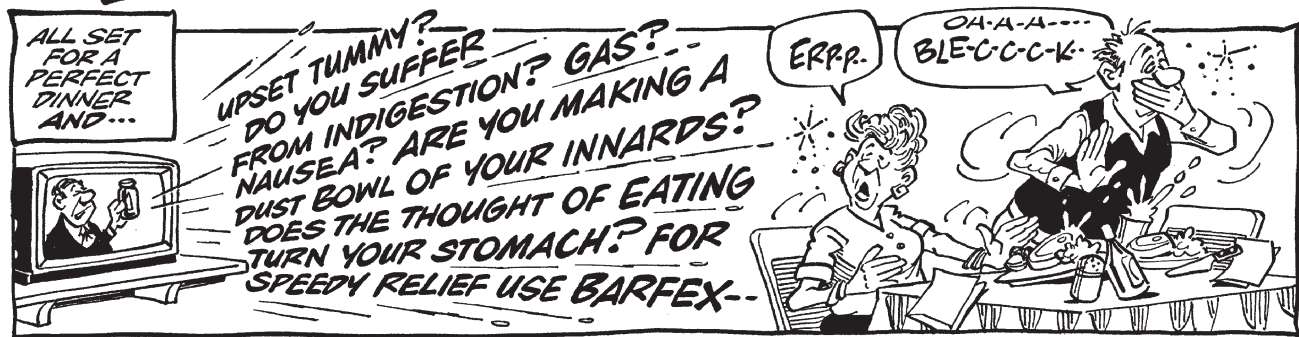
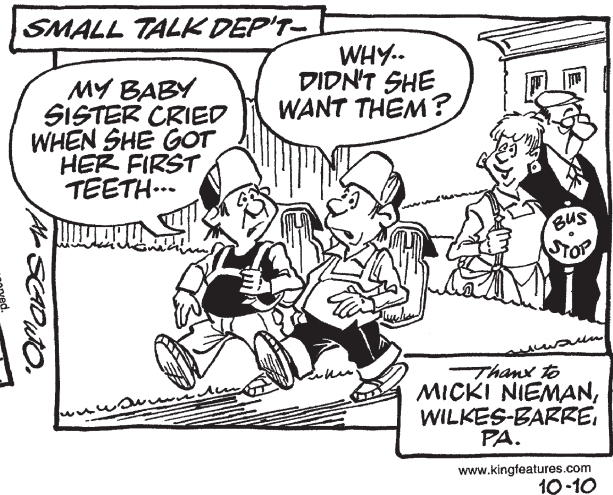
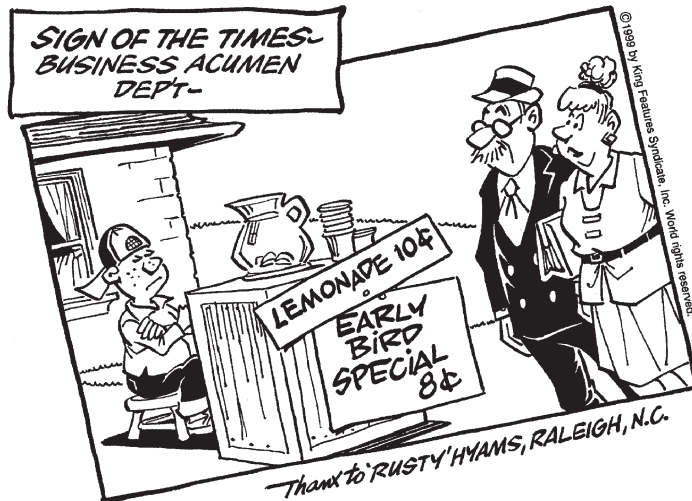
(c) 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 20 of 90

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO



Spider lilies



Native to Japan, these perennials exhibit large, striking flowers on slender 2-foot stalks that appear in late summer and early fall. They love very rich and well-drained soil, with only a moderate watering schedule needed. They grow well in both full-sun and partly-shady garden areas, and will also tolerate being potted for use as a patio accent.

Spider lilies are quite resistant to diseases and pests, and attract pollinators.

- Brenda Weaver

Sources: www.gardenia.net www.southernliving.com



by Freddy Groves

Guardians Stole From Helpless Veterans

Most of the time, a scammer of veterans will be given a prison sentence that is less than satisfactory to those of us who are following the story. A few years here or there, a monetary fine ... it's not enough.

But now and then, a sentence will come along that just feels right. This happened in a recent fraud case against a group of four criminals. One of the males received a sentence of 15 years. His stepson got almost six years. One of the female criminals got 20 years. But the last one, another woman, received a sentence of 47 years for her part in the crimes.

The group, calling itself a nonprofit corporation, acted as guardians, conservators and financial managers to those with special needs, including veterans. The 33-count indictment included money laundering, mail fraud, conspiracy and aggravated identity theft.

The criminals would either use a company credit card to make their purchases, knowing the company would pay it back out of client money, or write checks to themselves out of the account. Among the take were RVs, vacations, cars, cruises and more, to the tune of \$11 million in client money ... clients who suffered when they didn't have enough money for expenses, care and food, and were sometimes left homeless.

What's galling is that it could have been stopped as far back as 2012. The company's tax accountant raised flags with their attorney, saying one of the women was using the client funds as her own personal ATM. But instead of going to the authorities, the accountant let himself be silenced by a threatening confidentiality agreement and a check for payment in full for his services.

Despite the short sentences the two men received, there is one thing that does make me smile. The head criminal, the woman who received a sentence of 47 years plus three years supervised release, is 74 years old.

© 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 22 of 90



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



A Ballooning Deficit

This week, the House was called back for a special session. However, it was not to vote on legislation related to the heart-wrenching humanitarian and military crisis unfolding in Afghanistan. Instead, Speaker Pelosi called us back to vote on a \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint.

To give you some context, the federal budget Congress passed for fiscal year 2021, which included all discretionary and defense spending, was \$1.4 trillion. This blueprint is the highest sustained spending level in American history.

While there are some proposals I can get behind, such as lowering prescription drug costs, there are too many programs that significantly increase the size of our government. Among other things, this proposal expands Obamacare and Medicare, funds two years of tuition-free community college and universal pre-k, and develops a Civilian Climate Corp.

While some of these proposals sound enticing, the financial consequences are damaging. I believe in giving every American an opportunity to succeed, but I cannot agree to burdening our current taxpayers with paying more of their share and burdening our future generations by adding to our national debt. This much spending will spur inflation and drive-up prices, something that millions of Americans are already confronting.

Over the last decade, our national debt has more than doubled and we are now approaching \$29 trillion. This package would add an additional \$17 trillion to our national debt over the next ten years, bringing us to a total of \$47 trillion. This is inexcusable.

In our personal lives, there are serious consequences if we are not responsible with our money. Yet, when it comes to the federal government, it seems this same logic is not applied. Let me be clear, it's not just the Democrats who spend, both parties are guilty of adding to our ballooning deficit. We cannot keep spending ourselves into oblivion and racking up debt—the balloon will eventually burst.

I'm willing to take the hard votes. I'm willing to fight for comprehensive reform to our dysfunctional budget process. I'm willing to support a balanced budget amendment like the one enshrined in South Dakota's state constitution. Most importantly, I am willing to say no to a \$3.5 trillion budget.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 23 of 90

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Conservative Principles Restrain Government, Not Expand Its Powers

You can't be a constitutional conservative only when it suits you.

We are now seeing a battle in the Republican Party between the populist wing and traditional limited government conservatism. So-called conservatives want to regulate businesses to prevent them from requiring a Covid vaccine as a condition of employment, but my beliefs do not allow me to waive the constitution because I disagree with a private business.

It is human nature to want to wield power, and a crisis adds to that impulse. As an emergency unfolds, many will insist that "somebody should do something" and governments, eager to pass laws and hire people with weapons to enforce them, step in. It's up to pro-liberty conservatives to stand on principle and to stand up to government mandates.

To be clear, I don't think businesses should require a Covid vaccine as a condition of employment. I also believe that government is too big, and mandates are not a conservative tool in forcing the behavior of its citizens. Since when did the Republican Party become the party of big government and social engineering using the power of government to force behavior? Once we, as a people, open the door to increased government power to put mandates on businesses, expect a Pandora's Box of liberal mandates to hit in the future that touch on faith, the right to keep and bear arms, and the expanding list of genders the left has invented.

William F. Buckley once referred to the growth of government as "creeping socialism." We are seeing a version today with both Republicans and Democrats calling on the government to mandate behavior they find acceptable. Even if I agree with a mandate, a mandate both limits freedom and sets a precedent for even more mandates, taxes, spending, and expansion of government into the daily lives of average Americans who just want to be left alone.

Since March of 2020, we've seen governors from California to New York declare that they have sweeping powers to ban activities, close businesses, and strongarm sick people into nursing homes. These "leaders" must have temporarily forgotten the principle that the proper powers of government are limited, even (and especially) during a crisis.

On the federal level, power is granted and specifically limited by the Constitution. On the state and local

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 24 of 90

level, power is limited by state constitutions and, frankly, common sense.

For example, as governor last year, I refused to issue lockdowns or mask mandates. I did not shut down any business, nor did I close one church. I follow a principle: I am a limited government conservative in the mold of Ronald Reagan. The government may have the brute force to declare a business "essential," yet that is not a proper role of any government, federal or state.

Now, as a new Covid variant is spreading, some state legislatures and governors are trying to mandate that, in order to work in a private business, a person must provide proof of vaccination. This is a bad idea because no government has that power over the private decisions of small businesses.

In South Dakota, I used my valid power as governor to prevent the state from issuing Vax Passports. That means you won't see a government-run vaccine passport system in South Dakota –under my watch, South Dakota will have a limited government.

Our policy allows individuals to make decisions and limits the decisions forced upon them by the government. Freedom cuts both ways, and the government doesn't have the power to weigh in on either side of this. I'm going to make certain that we respect the limits of the state government. Small businesses won't be forced to cede management decisions to a bureaucrat or politician.

I don't believe that a business should require proof of vaccination to work there, and as a former business owner, I would not have imposed such a requirement on my employees. But my personal beliefs are irrelevant when it comes to the role of the state in what a business may or may not choose to do. Government should not exercise its power to force a small business to agree with me.

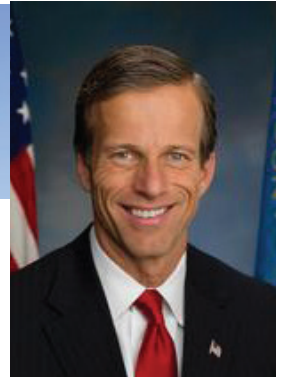
Conservatives see that liberals are trying to use this crisis to expand the size and scope of government at every level. On everything from mandates to spending, the left wants more government. Conservatives must stand on principle and oppose big government in all its forms.

The Coronavirus pandemic has tested how far politicians will go to use heavy-handed tactics to get their way. One reason why South Dakota is considered a great place to live, work, raise a family, and do business is because we have a tradition of governance that respects individual rights and because we respect the limits of government power. These principles will allow us to overcome Covid, and to build the country we all want to live in.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 25 of 90

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



The Eyes of the World are Watching

The eyes of the world were on the United States and our leaders nearly 20 years ago to the day as we experienced one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in history. Nearly 3,000 innocent lives were lost at the World Trade Center in New York City, at the Pentagon in our nation's capital, and in a field in Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, and our country was forever changed.

At the time, a terrorist attack of this magnitude on American soil was unthinkable. It was a chaotic, uncertain time, but one thing was clear: America would not waiver in the pursuit of justice, and it would never hesitate to defend our nation, our people, and our ideals – at home or abroad.

True to a relentless American spirit, men and women from all walks of life answered the call to duty and signed up to serve in our armed forces. This generation of service members, including many from Ellsworth Air Force Base and the South Dakota National Guard, deployed around the globe to fight terror and defend freedom. Some of those same men and women are still serving today.

In the decades since 9/11, members of our all-volunteer military have taken action to bring the fight to terrorists around the globe and protect our nation. These men and women have dismantled terrorist safe havens, disrupted terror groups, thwarted attacks, hunted down and delivered justice to Osama bin Laden, and put their own lives at risk to make our world a safer place.

Twenty years later, the eyes of the world are again closely watching the United States and our leaders during the drawdown of our presence in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, under this administration's watch, the withdrawal of U.S. forces has rapidly devolved from bad to worse to what can now only be described as an all-out crisis.

Everything we've witnessed over the last few weeks has been a stunning end to the United States' effort in Afghanistan. For many, the unraveling of the country and the ensuing humanitarian crisis is personal, and I understand.

Prior to the Biden administration's reduction of American troops in Afghanistan, reasonable people could disagree on the merits of keeping a sustained military presence in the country. Military experts and members of Congress, including myself, repeatedly warned the president about the dangers of withdrawing troops based on an arbitrary timeline rather than the security situation on the ground. President Biden did not heed this advice.

The Afghanistan crisis is a direct result of the shortsighted actions of this administration. The intelligence did not fail. The president did. Instead of taking decisive action to improve the situation on the ground, President Biden doubled down on his strategy by maintaining an arbitrary deadline for concluding our efforts to evacuate Americans and our allies. President Biden has effectively ceded all leverage to the Taliban. While a heroic effort is underway by our military, the administration's actions continue to risk leaving an

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 26 of 90

unknown number of American citizens and others in Afghanistan at the mercy of the Taliban.

Unfortunately, this crisis will likely have long-lasting consequences. The rushed exit left a significant amount of U.S. military equipment behind, including modern arms that are now in the hands of the Taliban. ISIS-K, a resurgent branch of the Islamic State, has tragically – and, given the ongoing chaos, not surprisingly – attacked the evacuation effort, killing several U.S. service members and civilians. There's also a growing risk of a Taliban-led Afghanistan again serving as a safe haven for terrorist groups like al-Qaeda.

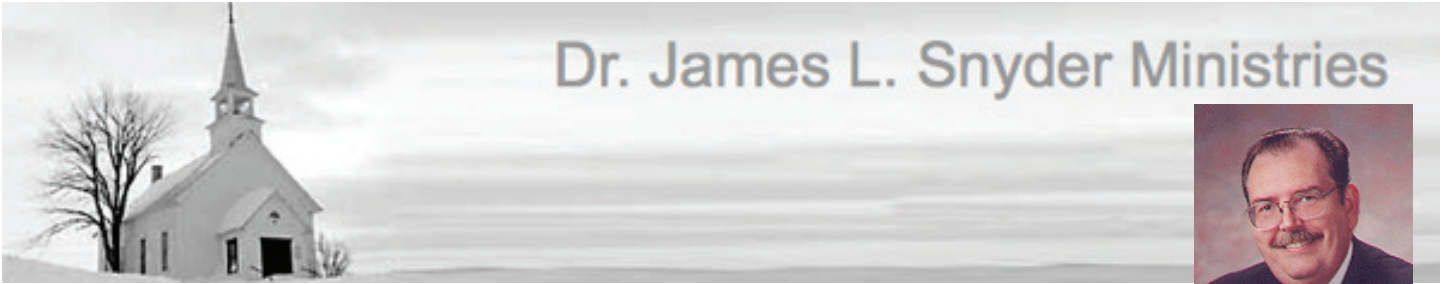
The world is watching as harrowing and unnecessary scenes continue to unfold across Afghanistan. People are also watching inspiring moments of humanity – our troops maintaining order in challenging conditions, comforting scared kids and parents, soothing babies, and handing out supplies.

To those American heroes, past and present, let me be crystal clear: The crisis we see today in no way diminishes the selfless service and significant sacrifice you and your families have made over the last 20 years. We are forever grateful for everything you've done for our country and for the years spent away from your families in far-flung corners of the world. There is no question that you made a difference.

It's because of our troops' service, sacrifice, and commitment that I'm so bitterly disappointed in the president and his administration for the dangerous decisions they've made over the past few weeks. I'm angry. I know many fellow South Dakotans are, too. But what was true 20 years ago is still true today: We should be undaunted in the pursuit of justice and in protecting our people. We can leave no American or ally behind in the hands of the Taliban.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 27 of 90



Is Being Sane Too Much to Ask?

When young, I remember my grandfather often saying to me, "the world wasn't like this when I was your age." Then he would go on a long rant about how things were much different when he was my age. Finally, he would conclude by saying, "It's an insane world out there, son."

I can't remember all he said, but one thing was when he was young, people were rather sane and the things they did. He explained it to me to the best of his ability, and I listen to the best of my ability. But then, sane to one person can be insanity to another.

Recently, I caught myself saying the same things to one of my grandchildren, and then it dawned on me, "Have I become my grandfather?"

Pondering this a little bit, I thought, is this generation just as insane as my generation? Or, where did this generation inherit their insanity?

Looking at the culture around us, it's hard to see anything with any sense of sanity. Trying to listen to contemporary music is crazy. Not only can I hardly understand the lyrics, but they don't make sense.

Wanting to do some research on this, I went to the shopping mall, sat in the middle with some coffee, and watched people pass by.

It's been a long time since I've been out in public like this, and I'm not sure I'm going to do it anytime soon. Watching these people, however, got me thinking a bit of what actual sanity is.

So many people walked by wearing such clothes that it was rather embarrassing.

Young ladies were wearing trousers full of holes and rips and tears. It looked like they got them out of some trashcan.

Someone told me, I have no idea it is true, but those trousers start at \$100 each. The more rips and tears, the more expensive they are.

When I was young, nobody wore trousers like that, at least in public. But what was sane yesterday is now insane.

If only I would've known this back then, I could have saved my trousers and sell them today for my retirement fund.

When I thought I saw everything there walked past me about a half dozen young men, I think they were young, whose trousers were down almost to their knees. How they could walk around like that without tripping was beyond the level of my sanity.

For a moment, I wanted to walk up and say, "Excuse me, but your pants are dropping off."

Where does something like that come from? Who in the world said that was "the thing" to do?

I would like to see them outside trying to run away from a barking dog.

As I sat there trying to wag my head and clear the clutter, I saw something that scared me at first.

Looking down one lane, I saw three young ladies coming, and I did not know what to do. It looked like they had painted their clothing on. I've never seen anything so crazy in all my life. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know if I should run. Should I just sit there and close my eyes?

As they walked by, I noticed that they did have clothes on. But, for the life of me, I don't know how they got those clothes on, and I could not imagine how they would take them off.

Seeing these young ladies with their painted-on clothes, I could appreciate the ladies wearing raggedy torn

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 28 of 90

trousers. I'm not sure which is worse, but I think at the time I would have voted for the terrible trousers.

It's good I had a cup of coffee with me because as I sat there, I was trying to calm myself down. If this world is not insane, then I am.

I noticed a young guy coming down, talking like he was on the radio. He talked and laughed and talked and laughed, and I thought maybe this guy had had a little too much "whatchamacallit" to drink.

I noticed an attachment to his ears with something coming down the side of his chin. As he walked by, he continued talking. It was then I noticed something rather strange. This young man was talking on the telephone.

At least, that's what I called it. But, of course, I don't know what you call telephones today, and I don't know how they work. But this young man seemed to know how it worked and was working it to the end.

Oh, if only my grandpa could be sitting with me right now and saw what I saw, he would have had quite a few words to say about what he saw.

I finished my coffee and then got up to leave and go out to my vehicle. As I drove home, I thought about what sanity and insanity is all about. What is right in one generation doesn't seem to be right in the next.

A favorite verse of Scripture came to my mind as I was driving. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

If anybody knew anything about this, it was King Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived. We may think what we're doing is new, but in all sanity, nothing is new.

EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: I've heard that Americans waste a huge amount of water and energy getting their clothes clean and dry. Do you have any tips for greening the laundry process? — B. Jones, Troy, NY



It's true that Americans use huge amounts of water and energy to keep their clothes clean, dry and soft. Indeed, the average U.S. home expends about 12,000 gallons of water on some 300 loads of laundry per year. The non-profit Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) estimates that as much as 20 percent of the water used in our homes goes down the washing machine's drain. Meanwhile, roughly 10 percent of a home's total electricity use goes toward laundry. No doubt, tightening up this one aspect of taking care of ourselves could make a serious dent in our carbon footprints and overall environmental impact.

Making a few tweaks to your laundry routine can help you make a serious dent in your carbon footprint and overall environmental impact. Credit: pexels.com.

Perhaps the quickest way to energy- and water-savings is to upgrade from an older laundry machine. Conventional washing machines (built before 2011) use some 40 gallons of water per load, while newer "HE" (high efficiency) machines can do just as good or better on 14 gallons or less. And since these HE machines have so much less water to heat up and are designed for maximum efficiency, they also use 50-80 percent less energy. They also spin faster, which removes more water from the clothes and thus saves dryer time. Whether or not your machine is HE, set it to the "high spin speed" or "extended spin" setting to remove excess moisture from clothes to reduce the amount of time and energy needed in the dryer.

Line-drying clothes is by far the most energy-efficient route, yet most of us (80 percent) rely on dryers to do the job quickly, despite the impact. While HE washing machines have been around for a decade now, it wasn't until the last few years that more efficient clothes dryers became widely available. Newer units, especially those that meet the federal government's stringent EnergySTAR efficiency standards, automatically sense how long to run and when to shut off based on the size/weight of the load.

If you have an older (conventional) dryer, consider purchasing a SmartDry sensor which attaches to the inside of your machine and then sends you wireless alerts when the load is dry, when delicates should come out, or if the machine has stopped working. The \$60 device saves an average of 15 minutes of dry time per load. While it's no replacement for a new machine, it can help you keep an older one from clogging up the landfill while putting off the expense and resource use of replacing it for a while.

Another low-cost way to reduce your laundry's environmental impact is by using a Cora Ball, an ingenious little recycled/recyclable plastic ball that catches plastic microfibers that shed off fleece clothing in the washing machine before it winds up in our waterways and oceans.

And if you like fabric softener but don't like subjecting yourself and those around you to harsh chemicals—most fabric softeners use dipalmethyl hydroxyethylammonium methosulfate, a synthetic chemical with softening and anti-static properties—try one of Friendsheep's Eco Dryer Balls, which naturally softens and fluffs laundry by gently tumbling in the dryer alongside your clothes, separating the fabrics so heat can flow better, reducing wrinkles and static cling while reducing dry time.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 30 of 90

#462 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

At midday today, cases are over a half-million up from the last update at 38,552,183. The seven-day new-case average looks as though it may be starting to level off a bit—too soon to be sure, but we may have something here—at 156,296. Deaths are still climbing fast, showing a 100 percent increase over 14 days. We are far from out of this yet.

Case numbers in children are at their highest since winter, and most experts expect them to keep climbing as school gets underway and winter comes on. There's been well over a four-fold increase in under a month from 38,000 cases per week at the end of last month to over 180,000 last week. The age group with the highest weekly case rate—not just among children, but in the entire population—is now 16- and 17-year olds with case rates of 160.3 weekly cases per 100,000 people. That's 22.9 daily cases, nearly enough for a red-zone designation if this age group was a state. We don't think this is due to some factor that makes these kids more vulnerable (although that has not yet been conclusively ruled out either), but rather simply due to their social behaviors and the fact that they are among the most poorly vaccinated in the population. With school getting underway, we'll see where that goes; some experts are worried this is going to trend to the younger ages next. After all, children under 12 are not yet eligible for vaccine and many schools have decided to move past the pandemic, even though it isn't moving past them. I see trouble in our future, and it looks younger and younger all the time.

This is the first time I've seen case rates broken down by age group. For those who are interested, here's what's being reported for the week that ended Saturday, all in weekly case rate per 100,000:

Under 5: 79.4
5 to 11: 137
12 to 15: 152.7
16 to 17: 160.3
18 to 29: 151.9
30 to 39: 152.9
40 to 49: 129.6
50 to 64: 95.9
65 to 74: 71.2
75 and older: 63.5

For the record, infants under 1 year and older teens are the highest risk groups among children for hospitalization; while I understand the risk in very young infants, I have no idea what's behind the higher risk in the older group. Pediatric hospitals are filling up though; reports are coming from across the South particularly. I also saw an interview with a pediatric oncologist who added a new wrinkle to this concern with increased infection rates in children. Turns out pediatric cancer patients are particularly at risk for severe Covid-19 (around 20 percent become critical) with death rates around four percent. Those numbers are fairly awful.

Hospitalizations are soaring at close to 97,000 nationwide, almost tripled in the last month. We haven't been over 100,000 since January, so I'll be watching this number as it grows. Even where overall hospitalization numbers aren't too bad yet, ICU capacity is shrinking. One hospital in Georgia reports they have 50 ICU patients in a unit built for 38. New Mexico officials warned they're about a week from having to ration care; they are experiencing a 20 percent increase per day. Idaho has asked for volunteers to keep hospitals open. Texas and Kentucky have record numbers hospitalized; they join Hawaii, Oregon, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida who are already there. With case rates continuing to increase and the lag that always occurs between diagnosis and hospitalization, this is going to continue to worsen well after new cases level off. Hospitalizations in children are at record levels now as the gap between seniors and children closes.

The CDC's ensemble forecast came out as usual on Wednesday. There may be a glimmer of good news in it; for the first time in several weeks, hospitalizations are projected to level out in coming weeks. Deaths,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 31 of 90

on the other hand, are projected to increase; up to 680,000 are projected by September 18; that's a hefty increase from last week's forecast.

Mississippi set a record for deaths for the entire pandemic this week; the previous high point was in January. Still more than half of these deaths are in people over 65 years of age, the group with the highest death rate once infected; this likely reflects low vaccination rates in the state, even among elderly. Hospitalizations continue to increase in the state, but the pace of increase appears to be leveling off. We can hope that continues; they've had serious trouble for a long while now.

Florida also reported a record average number of deaths; their previous high was also in January. The state today has an average daily number of deaths higher than the whole country had in the middle of last month. Think about that. The state is still accounting for about 20 percent of deaths in the US as cases and hospitalizations continue to set records as well. New cases broke the January record a couple of weeks ago and have continued to set records every day now since; the state also leads the US in both new cases and deaths. Hospitalizations are almost 50 percent higher than the last peak which was seen last July; they've almost tripled in the last month. Things don't seem to be looking up there; they've identified more than 14,300 cases in school staff and students and placed close to 30,000 more in quarantine. Since several districts have not reported their numbers publicly, so it is certain the real situation is worse than reported.

Another state to watch is my own South Dakota. Because our population is small, we don't put much of a dent in the national figures whether we're doing well or ill; but the expected incubation period following our annual superspreader event at Sturgis appears to have coincided with an unsurprising quintupling of per-capita new cases to 3819 from 644. The statewide increase over the past three weeks has been a nation-leading 686.8 percent, largely driven by a handful of counties in the Black Hills where the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is held. Meade County, home to Sturgis, shows a 3400 percent in new cases over three weeks—and 124 cases per 100,000 population. Neighboring counties Butte and Lawrence show 1050 percent increase and 95 cases per 100,000 and 1900 percent increase with 90 cases per 100,000 respectively. Test positivities in these counties are running from 22.5 percent to 36.1 percent, a sure sign of rampant community spread.

The Motorcycle Rally is characterized by mass events—concerts, packed bars, gatherings, parties, and dances. In a state with no testing requirements, no mask mandates, and no vaccination requirements and, according to the South Dakota Department of Transportation, 525,768 vehicles entering this 7000-resident town over the 10 days of the Rally, it's pretty difficult to believe there is no connection between the event and these surges, even though the state health department says they do not have evidence of a connection with "any one event." Monument Health which operates hospitals serving the western part of the state went from three Covid-19 patients in June to 58 this week; Dr. Shankar Kurra, vice president of medical affairs for the system, told NBC, they are seeing younger patients in their hospitals and "almost 99.9% are unvaccinated." Meade County's number of new cases sets a new record for the pandemic. South Dakota's total case count for the pandemic is third among states and territories. The state has not enacted any mitigation measures at all at any time. There will likely be a regional impact from the Rally; last year, neighboring states spiked afterward, but cases are most difficult to track. Of course, the true toll of the Rally will never be known because attendees came from all over the country and do not necessarily (or even usually) report attendance at the Rally when they go into emergency rooms after they return home. Kurra adds, "We knew this was going to happen. It happened last year. It was just playing a reboot of last year pretty much." And so there we are. How's your state doing?

We've mentioned a couple of times in the past few weeks that the number of vaccine doses delivered into arms is increasing, and it has—by more than 70 percent since the middle of last month. We're now at an average of 860,114 doses administered per day. According to a White House briefing on Tuesday, the daily average for people initiating vaccination is 444,607 people, which is an increase from 260,000 at that time. First doses are particularly important because they represent people who were not getting vaccinated at all up until now. It is, of course, important to get folks back in for a second dose of the mRNA vaccines, but getting someone in for a first dose signals a person who is now open to the idea of being

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 32 of 90

vaccinated. That's progress. Wish it was faster. We have 51.6 percent of the population fully vaccinated and 28.8 percent of the eligible population (12 and older) unvaccinated—no doses at all. Meanwhile, the White Houses announced today that half of the 12 to 17 age group has now received a first dose. Welcome news, for sure.

So what's the deal with this Delta virus anyhow? Why is it causing so much trouble when we thought we were just about out of this nightmare? From the questions I'm fielding, it appears there is a general belief Delta must cause worse disease, do more damage, kill more of the people it infects. And yet, we have no evidence this is true—it could be, but if it is, we don't know it yet. So what gives?

This Delta variant, B.1.617.2, first identified in India a few months ago, has taken over much of the world. Nearly every case in the US is Delta. It seems likely the only big difference between Delta and B.1.1.7 or Alpha, first identified in the UK, which had previously taken over the world, or any of the other variants is its crazy-high transmissibility. You may recall our long-ago discussions of reproduction numbers; they're key to understanding what we're seeing here. Reproduction number (R_0) is the number of people, on average, to whom each infected person spreads the virus. When R_0 is greater than 1, each infected person passes it on to more than one other person and the outbreak grows; when R_0 is exactly 1, each infected person passes it on to just one other person and the outbreak remains the same in size; when R_0 is less than 1, each infected person passes it on to less than one other person, and the outbreak decreases. (To review our earlier conversation about R_0 , have a look at my Update #82 posted May 14, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3593396484010065>.)

We have a reasonable handle on what the R_0 , or reproduction number, was when this virus first hit our shores, around 2 to 3. Now, remembering R_0 is an average, each infected person does not pass it to exactly 2 or 3 others; instead, some people spread it to many others while some didn't transmit it at all. In some locations there was a lot more transmission than others and we had superspreading events; but that 2 to 3 is a fair estimate of an average. So with a cycle time (time between getting infected and becoming able to transmit) of 5 days, if no mitigation measures are in place, 1000 infected people could grow to an outbreak involving 64,000 (if $R_0=2$) to 729,000 (if $R_0=3$) in 30 days. Pretty horrifying, right? That's what we were facing back last February.

Now, even a modest increase in R_0 really changes things. We had that conversation back when we were contemplating Alpha, which was 50 percent more transmissible than the prior dominant variant D614G. If you want to have a look at that discussion, check out my Update #357 posted February 14, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4436334386382933>. Doesn't take much to paint a far worse picture than the mess we looked at above. And contemplate the difference in 30-day outcome between $R_0=2$ and $R_0=3$; that's pretty stark, isn't it?

Well, Delta is wildly more transmissible. It appears earlier in the upper respiratory tract of the infected unvaccinated person (which drives the cycle time down as well), the viral load is much higher when it appears, and it transmits longer—for more days. All of this drives the R_0 higher, and the current CDC estimate is that the R_0 of this variant is between 5 and 9. You know what that means? Even if we don't shorten up the cycle time we use in our calculations (which we should and which would make this whole thing worse yet), that means at $R_0=5$, after 30 days with no mitigation, our 1000-person outbreak would involve 15.625 million people; at $R_0=9$, it would engulf the entire population of the US.

Now, spread is not unmitigated these days. Even in areas which stubbornly refuse to do a single thing to reduce transmission, there are better ventilation systems in place in many buildings, there are more people meeting outdoors, there are folks avoiding crowded locations and distancing and wearing masks on their own. And a big deal is that we have about half of us vaccinated, and even though vaccinated people can become infected and transmit themselves, the vast majority of them don't do either one and those who are infected do not transmit as much or as long as the unvaccinated. Even those one-dose folks who haven't gotten back in for a second dose have a small amount of protection. But even with these factors in place, this is seriously bad. And that's what makes Delta so scary: There's really nowhere to hide if you're unvaccinated.

I get a lot of questions about what use vaccination is. They go like this: So if only a tiny proportion of

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 33 of 90

vaccinated people can get infected and transmit the virus, why are there so many breakthrough infections?

Easy one: We estimate 0.01 to 0.29 percent of fully vaccinated people will experience a breakthrough infection (compared to what experts estimate will be a close to 100 percent infection rate in the unvaccinated.) If we have 166 million fully vaccinated people, the high end of that estimate translates to almost a half-million breakthroughs. Odds are you know some of these people. Odds are you'll still know them in six months because they'll still be with us. Hard to argue with that.

And in the meanwhile, while increased vaccination rates are critical to a return to a more normal reality, we're just not going to vaccinate our way out of this: It is clear we can't get everyone to take the vaccine, and at this point, anyone who starts vaccination today won't be covered for at least five weeks anyhow—which isn't soon enough to solve the current problem. There are also close to 50 million children who are too young to be vaccinated. Now, I know only a small percentage of infected kids get dangerously ill—according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, in the US about 1 percent of infected children end up in the hospital and only 0.01 percent die; having just looked at another example of applying small percentages to large numbers, I'll let you do the math on that—it's more than a few. And if one of those is your kid, that one seems like a lot. The upshot of all of this is that vaccination, even if we go fast and furious from here forward, won't be enough at this point; we need to do all the other things too. We don't need to shut down (as things stand), but we do need to improve ventilation, use testing to identify infections, provide the means for people to stay home from work and avoid contact with others while they're infected, use masks, distance, avoid crowds, and limit indoor gatherings.

We've talked before about correlates of immunity, measurable markers that indicate how protective a vaccine is. The thing is, once you have effective vaccines in sufficient supply to cover everyone in the world who is interested, it is no longer ethical to do large randomized, double-blind, controlled studies on new vaccines; those would involve leaving some participants susceptible to a potentially lethal infection when we have effective means to prevent that. You can see the problem with this, right? Additionally, as the prevalence of the infection decreases (if it ever does—sigh), having to wait for a certain number of people in your clinical trial to get sick so you can do your statistical analysis makes it more difficult, costly, and time-consuming to run clinical trials. If you need to provide new doses periodically for boosters or to meet new variants, you can actually end up with a trial cycle time longer than the time you have to put out the new vaccines: For example, we simply wouldn't have new annual influenza vaccines if we had to do clinical trials on each new formulation; it would take way more than a year to get a new one through trials, by which time it would be too late to use it.

What we need, therefore, is some way to know whether a vaccine is working besides waiting for folks to get sick. Enter correlates of immunity, things we can measure in the folks we've given our vaccine that will tell us whether those people are protected or not. It's crucial to identify what those will be before we find ourselves in the inevitable position where clinical trials are no longer feasible. It's the how-do-we-know portion of the program. If you're interested, you can catch up on that earlier discussion in my Update #286 posted December 5 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4234321956584178>.

Well, there's good news on that front. Although we need to confirm these findings, it does appear we've identified the correlates of immunity for Covid-19, and they are, as we suspected, neutralizing antibodies. I read a preprint (not yet peer-reviewed) of work done at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center seeking these correlates. The research team took a look at the blood of folks who participated in the large phase trial of the Moderna vaccine. They evaluated antibody levels in vaccinated people who still got sick and vaccinated people who did not and discovered antibodies that were lower in those who did get sick, ending up with four serum antibody markers: antibodies of a class called IgG (for immunoglobulin, or antibody, type G) that were binding antibodies (bAb) to Spike and to Spike receptor-binding domain (RBD) and 50% and 80% inhibitory dilution pseudovirus-neutralizing antibody titers (cID50 and cID80). At Day 57, all four of these were negatively correlated with risk of Covid-19, which means that, as these markers increased, the risk of Covid-19 declined. That is precisely the sort of thing we're looking for.

This is the evidence we needed that specific identifiable antibody levels are predictive of immunity, which should mean we can at some future point use studies of smaller groups to determine how well a vaccine

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 34 of 90

is working. Don't get overexcited about individual application of these tests though; we're not yet at the point where we can apply these findings to your particular immunity. And we're still missing the element of our cell-mediated responses, something the team saw evidence is a player here because some vaccinated individuals had undetectable levels of antibodies, and half of those were still protected. Clearly something else is operating there, likely cell-mediated responses; but those are far more difficult to measure.

So while there is more work to do before regulators are likely to accept correlates of immunity as evidence of protection, this is a good step, potentially a big one. There are already some of those additional studies underway; and we're quite likely heading in the right direction.

While the case reports have recently skewed younger, as have the hospitalized, we should note that there are still a lot of senior citizens getting sick. The vast majority of the dying are still seniors—unvaccinated seniors. In the South and the Mountain West, those unvaccinated seniors constitute more than a tenth of the population, and they're still as vulnerable as they were when this thing started. It seems unlikely that very many of these folks are going to sign on to the vaccination thing at this point; they've been targeted more than any other age group in the vaccination pushes we've seen so that those who wanted vaccine probably have had ample opportunity to receive it. There's probably more dying coming in this age group.

Now that we have a licensed vaccine, attention has turned to young children, those from 5 to 11 who are not yet eligible for vaccination. It is important to note that the clinical trials in children are not finished gathering data yet, so there is no application for an extension of the emergency use authorization (EUA) languishing on some bureaucrat's desk at the FDA. Once such a request is officially made, it's going to take some time to review the data and make a decision. The current thinking is that Pfizer/BioNTech could be submitting their data as soon as late next month—perhaps a bit later. Then, according to statements made by Dr. Francis Collins, director of the NIH, to NPR, there's a pretty good chance the EUA will be extended in October; but the full review process is likely to take at least several weeks, even if everyone kicks into high gear so that license itself isn't likely to be extended to children before year's end. I don't actually care about that part; EUA was always good enough for me if it gets kids protected.

I will add that, predictably, the refuseniks have once again moved the goalposts with respect to accepting vaccine. Those who were claiming they were refusing vaccine only because it was "not FDA approved" and they'd get vaccinated as soon as that approval came through found themselves earlier this week at the end of that road. No problem: One response has been to claim that the FDA licensure was a trick, that since the EUA continues, the license must be fake news. Well, no. The EUA was continued for two reasons:

(1) There is still only EUA for children 12 to 15. The license probably won't be extended to them until early next year, so the only way they're going to continue to be vaccinated is under the EUA. What's more, it is quite likely that, when the FDA authorizes this vaccine for ages 5 to 11, that will also be an extension of the EUA at first. More data will be needed to extend the license itself. And the third dose and possible booster will also very likely take place under EUA. So we don't want that EUA to be cancelled or all of these activities would have to cease. An EUA, after all, is for an emergency, and I'd be hard pressed to make the case this is not an emergency. The EUA will continue for some months to cover these vaccinations.

(2) We have a lot of doses of EUA vaccine out in the world, labeled as such. It is not legal to overlay a licensed vaccine label over the EUA label those currently bear. We don't have so much vaccine that we're going to throw this stuff out and begin to use only stuff with the new labels, so the EUA needs to be continued to cover those doses until they're gone. The FDA is permitted to continue with the EUA as long as there isn't enough of the licensed product available to cover needs. This is precisely the situation in which we find ourselves, so it continues. Nothing fake about the license.

Also on the vaccine front, we have word from Janssen/Johnson & Johnson on their studies of booster doses. The companies said in a statement that, in a very small study, they noted that antibody levels barely moved as long as six months after vaccination in contrast to the mRNA vaccines whose antibodies did show a reduction with time. They also reported that when volunteers received second doses of this one-dose vaccine six months after the first, the result was a nine-fold increase in antibody levels within a week; this is comparable to what was seen with boosters for the mRNA vaccines. We should note that the data are not yet available publicly; the two papers the company has prepared have been submitted

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 35 of 90

to a pre-publication website, but are not yet posted so that independent experts can evaluate them for themselves. We should also note that, since we don't yet have our correlates of protection nailed down for sure, antibody studies are not as persuasive as real-world clinical trial data; however experts are saying a nine-fold increase is pretty darned persuasive—that's really big. NPR quoted Dr. Saad Omer, epidemiologist at Yale University, who told them, "It would be reasonable to say that, yes, you know, have at least two doses of J&J—or have one more dose for those who had a single dose." The question is going to be whether boosters are actually needed by those who received this vaccine, and that remains unclear. So far, the immunity resulting from this vaccine has looked pretty durable.

Meanwhile, Pfizer/BioNTech are now prepared to make formal application for supplemental approval of boosters for ages 16 and older; they announced on Wednesday they will have their supporting data submitted by the end of the week. They did not release their data, so we'll have to wait for the experts to get a look at those when they become available. They did report the third dose increased antibody levels significantly and that the side effects of that third dose are pretty much the same as they are for the earlier doses, so there are no scary safety signals turning up. We should also note that the booster study did not include people over 55 years of age. I'm not sure why; maybe that's in the paper too. Even while plans are being made to begin booster doses next month, it is important to remember that the FDA gets to say whether those plans go forward, and so we're all going to wait to hear from that agency.

And Moderna announced on Wednesday that their Biologics License Application for their mRNA vaccine is now complete. They began submitting data in June, and with luck, the agency has already worked its way through most or all of that so that the review process for the final reports can be expedited. The Pfizer/BioNTech application just approved on Monday took 97 days, which is less than half the usual time. That happened because the FDA pulled out all the stops, putting every available resource on the task to move it along quickly. I hope they have enough left in the tank to do it again because having two licensed vaccines is better than having one. Soon would be nice. The company also submitted a request for extension of its EUA to children down to the age of 12; that would also open up more doses for that age group, which would be a good thing too.

We've had this conversation before, but since we still have a crisis on our hands, it's probably time to talk about travel again. The landscape has changed since we did this last. Before winter sets in and travel is a bit curtailed, folks will be looking for opportunities to get away. That is not unreasonable, although I will say this up front: If you are not vaccinated, you should not travel. It's dangerous at this time for you, very dangerous. You shouldn't even be going out about your local area any more than you must. Most of the getting sick, the going to the hospital, and the dying are being done by the unvaccinated. Don't be one of those. Please consider getting vaccinated—starting tomorrow. Please.

If you are fully vaccinated, however, you can contemplate how to travel relatively safely. Nothing's 100 percent: The only way to be that safe from this virus is to never leave your home, never let anyone else into your home, and have everything delivered. And most of us are unwilling to live that way for a few more months at least. So what can you do to travel safely?

(1) If you can, drive rather than fly. This keeps you out of crowds in airports, TSA lines, and sky bridges; it also keeps you away from the scofflaws who refuse to mask up on the plane. It is important to note that, while the penalties for those folks are severe, if there's one on your flight, you're still trapped on an airplane with them until it can land and the person can be removed.

(2) Research your destination—and any in-between points where you might spend any amount of time. Avoid locales with high transmission rates as much as possible. Pay attention to vaccination rates, hospitalization rates, and local restrictions intended to mitigate spread. The higher the possibility for transmission, the greater are your chances to be exposed to virus. You may also want to have a look at the health care infrastructure in your destination; a place without much in the way of hospital care might be a risky proposition. So might one with jam-packed hospitals; you wouldn't have to get Covid-19 to be at risk there if a health problem pops up.

(3) A bed-and-breakfast or other small accommodation is preferable to a large, crowded resort. Places with fewer guests offer fewer opportunities to be exposed. Finding a beach house, cabin in the mountains,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 36 of 90

or rental in a rural setting is going to be safer than a popular tourist destination. Even outdoor settings, if crowded, are high-risk for transmission. The later into the fall we go, the less crowded some places will be, and that can factor into your planning as well. So look for fewer people and lots of space—outdoor space where possible. You want to keep your distance from strangers and remember that Delta doesn't need as much proximity or as much time to spread as earlier variants.

(4) Think about day-trips close enough to home to return by nightfall, avoiding an overnight stay away from home. Not using lodging reduces your risk of exposure substantially.

(5) Surprisingly, New York City is a preferred destination. (I know—big city in a pandemic. Go figure.) This is because they've been so proactive about vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and reduced capacity. If you want to visit a city, this might be a good one to visit.

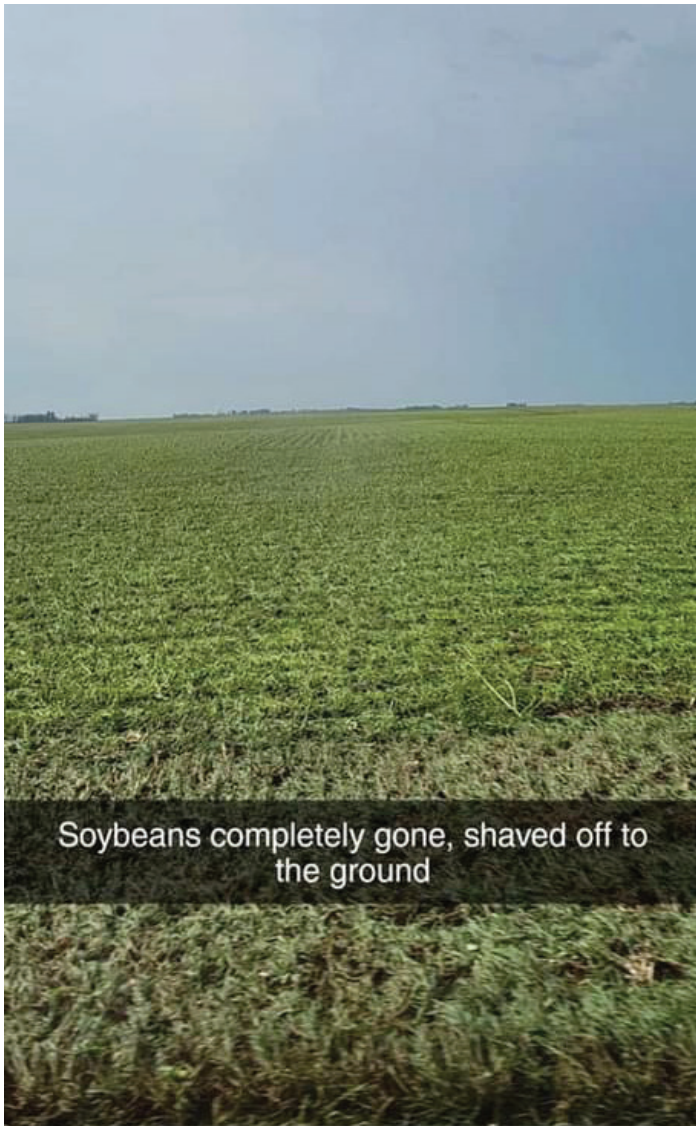
(6) Think about outdoor activities. This is a good time to think about camping, visiting national parks, engaging in hiking or biking or horseback riding—maybe canoeing or kayaking. Outside air has a significant dilution factor for virus, and as long as locations are not crowded, outdoor events are the safest.

And with that, we'll wrap up another too-long Update. I am enjoying my freedom from producing a daily Update, and I have gratefully shifted the burden to you by giving you a whole lot more to read each time I post. Sorry about that. I keep hoping the news slows down enough to mitigate the problem, but haven't had much luck with it so far. Afraid it will be a while for that.

Take care. We'll talk again.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 37 of 90



Storms wreck destruction south of Groton

From Brown County Emergency Management posted yesterday: Just got back from touring the storm zone on the south end of Brown County. Path of hail damage runs from south of Ipswich all the way thru to the Day county line south of Ferney. Lots of vehicle damage, structure damage with windows, siding and shingles. Major crop damage, with some crops completely destroyed. Towns of Warner, Stratford were both in the path. Could use a few prayers for all the folks affected over the past week from severe weather it sure has created some issues.

Photos above from Chad Johnson's Facebook Page

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 38 of 90

Community Events

Sunday, August 29, 2021

Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)

Monday, August 30, 2021

Boys JV Game hosts Redfield, 5 p.m.

Volleyball Hosting Aberdeen Christian (7th grade at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m., Varsity to follow)

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Volleyball at Ipswich (8th at 4:30 p.m., C at 5:15 p.m., JV at 6:15 p.m., Varsity to follow)

Boys golf at Lee Park Golf Course, Aberdeen, 10 a.m.

Thursday, September 2, 2021

Cross Country at Redfield Golf Course, 10 a.m.

Friday, September 3, 2021

NO SCHOOL

Football at Webster Area, 7 p.m.

Saturday, September 4, 2021

Soccer - Tea Area at Groton Area. Girls game at 1 p.m. followed by the boys game.

Monday, September 6, 2021

NO SCHOOL - LABOR DAY



GROTON'S UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ **Fall City-Wide Rummage Sale**
September 11 • 8:00 am-3:00 pm
- ▶ **Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course**
September 12 • 12:00 pm
- ▶ **Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport**
September 18-19 (Weather Permitting)
- ▶ **Lake Region Marching Band Festival**
October 8 • 10:00 am
- ▶ **Pumpkin Fest at the City Park**
October 9 • 10:00 am-3:00 pm
- ▶ **Groton United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat**
October 29 • 5:30-7:00 pm
- ▶ **Downtown Trick or Treat**
October 29 • 4:00-6:00 pm
- ▶ **Front Porch 605 Christmas at the Barn**
November 12-14 • 10:00 am-5:00 pm
- ▶ **Legion Post #39 Turkey Party**
November 13 • 6:30 pm
- ▶ **Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center**
November 25 • 11:30 am-1:00 pm
- ▶ **Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services**
December 11 • 9:00 am-12:00 pm

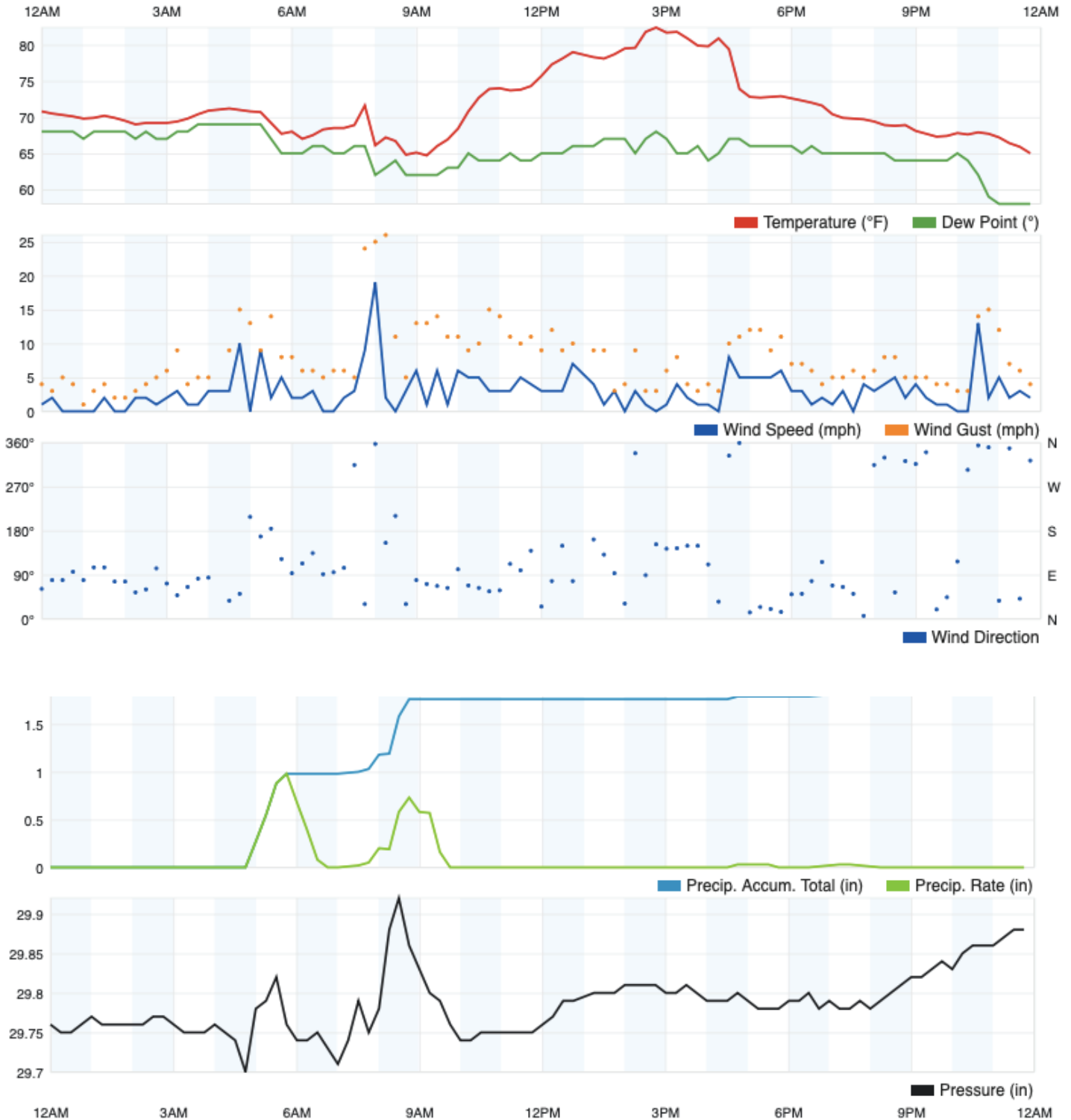
GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce

605.397.8422
120 N Main St.
Groton SD 57445
GrotonChamber.com

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 39 of 90

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 40 of 90

Today



Sunny

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Monday



Sunny

Monday
Night



Chance
Showers

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 80 °F

Low: 53 °F

High: 80 °F

Low: 56 °F

High: 78 °F

Today

Mostly Sunny and Dry
Highs: Mid 70s to the lower 80s

Monday-Monday Night

Scattered Showers/Storms Return to the Region
Highs: Mid 70s to the lower 80s



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

There will be a break in the action today with dry conditions under mostly sunny skies. Scattered showers and storms will return to the region Monday and Monday night. Highs today and Monday will be in the mid 70s to the lower 80s.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 41 of 90

Today in Weather History

August 29, 1983: A devastating hail storm struck portions of central South Dakota. In a small part of Faulk County, hail pounded the area for two straight hours. At times, the hail was the size of baseballs. Of course, this incredible hailstorm devastated crops in the area and took out windows in area buildings. In one home, the windows were shattered, the curtains shredded, and glass shards and water ruined much of the upper floor. On some houses, the paint was peeled off by the continual pounding of the hail. Also, funnel clouds were reported just east of Lake City, and near Langford and Veblen in Marshall County. In Veblen, a pole barn was blown over, and shingles were torn off.

August 29, 1993: A severe thunderstorm hit Groton with hail, damaging lightning, and 3.43 inches of rain which flooded some basements. At the high school, lightning spits a 30-foot chimney which fell through a large skylight and sections of the roof.

1960: The storm that would become Hurricane Donna forms near Cape Verde off the African coast. It would go on to cause 150 deaths from Puerto Rico to New England over the next two weeks.

2005: Hurricane Katrina makes landfall near New Orleans, Louisiana, as a Category 3 hurricane. Despite being only the third most powerful storm of the 2005 hurricane season, Katrina was one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the United States.

1962 - Hackberry, LA, was deluged with twenty-two inches of rain in 24 hours, establishing a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1965 - A national record for the month of August was established when 2.5 inches of snow fell atop Mount Washington NH. Temperatures in New England dipped to 39 degrees at Nantucket MA, and to 25 degrees in Vermont. For many location it was the earliest freeze of record. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Some of the most powerful thunderstorms in several years developed over the piedmont of North Carolina, and marched across central sections of the state during the late afternoon and evening hours. Baseball size hail was reported around Albemarle, while thunderstorm winds downed giant trees around High Falls. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Cool air invaded the north central U.S. Ten cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Bismarck ND with a reading of 33 degrees. Deerfield, a small town in the Black Hills of South Dakota, reported a low of 23 degrees. The remnants of Tropical Storm Chris drenched eastern Pennsylvania with up to five and a half inches of rain, and produced high winds which gusted to 90 mph, severely damaging a hundred boats in Anne Arundel County MD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Evening thunderstorms produced destructive lightning in West Virginia. The lightning caused widespread damage, particularly in Doddridge County. Numerous trees were downed closing many roads. Fire companies had a difficult time tending to the many homes and trailers on fire. Anchorage AK reported a record 9.60 inches of rain for the month of August. The average annual precipitation for Anchorage is just slightly more than fifteen inches. Three day rainfall totals in northwest Missouri ranged up to 8.20 inches at Maryville. (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Plaquemines Parish in southeastern Louisiana early on the 29th with maximum sustained winds near 125 mph, a strong category-three, and the third most-intense landfalling hurricane in U.S. history. The center of the hurricane passed just east of New Orleans, where winds gusted over 100 mph. Widespread devastation and unprecedented flooding occurred, submerging at least 80 percent of the city as levees failed. Farther east, powerful winds and a devastating storm surge of 20-30 feet raked the Mississippi coastline, including Gulfport and Biloxi, where Gulf of Mexico floodwaters spread several miles inland. Rainfall amounts of 8-10 inches were common along and to the east of the storm's path.

Groton Daily Independent

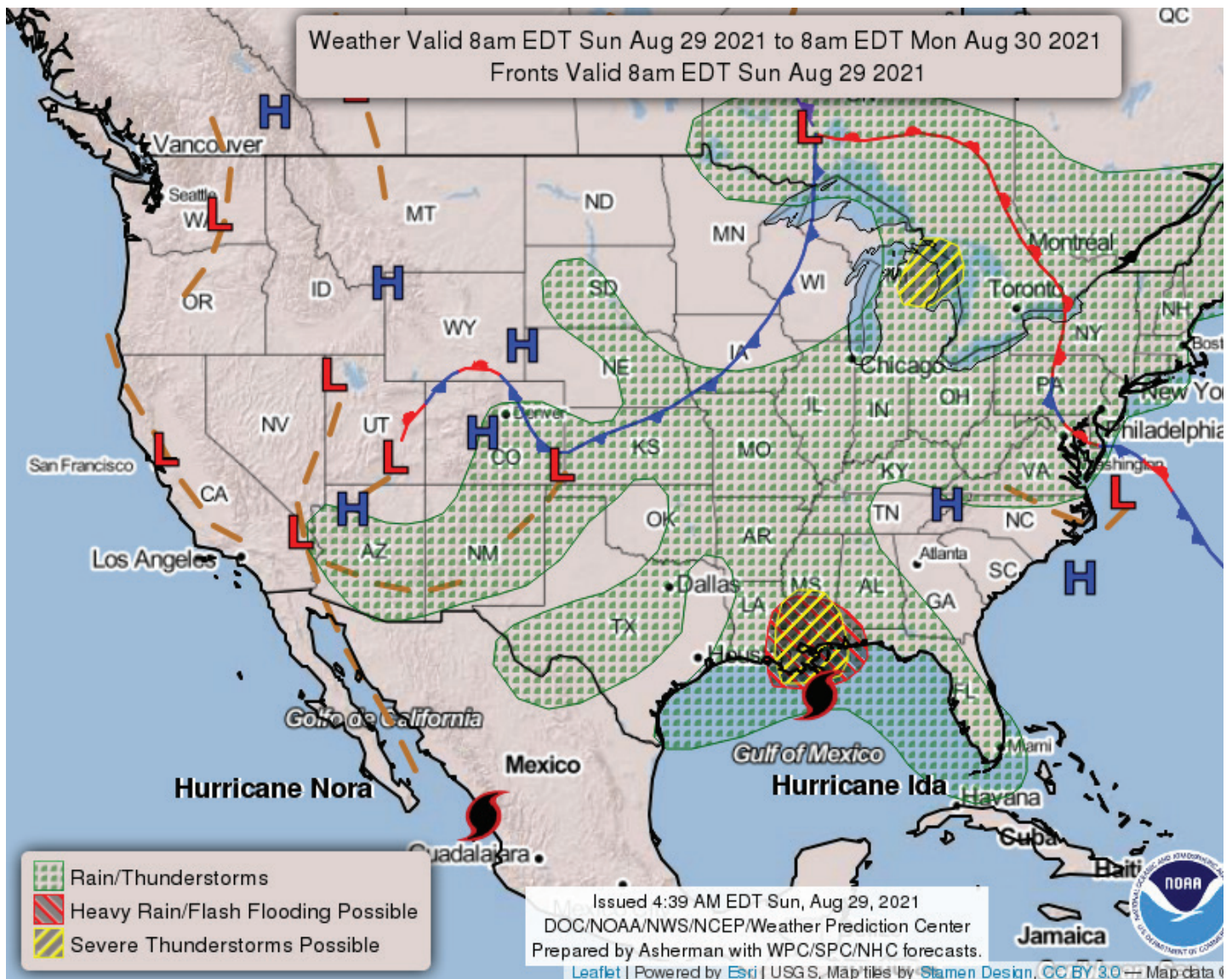
Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 42 of 90

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 2:46 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 11:58 PM
Wind: 64 °F at 11:58 PM
Precip: 0.00
Three-Day Total: 3.68

Today's Info

Record High: 100° in 1961
Record Low: 61° in 1903
Average High: 81°F
Average Low: 53°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 2.10
Precip to date in Aug.: 5.87
Average Precip to date: 16.20
Precip Year to Date: 13.14
Sunset Tonight: 8:16 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:50 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 43 of 90



"TOO BIG FOR ME, DAD"

Young Timothy was helping his Dad clear a lot next to their home for a garden. Things went well until Tim ran into a large stone that he couldn't budge. After struggling for a few moments he called to his Dad and said, "Dad, this one is too big for me to handle. What should I do?"

"Well," said his Dad wanting him to learn a lesson, "what have you tried to do?"

"I've pulled on it with both hands," he said looking down at the stone. "And I've tried to pull it with a hoe, too, but that didn't work either."

"Sounds like you've tried to move it with all the strength that you have," his Dad said patiently.

"Sure have, Dad. There's nothing else for me to do but up give up on it," he said with discouragement.

"Give up, son? Why would you give up?" he asked.

"There's nothing else to I can do," said Tim.

"Oh, but there is. You can always call on me to help you, Son," he said with compassion.

Often God allows us to realize how weak we are without Him. We struggle and fail. We try and give up. We worry and become depressed. We think and realize that many things are beyond us. We practice and still make mistakes. We work and still can't make ends meet.

Then suddenly we realize that God has put a "gap" between us and the solution to our problem. It's His way of saying, "You can always call on me for help. And when you do, I will answer you and I will be with you!"

Prayer: We thank You, Lord, for being just a "prayer away" whenever we need Your help. We are truly grateful. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 91:15 He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 44 of 90

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
Cancelled 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
10/29/2021 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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 45 of 90

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

09-13-26-28-34

(nine, thirteen, twenty-six, twenty-eight, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$63,000

Lotto America

10-13-33-39-48, Star Ball: 3, ASB: 2

(ten, thirteen, thirty-three, thirty-nine, forty-eight; Star Ball: three; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.6 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$306 million

Powerball

06-13-41-47-48, Powerball: 10

(six, thirteen, forty-one, forty-seven, forty-eight; Powerball: ten)

Estimated jackpot: \$322 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Rapid City Stevens, 25-19, 25-17, 18-25, 30-32, 15-13

Castlewood def. Sioux Valley, 25-18, 25-19, 25-14

Pierre def. Rapid City Central, 25-17, 25-20, 25-13

Alpha IV Tournament=

Baltic def. Flandreau, 25-18, 25-11

Flandreau def. Tri-Valley, 20-25, 25-22, 25-17

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Flandreau, 25-18, 25-19

Bennett County Triangular=

Stanley County def. Bennett County, 25-16, 16-25, 25-8, 21-25, 15-8

Wall def. Bennett County, 25-20, 25-23, 25-18

Canton Tournament=

Pool 1=

Canton def. Dell Rapids, 25-20, 25-22, 25-22

Canton def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-17, 22-25, 25-10

Canton def. West Sioux, Iowa, 26-24, 25-20

Dell Rapids def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-9, 25-11

West Sioux, Iowa def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-21, 25-19

Pool 2=

Garretson def. Canistota, 25-9, 25-13

Garretson def. Lennox, 25-13, 25-11

Garretson def. West Lyon, Inwood, Iowa, 25-18, 25-13

Custer Tournament=

Hill City def. Red Cloud, 25-6, 25-10

Newell def. Red Cloud, 25-13, 25-23

Estelline Tournament=

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 46 of 90

Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-22, 25-18

Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-13, 25-9

Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Wilmot, 25-19, 25-14

Estelline/Hendricks def. Langford, 24-26, 25-20, 25-14

Hamlin def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 19-25, 25-22, 27-25

Langford def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-20, 25-17

Langford def. Waubay/Summit, 25-8, 25-16

Langford def. Webster, 25-18, 25-23

Huron Invitational=

Brandon Valley def. Huron, 23-25, 25-19, 25-22

Brandon Valley def. Spearfish, 25-16, 25-12

Brookings def. Sturgis Brown, 25-11, 25-20

Chester def. Douglas, 25-13, 25-10

Chester def. Spearfish, 25-12, 25-15

Harrisburg def. Brookings, 25-19, 25-14

Harrisburg def. Douglas, 25-19, 25-17

Huron def. Brookings, 25-11, 25-22

Huron def. Spearfish, 25-23, 25-12

Mitchell def. Chester, 27-25, 25-17

Mitchell def. Douglas, 25-17, 25-4

Mitchell def. Watertown, 25-15, 25-16

Sioux Falls Christian def. Brandon Valley, 25-19, 29-27

Sioux Falls Christian def. Brookings, 25-16, 25-9

Sioux Falls Christian def. Harrisburg, 25-14, 25-21

Sioux Falls Christian def. Sturgis Brown, 25-2, 25-8

Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Brandon Valley, 16-28, 25-20, 25-19

Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Huron, 25-21, 25-22

Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Mitchell, 25-20, 32-30

Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Spearfish, 25-9, 25-7

Watertown def. Chester, 25-19, 25-16

Watertown def. Douglas, 25-15, 25-22

Huron Tournament=

Harrisburg def. Sturgis Brown, 25-15, 25-11

Watertown def. Sturgis Brown, 25-10, 25-10

Irene-Wakonda Tournament=

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Centerville, 25-6, 25-11

Gayville-Volin def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-12, 25-14

Irene-Wakonda def. Menno, 11-25, 25-11, 25-12

Scotland def. Lower Brule, 25-15, 25-19

Championship=

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Gayville-Volin, 25-21, 25-23

Consolation=

Centerville def. Lower Brule, 25-20, 25-11

Menno def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 22-25, 25-19, 25-17

Fifth Place=

Menno def. Centerville, 25-27, 25-16, 25-23

Semifinal=

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Scotland, 25-14, 25-22

Gayville-Volin def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-15, 27-25

Seventh Place=

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 47 of 90

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Lower Brule, 25-19, 25-17
Third Place=
Scotland def. Irene-Wakonda, 16-25, 25-15, 25-13
Jones County Triangular=
Jones County def. Little Wound, 25-16, 25-15, 25-12
Norfolk Invitational=
Pool A=
Norfolk, Neb. def. Yankton, 20-25, 25-14, 25-21
Yankton def. Kearney, Neb., 23-25, 26-24, 25-22
Yankton def. South Sioux City, Neb., 25-14, 25-18
Third Place=
Columbus, Neb. def. Yankton, 25-12, 25-21
Parkston Tournament=
Northwestern def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-19, 25-15
Northwestern def. McCook Central/Montrose, 25-15, 25-21, 26-24
Northwestern def. Parkston, 25-14, 25-20
Northwestern def. Wagner, 25-22, 25-11
Wagner def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-13, 25-10
Wagner def. McCook Central/Montrose, 18-25, 25-21, 25-19
Wagner def. Parkston, 25-21, 22-25, 25-19
Rapid City Christian Tournament=
Madison def. Faith, 25-10, 25-10
Madison def. Scottsbluff, Neb., 25-19, 25-21
Madison def. St. Thomas More, 19-25, 25-16, 25-13
New Underwood def. Faith, 25-13, 27-25
Rapid City Christian def. Madison, 25-22, 27-29, 25-22
Rapid City Christian def. New Underwood, 25-14, 25-18
Rapid City Christian def. Scottsbluff, Neb., 25-11, 20-25, 25-23
Rapid City Christian def. St. Thomas More, 25-17, 25-14
Scottsbluff, Neb. def. Faith, 25-13, 25-20
Scottsbluff, Neb. def. New Underwood, 25-12, 25-18
St. Thomas More def. Faith, 25-21, 25-22
St. Thomas More def. New Underwood, 25-17, 25-17

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

The Latest: Japan aims for full vaccinations by this fall

By The Associated Press undefined

TOKYO — Taro Kono, the Japanese minister in charge of the vaccine rollout, promised Sunday a timely administering of booster shots for the coronavirus, as the nation aims to fully vaccinate its population by October or November.

He said Pfizer and Moderna booster shots will arrive early next year, in time for medical workers and the elderly, who were prioritized and mostly got their second shots by July.

"Japan is aiming for 80% vaccination levels," Kono said on a nationally broadcast Fuji TV show.

A digital system for proof of vaccination will be available later this year, he added.

Japan has lagged among developed nations on vaccinations, with its fully vaccinated now at about 43%. Hospitals are getting swamped, and more than 118,000 people infected with the coronavirus are waiting at home, according to the health ministry. Japan has recorded about 15,800 COVID-related deaths.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 48 of 90

MORE ON THE PANDEMIC:

- Russia's virus-related deaths hit record of 50,000 in July
- Contact tracing takes a back seat during latest COVID-19 surge
- UK prepares to vaccinate youth ages 12-15 before school starts
- How much impact could Sturgis rally have on virus caseload?

— Find more AP coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BEND, Ore. — Oregon's emergency management department says the state's death toll from COVID-19 is climbing so rapidly that two counties have requested refrigerated trucks to hold the bodies.

Department spokeswoman Bobbi Doan said Saturday that Tillamook County, on Oregon's northwest coast, and Josephine County, in the southwest, have requested the trucks.

Tillamook County Emergency Director Gordon McCraw wrote in his request to the state that the county's sole funeral home "is now consistently at or exceeding their capacity" of nine bodies. He added that virus cases among staff have made them unable to transport bodies to other counties.

The refrigerated truck arrived in the county on Friday, loaned by Klamath County, Doan said in a telephone interview.

The Tillamook County Board of Commissioners says there were six COVID-19 deaths in the county from Aug. 18 to Aug. 23, surpassing the five total COVID-19 deaths that occurred during the first 18 months of the pandemic.

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — A newspaper reporter in Michigan says he was punched in the face while covering an anti-mask event.

The Grand Traverse County sheriff's office is investigating. Record-Eagle reporter Brendan Quealy went to Silver Lake Recreation Area on Thursday to check an event organized by a group called Citizens Liberating Michigan.

Heather Cerone introduced herself to the crowd and urged people to block the reporter's view. Quealy says he was shoved into a fence by a man and punched in the face.

Cerone claimed the event was private because the pavilion had been rented. But prosecutor Noelle Moeggenberg said the area around the pavilion is open to anyone.

Quealy says he was just doing his job: to chase the news and accurately report it.

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. -- Public health officials say a COVID-19 outbreak at an Oregon assisted living facility that has infected 64 people and killed five began with an unvaccinated worker.

The Register-Guard newspaper reports that Gateway Living in Springfield has 105 employees and 101 residents. Only 63% of the staff and 82% of the residents are completely vaccinated.

Lane County Public Health spokesman Jason Davis says the outbreak began with an unvaccinated employee who worked while infectious. About 60% of the cases are breakthrough cases. It's not yet clear how many of the cases were among residents, employees or family members and others outside of the facility.

Seven of the people infected are hospitalized.

LAS VEGAS — A Las Vegas hospital has opened a clinic to provide ongoing care to so-called long-haulers — people with long-term medical complications from COVID-19.

University Medical Center said its clinic is the first of its kind in Nevada and will also help patients enroll in clinical trials for new therapies to treat long-term symptoms, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

Long-term symptoms include heart and lung conditions, pain and cognitive impairment.

In another development, the Clark County School District Board on Wednesday will consider allowing the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 49 of 90

superintendent to establish a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for district employees.

Requiring COVID-19 vaccination "is the responsible, common-sense course of action," based on experiences of many government agencies, businesses and other organizations, the Clark County district said in a statement. "Our top priority remains the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff.

PHOENIX — A day after Arizona surpassed the 1 million in confirmed coronavirus cases, the state on Saturday reported nearly 3,900 new cases, the most since a surge in February.

The 3,893 cases and 55 deaths reported Saturday increased Arizona's total confirmed deaths to 18, according to the state's coronavirus dashboard.

The seven-day rolling average of daily new cases rose over the past two weeks from 2,604 on Aug. 12 to 3,184 on Thursday. The rolling average of daily deaths rose from 13 deaths to 23 during the same period, according to Johns Hopkins University.

After climbing steadily since early July, the state's virus-related hospitalizations in recent days ranged between 1,900 and 2,000, with 1,982 COVID-19 patients occupying hospital beds on Friday. That's far below the pandemic peak of 5,082 on Jan. 11.

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — State numbers show the overwhelming number of people hospitalized or dying from COVID-19 are unvaccinated.

State Health Officer Scott Harris says Alabama had 1,230 virus deaths since April when the vaccine was widely available. About 91% of the deaths were among the unvaccinated.

There were 108 deaths, or about 9%, of deaths among people who are fully vaccinated. Harris says nearly all of those deaths were ealderly or had serious chronic health problems.

State officials provided the numbers as they try to stress that the vaccine lowers the risk of serious illness. The Alabama Hospital Association says 85% of the 2,900 people hospitalized for COVID-19 are unvaccinated.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Tennessee classrooms and schools that face a surge in coronavirus cases and quarantines can request a temporary shift to remote instruction if their districts can show a need.

Tennessee Department of Education Commissioner Peggy Schwinn says while she remains committed to in-person instruction, schools and classrooms can seek a waiver to state Board of Education rules that prevent districts from unilaterally requiring students to implement remote learning.

The letter comes as some school districts in Tennessee were forced to close due to an increase in coronavirus cases among students, faculty and staff. Wilson County Schools says schools will close next week "to help slow the current trend of positive cases and quarantines."

State Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey said Wednesday that children make up 36% of Tennessee's reported coronavirus cases. Tennessee ranked sixth in the country this week for new overall cases per capita, according to researchers from Johns Hopkins. The rolling average number of daily new cases has increased by about 2,200 in the past two weeks.

PRISTINA, Kosovo — Kosovo's government has postponed the start of school for two weeks and installed new restrictive measures to cope with a rise of coronavirus cases.

In August, the numbers increased significantly to about 2,000 new cases a day. On Saturday, there were 18 deaths and 1,891 confirmed cases.

The government says the pre-university school year now will start Sept. 13. Public institutions will limit the number of people in the office, and there will be no gatherings of more than 50 people.

It also reimposes the overnight curfew of 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. and only the main public service employees are exempt.

Sport and culture events can use only 10% to 30% of the seats and restaurants 70% of the outside seats. Masks are obligatory in all closed spaces and outdoors.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 50 of 90

MOSCOW — Russia's state statistics agency shows a record 50,000 deaths in July were related to the coronavirus.

The report from the Rosstat agency says 50,421 people suffering from the coronavirus died during the month, sharply higher than the previous record of 44,435 in December.

However, the agency says only 38,992 deaths were directly attributed to the disease COVID-19. In another 5,206 deaths, the coronavirus was assessed as likely the main cause but that more investigation would be needed; in 1,449 other cases the virus contributed to deaths but was not the main cause.

The report says Russia has registered a total of 215,265 virus-related deaths by the end of July — more than the 180,840 cited by the national coronavirus task force.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — Health officials across five states have linked 178 virus cases to the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

In the three weeks since the rally kicked off, South Dakota health officials have reported 63 cases among rallygoers so far. The epicenter of the rally, Meade County, is reaching a per capita rate similar to the hardest-hit states of the South. Health officials in North Dakota, Wyoming, Minnesota and Wisconsin all reported cases among people who attended the 10-day rally that attracted more than 500,000 people.

Health experts are worried that large gatherings across the Upper Midwest will feed a new wave of the virus.

"This coronavirus forest fire will keep burning any human wood it can find," said Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy. "It will find you, and it's so infectious."

The Black Hills region's largest hospital system, Monument Health, says hospitalizations from the virus rose from five to 78 this month. The hospital was bracing for more COVID-19 patients by converting rooms to intensive care units and reassigning staff.

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

Parker 26, Rapid City Christian 0

Potter County 58, Newell 8

Red Cloud 48, Standing Rock, N.D. 16

Sioux Falls Lincoln 47, Rapid City Central 6

Wagner 55, Bennett County 6

Watertown 38, Sturgis Brown 18

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Garretson vs. Hanson, ppd.

Sioux Falls O'Gorman vs. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, ppd. to Aug 30th.

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Ohio beats South Dakota 5-2, reaches LLWS championship game

By PRESTON SHOEMAKER Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (AP) — Cooper Oden struck out six and allowed two runs over five innings Saturday as Ohio hung on to beat South Dakota 5-2 in a semifinal at the Little League World Series.

The West Side Little League squad from Hamilton, Ohio, became the first team from the state to reach the LLWS championship game. Ohio will play Sunday against Michigan, which defeated Hawaii 2-1 in the other semifinal.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 51 of 90

Wearing his cap just slightly crooked, Oden stared straight though the South Dakota order, locating and mixing his pitches efficiently. Despite his successful outing, he said it wasn't easy.

"That first inning was pretty nerve-racking because this is probably the biggest game I have pitched in in my life and probably will ever pitch," he said. "Every 12-year-old that plays baseball, this is basically their dream."

Trailing 5-1 entering the bottom of the sixth, South Dakota rallied for three straight singles off Oden to score a run. South Dakota then loaded the bases off reliever Kaleb Harden and brought the winning run to the plate with nobody out. But Harden got three outs, the last on a force at third, to send Ohio into the title game.

Ohio became the first team in LLWS history to reach the championship game without winning its regional tournament, finishing as a runner-up in the Great Lakes to Michigan. Then again, COVID-19 protocols have made this year's tournament unlike any other. Because of travel restrictions, international teams aren't playing for the first time since 1975.

Ohio manager Ken Coomer has been coaching for over 28 years. He spent the last three coaching Oden and said he is an all-star personality.

"He's just one of those kids. You ask him to do something and he does it," he said. "It has just been a great year for Cooper."

Ohio jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the second against Sioux Falls starter Maddux Munson. With runners on first and second and one out, Oden hit a single that right fielder Gunner Alfson bobbled, allowing a run to score.

Krew Brown loaded the bases with a bunt single, setting up a bases-clearing single from Levi Smith. The four runs in the inning were the first given up by South Dakota in the whole tournament.

South Dakota responded with a run in the third. Ohio tacked on an insurance run in the fifth on an RBI single by Maddox Jones.

"That kid today, Oden, threw a great game. He was pretty dialed in on his locations," South Dakota manager Mike Gorsett said. "His fastball is not overpowering but when you throw so many off-speed pitches and then throw that fastball, it really ties guys up."

— Preston Shoemaker is a sports journalism student at Penn State.

Rapid City teen dies of injuries sustained in shooting

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a Rapid City teen has died following a shooting in the city.

Police said McKenzie Garreaux, 16, died at a Rapid City hospital after receiving treatment for injuries sustained in the Friday morning shooting. Garreaux was reported missing by the Pennington County Sheriff's Office on Aug. 20.

The Rapid City Journal reports police arrested a 19-year-old suspect in the shooting. Charges are pending in the case.

The shooting was reported at about 9:30 a.m. Friday at an apartment complex.

Police said a gun believed to be used in the shooting was located near the apartment complex.

How much impact could Sturgis rally have on COVID caseload?

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Rumbles from the motorcycles and rock shows of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally have hardly cleared from the Black Hills of South Dakota, and the reports of COVID-19 infections among rallygoers are already streaming in — 178 cases across five states, according to contact tracers.

In the three weeks since the rally kicked off, coronavirus cases in South Dakota have shot up at a startling pace — sixfold from the early days of August. While it is not clear how much rallygoers spread the virus through secondary infections, state health officials have so far reported 63 cases among South Dakota residents who attended the event.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 52 of 90

The epicenter of the rally, Meade County, has become red-hot with new cases, reaching a per capita rate that is similar to the hardest-hit Southern states. The county reported the highest rate of cases in the state over the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

The Black Hills region's largest hospital system, Monument Health, warned Friday that it has seen hospitalizations from the virus rise from five to 78 this month. The hospital was bracing for more COVID-19 patients by converting rooms to intensive care units and reassigning staff.

Virus cases were already on the rise when the rally started, and it's difficult to measure just how much the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is to blame in a region where local fairs, youth sports leagues and other gatherings have resumed.

However, Meade County could be a harbinger of things to come for the Upper Midwest as infections ripple from those events, said Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.

"This coronavirus forest fire will keep burning any human wood it can find," he said. "It will find you, and it's so infectious."

Health officials in North Dakota, Wyoming, Minnesota and Wisconsin all reported cases among people who attended the rally, with North Dakota also reporting two hospitalizations. Some health officials noted people could have caught the virus elsewhere.

A team from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined last year's rally looked like a "superspreader event." The team said the event offered a lesson: Such large gatherings can result in "widespread transmission" of infections and attendees should follow precautions like getting vaccinated, wearing masks and social distancing.

The aftermath of this year's rally looks eerily similar to last year — when the event heralded a wave that did not subside until the winter.

But the pandemic fallout from the rally won't be seen for weeks and an exact case count will likely remain unknown, Osterholm said.

Daniel Bucheli, a spokesman for the state Department of Health, said the virus spike is following "a national trend being experienced in every state, not just South Dakota."

He also pointed out that Meade County's vaccination rate of 45% lags behind the statewide rate of 56% eligible people vaccinated.

The city of Sturgis also downplayed the virus numbers, issuing a statement that blamed the increase in positivity rate on a "significant increase in testing performed to proactively reduce the spread of COVID-19" and accusing "individuals in the national media" of mischaracterizing the event.

Despite the more contagious delta variant, this year's motorcycle rally was even bigger than last year. More than 500,000 people showed up during the 10-day rally.

The streets of Sturgis filled with rallygoers drawn to the libertarian rules of South Dakota — motorcycle helmets weren't required, minimal attire and bodypainting were welcome, and masks were often nowhere in sight. Bikers bellied up to bars and packed into rock shows.

Two bands that performed at the rally have canceled shows after musicians came down with the virus. Corey Taylor, the lead singer of Slipknot who had embarked on a solo tour, told fans he was "very, very sick" from COVID-19, though he did not say where he contracted it.

"This is the worst I've ever been sick in my life," Taylor said in a Facebook video this week. "Had I not been vaccinated, I shudder to think how bad it would have been."

Biden to pay respects to US troops killed in Afghanistan

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is embarking on a solemn journey Sunday to honor and mourn the 13 U.S. troops killed in the suicide attack near the Kabul airport as their remains return to U.S. soil from Afghanistan.

Biden and his wife Jill were traveling to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to meet privately with the fami-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 53 of 90

lies of those killed and then attend the "dignified transfer" of the fallen troops, a military ritual of receiving the remains of those killed in foreign combat. They departed for Dover on a misty, overcast morning.

The dead ranged in age from 20 to 31, and came from California and Massachusetts and states in between. They include a 20-year-old Marine from Wyoming who had been expecting his first child in three weeks and a 22-year-old Navy corpsman who in his last FaceTime conversation with his mother assured her that he would stay safe because "my guys got me."

Five were just 20, born not long before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that spurred the United States to invade Afghanistan in order to topple al-Qaida and dismantle their Taliban hosts who ruled the country.

At their deaths, the 13 young service members were on the ground for the U.S. coda to its longest war, assisting a chaotic evacuation of Americans and of Afghans who helped the U.S. war effort and are now fleeing the Taliban after their return to power.

"The 13 service members that we lost were heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of our highest American ideals and while saving the lives of others," Biden said in a statement Saturday. "Their bravery and selflessness has enabled more than 117,000 people at risk to reach safety thus far."

Family members of the fallen often travel to Dover to be present as flag-draped transfer cases are taken off the transport plane that returns them to American soil.

Aside from the quiet commands of honor guards who carry the transfer cases, the short prayers of the chaplain typically are the only words spoken during the ritual.

Like his three most recent predecessors as presidents, who all attended dignified transfers for troops killed in the nearly 20-year-old Afghanistan war, Biden is expected to meet with the families of the fallen before returning to Washington.

It will be the first time that Biden has traveled to Dover as president for such a movement. But he is not unfamiliar with the ritual.

Biden attended a dignified transfer for two U.S. soldiers killed in a suicide blast at Bagram Airfield in the final months of his vice presidency in 2016. In 2008, while a senator and at the request of the grieving family, he attended one for a soldier killed in a car bombing in Iraq. Biden told CBS' "Face the Nation" that he had to get permission from the Pentagon to attend the transfer.

The 13 troops who died in Kabul were the first U.S. service members killed in Afghanistan since February 2020. That was when the Trump administration reached an agreement with the Taliban that called for the militant group to halt attacks on Americans in exchange for a U.S. commitment to remove all American troops and contractors by May 2021. Biden announced in April that he would have all forces out by September.

Eleven of the 13 Americans killed were Marines. One was a Navy sailor and one an Army soldier.

Associated Press writers Lolita C. Baldor, Robert Burns and Matt Sedensky contributed to this report.

Biden aide: US has capacity to evacuate remaining Americans

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States has the capacity to evacuate the approximately 300 U.S. citizens remaining in Afghanistan who want to leave before President Joe Biden's Tuesday deadline, national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday. He also said the administration's current plan is not to have "an ongoing embassy presence" after the final U.S. troop withdrawal.

With Biden warning that another terrorist attack was "highly likely" after last week's suicide bombing at the Kabul airport, Sullivan said the U.S. has shown in other countries that it is capable of "suppressing the terrorism threat ... without a large permanent presence on the ground. ... And we will do that in Afghanistan as well as we go forward."

Biden has pledged to keep up airstrikes against the Islamic extremist group whose airport attack killed scores of Afghans and 13 American service members. Biden was traveling to Dover Air Force Base in

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 54 of 90

Delaware on Sunday for a "dignified transfer" movement, a military ritual of receiving the remains of fallen troops killed in foreign combat.

The Pentagon said a U.S. drone mission in eastern Afghanistan killed two members of the Islamic State group's Afghanistan affiliate early Saturday local time in retaliation for the airport bombing, and Biden said the extremists can expect more.

"This strike was not the last," Biden said in a statement Saturday. "We will continue to hunt down any person involved in that heinous attack and make them pay."

The evacuation of Americans proceeded as tensions rose over the prospect of another IS attack. The State Department issued a new security alert early Sunday morning Kabul time instructing people to leave the airport area immediately "due to a specific, credible threat."

Sullivan told CBS' "Face the Nation" for those U.S. citizens seeking immediately to leave Afghanistan by Biden's deadline, "we have the capacity to have 300 Americans, which is roughly the number we think are remaining, come to the airport and get on planes in the time that is remaining. We moved out more than that number just yesterday. So from our point of view, there is an opportunity right now for American citizens to come, to be admitted to the airport and to be evacuated safely and effectively."

He also pledged the U.S. "will make sure there is safe passage for any American citizen, any legal permanent resident" after Tuesday, as well as for "those Afghans who helped us." But untold numbers of vulnerable Afghans, fearful of a return to the brutality of pre-2001 Taliban rule, are likely to be left behind.

There also are roughly 280 others who have said they are Americans but who have not told the State Department of their plans to leave the country, or who have said they plan to remain.

Sullivan said the U.S. would continue to undertake similar strikes against IS and consider "other operations to go after these guys, to get them and to take them off the battlefield." He added: "We will continue to bring the fight to the terrorists in Afghanistan to make sure they do not represent a threat to the United States."

The administration's current plan "is not to have an ongoing embassy presence in Afghanistan" — a permanent presence — as of Tuesday, Sullivan said. "But we will have means and mechanisms of having diplomats on the ground there, be able to continue to process out these applicants, be able to facilitate the passage of other people who want to leave Afghanistan."

He said that "over time, depending on what the Taliban does, how it follows through on its commitments with respect to safe passage, how it deals with the treatment of women, how it deals with its international commitments not to allow Afghanistan to become a base for terrorism in the rest of the world, we can make further determinations about both diplomatic presence."

The 13 service members were the first U.S. troops killed in Afghanistan since February 2020, the month the Trump administration struck an agreement with the Taliban in which the militant group halted attacks on Americans in exchange for a U.S. agreement to remove all troops and contractors by May 2021. Biden announced in April that the 2,500 to 3,000 troops who remained would be out by September, ending what he has called America's forever war.

With Biden's approval, the Pentagon this month sent thousands of additional troops to the Kabul airport to provide security and to facilitate the State Department's chaotic effort to evacuate thousands of Americans and tens of thousands of Afghans who had helped the United States during the war. The evacuation was marred by confusion and chaos as the U.S. government was caught by surprise when the Afghan army collapsed and the Taliban swept to power Aug. 15.

Hurricane Ida winds hit 150 mph ahead of Louisiana strike

By KEVIN MCGILL and JAY REEVES Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Hurricane Ida rapidly grew in strength early Sunday, becoming a dangerous Category 4 hurricane just hours before hitting the Louisiana coast while emergency officials in the region grappled with opening shelters for displaced evacuees despite the risks of spreading the coronavirus.

As Ida moved through some of the warmest ocean water in the world in the northern Gulf of Mexico,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 55 of 90

its top winds grew by 45 mph (72 kph) to 150 mph (230 kph) in five hours. The system was expected to make landfall Sunday afternoon, set to arrive on the exact date Hurricane Katrina ravaged Louisiana and Mississippi 16 years earlier.

Ida threatened a region already reeling from a resurgence of COVID-19 infections, due to low vaccination rates and the highly contagious delta variant.

New Orleans hospitals planned to ride out the storm with their beds nearly full, as similarly stressed hospitals elsewhere had little room for evacuated patients. And shelters for those fleeing their homes carried an added risk of becoming flashpoints for new infections.

On Grand Isle, where Ida appeared to be heading for landfall, the ocean steadily rose as increasingly bigger waves churned Sunday morning.

In New Orleans, where the worst weather is expected later, a light rain fell. Cars were parked on the median, which locals call neutral ground in New Orleans, because it's a few feet higher and can protect against potential flooding.

Ida intensified so swiftly that New Orleans officials said there was no time to organize a mandatory evacuation of its 390,000 residents. Mayor LaToya Cantrell urged residents to leave voluntarily. Those who stayed were warned to prepare for long power outages amid sweltering heat.

Nick Mosca was walking his dog, like most of those who were out.

"I'd like to be better prepared. There's a few things I'm thinking we could have done. But this storm came pretty quick, so you only have the time you have," Mosca said.

Gov. John Bel Edwards vowed Saturday that Louisiana's "resilient and tough people" would weather the storm. He also noted shelters would operate with reduced capacities "to reflect the realities of COVID."

Edwards said Louisiana officials were already working to find hotel rooms for many evacuees so that fewer had to stay in mass shelters. He noted that during last year's hurricane season, Louisiana found rooms for 20,000 people.

"So, we know how to do this," Edwards said. "I hope and pray we don't have to do it anywhere near that extent."

In coastal Gulfport, Mississippi, a Red Cross shelter posted signs displaying directions for evacuees along with warnings about COVID-19. With skies still sunny, only a handful of people had shown up Saturday evening.

Shelter manager Barbara Casterlin said workers were required to wear face masks. Evacuees were encouraged to do the same. Anyone who refuses will be sent to an isolated area, she said, and so will people who are sick.

"We're not checking vaccinations," Casterlin said, "but we are doing temperature checks two or three times a day."

President Joe Biden approved emergency declarations for Louisiana and Mississippi ahead of Ida's arrival.

Comparisons to the Aug. 29, 2005, landfall of Katrina weighed heavily on residents bracing for Ida. A Category 3 storm, Katrina was blamed for 1,800 deaths as it demolished oceanfront homes in Mississippi and caused levee breaches and catastrophic flooding in New Orleans.

Officials stressed that the levee and drainage systems protecting the city had been much improved since Katrina. But they cautioned flooding was still possible with up to 24 inches (61 centimeters) of rain forecast in some areas.

Edwards said 5,000 National Guard troops were being staged in 14 Louisiana parishes for search and rescue efforts. And 10,000 linemen were on standby to respond to electrical outages.

Ida posed a threat far beyond New Orleans. A hurricane warning was issued for nearly 200 miles (320 kilometers) of Louisiana's coastline, from Intracoastal City south of Lafayette to the Mississippi state line. A tropical storm warning was extended to the Alabama-Florida line.

Meteorologist Jeff Masters, who flew hurricane missions for the government and founded Weather Underground, said Ida is forecast to move through "the just absolute worst place for a hurricane."

The Interstate 10 corridor between New Orleans and Baton Rouge is a critical hub of the nation's pet-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 56 of 90

rochemical industry, lined with oil refineries, natural gas terminals and chemical manufacturing plants. Entergy, Louisiana's major electricity provider, operates two nuclear power plants along the Mississippi River.

A U.S. Energy Department map of oil and gas infrastructure shows scores of low-lying sites in the storm's projected path that are listed as potentially vulnerable to flooding.

Reeves reported from Gulfport, Mississippi. Associated Press writers Rebecca Santana, Stacey Plaisance and Janet McConnaughey in New Orleans; Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi; Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland; Frank Bajak in Boston; and Michael Biesecker in Washington.

Family: Taliban kills Afghan folk singer in restive province

By KATHY GANNON, TAMEEM AKHGAR and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A Taliban fighter shot dead an Afghan folk singer in a restive mountain province under unclear circumstances, his family said Sunday. The killing reignited concerns among activists that the insurgents would return to their oppressive rule in the country after their military blitz toppled the government.

The slaying of Fawad Andarabi comes as the United States winds down a historic airlift that saw tens of thousands evacuated from Kabul's international airport, the scene of much of the chaos that engulfed the Afghan capital since the Taliban took over two weeks ago. After an Islamic State affiliate's suicide attack that killed over 180 people, the Taliban increased its security around the airfield as Britain ended its evacuation flights Saturday.

U.S. military cargo planes continued their runs into the airport Sunday, ahead of a Tuesday deadline earlier set by President Joe Biden to withdraw all troops from America's longest war.

The shooting Friday of the folk singer came in the Andarabi Valley for which he was named, an area of Baghlan province some 100 kilometers (60 miles) north of Kabul. The valley had seen upheaval since the Taliban takeover, with some districts in the area coming under the control of militia fighters opposed to the Taliban rule. The Taliban say they have since retaken those areas, though neighboring Panjshir in the Hindu Kush mountains remains the only one of Afghanistan's 34 provinces not under its control.

The Taliban previously came out to Andarabi's home and searched it, even drinking tea with the musician, his son Jawad Andarabi told The Associated Press. But something changed Friday.

"He was innocent, a singer who only was entertaining people," his son said. "They shot him in the head on the farm."

His son said he wanted justice and that a local Taliban council promised to punish his father's killer.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told the AP that the insurgents would investigate the incident, but had no other details on the killing.

Andarabi played the ghichak, a bowed lute, and sang traditional songs about his birthplace, his people and Afghanistan as a whole. A video online showed him at one performance, sitting on a rug with the mountains of home surrounding him as he sang.

"There is no country in the world like my homeland, a proud nation," he sang. "Our beautiful valley, our great-grandparents' homeland."

Karima Bennoune, the United Nations special rapporteur on cultural rights, wrote on Twitter that she had "grave concern" over Andarabi's killing.

"We call on governments to demand the Taliban respect the #humanrights of #artists," she wrote.

Agnes Callamard, the secretary-general of Amnesty International, similarly decried the killing.

"There is mounting evidence that the Taliban of 2021 is the same as the intolerant, violent, repressive Taliban of 2001," she wrote on Twitter. "20 years later. Nothing has changed on that front."

Meanwhile on Sunday, private banks across Afghanistan resumed their operations. However, they limited withdrawals to no more than the equivalent of \$200 a day.

While some complained of still being unable to access their money, government employees say they

haven't been paid over the last four months. The Afghani traded around 90.5 to \$1, continuing its depreciation as billions of dollars in the country's reserves remain frozen overseas.

Akhgar reported from Istanbul, Gambrell from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Dealing with mental health crisis one Zoom call at a time

By DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The sergeant had so little use for the tablet that she did not bother to grab it from the seat of her squad car when she ran into the house where a suicidal man was screaming and slamming his head against the floor.

But when she saw the man might harm himself, his family or her officers with knives he was threatening to use, she sent an officer to retrieve the tablet. She turned it on, handed it to the man and told him to talk to the woman whose face appeared on the screen. And then she watched as the man immediately calmed down.

"When I saw how this tool pacified him, I was like, holy smokes, this is incredible," said Cook County Sheriff's Police Sgt. Bonnie Busching.

The scene marked the first time the department took the idea of the Zoom call that has become so common during the COVID-19 pandemic and inserted it into one of the most dangerous things a police officer can do: answer a domestic disturbance call.

Law enforcement agencies are struggling nationwide with increasing violent crime as calls mount for changing how police interact with citizens, especially those with mental health issues. Police are still most often the first called to the scene, and the sheriff's department's Treatment Response Team is a novel approach to managing such calls.

Started two years ago, the effort was designed to help the sheriff's department's 300-member police force deal with a skyrocketing number of drug overdose calls during a national opioid crisis.

Then, as the pandemic left more people isolated in their homes, either unable to connect to services or unwilling to step outside and risk getting sick, the department was faced with an explosion of 911 calls linked to threats of suicide and other mental health crises.

The sheriff, who made national headlines for putting in place programs at his jail dealing with the growing number of inmates with mental health problems, now saw the same kind of issues playing out for his officers on the street.

"We were being asked more and more to be the first responders for mental health cases and they were being asked to do things they don't have training for or minimal training for," said Tom Dart, whose department is the second largest sheriff's office in the nation and patrols unincorporated parts of Cook County and many of its smaller communities. It has seen the number of 911 calls involving mental health issues increase by nearly 60% this year.

There are other programs around the country, but most involved mental health professionals riding around with police officers or in ambulances, Dart said. That's fine for smaller communities but wasn't practical for Cook County, where getting from one end to the other — without traffic — takes well over an hour.

"How many ambulances would we have to buy and how many would we have to hire to man them all?" Dart asked

Enter the tablets.

"We wanted a tool for the officers to get that mental health expert on the scene immediately," said Elli Petaque-Montgomery, the team director.

Thus far, the department has 70 tablets — 35 purchased with grant money when the program began and 35 more when it became clear that the number of Zoom calls, which has now climbed past the 50 mark, would increase.

Also, with a program that the department is using throughout the county as well as the west side of Chicago, there have been times Zoom calls have been impossible, due to spotty service or other reasons.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 58 of 90

In nearly 20 instances, officers set up a phone call between the people in crisis and mental health professionals.

At the same time, four clinicians and other mental health professionals already working for the department have been joined by four more to answer calls. Dart said the price of the clinicians and the tablets — a couple hundred dollars each — is a fraction of what it would cost to send out a small army of mental health professionals ready to hit the streets.

"We're not asking anyone to work an 8-hour shift, but we're just asking them to be available," said Dart, whose office announced last week that one suburb, Oak Lawn, has joined the program. The hope is others will follow.

Still, such a program cannot work unless police officers, particularly those who have been around for a while and have a certain way of doing things, embrace the idea of handing over at least some control of situations to someone — and something — else.

"I don't play video games and I wasn't brought up in an era where you FaceTime and text instead of dealing face to face," Busching said. And she didn't like the idea of someone on a video screen looking over her shoulder and telling her what to do.

But on that night in December, she quickly concluded she had no choice, and borrowing a famous line from a game show, told the man she was going to "phone a friend."

"I looked at the guy and said, 'This lady is going to help you, she's not the police, she's a therapist,'" Busching said.

Busching may be one of those not all that comfortable with Zoom calls and text messages, but she quickly learned what anyone with teenage kids already knows.

"People spend a lot of time on electronic devices, they're comfortable with them and they feel safer talking face to face with a person," said Petaque-Montgomery, who was on the other end of the call. And, she said, by handing the man the tablet, Busching signaled a level of trust.

That signaled something to the officers themselves.

"They've seen they could go into (situations) that historically meant hours and hours and tons of paperwork and potentially the use of force and hand the tablet over to the clinician and let the clinician do their job so they could do theirs," Petaque-Montgomery said.

"We can even slide a tablet under a door so they don't even have to see a cop," Dart added.

One mother of a troubled 12-year-old boy who kept running away and needed mental health assistance a few weeks ago could see the change in her agitated son's demeanor when the officer handed him the tablet. It changed even more when the conversation with the clinician started.

"The way he (the clinician) talked, my son could see he was understanding," said the woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity because she does not want her son identified. "He likes it because somebody is talking to him and seeing the human behind the voice helps."

For Busching, the questions she had about the tablets and the worries about what might happen if she was forced to try to restrain a man who had threatened to kill himself vanished when what looked like a situation that might easily turn into a physical confrontation ended quietly.

"He gave me his hand and walked to the ambulance with me," she said.

US airlifts aid to Haiti to reach areas hardest hit by quake

By BEN FOX Associated Press

JEREMIE, Haiti (AP) — U.S. military aircraft are now ferrying food, tarps and other material into southern Haiti amid a shift in the international relief effort to focus on helping people in the areas hardest hit by the recent earthquake to make it through the hurricane season.

Aircraft flying out of the capital, Port-au-Prince, arrived throughout the day Saturday in the mostly rural, mountainous southern peninsula that was the epicenter of the Aug. 14 earthquake. In Jeremie, people waved and cheered as a Marine Corps unit from North Carolina descended in a tilt-rotor Osprey with pallets of rice, tarps and other supplies.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 59 of 90

Most of the supplies, however, were not destined for Jeremie. They were for distribution to remote mountain communities where landslides destroyed homes and the small plots of the many subsistence farmers in the area, said Patrick Tiné of Haiti Bible Mission, one of several groups coordinating the delivery of aid.

"They lost their gardens, they lost their animals," Tiné said as he took a break from helping unload boxes of rice. "The mountains slid down and they lost everything."

At the request of the Haitian government, getting as much help to such people as fast as possible is now the focus of the \$32 million U.S. relief effort, said Tim Callahan, a disaster response team leader for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In the immediate aftermath of the magnitude 7.2 earthquake, which killed more than 2,200 people and damaged or destroyed more than 100,000 homes, the focus was on search and rescue.

That was complicated by heavy rain from Tropical Storm Grace as well as earthquake damage to roads and bridges, in an area where the infrastructure was in bad shape to begin with. The threat of gangs, in a country still reeling from the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moise, also made it hard to distribute aid. As a result, many Haitians had grown increasingly impatient with relief efforts.

"We're just trying to get as much material out to the most affected areas as fast as we can. If you do that, then the frustration level goes down," Callahan said over the roar of helicopters at the Port-au-Prince airport, where U.S. troops and civilian aid workers labored to load aircraft with pallets in the hot sun.

That is where the U.S. military comes into play. Troops under the direction of Miami-based U.S. Southern Command have so far delivered more than 265,000 pounds of relief assistance.

Among those troops is the unit from North Carolina, known as the Fighting Griffins and based at the New River Marine Corps Air Station, which allowed Associated Press journalists to come along as they delivered emergency supplies.

Two crews took off from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, flew to Port-au-Prince to pick up supplies, and then made multiple trips across the mountainous southern peninsula to deliver their loads. They stopped only to refuel on board the USS Arlington off the coast of Haiti.

It was an upbeat mission, with the flight crew and pilots helping the Haitian aid workers unload the aircraft, then shaking hands as they said their goodbyes.

One crew, which delivered more than 8,500 pounds of goods on Saturday alone, brought along a Marine of Haitian descent from New York City as their interpreter. "It really means a lot to me to do something like this," said Lance Cpl. Lunel Najac.

The U.S. effort is expected to continue at least for several more weeks, though whether it will be enough to get people through the rest of the hurricane season remains to be seen.

"People need food, water, tents, tarps," said Wilkens Sanon of Mission of Hope Foundation, another of the groups working with the U.S. to channel aid to people who need it most.

"It is very, very bad right now," he said.

Croatia thrilled at summer season success despite COVID-19

By DARKO BANDIC Associated Press

DUBROVNIK, Croatia (AP) — Beaches along Croatia's Adriatic Sea coastline are swarming with people. Guided tours are fully booked, restaurants are packed and sailboats were chartered well in advance.

Summer tourism has exceeded even the most optimistic expectations in Croatia this year. Once fearful that the coronavirus pandemic would discourage people from traveling, Croatia's tourism industry was caught by surprise.

"It's much better — it's almost like 2020 never happened," said Josip Crncevic, a tour guide in Dubrovnik, a southern city known for its Old Town and nightlife that is Croatia's most popular destination.

The Balkan country experienced four years of war in the 1990s, but before the pandemic had become a top vacation spot for European and American visitors who appreciated its small towns and scores of islands offering natural beauty, local seafood and recreation in comparatively uncrowded settings.

The success of the summer season carries strong implications for Croatia's economy, which is among the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 60 of 90

weakest in the European Union. Tourism accounts for up to 20% of gross domestic product, and visitor spending is essential to the incomes of locals who rent lodging or run other tourism-linked businesses.

While people here prepared for this year to be better than last because of the advent of COVID-19 vaccines, the tourism minister described the July and August demand for getaways in Croatia as "remarkable." As of Aug. 10, overnight stays were at 69% of the record number seen in the 2019 season, tourism minister Nikolina Brnjac said.

The tourism revival is clearly visible in Dubrovnik, known as the "pearl" of the coastline, famous for its fortified, walled medieval city that is a UNESCO protected area and which served as a set for the popular "Game of Thrones" series. The main street in Old Town buzzes with people as tour groups mill along the outer walls.

As a reminder of the continuing risk of COVID-19, a huge sign on one of the stone walls warns people to keep their distance from others, to wash their hands and to wear masks. Wearing a mask is required in enclosed spaces in Croatia, but not outdoors.

Toni Dugandzic, a waiter at the restaurant Gusta Me, said the influx of tourists surprised many town residents and business people following last year's poor season. Restaurant owners didn't expect it and therefore didn't hire enough staff in time, he said.

"We work a little bit more because we were not prepared regarding human resources," Dugandzic said.

Health officials organized vaccination drives for people with jobs in tourism and kept some crowd limits in place. About 40% of the adult population in the country of 4.2 million has been vaccinated against the coronavirus.

Daily reported cases have increased in recent weeks, reaching nearly 600 late this week. Croatia has reported about 370,000 cases and more than 8,000 virus-related deaths since the start of the pandemic.

Some visitors decided the best way to stay safe while on vacation was by renting a sailboat to tour Croatia's islands and isolated bays. Most of the sailboats in the crammed marina in the central Adriatic town of Biograd were already booked.

"Everybody is looking to have a boat!" exclaimed Marin Katicin, the CEO of charter company Pitter Yachting. "We have no boats anymore!"

Kate Redder, a visitor from Germany, chartered a boat with her friends. Sailing around Croatia provides a feeling of independence, a better view of the country's stunning scenery and a way to self-isolate on the water, she explained.

"I think it is just safer than going to a hotel where you meet different people all the time," Redder said. "So you are safe. We are only here as a family and with our skipper."

Hurricane Ida forecast to strengthen as it nears Louisiana

By REBECCA SANTANA and KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Forecasters warned residents along the northern Gulf of Mexico coast to rush preparations ahead of Hurricane Ida, which is expected to rapidly intensify and bring winds as high as 130 mph (209 kph), life-threatening storm surge and flooding rain when it slams ashore Sunday in Louisiana.

The National Hurricane Center warned that super-warm Gulf waters are expected to soon rapidly magnify Ida's destructive power, boosting it from a Category 2 storm to an extremely dangerous Category 4 hurricane in just 18 hours or less. Landfall was expected Sunday afternoon.

Coastal highways saw heavy traffic Saturday as people moved to escape the storm's path. Trucks pulling saltwater fishing boats and campers streamed away from the coast Interstate 65 in south Alabama. Traffic jams clogged Interstate 10 heading out of New Orleans.

"We're going to catch it head-on," said Bebe McElroy as she prepared to leave home in the coastal Louisiana village of Cocodrie. "I'm just going around praying, saying, 'Dear Lord, just watch over us.'"

Ida was poised to strike Louisiana 16 years to the day after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi and Louisiana coasts. A Category 3 storm, Katrina was blamed for 1,800 deaths and caused levee breaches and catastrophic flooding in New Orleans, which took years to recover.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 61 of 90

"We're not the same state we were 16 years ago," Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said Saturday, pointing to a federal levee system that's seen major improvements since Katrina swamped New Orleans in 2005.

"This system is going to be tested," Edwards said. "The people of Louisiana are going to be tested. But we are resilient and tough people. And we're going to get through this."

Edwards said 5,000 National Guard troops were being staged in 14 parishes for search and rescue efforts with high-water vehicles, boats and helicopters. And 10,000 linemen were on standby to respond to electrical outages.

A tropical depression two days earlier, Ida was strengthening so quickly that New Orleans officials said there was no time to organize a mandatory evacuation of the city's 390,000 residents, a task that would require coordinating with the state and neighboring locales to turn highways into one-way routes away from the city.

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell called for a voluntary evacuation and reiterated Saturday that the time to safely leave was growing short. Collin Arnold, the city's emergency management director, said the city could be under high winds for about 10 hours. Officials warned those who stayed to be prepared for long power outages amid sweltering heat in the days ahead.

Ramsey Green, the city's top infrastructure official, stressed that the levee and drainage systems protecting the city have been much improved since Katrina.

"That said, if we see 10 to 20 inches of rain over an abbreviated period of time, we will see flooding," he said.

In Washington, President Joe Biden on Saturday called Ida "very dangerous" and urged Americans "to pay attention and be prepared."

Lines at gas pumps and car rental agencies grew long as residents and tourists alike hastened to leave Saturday.

"We were willing to wait it out but the hotel said we had to leave," said visitor Lays Lafaurie of Fort Worth, Texas, waiting in a rental car line at the city's airport. "They said we had to leave by 7 tomorrow morning. But if we'd waited that long there wouldn't have been any cars left."

Ida posed a threat far beyond New Orleans. A hurricane warning was issued for nearly 200 miles (320 kilometers) of Louisiana's coastline, from Intracoastal City south of Lafayette to the Mississippi state line. A tropical storm warning was extended to the Alabama-Florida line, and Mobile Bay in Alabama was under a storm surge watch.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey declared a state of emergency Saturday for the state's coastal and western counties, warning Ida could bring flooding and tornadoes there.

In Mississippi, Gov. Tate Reeves urged residents to stay off of interstate highways to make room for people evacuating from Louisiana. He said 19 shelters had opened to take in evacuees. Several casinos on the Mississippi coast had closed ahead of Ida.

Meteorologist Jeff Masters, who flew hurricane missions for the government and founded Weather Underground, said Ida is forecast to move through "the just absolute worst place for a hurricane."

The Interstate 10 corridor between New Orleans and Baton Rouge is a critical hub of the nation's petrochemical industry, lined with oil refineries, natural gas terminals and chemical manufacturing plants. Entergy, Louisiana's major electricity provider, operates two nuclear power plants along the Mississippi River.

A U.S. Energy Department map of oil and gas infrastructure shows scores of low-lying sites in the storm's projected path that are listed as potentially vulnerable to flooding. Phillips 66 said it was shutting operations at its refinery in Belle Chasse, Louisiana.

Many gas stations in and around New Orleans were out of gas, and the few still open had lines more than a dozen cars deep.

Mike Laurent of Marrero, Louisiana, was filling up about a dozen gas canisters to fuel his generator and those of friends and family. Laurent said his family planned to weather the storm at home despite concerns about whether the nearby levee would hold.

"I don't think it's ever been tested like it's going to be tested tomorrow or Monday," Laurent said. "I bought a dozen life jackets, just in case."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 62 of 90

Ida was a Category 2 hurricane late Saturday night with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph (168 kph). The storm was centered about 235 miles (375 kilometers) southeast of coastal Houma, Louisiana, and traveling northwest at 16 mph (26 kph). Ida's core was also about 145 miles (235 kilometers) south-southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Cuba started to clean up Saturday after Ida tore through Isla de la Juventud and then western parts of the mainland. The storm toppled trees and damaged crops and buildings. There were no reported deaths.

Associated Press writers Stacey Plaisance and Janet McConnaughey in New Orleans; Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi; Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland; Frank Bajak in Boston; Michael Biesecker in Washington and Andrea Rodríguez in Los Palacios, Cuba, contributed to this report.

Slain Marine who cradled baby at Kabul airport loved her job

By BRIAN MELLEY and AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

A woman who cradled a baby in her arms at the airport and posted on social media that she loved her job. A young husband with a child on the way. Another man who always wanted to be in the military. A man who planned to become a sheriff's deputy when his deployment ended. Heart-wrenching details have emerged about some of the 13 U.S. troops killed in a horrific suicide bombing at Afghanistan's Kabul airport, which also claimed the lives of more than 160 Afghans.

Eleven Marines, one Navy sailor and one Army soldier were among the dead, while 18 other U.S. service members were wounded in Thursday's bombing, which was blamed on Afghanistan's offshoot of the Islamic State group. The U.S. said it was the most lethal day for American forces in Afghanistan since 2011.

Here are the stories of the victims killed and the people who are mourning them:

NICOLE GEE, 23

A week before she was killed, Sgt. Nicole Gee cradled a baby in her arms at the Kabul airport. She posted the photo on Instagram and wrote, "I love my job."

Gee, 23, of Sacramento, California, was a maintenance technician with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit from Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

Brig. Gen. Forrest C. Poole III, commanding general of 2nd Marine Logistics Group, said his unit mourned "the immense loss of Sgt. Gee," and the others.

Sgt. Mallory Harrison, who lived with Gee for three years, wrote about how hard the death hit her.

"I can't quite describe the feeling I get when I force myself to come back to reality & think about how I'm never going to see her again," Harrison wrote on Facebook. "How her last breath was taken doing what she loved — helping people. ... Then there was an explosion. And just like that, she's gone."

Gee's Instagram page shows another photo of her in fatigues, holding a rifle next to a line of people walking into the belly of a large transport plane. She wrote: "escorting evacuees onto the bird."

Photos show her on a camel in Saudi Arabia, in a bikini on a Greek isle and holding a beer in Spain. One from this month in Kuwait shows her beaming with her meritorious promotion to sergeant.

Harrison said her generation of Marines hears war stories from veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, but they seem distant until "the peaceful float you were on turns into ... your friends never coming home."

Gee's car was still parked in a lot at Camp Lejeune, and Harrison mused about all the Marines who walked past it while she was overseas.

"Some of them knew her. Some of them didn't," she said. "They all walked past it. The war stories, the losses, the flag-draped coffins, the KIA bracelets & the heartbreak. It's not so distant anymore."

RYLEE MCCOLLUM, 20

Lance Cpl. Rylee McCollum, a Marine and native of Bondurant, Wyoming, was married and his wife is expecting a baby in three weeks, his sister, Cheyenne McCollum, said.

"He was so excited to be a dad, and he was going to be a great dad," McCollum said. She said her brother

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 63 of 90

"was a Marine before he knew he was allowed to be a Marine. ... He'd carry around his toy rifle and wear his sister's pink princess snow boots and he'd either be hunting or he was a Marine. Sometimes it would be with nothing on underneath, just a T-shirt."

McCollum said her brother wanted to be a history teacher and a wrestling coach once he completed his service. Another sister, Roice McCollum, told the Casper Star Tribune that her brother was on his first deployment when the evacuation in Afghanistan began.

"We want to make sure that people know that these are the kids that are sacrificing themselves, and he's got a family who loves him and a wife who loves him and a baby that he'll never get to meet," Cheyenne McCollum said.

Regi Stone, the father of one of Rylee McCollum's friends, described McCollum as "a good kid," who was resilient, smart and courageous. Stone shared a note that his wife, Kim, sent to their son Eli Stone, who is also in the military and deployed elsewhere. Kim wrote that she remembered telling the friends to run the other way if they had to go in first and that both of them said, "If we die doing this, we die doing what we love."

KAREEM MAE'LEE GRANT NIKOUI, 20

Lance Cpl. Kareem Mae'Lee Grant Nikoui, of Norco, California, sent videos to his family hours before he died, showing himself interacting with children in Afghanistan. In one clip, he asked a young boy to say hello.

"Want to take a video together buddy?" Nikoui said, leaning in to take a video of himself with the boy. "All right, we're heroes now, man."

Family friend Paul Arreola said the videos show "the heart of this young man, the love he has."

"The family is just heartbroken," he said. Arreola described Nikoui as an "amazing young man" full of promise who always wanted to be a Marine and set out to achieve his goal. He is survived by his parents and three siblings.

"He loved this country and everything we stand for. It's just so hard to know that we've lost him," he said, crying.

Nikoui was also in the JROTC, and the Norco High School Air Force JROTC posted on Facebook that he was "one of our best Air Force JROTC cadets" and that "Kareem was set on being a Marine & always wanted to serve his country."

MAXTON SOVIAK, 22

The flag in front of the Ohio home where Navy Hospital Corpsman Maxton "Max" Soviak's parents live was at half-staff as a steady stream of friends, coaches, teachers and family stopped by to offer condolences.

Soviak, of Berlin Heights, was remembered as a friendly, well-liked guy who amused others and had been a member of the state champion wrestling team and made the final four football playoffs two years in a row. He had 12 brothers and sisters.

"Max was a wonderful son who loved his family, his community, and was proud to serve in the U.S. Navy," where he planned to spend his career, his family said in a statement. "Words cannot express how heartbroken we are with this news and we will miss Max tremendously."

Soviak graduated from Edison High School in 2017. At Friday night's football game, fans honored him with a moment of silence.

"Max always was smiling," said Vince Ragnoni, his electrical technology teacher. "Max was good for pulling shenanigans and liked to get other people to laugh."

He enlisted in September 2017 and attended Hospital Corpsman School in San Antonio, Texas, before postings in Guam and at Camp Pendleton.

In his final words to his mother over FaceTime, he reassured her he would be safe, they said.

"Don't worry mom, my guys got me," he said. "They won't let anything happen to me."

HUMBERTO SANCHEZ, 22

Marine Cpl. Humberto Sanchez was among 17 members of his Indiana high school class who joined the military after graduation.

Sanchez played on Logansport High School's varsity soccer team and was in the homecoming court his

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 64 of 90

senior year, Principal Matt Jones said. Jones called Sanchez a dedicated artist who took many art classes along with honors and dual credit college courses.

"Humberto was a bright, athletic young man who was popular, well-liked by his soccer teammates, classmates, coaches and teachers," Jones said. "He was honored to be putting on the Marine uniform and serving his country."

DYLAN MEROLA, 20

In his last message home, Lance Cpl. Dylan Merola told his mother he wouldn't be able to speak to her for a while because he was being moved to a new location in Afghanistan.

"I love you and I'll talk to you as soon as I get home," were his final words, Cheryl Merola told KCAL-TV.

Merola, from Rancho Cucamonga, California, had only been in the country less than two weeks when he was killed, family members said.

He planned to study engineering in college after his military service.

Before the football game Friday at his alma mater, Los Osos High School, fans were told the school had received "devastating news" and a moment of silence was observed in his honor.

A GoFundMe account for his funeral had far exceeded its goal of \$15,000 by Saturday afternoon.

"Dylan was a beloved son, brother, grandson, great grandson, nephew, a great friend, and a brave soldier who paid the ultimate sacrifice at the Abbey Gate at Hamid Karzai International Airport during the evacuation," the announcement said.

His tearful mother said he was "one of the best kids ever."

"Kind loving, giving to every single person," she said. "He would give anything for anybody."

JARED SCHMITZ, 20

Marine Lance Cpl. Jared Schmitz grew up in the St. Louis area and was among a group of Marines sent back to Afghanistan to assist with evacuation efforts, his father, Mark Schmitz, told KMOX Radio.

"This was something he always wanted to do, and I never seen a young man train as hard as he did to be the best soldier he could be," Mark Schmitz said of his son. "His life meant so much more. I'm so incredibly devastated that I won't be able to see the man that he was very quickly growing into becoming."

TAYLOR HOOVER, 31

Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover, of Utah, had been in the Marines for 11 years and was remembered as a hero, his father, Darin Hoover, said.

"He gave his life protecting those that can't protect themselves, doing what he loved serving his country," said Darin Hoover, who lives in a Salt Lake City suburb.

He said he had heard from Marines who said they were grateful they had his son as their sergeant.

"They look back on him and say that they've learned so much from him," Hoover said. "One heck of a leader."

Hoover said his son was also a best friend to his two sisters and loved all his extended family. He had a girlfriend in California and was the kind of guy who "lit up a room" when he came in, his father said.

Nate Thompson of Murray, Utah, first met Hoover when they were 10 years old in Little League football. They stayed friends through high school, where Hoover played lineman. He was undersized for the position, but his heart and hard work more than made up for what he lacked in stature, Thompson said. As a friend, he was selfless and kind.

"If we had trouble with grades, trouble with family or trouble on the field, we always called Taylor. He's always levelheaded, even if he's struggling himself," he said.

DEAGAN WILLIAM-TYELER PAGE, 23

Cpl. Daegan William-Tyler Page served in the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment based at Camp Pendleton, California, and planned to go to trade school and possibly become a lineman after his enlistment ended, his family said in a statement.

Page was raised in Red Oak, Iowa, and in the Omaha area and joined the Marines after graduating from Millard South High School. He is mourned by his girlfriend, parents, stepmom and stepdad, four siblings and grandparents, the family statement said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 65 of 90

"Daegan will always be remembered for his tough outer shell and giant heart," the statement said. "Our hearts are broken, but we are thankful for the friends and family who are surrounding us during this time."

JOHANNY ROSARIO PICHARDO, 25

Sgt. Johanny Rosario Pichardo was being mourned in the Massachusetts mill town of Lawrence she called home, the state's capital and her birthplace in the Dominican Republic.

"We will not allow her to be forgotten," said Jaime Melendez, director of veterans services in Lawrence, where Rosario attended high school.

Rosario served with the Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, which praised her work as supply chief this spring.

Sonia Guzmán, the Dominican Republic's ambassador to the United States, tweeted that the Caribbean nation shares in the loss.

"Peace to your soul!" she tweeted in Spanish.

RYAN KNAUSS, 23

Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss was remembered as a funny man who loved his country and was looking forward to coming home and moving to Washington, D.C., relatives told WATE-TV in Knoxville, Tennessee.

"He was a super-smart hilarious young man," stepmother Linnae Knauss said.

Knauss had been stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and he was part of the 9th Psychological Operations Battalion, 8th Psychological Operations Group, the Defense Department said.

"A motivated young man who loved his country," his grandfather, Wayne Knauss, told the TV station. "He was a believer, so we will see him again in God's heaven."

HUNTER LOPEZ, 22

Cpl. Hunter Lopez had planned to follow in the footsteps of his parents and embark on a career in law enforcement after his military deployment.

As a teen he had been in the Explorer program at the Riverside County Sheriff's Department in Southern California, where his mother and father serve, and planned to join the force there himself, Sheriff Chad Bianco said.

"We are heartbroken to hear this sad news about Hunter, who chose to follow a life of service, selflessness, courage and sacrifice, like his parents," Bianco said in a statement.

Lopez's mother is a sheriff's deputy, and his father is a captain.

The union representing Riverside sheriff's officers said there were no words for how deeply Lopez would be missed.

"Hunter was the victim of vicious evil and was killed because he wore a United States Marine uniform with love and pride," the Riverside Sheriff's Association said. "Our entire community feels the anguish, and we mourn the death of Hunter, who answered the call to serve, defend and protect our nation."

DAVID LEE ESPINOZA, 20

Lance Cpl. David Lee Espinoza, a Marine from Laredo, Texas, joined the military after high school, and was being remembered as a hero by his mother.

"He was just brave enough to go do what he wanted and to help out people. That's who he was, he was just perfect," his mother, Elizabeth Holguin, told the Laredo Morning Times.

In a statement, U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar said Espinoza "embodied the values of America: grit, dedication, service, and valor. When he joined the military after high school, he did so with the intention of protecting our nation and demonstrating his selfless acts of service."

Cuellar concluded, "The brave never die. Mr. Espinoza is a hero."

Melley reported from Los Angeles and Hanson reported from Helena, Montana. Associated Press writers John Seewer in Berlin Heights, Ohio, Tom Davies in Indianapolis, Adrian Sainz in Memphis, Tennessee, Janie Har in San Francisco, Amy Forliti in Minneapolis, Terry Wallace in Dallas, Lindsay Whitehurst and Brady McCombs in Salt Lake City, and Robert Burns and Darlene Superville in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 66 of 90

Biden: Another attack likely, pledges more strikes on IS

By ROBERT BURNS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden vowed Saturday to keep up airstrikes against the Islamic extremist group whose suicide bombing at the Kabul airport killed scores of Afghans and 13 American service members. He warned another attack was “highly likely” and the State Department called the threat “specific” and “credible.”

The Pentagon said the remaining contingent of U.S. forces at the airport, now numbering fewer than 4,000, had begun their final withdrawal ahead of Biden’s deadline for ending the evacuation on Tuesday.

After getting briefed on a U.S. drone mission in eastern Afghanistan that the Pentagon said killed two members of the Islamic State group’s Afghanistan affiliate early Saturday, Biden said the extremists can expect more.

“This strike was not the last,” Biden said in a statement. “We will continue to hunt down any person involved in that heinous attack and make them pay.” He paid tribute to the “bravery and selflessness” of the American troops executing the hurried airlift of tens of thousands from Kabul airport, including the 13 U.S. service members who were killed in Thursday’s suicide bombing at an airport gate.

The evacuation proceeded as tensions rose over the prospect of another IS attack. The State Department issued a new security alert early Sunday morning Kabul time instructing people to leave the airport area immediately “due to a specific, credible threat.”

“Our commanders informed me that an attack is highly likely in the next 24-36 hours,” Biden said, adding that he has instructed them to take all possible measures to protect their troops, who are securing the airport and helping bring onto the airfield Americans and others desperate to escape Taliban rule.

The remains of the 13 American troops were on their way to the United States, the Pentagon said. Their voyage marked a painful moment in a nearly 20-year American war that cost more than 2,400 U.S. military lives and is ending with the return to power of a Taliban movement that was ousted when U.S. forces invaded in October 2001.

The remains of troops killed in action overseas are usually flown back to the U.S. via Dover Air Base in Delaware, where fallen troops’ return to U.S. soil is marked by a solemn movement known as the “dignified transfer.”

The White House on Saturday did not say if Biden would travel to Dover for the troops’ return. Biden’s press secretary, Jen Psaki, said shortly after the attack that the president “would do everything he can to honor the sacrifice and the service” of those killed.

The Pentagon released the names of those killed — 11 Marines, one Navy sailor and one Army soldier. Twelve of them were in the 20s; some were born in 2001, the year America’s longest war began. The oldest was 31.

They were the first U.S. service members killed in Afghanistan since February 2020, the month the Trump administration struck an agreement with the Taliban in which the militant group halted attacks on Americans in exchange for a U.S. agreement to remove all troops and contractors by May 2021. Biden announced in April that the 2,500 to 3,000 troops who remained would be out by September, ending what he has called America’s forever war.

With Biden’s approval, the Pentagon this month sent thousands of additional troops to the Kabul airport to provide security and to facilitate the State Department’s chaotic effort to evacuate thousands of Americans and tens of thousands of Afghans who had helped the United States during the war. The evacuation was marred by confusion and chaos as the U.S. government was caught by surprise when the Afghan army collapsed and the Taliban swept to power Aug. 15.

About 5,400 Americans have been evacuated from the country so far, including 300 in the last day. The State Department believes about 350 more want out; it said there are roughly 280 others who have said they are Americans but who have not told the State Department of their plans to leave the country, or who have said they plan to remain.

Untold numbers of vulnerable Afghans, fearful of a return to the brutality of pre-2001 Taliban rule, are likely to be left behind. Biden and the leaders of other Western countries have said they would try to work

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 67 of 90

with the Taliban to allow Afghans who had worked with them to leave after the U.S.-led evacuation ends.

The Pentagon said that about 6,800 people, mostly Afghans, were flown out in the 24 hours that ended Saturday morning, bringing to 113,500 the total number of people of all nationalities evacuated since the hurried exit was begun Aug. 14.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. military force at the Kabul airport, which peaked at about 5,800, had begun its final withdrawal. The number had dropped below 4,000 on Saturday, according to a U.S. official who discussed details not yet publicly released on condition of anonymity. Kirby said that for security reasons the Pentagon will not provide a day-by-day description of the final stages of the military's withdrawal, which includes flying home troops as well as equipment.

The Pentagon said an airstrike early Saturday local time in the eastern province of Nangarhar, which borders Pakistan, killed two IS "planners and facilitators."

"They have lost some capability to plan and to conduct missions, but make no mistake, nobody's writing this off and saying, 'Well, we got them. We don't have to worry about ISIS-K anymore.' Not the case," Kirby told a news conference, using an abbreviation for the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan.

Biden also faces the problem over the longer term of containing an array of potential extremist threats based in Afghanistan, which will be harder with fewer U.S. intelligence assets and no military presence in the nation. Critics say Biden's withdrawal from Afghanistan leaves the door open for al-Qaida, the Islamic State and other extremist groups to grow and potentially threaten the United States. It was al-Qaida's use of Afghanistan as a base, with the Taliban's acquiescence, that prompted the United States to invade the country in October 2001, beginning the longest war in U.S. history.

Saturday's drone mission came less than two days after the Kabul attack and a public pledge by Biden that he would make IS "pay" for their suicide bomb attack. Officials made no claim that the two individuals killed played a direct role in Thursday's Kabul airport attack.

Kirby declined to release the names and nationalities of the two killed. He said one other person was wounded in the strike. The speed with which the U.S. retaliated reflected its close monitoring of IS and years of experience in targeting extremists in remote parts of the world. But it also shows the limits of U.S. power to eliminate the threat from extremists, who some believe will have more freedom of movement in Afghanistan now that the Taliban is in power.

Kirby said the U.S. had "the ability and the means to carry over-the-horizon counterterrorism capabilities and we're going to defend ourselves," referring to the military's use of aircraft based in the Persian Gulf area and elsewhere to carry out strikes in Afghanistan.

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani and Matthew Lee contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the total number of those evacuated is 113,500 since Aug. 14. The previously cited figure, 117,000, was for all of August.

Taliban guard airport as most NATO troops leave Afghanistan

By SAYED ZIARMAL HASHEMI, RAHIM FAIEZ, JILL LAWLESS and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Taliban forces sealed off Kabul's airport Saturday to most Afghans hoping for evacuation, as the U.S. and its allies were ending a chaotic airlift that will end their troops' two decades in Afghanistan.

Western leaders acknowledged their withdrawal would mean leaving behind some of their citizens and many locals who helped them over the years, and they vowed to try to continue working with the Taliban to allow local allies to leave after President Joe Biden's Tuesday's deadline to withdraw from the country.

Although most of its allies had finished their evacuation flights, the U.S. planned to keep its round-the-clock flights going until the deadline, saying 113,500 people had been evacuated since Aug. 14, the day before the Taliban claimed Kabul. Biden warned Saturday that commanders had told him another attack was "highly likely in the next 24-36 hours," and the U.S. Embassy issued a new warning early Sunday for

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 68 of 90

all Americans to avoid the airport area entirely.

Britain ended its evacuation flights Saturday, though Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised to “shift heaven and earth” to get more of those at risk from the Taliban to Britain by other means.

Britain’s ambassador to Afghanistan, Laurie Bristow, said in a video from Kabul airport and posted on Twitter that it was “time to close this phase of the operation now.”

“But we haven’t forgotten the people who still need to leave,” he said. “We’ll continue to do everything we can to help them. Nor have we forgotten the brave, decent people of Afghanistan. They deserve to live in peace and security.”

As the flow of planes leaving Kabul slowed, others arrived in locales around the world carrying Afghans who managed to secure places on the last evacuation flights, including in the Washington area, Philadelphia, Madrid, and Birmingham, England. Some passengers were relieved and looking forward to starting new lives far from the Taliban, but others were bitter about having to flee.

In Spain, Shabeer Ahmadi, a journalist targeted by the Taliban, said the United States had doomed the work he and others had put into making Afghanistan a better place by allowing the insurgent group to reclaim power.

“They abandoned the new generation of Afghanistan,” Ahmadi said.

An evacuation flight to Britain landed with an extra passenger after the cabin crew delivered a baby girl midair, Turkish media reported. The parents named her Havva, or Eve, and she was at least the fourth baby known to have been born to Afghan mothers who went into labor on evacuation flights.

Meanwhile, families of Afghans killed in Thursday’s suicide bombing at the airport by an Islamic State group affiliate continued burying their dead — at least 169 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members were killed. Among them was Belal Azfali, a 36-year-old contractor for a U.S.-funded project who had gone to the airport on his own, without his wife. His remains were so disfigured that he could only be identified when someone picked up the family’s repeated calls to the cellphone he had with him, relatives said.

The U.S. on Saturday released the names of the 13 Marines, Navy and Army personnel who were killed in the bombing. One of the Marines — recently promoted Sgt. Nicole Gee, 23 — was seen in a widely circulated photo cuddling an Afghan infant temporarily rescued from the crush of the crowds outside the airport gates this month.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed Saturday that the group’s forces were holding some positions within the airport and were ready to peacefully take control of it as American forces flew out. But Pentagon spokesman John Kirby denied the claim.

The Taliban did deploy extra forces outside of the airport to prevent large crowds from gathering in the wake of Thursday’s bombing. New layers of checkpoints sprang up on roads leading to the airport, some manned by uniformed Taliban fighters with Humvees and night-vision goggles captured from Afghan security forces. Areas where the crowds had gathered over the past two weeks in the hopes of fleeing the country were largely empty.

Officials said U.S. forces were taking every precaution at the airport, as there were concerns that IS, which is far more radical than the Taliban, could strike again. A new security alert from the U.S. Embassy on Sunday morning said due to a “specific, credible threat” all U.S. citizens should avoid certain gates at the airport and avoid traveling to the area.

In his statement earlier, Biden said a drone strike he ordered that killed what military officials described as two “high-profile” IS militants believed to have been involved in planning or facilitating attacks would not be his “last” response to Thursday’s suicide attack.

An Afghan who worked as a translator for the U.S. military said he was with a group of people with permission to leave who tried to reach the airport late Friday. After passing through three checkpoints they were stopped at a fourth. An argument ensued, and the Taliban said they had been told by the Americans to only let U.S. passport-holders through.

“I am so hopeless for my future,” the man later told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because of security concerns. “If the evacuation is over, what will happen to us?”

Kirby, the Pentagon spokesman, said Saturday that Afghans who had worked with American forces still

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 69 of 90

were being allowed in.

According to a State Department spokesperson, 5,400 Americans and likely more have been safely evacuated from Afghanistan since Aug. 14, including nearly 300 Americans in the last day. Another 350 were still seeking to leave the country, and those were the only ones the department could confirm were still in Afghanistan.

Biden has said he will adhere to a self-imposed Tuesday deadline for withdrawing all U.S. forces, and the Taliban have rejected any extension. They have encouraged Afghans to stay, pledging amnesty even to those who fought against them, and have said commercial flights would resume after the U.S. withdrawal, but it's unclear if airlines will be willing to offer service.

As the deadline neared and with the Taliban controlling nearly all of the country, hundreds of protesters, including many civil servants, gathered outside a bank while countless more lined up at cash machines. They said they hadn't been paid for three to six months and were unable to withdraw cash. ATM machines were operating, but withdrawals were limited to about \$200 every 24 hours. Later Saturday, the central bank ordered commercial bank branches to open and allow customers to withdraw \$200 per week, calling it a temporary measure.

The economic crisis, which predates the Taliban takeover, could give Western nations leverage as they urge Afghanistan's new rulers to form a moderate, inclusive government and allow people to leave after Tuesday.

Afghanistan is heavily dependent on international aid, which covered around 75% of the toppled Western-backed government's budget. The Taliban have said they want good relations with the international community and have promised a more moderate form of Islamic rule than when they last governed the country, but many Afghans are deeply skeptical.

The Taliban cannot access almost any of the central bank's \$9 billion in reserves, most of which is held by the New York Federal Reserve. The International Monetary Fund has also suspended the transfer of some \$450 million. Without a regular supply of U.S. dollars, the local currency is at risk of collapse, which could send the price of basic goods soaring.

The U.S. and its allies have said they will continue providing humanitarian aid through the U.N. and other partners, but any broader engagement — including development assistance — is likely to hinge on whether the Taliban deliver on their promises of more moderate rule.

Faiez reported from Istanbul, Lawless reported from London and Knickmeyer reported from Oklahoma City. Associated Press writers Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Joseph Krauss from Jerusalem, Robert Burns in Washington, Arritz Parra in Madrid and Kathy Gannon in Islamabad contributed to this report.

An earlier version of the story contained an incorrect figure for the evacuation total since Aug. 14.

More of AP's Afghanistan coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/afghanistan>

Yankees' win streak ends at 13; Montas, A's stop 6-game skid

By MICHAEL WAGAMAN Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Fresh off their first loss in more than two weeks, Aaron Judge and the New York Yankees immediately looked forward.

The Yankees' longest winning streak in nearly 60 years ended at 13 games Saturday when Frankie Montas pitched seven shutout innings and the Oakland Athletics held on for a 3-2 victory.

Judge hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning, but that's all New York managed against Montas and the A's bullpen.

"A loss is a loss. It's time to start another streak, that's all," Judge said. "We didn't get the job done, so it's time to turn the page. (The streak) showed what we're capable of. This team is capable of a lot of great things."

Judge has homered six times in 15 games. His power surge helped the Yankees boost their playoff posi-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 70 of 90

tion and put pressure on AL East-leading Tampa Bay.

Matt Chapman homered for the A's, who had lost six straight and 10 of 12 before handing the charging Yankees their first loss since Aug. 12 in Chicago against the White Sox.

The Yankees trailed 3-0 in the ninth inning when Anthony Rizzo reached on a bloop single with one out and Judge followed with his 29th homer, connecting against Sergio Romo.

But Romo got Giancarlo Stanton to pop out and Joey Gallo to ground out for his first save since 2020.

Montas (10-9) was crisp all afternoon, allowing just two hits. He struck out six and walked one for his first win since July 29.

"Against that lineup, win-streak going and the way they're going, I don't know how you can pitch any better than that," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "(Montas) had an edge from the very beginning. A much-needed outing. Fantastic, maybe to an extent as good an outing as he's had all year."

The Yankees' string was their best since a 13-game streak in September 1961 fueled by Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris. The last time they did better was a 15-game charge in 1960; the team's record is a 19-game winning streak in 1947.

Montas retired 15 straight after Judge's two-out double in the first, then fanned Stanton for the second time. Montas got a key 3-5-3 double play after Judge singled in the seventh and clapped his hands furiously after the double play.

"It feels good to give high-fives again," Montas said. "It felt like all of us did a little bit, did our part to win. We have to bring that mentality into tomorrow and keep rolling."

Montas set a career high with his 10th win.

"He filled up the zone and was ahead for the most part," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "Credit him for being on the attack. He kept us at bay. He had a good slider, the split, good fastball. His strike-throwing and ability to get ahead allowed to make it a tough day for us against him."

Andrew Chafin retired three batters before Romo pitched the ninth.

The A's got to Nelson Cortes Jr. (2-2) for two runs in the second, aided by a balk call against the Yankees starter on a pickoff attempt following Tony Kemp's two-out RBI single.

Nearly three hours after the call, the Yankees left-hander was still fuming.

"At first I didn't know what I did," Cortes said. "I usually hang up and try to read the runner and stuff like that. I was very surprised that the third base umpire was the one that gave the call. It cost us a run. Right now we'd be tied in the ninth inning."

Chapman hit his 21st homer leading off the fourth.

Pitching on seven days' rest, Cortes allowed three runs and four hits in 5 1/3 innings. He had four strikeouts and walked three.

BUSY DAY FOR PLATE UMP

Home plate umpire Tony Randazzo had an active afternoon. After the balk call against Cortes, Randazzo and the pitcher got into a brief, heated discussion near the Yankees dugout. In the top of the third, Randazzo was in hit in the facemask by a pitch from Montas that appeared to glance off catcher Yan Gomes' glove. Then in the bottom of the frame, Randazzo ejected Melvin after replay upheld an inning-ending double play by the Yankees.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Athletics: INF Elvis Andrus was rested after injuring his left arm while taking a check-swing in the ninth inning of Friday's loss. Melvin called it a stinger injury that happened when Andrus tried to stop his swing. "He'll probably be in there tomorrow," Melvin said. ... LHP Cole Irvin (hip discomfort) threw a bullpen session and remains on scheduled to start Tuesday in Detroit. ... Four days after surgery to repair his broken cheekbone suffered when he was hit in the head by a line drive, injured ace Chris Bassitt is intent on pitching again this season. "The doctors made a mistake in telling me that I'm going to be OK in a couple weeks," Bassitt said. "When they said that, I said, 'All right, we're rocking.' If everything progresses the way it should, I want to be back before the end of the season and hopefully I am."

UP NEXT

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 71 of 90

Yankees LHP Jordan Montgomery (5-5, 3.69 ERA) faces the A's in the series finale Sunday. Montgomery has allowed one run or fewer in four of his previous five starts. Oakland RHP Paul Blackburn (0-1, 4.09) makes his third start since being called up from Triple-A Sacramento. Blackburn hasn't won since June 29, 2018.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

EXPLAINER: Ida, Katrina similar but tiny differences are key

By SETH BORENSTEIN Science Writer

Hurricane Ida is looking eerily like a dangerous sequel to 2005's Hurricane Katrina, the costliest storm in American history. But there's a few still-to-come twists that could make Ida nastier in some ways, but not quite as horrific in others.

Ida is forecast to make landfall on the same calendar date, August 29, as Katrina did 16 years ago, striking the same general part of Louisiana with about the same wind speed, after rapidly strengthening by going over a similar patch of deep warm water that supercharges hurricanes.

What could be different is crucial though: Direction and size.

Katrina hit Louisiana from due south, while Ida is coming to the same part of the state from southeast. A day-and-a-half before landfall Ida's hurricane-force winds extended 13 miles (21 kilometers) from the center compared to 106 miles (170 kilometers) for the much more massive Katrina at the same time before landfall.

"This has the potential to be more of a natural disaster whereas the big issue in Katrina was more of a man-made one" because of levee failures, said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy. Levee failures pushed Katrina's death toll to 1,833 and its overall damage to about \$176 billion in current dollars and experts don't expect Ida to come near those totals.

DIFFERENT DIRECTION

Ida is coming to the same general place from a slightly different direction. Several hurricane experts fear that difference in angle may put New Orleans more in the dangerous storm quadrant — the right front part of a hurricane — than it was in Katrina, when the city was more devastated by levee failure than storm surge. Katrina's northeast quadrant pushed 28-foot (8.5-meter) storm surges in Mississippi not New Orleans.

Ida's "angle is potentially even worse," McNoldy said. Because it is smaller "it's not going to as easily create a huge storm surge ... but the angle that this is coming in, I think is more conducive to pushing water into the lake (Pontchartrain)."

That northwestern path of Ida not only puts New Orleans more in the bullseye than it did in Katrina, but it also more targets Baton Rouge and crucial industrial areas, said meteorologist Jeff Masters, who flew hurricane missions for the government and founded Weather Underground. He said Ida is forecast to move through "the just absolute worst place for a hurricane."

"It is forecast to track over the industrial corridor between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, which is one of the key infrastructure regions of the U.S., critical to the economy, there's hundreds of major industry sites there I mean petrochemical sites, three of the 15 largest ports in America, a nuclear power plant," Masters said. "You're probably going to shut down the Mississippi River for barge traffic for multiple weeks."

"It's not just the coastal impact. It's not just New Orleans," said meteorologist Steve Bowen, head of global catastrophe insight at the risk and consulting firm Aon. "We're certainly looking at potential losses well into the billions."

SIZE MATTERS

The difference in size is not just physically huge, but it matters for damages. Storms that are bigger in width have larger storm surge because of the broader push of the water.

Ida "is not going to generate the huge storm surge like Katrina did, it'll have more focused storm surge like (1969's) Camille," Masters said.

But larger in size storms are often weaker, Bowen said. There's a trade off of intense damage in a smaller

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 72 of 90

area versus less damage, but still bad, in a wider area. Bowen and Princeton University's Gabriel Vecchi said they don't know which scenario would be worse in this case.

RAPID INTENSIFICATION

Ida is about to hit an eddy of what's called the Loop Current. The Loop Current is this deep patch of incredibly warm water. It takes warm water off the Yucatan Peninsula does a loop in the Gulf of Mexico and spins up the eastern edge of Florida into the Gulf Stream. Water above 79 degrees (26 degrees Celsius) is hurricane fuel.

Normally when a storm intensifies or stalls it takes up all of the region's warm water and then hits colder water that starts to weaken the storm or at least keeps it from further strengthening. But these warm water spots keep fueling a storm. Katrina powered up this way and Ida is forecast to do the same. The eddy that Ida is going to pass over has necessary warm water going more than 500 feet (150 meters) deep, "just a hot tub," McNoldy said. That means lots of rapid intensification.

"Running over these Loop Current (eddys) is a very big deal. It's really dangerous," said climate and hurricane scientist Kossin of The Climate Service. "It could be explosive."

In the past 40 years more hurricanes are rapidly intensifying more often and climate change seems to be at least partly to be blame, Kossin and Vecchi said. Hurricane Grace already rapidly intensified this year and last year Hanna, Laura, Sally, Teddy, Gamma and Delta all rapidly intensified.

"It has a human fingerprint on it," said Kossin, who with Vecchi was part of a 2019 study on recent rapid intensifications.

NEW EYEWALL

After a hurricane rapidly intensifies it becomes so strong and its eye so small that it often can't quite keep going that way, so it forms an outer eyewall and the inside eyewall collapses, Kossin said. That's called eyewall replacement.

When a new eyewall forms, often a storm becomes larger in size but a bit weaker, Kossin said. So key for Ida is when and if that happens. It happened for Katrina, which steadily weakened in the 12 hours before it made landfall.

However, many of the other forces like crosswinds that made Katrina weaken at the last minute aren't there for Ida, McNoldy said.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Crews battle to protect Lake Tahoe region from wildfire

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. (AP) — Firefighters faced a critical day in efforts to prevent a massive California wildfire from reaching the Lake Tahoe resort region Saturday, hoping to take advantage of calmer winds before hot, heavy gusts return.

The Caldor Fire churned through mountains just southwest of the Tahoe Basin, cloaking much of the area in toxic smoke and sending tourists packing at a time when summer vacations would be in full swing ahead of the Labor Day weekend.

A favorable turn in weather Saturday afternoon allowed firefighters to make progress and increase containment of the Caldor Fire to 19%, up from 12% the day before, said Capt. Stephen Horner, a Cal Fire spokesman for the Caldor Fire. The fire so far has burned about 149,000 acres, or 233 square miles (603 square kilometers).

"It's going to be a very pivotal day for us," Horner said.

The fire's eastern edge was about 7 or 8 miles (11 or 13 kilometers) from the city of South Lake Tahoe and did not advance much overnight thanks to operations known as "backfiring," where firefighters get ahead of the blaze and burn up fuel so the fire has nothing to ignite, Horner said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 73 of 90

"They did backfiring operations that were nothing short of amazing last night in that area," Horner said. Wind gusts were forecast for early Saturday up to 35 mph, but they tapered off with slower, weaker winds expected through the rest of the weekend, Cal Fire incident spokesman Henry Herrera said.

"We anticipate being able to make more progress over the weekend because of favorable wind conditions," Herrera said. But the slower winds were only expected to last two days.

A Fire Weather Watch was issued for Monday and Tuesday that will lead to "elevated fire weather concerns" in higher elevations of the Northern Sierra, Cal Fire said.

The Caldor fire has destroyed more than 600 structures since it started on Aug. 14 in the Sierra Nevada. It has proved so difficult to fight that fire managers this week pushed back the projected date for full containment from early next week to Sept. 8. But even that estimate was tenuous.

It is one of nearly 90 large blazes in the U.S. Many are in the West, burning trees and brush desiccated by drought. Climate change has made the region warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make the weather more extreme and wildfires more destructive, according to scientists.

The Department of Defense is sending 200 U.S. Army soldiers from Washington state and equipment including eight U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft to help firefighters in Northern California, the U.S. Army North said in a statement Saturday. The soldiers are expected to arrive in California in early September after a week-long training. The C-130s have been converted into airtankers that can dump thousands of gallons of water on the flames.

In California, 14 large fires are being fought by more than 15,200 firefighters. Fires have destroyed around 2,000 structures and forced thousands to evacuate this year while blanketing large swaths of the West in unhealthy smoke.

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Joe Irvin issued an emergency proclamation Thursday so the city that's home to Heavenly Ski Resort can be better prepared if evacuation orders come and be reimbursed for related expenses.

The last time the city declared a wildfire emergency was during the 2007 Angora Fire, which destroyed nearly 250 homes in neighboring Meyers and was the last major fire in the basin.

A Hurricane Ida unknown: Economic impact on region and US

By FRANK BAJAK Associated Press

A strengthening Hurricane Ida, bearing high winds and the likelihood of flooding rain as it heads for the Louisiana coast, could damage the energy-heavy Gulf Coast economy and potentially have economic consequences well beyond the region.

The Gulf is not only a major base for oil and natural gas companies but also a vital hub for the nation's chemical and shipping industries.

Companies evacuated oil and gas platforms south of Louisiana ahead of the hurricane. But a far greater worry was potential damage to refineries and petrochemical plants in its projected path from flooding and storm surge.

Nearly 300 offshore platforms — or half the manned platforms in the Gulf of Mexico — were evacuated ahead of the storm, their production temporarily halted, the U.S. Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement said on its website Saturday. Floating rigs also cleared out. In all, more than 80% of gulf oil and gas production halted, the agency said.

But a potentially more serious concern was the fate of refineries and petrochemical plants along the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans in or near the projected path of a storm whose maximum sustained winds were expected to reach 130 mph (209 kph) at anticipated landfall late Sunday.

Louisiana's 17 oil refineries account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's refining capacity and can process about 3.4 million barrels of crude per day, according to the Energy Information Administration. Many could be vulnerable to flooding. The EIA said Ida could affect local energy supply — especially transportation fuel and electricity.

Less clear is whether the domestic fuel supply might be affected. U.S. daily oil consumption is a little

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 74 of 90

under 20 million barrels a day. Analysts said it was too early to say, though S&P Global Platts said the storm could halt production of 765,000 barrels a day in gulf output.

It was not immediately clear how many refineries and petrochemical plants might be shut down.

Phillips 66 was halting production at its refinery on the Mississippi just south of New Orleans in Belle Chasse, Louisiana, due in part to "the potential for storm surge," said company spokesman Bernardo Falas. It's daily capacity is 250,000 barrels.

Exxon Mobil said its Baton Rouge refinery, which produces about 520,000 barrels of crude daily, continued to operate while Chevron said it had shut down operations at terminals on the Mississippi river and gulf coast and their related pipeline systems. Shell, Marathon and Valero also have refineries close to the storm's projected path.

"The industry has been through this maybe too many times over the last few decades," said Peter McNally, an energy analyst at Third Bridge, said of the hurricane. Several refineries in Lake Charles, west of Ida's projected path, suffered wind damage in Hurricane Laura almost exactly a year ago.

Meteorologist Jeff Masters, who flew hurricane missions for the government and founded Weather Underground, said Ida is forecast to move through "the just absolute worst place for a hurricane."

While refineries and petrochemical plants are generally built to withstand high winds, they are not necessarily prepared for high water, an increasing problem as global warming spurs higher rainfall amounts in big storms.

McNally said the industry is most concerned about flooding, which is what cause so much havoc in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey in the Houston area, where petroleum products were spilled at flooded tanker and chemical plants.

"Louisiana is low so you are prone to the flooding. These things are built to withstand winds but it's flooding you have tougher time dealing with," he said.

Sixty percent of the gasoline used on the East Coast are shipped from the Gulf Coast, much of it through the Colonial Pipeline, which is in the storm's path.

In addition to oil production, Louisiana accounts for 9% of U.S. natural gas yields. Last year, the state's two liquefied natural gas export terminals shipped out about 55% of total U.S. LNG exports, according to the Energy Information Administration.

AP science writer Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland, contributed to this report.

Marchers across US call on Congress to bolster voting rights

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of voting rights advocates rallied across the country Saturday to call for sweeping federal laws that would wipe out voting restrictions advancing in some Republican-controlled states that could make it harder to cast a ballot.

Many activists view the fight over voting rules as the civil rights issue of the era. But frustrations have mounted for months because two expansive election bills have stalled in the U.S. Senate, which is split evenly between Democrats and Republicans and the measures lack the votes to overcome a GOP blockade.

The rallies, which were held in dozens of cities, were intended to increase pressure on Democrats to rewrite procedural rules that would allow Democrats to muscle the legislation through without Republican votes. But they were also aimed at coaxing President Joe Biden to become a more forceful advocate on the issue.

"You said the night you won that Black America had your back, and that you were going to have Black Americans' backs," the Rev. Al Sharpton, who helped organize the national demonstrations, said at a rally in Washington. "Well, Mr. President, they're stabbing us in the back."

More than a thousand people turned out in sweltering heat on the National Mall on Saturday, the 58th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

His son Martin Luther King III used the occasion to call on the Senate to scrap the filibuster rule, which

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 75 of 90

requires 60 votes for most legislation, including the voting bills, to advance.

"Our country is backsliding to the unconscionable days of Jim Crow. And some of our senators are saying, 'Well, we can't overcome the filibuster,'" King told the crowd. "I say to you today: Get rid of the filibuster. That is a monument to white supremacy we must tear down."

At one point, nearly a dozen state lawmakers from Texas who had sought to block changes to their state's elections laws, strolled onto the stage at the National Mall and were hailed as patriots.

"Texas is the worst state to vote in, in the entire nation," said U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a Democrat from Houston.

Even as rally participants pushed for stronger protections, Republican lawmakers in Texas were on the brink of passing an overhaul of its voting laws, including restrictions on voting by mail, limits on when voters can cast ballots and other measures that Republicans say would improve the integrity of its elections.

Texas would be the latest state to pass new laws, following moves in other Republican-controlled states like Arizona, Florida and Georgia to put in place similar restrictions — efforts driven by former President Donald Trump's false claims that the 2020 election was stolen.

Congressional Democrats have responded to the Republican efforts to make it harder to vote by approving legislation earlier this week that would restore sections of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965. The bill would require the Justice Department to once again police changes to voting laws in states with a history of restricting the vote, a practice that was put on hold by the Supreme Court in 2013.

But unless Democrats make changes to the Senate procedural rules, passage of the bill, as well as a separate measure that would establish national election standards, remains unlikely.

In a video posted on Twitter earlier in the day, Vice President Kamala Harris urged Congress to pass legislation that she said was needed to push back against Republicans in Texas, Florida and other states.

"The country is changing. The demographics are changing. And (Republicans) think that if they don't get ahead of it and suppress the vote, they ain't gonna have a say in it," said Ken Jones, 72, of Atlanta, who traveled to Washington with his wife, Paula, to attend the rally.

Angela Hill, 61, who lives in the Washington area, attended the rally with her daughter because she is "alarmed" by Republican efforts to make it harder to vote. In spite of Trump's false claims of a stolen victory, Republican and Democratic election officials across the country certified the outcome and Trump's own attorney general said he saw no evidence of widespread voter fraud.

"Why was it necessary for Republican states to try and make it more difficult to vote? Things went well in this election," Hill said.

Marches were also scheduled for Atlanta, Miami, Phoenix and other cities under the banner of "March On for Voting Rights," organized by Sharpton and King. Because of concerns over the fast-spreading delta variant of COVID-19, a march in Houston did not go on as planned.

A daughter of the late civil rights leader, Bernice King, led the march in Atlanta. In an interview with The Associated Press, she called for "new levels of civil disobedience" to push against voting restrictions.

"We're going to have to disrupt some things. We've got to disturb this country to the point that people who are still uninvolved and on the periphery to get involved in some fashion," she said.

In Phoenix, the Rev. Terry Mackey, the pastor of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, urged those attending an indoor rally to honor those who fought and shed blood for voting rights.

"I want you to stand up and fight," he said, "until every person in this state has the same voting rights as anybody else."

Calvan reported from New York. Associated Press writers Alex Sanz in Atlanta and Paul Davenport in Phoenix contributed to this report.

How Instagram star helped rescue dozens from Afghanistan

By HALELUYA HADERO and GLENN GAMBOA AP Business Writers

Dozens of desperate Afghans who had been trying to flee the Taliban before Tuesday's deadline for the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 76 of 90

U.S. withdrawal from Kabul made it to safety with help from an unexpected place: Instagram influencer Quentin Quarantino.

Quarantino is the alter ego of 25-year-old Tommy Marcus of New York City, previously best-known for his liberal memes and his jokes about opponents of COVID-19 vaccinations. Along with his followers, Quarantino raised \$7 million within days on GoFundMe to launch rescue missions into Afghanistan to evacuate as many people as possible, many of whom said they had been threatened by the Taliban.

On Wednesday, their mission "Operation Flyaway" helped ferry 51 people from Afghanistan to Uganda on a privately chartered plane financed by the GoFundMe campaign.

More than 121,000 people had donated to the campaign after Marcus made an appeal to his 832,000 followers, making it one of the largest humanitarian fundraisers in GoFundMe's history.

"It's beyond humbling that they have that faith in me, that they're willing to put significant amounts of money into hands that I trust," Marcus told The Associated Press.

Saraya International, a global development firm, and the Rockefeller Foundation, which both provided organizational support for the flight to Uganda, as well as another company involved with the evacuation, confirmed to the AP that the flight was chartered by the emergency collaboration financed through Marcus' Go FundMe campaign.

"I don't know what word to use besides miraculous, because it's restored a faith in humanity," Marcus said. "We've shed the political divisions in this situation and really come together from all walks of life to rally together and save these people because .. they don't deserve what their future holds if they stay in Afghanistan right now."

Those who were evacuated, Marcus said, were women, children, humanitarians and others "who've been fighting for the greater good in Afghanistan for a long time," as well as their families. The organizers had said they were seeking to rescue 300 people who, along with their families, were "at imminent risk of being executed by the Taliban."

The team had been met with skepticism from experts who questioned whether they had the capability to pull off such a mission at a time when governments, corporations and charity groups were rushing to get their citizens and employees out of Afghanistan on whatever aircraft they could.

Marcus' group said more than 350 people have been rescued, with nearly 300 leaving Kabul on other chartered flights that "Operation Flyaway" reimbursed for providing safe passage from the country. A spokesperson for the State Department wrote in an emailed statement that the department appreciates "community-led efforts to support the Afghan relocation and resettlement process, which reflects the generosity of the American people and the international community."

"However, we are unable to verify the authenticity or effectiveness of these efforts," the statement said.

Officials from several nonprofit groups describe a chaotic and perilous scene at the Kabul airport as they rushed to fill private chartered flights with people who have the necessary paperwork in the limited time that they can keep their planes on the tarmac.

"I'm so proud of our extraordinary team and what we were able to accomplish in such a short time," said Sayara CEO Scott Shadian. "I just wish we could've done more. Simply put, the institutions failed, and it breaks my heart how much more we could have accomplished. We are grateful we got out as many people as we did against the greatest odds we've ever faced."

At the request of the U.S. government, Uganda received the evacuees, who will stay at hotels in a city outside the country's capital, Kampala. Ugandan officials said the nation would shelter up to 2,000 people who are expected to be relocated elsewhere after a temporary stay in the country.

The chartered flight that left Kabul early Wednesday morning is one of several private rescue efforts being organized by various groups, separately and through collaborations, to help Afghans flee. The flight from Kabul to Entebbe, Uganda, was organized by Sayara, which advised a company working with Marcus that it knew of a plane available for "Operation Flyaway."

Representatives from that North Carolina-based company, Raven Advisory, said they were able to pay for the mission using money raised through Marcus' GoFundMe campaign. The company, which says it

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 77 of 90

performs subcontract work for the U.S. military, said "an all-volunteer team consisting of former Special Forces soldiers and other veterans with expertise in Afghanistan" were working with the military to coordinate their rescue efforts.

Sayara's Shadian said he had met "Operation Flyaway" members on Zoom only earlier in the week and in the chaos of the Kabul evacuations was thrilled they agreed to fund the flight.

"They were one of many miracles we experienced in this time," Shadian said. "Their last-minute funding, along with the generous support of the Rockefeller Foundation, Schmidt Futures and other donors, was critical. Without Operation Flyaway's quick funding, that flight wouldn't have gotten off the ground."

Raven Advisory CEO Sheffield Ford told the AP that in order to transport the people into the airport, the U.S. government has to be "comfortable with our organization saying these people are OK, and that they have actually done things to help their country, to help our country."

Though the deadly suicide bombing at the airport on Thursday complicated their efforts, Ford says those they are helping must have passports, a relative his group can communicate with and someone vouching for them who has passed a background check. The goal, Ford noted, is to ferry Afghan citizens that have been targeted by the Taliban out of the country.

"Our focus was the people who wanted to build their country into something great," he said. "They thought they were going to stay there, with us backing them, for the long haul. It's going to be women that work in journalism and teachers. It could be the young people and older people who have been very outspoken against the different atrocities of committed by the Taliban in the past."

Though crowdfunding has been a welcome tool to mobilize donations during crisis situations, Patricia McIlreavy, president of the Washington-based Center for Disaster Philanthropy, stresses that donors should be cautious when donating to private efforts through these sites.

"There's not necessarily going to be a public report on where these funds went and how they were used, in the way that a nonprofit — or a 501(c)(3) — is required to by law," she said.

Though rescue flights are now winding down with the pending deadline of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the GoFundMe campaign said it will donate whatever money remains to the Washington-based organization International Women's Media Foundation. According to organizers, the foundation, which supports female journalists, will use the money to "partner with experienced organizations and experts to support people once they are on safe ground."

Ford was impressed by how quickly millions were raised on GoFundMe for these missions.

"It's about people coming together to help others," he said. "And it was awesome to see that happen."

The Associated Press receives support from the Lilly Endowment for coverage of philanthropy and non-profits. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

US Open players don't need COVID shots; about half have them

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When Andy Murray sat in the U.S. Open's main interview room for a pre-tournament news conference Saturday, the moderator informed the 2012 champion he was allowed to remove the sort of light blue medical mask that has become so ubiquitous during the coronavirus pandemic.

Unlike the nine players who met with the media in that spot a day earlier, Murray chose to keep his mask on. And unlike roughly half the other men and women who will be taking the court when the year's last Grand Slam tournament begins Monday, Murray has been vaccinated against COVID-19.

He wishes more tennis pros were. It sets up a couple of contrasts at Flushing Meadows when it comes to a hot-button issue across society these days, especially as cases connected to the delta variant increase.

For one thing, players and their team members do not need to be vaccinated, but the spectators who have paid to watch them — and at some courts can get close enough to the action to offer high-fives — now must be able to show they have had at least one shot.

Plus, among the players, there are those, such as No. 1-ranked Novak Djokovic, who frame the decision

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 78 of 90

about whether to get a shot as a purely personal choice. And there are those, such as Murray, who explain it as being not just about protecting oneself but also about helping others.

"I feel like I'm enjoying kind of a fairly normal life, whereas for the players that haven't, it's different. I'm sure they'll be frustrated with that. Ultimately, I guess the reason why all of us are getting vaccinated is to look out for the wider public. We have a responsibility as players that are traveling across the world to look out for everyone else, as well," Murray said. "I'm happy that I'm vaccinated. I'm hoping that more players choose to have it in the coming months."

An ATP spokesman said Saturday that just above 50% of male players are vaccinated and the men's tour "continues to strongly recommend vaccination to players." A WTA spokeswoman said nearly half of female players are vaccinated and the women's tour "strongly believes in, and encourages everyone to get, a vaccine," with a goal of raising numbers "in excess of 85% by the end of the year," while not currently requiring athletes to get the shots.

As recently as Wednesday, the U.S. Tennis Association said fans wouldn't need to be vaccinated at the U.S. Open. But, prompted by the New York mayor's office, the USTA did an about-face Friday, making it mandatory for fans over 12 years old entering the grounds to show proof they've received one dose — drawing praise on social media from those pleased about the extra layer of precaution and complaints from others upset about the policy and its timing.

People who interact with players already were required to be vaccinated: USTA employees, chair umpires, ball kids, the media and some security and transportation workers.

Some players say their itinerant lifestyle, regularly traveling from city to city — or even continent to continent — makes getting the vaccine complicated.

"There are some opportunities that have come up throughout the year. Maybe a handful," said three-time major semifinalist Johanna Konta, who is not vaccinated and pulled out of Wimbledon because of contact tracing after a team member tested positive for COVID-19, then got sick herself and missed the Tokyo Olympics. "But obviously it is a logistical thing to put together and to time those things. That is just the nature of kind of our sport."

Unlike in team sports such as the NFL or Major League Baseball, where vaccines were encouraged and incentivized, tennis is very much an individual sport, where certain tournaments offer players the chance to get shots on-site and others don't — including the U.S. Open itself.

"We provided the athletes with the information of where they can go to be vaccinated in the vicinity of the hotel. ... There are so many locations here in New York City for non-citizens to receive a vaccine," tournament director Stacey Allaster said. "We won't specifically be doing it here on-site."

Coco Gauff, the 17-year-old American who was a French Open quarterfinalist in June, said she was supposed to get her first vaccine shot the same week she got COVID-19.

"The real problem is just getting the dosages spaced out and, obviously, going from country to country is difficult," Gauff said this month.

"But," she said, "I'm going to get it as soon as I can."

Other players, such as Stefanos Tsitsipas, the runner-up to Djokovic at the French Open, say they only would be vaccinated if it were required.

"At some point I will have to, I'm pretty sure about it, but so far it hasn't been mandatory to compete, so I haven't done it," said Tsitsipas, who is scheduled to face Murray on Monday.

Djokovic and his wife, Jelena, tested positive for the coronavirus last year after he organized a series of exhibition matches while the pro tours were on hiatus.

"I feel like that should be always a personal decision, whether you want to get vaccinated or not. So I'm supportive of that," Djokovic said. "So whether someone wants to get a vaccine or not, that's completely up to them. I hope that it stays that way."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 79 of 90

Museum chief is only candidate for Estonia's presidency

By JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Estonia is gearing up for an unusual presidential election in parliament. There will be only one candidate in Monday's vote, a situation unprecedented since the Baltic nation regained its independence 30 years ago.

President Kersti Kaljulaid's five-year term expires on Oct. 10, and lawmakers in the 101-seat Riigikogu parliament must elect a new head of state to replace her in the largely ceremonial post.

As no further candidates registered by the late Saturday deadline, the director of the Estonian National Museum, Alar Karis, will be the sole contender. Karis, a former state auditor, is the only one who has managed to get support from the required minimum of 21 lawmakers.

Holding a vote with only one candidate has flummoxed the country, and several politicians have called for a complete overhaul of Estonia's complex presidential election system. Some Estonians have even suggested that the small European nation, where the prime minister holds most political power, should abolish the head of state post altogether.

Jaak Joeruut, a former defense minister and diplomat, said in a recent opinion piece that "elections with one candidate belong to the Soviet era. It is unethical, but, strangely enough, legal."

Once a Soviet republic, Estonia, a nation of 1.3 million, regained its independence in 1991 and is now a member of both the European Union and NATO.

Had the president been directly elected by the people, the liberal Kaljulaid would be seeking a second term. Estonia's first female president is reasonably popular among the public. But she enjoys little support from lawmakers, reportedly due to her outspokenness about fellow politicians and government policies.

Prime Minister Kaja Kallas' Reform Party and the Center Party — which make up Estonia's center-right coalition government — have endorsed Karis, 63.

Both parties have praised him for his understanding of Estonia's society and see his academic background — he headed the University of Tartu, Estonia's main academic institution — and work as an auditor as substantial strengths.

Tonis Sarts, an associate professor in comparative politics at Tallinn University, agrees with the assessment but noted that Karis is a novice in foreign policy.

"He is probably one of the most well-prepared candidates considering the domestic policy dimension but he hasn't had any practical experience in foreign policy-making and diplomacy," Sarts told The Associated Press.

Karis needs a two-thirds majority, or 68 votes, in parliament to be elected in the secret ballot. The governing coalition has 59 votes, and he is seen as likely to gather the support of at least another nine lawmakers from three opposition parties.

The populist right-wing EKRE party has proposed a candidate of its own, but didn't have enough lawmakers to register him. The conservative Fatherland — a small opposition party — said it agrees with Karis on several issues but gave its lawmakers a free hand in the vote.

Meanwhile, the Social Democrats are divided between Kaljulaid and Karis but the party has too few lawmakers and allies to propose the sitting president run for reelection.

Should lawmakers reject Karis on Monday, another two voting rounds are scheduled for Tuesday. If that fails, the election will be transferred to a special 208-member electoral college who would vote on a new head of state in September.

Under Estonia's constitution, the president's role is mostly representing the nation abroad and acting as a domestic opinion leader. However, the president is also the supreme commander of Estonia's armed forces, formally appoints government members, signs laws to make them valid and has the power to veto law proposals.

Experts warn of dangers from breach of voter system software

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 80 of 90

ATLANTA (AP) — Republican efforts questioning the outcome of the 2020 presidential race have led to voting system breaches that election security experts say pose a heightened risk to future elections.

Copies of the Dominion Voting Systems software used to manage elections — from designing ballots to configuring voting machines and tallying results — were distributed at an event this month in South Dakota organized by MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, an ally of former President Donald Trump who has made unsubstantiated claims about last year's election.

"It's a game-changer in that the environment we have talked about existing now is a reality," said Matt Masterson, a former top election security official in the Trump administration. "We told election officials, essentially, that you should assume this information is already out there. Now we know it is, and we don't know what they are going to do with it."

The software copies came from voting equipment in Mesa County, Colorado, and Antrim County, Michigan, where Trump allies had sue unsuccessfully challenging the results from last fall.

The Dominion software is used in some 30 states, including counties in California, Georgia and Michigan.

Election security pioneer Harri Hursti was at the South Dakota event and said he and other researchers in attendance were provided three separate copies of election management systems that run on the Dominion software. The data indicated they were from Antrim and Mesa counties. While it's not clear how the copies came to be released at the event, they were posted online and made available for public download.

The release gives hackers a "practice environment" to probe for vulnerabilities they could exploit and a road map to avoid defenses, Hursti said. All the hackers would need is physical access to the systems because they are not supposed to be connected to the internet.

"The door is now wide open," Hursti said. "The only question is, how do you sneak in the door?"

A Dominion representative declined comment, citing an investigation.

U.S. election technology is dominated by just three vendors comprising 90% of the market, meaning election officials cannot easily swap out their existing technology. Release of the software copies essentially provides a blueprint for those trying to interfere with how elections are run. They could sabotage the system, alter the ballot design or even try to change results, said election technology expert Kevin Skoglund.

"This disclosure increases both the likelihood that something happens and the impact of what would happen if it does," he said.

The effort by Republicans to examine voting equipment began soon after the November presidential election as Trump challenged the results and blamed his loss on widespread fraud, even though there has been no evidence of it.

Judges appointed by both Democrats and Republicans, election officials of both parties and Trump's own attorney general have dismissed the claims. A coalition of federal and state election officials called the 2020 election the "most secure" in U.S. history, and post-election audits across the country found no significant anomalies.

In Antrim County, a judge had allowed a forensic exam of voting equipment after a brief mix-up of election results led to a suit alleging fraud. It was dismissed in May. Hursti said the date on the software release matches the date of the forensic exam.

Calls seeking information from Antrim County's clerk and the local prosecutor's office were not immediately returned; a call to the judge's office was referred to the county clerk. The Michigan secretary of state's office declined comment.

In Colorado, federal, state and local authorities are investigating whether Mesa County elections staff might have provided unauthorized individuals access to their systems. The county elections clerk, Tina Peters, appeared onstage with Lindell in South Dakota and told the crowd her office was being targeted by Democrats in the state.

Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold said she alerted federal election security officials of the breach and was told it was not viewed as a "significant heightening of the election risk landscape at this point." This past week, Mesa County commissioners voted to replace voting equipment that Griswold had ordered could no longer be used.

Geoff Hale, who leads the election security effort at the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 81 of 90

Agency, said his agency has always operated on the assumption that system vulnerabilities are known by malicious actors. Election officials are focused instead on ways they can reduce risk, such as using ballots with a paper record that can be verified by the voter and rigorous post-election audits, Hale said.

He said having Dominion's software exposed publicly doesn't change the agency's guidance.

Security researcher Jack Cable said he assumes U.S. adversaries already had access to the software. He said he is more concerned the release would fan distrust among the growing number of people not inclined to believe in the security of U.S. elections.

"It is a concern that people, in the pursuit of trying to show the system is insecure, are actually making it more insecure," said Cable, who recently joined a cybersecurity firm run by former CISA Director Christopher Krebs and former Facebook security chief Alex Stamos.

Concerns over access to voting machines and software first surfaced this year in Arizona, where the Republican-controlled state Senate hired Cyber Ninjas, a firm with no previous election experience, to audit the Maricopa County election. The firm's chief executive also had tweeted support of conspiracy theories surrounding last year's election.

After the county's Dominion voting systems were turned over to the firm, Arizona's top election official said they could not be used again. The GOP-controlled Maricopa County Board of Supervisors voted in July to replace them.

Dominion has filed suits contesting various unfounded claims about its systems. In May, it called giving Cyber Ninjas access to its code "reckless," given the firm's bias, and said it would cause "irreparable damage" to election security.

Election technology and security expert Ryan Macias, in Arizona earlier this year to observe that review, was alarmed by a lack of cybersecurity protocols. There was no information about who was given access, whether those people had passed background checks or were asked to sign nondisclosure agreements.

Cyber Ninjas did not respond to an email with questions about the review and their security protocols.

Macias was not surprised to hear that copies of Antrim County's election management system had surfaced online given the questionable motives of the various groups conducting the reviews and the central role that voting systems have played in conspiracy theories.

"This is what I anticipated would happen, and I anticipate it will happen yet again coming out of Arizona," Macias said. "These actors have no liability and no rules of engagement."

Unwanted record: Russia's COVID deaths hit new high in July

MOSCOW (AP) — A new report from Russia's state statistics agency shows the country recorded a record number of deaths in July of people infected with coronavirus.

The report from the Rosstat agency said 50,421 people suffering from COVID-19 died during the month, sharply higher than the previous record of 44,435 in December.

However, the agency said in the report that only 38,992 deaths were directly attributed to the disease. In another 5,206 deaths, the virus was assessed as likely the main cause but that more investigation would be needed; in 1,449 other cases, the virus contributed to the deaths but was not the main cause.

Rosstat said the other 4,844 deaths of infected people were not connected to the virus.

The report said the total of virus-related deaths in Russia by the end of July was 215,265 — well higher than the 180,840 cited by the national coronavirus task force. Russian officials ascribe that to different counting methods, saying the task force only includes deaths where COVID-19 was the main cause.

Officials also say the task force uses data from medical facilities while Rosstat takes its numbers from civil registry offices, where registering a death is finalized.

Russia's vaccination drive against COVID-19 has lagged behind other nations. As of mid-August, only a quarter of the country's 146 million people had received at least one vaccine dose, while 20% had been fully vaccinated.

Authorities in many regions have made vaccines mandatory for certain groups of workers, including those employed in health care, education, retail, public transportation and government offices.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 82 of 90

Follow all AP stories on the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>.

GOP rift widens amid growing hostility to Afghan refugees

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the U.S. rushes to evacuate Americans and allies from the chaos of Afghanistan, a growing number of Republicans are questioning why the U.S. should take in Afghan citizens who worked side by side with Americans, further exacerbating divides within the party heading into next year's midterm elections.

Little more than a week ago, as the Taliban's stunning takeover of Afghanistan still was snapping into focus, former President Donald Trump issued a statement saying "civilians and others who have been good to our Country ... should be allowed to seek refuge." But in more recent days, he has turned to warning of the alleged dangers posed by those desperately trying to flee their country before an end-of-month deadline.

"How many terrorists will Joe Biden bring to America?" he asked.

As Republicans level blistering criticism at Biden during his first major foreign policy crisis, some are turning to the nativist, anti-immigrant rhetoric perfected by Trump during his four years in office. It's causing dismay among others in the party who think the U.S. should look out for those who helped the Americans over the last two decades.

"I think these false narratives that these are a bunch of terrorists are just — they're completely baseless in reality," said Olivia Troye, a former White House homeland security adviser who currently serves as director of the Republican Accountability Project. "There's no basis for this at all in terms of the intelligence and national security world."

Neil Newhouse, a veteran Republican pollster, said the rhetoric reflects "a general, overall increase" in concern in the country over the risk of terrorist threats after Afghanistan's fall to the Taliban — not just in the short term from those who may not have been properly vetted, but a year or two down the road.

"There's just a sense that we are less safe as a country as a result of this," he said.

The Biden administration has stressed that every person cleared to come to the U.S. is being thoroughly vetted by officials working around the clock. But the refugees have become an emerging flash point, with Trump and his followers loudly demanding that Americans be prioritized for evacuation and warning of the potential dangers posed by Afghans being rescued in one of the world's largest-ever civilian airlift operations.

That talk intensified Thursday after a suicide bombing ripped through the crowd at the Kabul airport, killing 13 U.S. service members and well over 150 Afghans.

"How many American military personnel have to die to evacuate unvetted refugees?" tweeted Rep. Matt Rosendale, R-Mont. "Get American citizens out and bring our troops home."

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, on Friday toured the Doña Ana Range complex at Fort Bliss, where many refugees will be housed, and later tweeted the U.S. "should rescue Afghans who've assisted the US military, but they should go to a neutral & safe third country."

"They should NOT come to US w/o a FULL security vetting," he said.

That followed a call Wednesday by Kentucky Rep. James Comer, the top Republican on the House Oversight and Reform committee, for the administration to brief lawmakers on their efforts to vet Afghan refugees and prevent terrorists from entering the country.

"In the chaotic situation left in the wake of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, we are particularly concerned that terrorists and others who wish to harm the United States may seek to infiltrate the country disguised as those who provided assistance to coalition forces in Afghanistan," he wrote in letters to the secretaries of state and homeland security.

Still others, including Republican governors and members of Congress, have taken a different stance, welcoming refugees to their states and working furiously to help those trying to flee. On Capitol Hill, the effort to help Afghan friends and family of constituents is the rare undertaking that is consuming legislative offices of members of both parties.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 83 of 90

The United States and its coalition partners have evacuated more than 100,000 people from Afghanistan since the airlift began Aug. 14, including more than 5,100 American citizens. While the administration's explicitly stated priority is to evacuate Americans, the numbers reflect the demographics of those trying to flee.

U.S. officials believe about 500 American citizens who want to leave Afghanistan remain in the country; others are believed to want to stay. And many of the Afghans, including those who served as American interpreters and fixers and in other support capacities, are desperate to escape, fearing they will be prime targets for retribution by the Taliban once the U.S. leaves.

But that hasn't stopped Republicans from accusing the Biden administration of failing to put Americans first.

"We're actually prioritizing Afghan refugees more than we're prioritizing our own citizens," said Republican J.D. Vance, who is running for Senate in Ohio and has made repeat television appearances blasting the administration's approach.

On Fox Business Network, he claimed, without evidence, that the U.S. has "no knowledge" of 90% of the people being evacuated and said some have shown up on wide-ranging terror databases.

"They put Americans last in every single way, but Americans pay for it all," echoed Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., who has shot to prominence with incendiary statements.

Trump and his former policy adviser Stephen Miller, along with conservative commentators like Tucker Carlson, have taken things even further, using the same anti-immigrant language that was the hallmark of Trump's 2015 speech announcing his candidacy for the Republican nomination.

"You can be sure the Taliban, who are now in complete control, didn't allow the best and brightest to board these evacuation flights," Trump said. "Instead, we can only imagine how many thousands of terrorists have been airlifted out of Afghanistan and into neighborhoods around the world."

Carlson has warned about Afghans invading America.

The rhetoric underscores the transformation of a party once led by neoconservatives who championed interventionist nation-building policies and invaded Afghanistan — followed by Iraq — nearly 20 years ago.

But not Republicans all are on board.

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., whose office has been working around the clock to rescue the "countless" Afghans he says deserve evacuation, chastised those in his party invoking "terrorist" rhetoric.

"I would say that they need to do their homework," he said. "When you talk to the people that we've spoken with, when you look at their service record ... when you recognize that they sleep in the same tents, they carry arms together, they've been in live firefights, how dare anyone question whether or not they deserve to come to this country or to a safe third country?"

"We're not talking about just walking down the street and picking and choosing people," Tillis added. "We know these people. We know who their children are. We know what their service record was. And quite honestly, somebody taking that position, each and every time they do, is insulting a service member who considers these people like brothers and sisters."

Many of the Afghans seeking to come to the U.S. are doing so under the Special Immigrant Visa program designed specifically for individuals who worked with U.S. forces. Adam Bates, policy counsel at the International Refugee Assistance Project, said that, due to their work, those individuals were extensively vetted by U.S. authorities before applying to the program — and are again extensively vetted "by a wide array of federal agencies" before the visas are granted.

Troye, who has spent significant time on the ground in Afghanistan over the years, said Americans became extremely close to the Afghans with whom they served.

"These people became like family to many of us," she said. "It's really shameful to see some of these Republicans speaking in this way about people who really risked their lives to help us, who were really our allies on the ground."

Associated Press writer Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

Mask debate moves from school boards to courtrooms

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The rancorous debate over whether returning students should wear masks in the classroom has moved from school boards to courtrooms.

In at least 14 states, lawsuits have been filed either for or against masks in schools. In some cases, normally rule-enforcing school administrators are finding themselves fighting state leaders.

Legal experts say that while state laws normally trump local control, legal arguments from mask proponents have a good chance of coming out on top. But amid protests and even violence over masks around the United States, the court battle is just beginning.

Mask rules in public schools vary widely. Some states require them; others ban mandates. Many more leave it up to individual districts.

Big school districts that want to require masks are in court and battling governors in Florida, Texas and Arizona. Worried parents are suing over similar legislative bans on mandates in Utah, Iowa and South Carolina.

Suits fighting mask requirements have popped up in Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky and Montana.

At the heart of the debates are parents, scared or frustrated for their children in an unprecedented time. The early court record is mixed, with victories for mask proponents in Arkansas and Arizona followed by back-to-back decisions in two big states going opposite ways. The Texas Supreme Court blocked another school mask mandate Thursday while a Florida judge allowed the rules to go forward Friday.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending universal mask wearing in schools. Students age 12 and younger remain ineligible for COVID-19 vaccines.

Republican officials who restrict mask mandates argue there are downsides to kids being masked all day and that parents should decide whether to put them on children, who are generally less vulnerable to the virus than are older adults.

But public health experts say masks are a key coronavirus-prevention tool that does not pose health risks for children older than toddler age, and truly effective when worn by a large number of people.

"This idea of parental freedom to decide what's best for their child is not unlimited. It has never been unlimited in our system," said Ellen Clayton, a pediatrician and law professor at Vanderbilt Law School in Nashville, Tennessee.

Nationwide, COVID-19 deaths are running at more than 1,200 a day, the highest level since mid-March. New cases per day are averaging over 156,000, turning the clock back to the end of January.

The surge is largely fueled by the highly contagious delta variant among people who are unvaccinated. In areas where vaccination rates are particularly low, doctors have pleaded with their communities to get inoculated to spare overburdened hospitals.

They have also sounded the alarm about the growing toll of the variant on children and young adults.

In Tennessee, for example, children now make up 36% of the state's reported COVID-19 cases. Gov. Bill Lee has not banned schools from requiring masks but has ordered that any parent can opt out — and remote education options are limited this year. Few schools in the state have adopted mask mandates.

South Carolina passed anti-mask regulations and is now facing a federal lawsuit from the American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU argues that the state is putting students with disabilities at greater risk in violation of federal law amid skyrocketing infections, particularly among younger children.

Susan Mizner, director of the ACLU's Disability Rights Project, said offering students with disabilities or medical conditions a remote option is not a good alternative. Limiting medically fragile students and those with disabilities to a remote-only education denies them equal opportunity, she said.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act, public schools cannot exclude students with disabilities or segregate them unnecessarily from their peers. Schools are also required to provide reasonable modifications to allow students with disabilities to participate fully. Lawyers have filed for a temporary injunction requiring masks while the court case plays out.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 85 of 90

"We understand people are tired," Mizner said. "We understand people are frustrated with the pandemic, we understand there is a lot going on here. We just want them to draw on their better selves to care about the kids in their communities who are most at risk and really need their help at protecting them."

Schools already have plenty of restrictions aimed at protecting the health of kids. Rules against peanuts are a good example, said Ruth Colker, a law professor at Ohio State University and a disability-law expert.

Those rules are aimed at protecting kids with potentially fatal peanut allergies that can be triggered by particles in the air. Similarly, the argument goes, kids especially vulnerable to COVID-19 need everyone to wear masks so they don't get sick.

"They need the people around them not to be spreading the particles of peanuts," Colker said. "COVID is just like peanuts. In fact, is more contagious."

Because schools that accept federal money are subject to federal disability law, she sees those arguments as likely to win in court. While many court decisions generally apply to one school or state, that could change if the federal government enters the legal fray. President Joe Biden has ordered his education secretary to explore possible legal action against several states that have blocked school mask mandates and other educational public health measures.

Whatever happens in court, though, is unlikely to bridge the vast and contentious political divides over masks. A recent poll from The Associated Press and NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found about 6 in 10 Americans wanted students and teachers to be required to wear face masks while in school.

But that poll also found just 3 in 10 Republicans favor mask requirements, compared with about 8 in 10 Democrats.

The divide is playing out in Florida and Texas, where several big school districts are defying governors' executive orders against school mask mandates.

In Texas, dozens of school districts have defied Gov. Greg Abbott's mask mandate ban. But the state's highest court sided with the governor this past week as the Republican judges found the "status quo" of authority on masks should rest with him while the case plays out.

"The decision to enforce mask mandates lies with the governor's legislatively-granted authority," Attorney General Ken Paxton said Thursday. "Mask mandates across our state are illegal."

In Florida, more than half of public school students are now in mask-requiring districts, despite an executive order from Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis. He wants to leave such decisions up to parents, but on Friday a judge decided that schools need to be able to require masks to protect public health.

In places such as Utah and Iowa, where legislatures have passed laws restrictions or bans on mask mandates, the state could have a legal upper hand because state laws generally trumps local control. Lawrence Gostin, professor of global health law at Georgetown and director of the World Health Organization Center on Global Health Law, said he considers restrictions on mask mandates "utterly irresponsible" and "a breach of public trust" but sees the legal landscape as hazy at best.

"There's going to be really fierce battles in the courtrooms across America," he said.

Whitehurst reported from Salt Lake City.

EXPLAINER: How wildfire camps keep crews ready for battle

By KEITH RIDLER Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Empty cow pastures on one day can be bustling with hundreds of firefighters the next as fire camps with colorful tent cities spring up.

More than 20,000 wildland firefighters are battling some 100 large wildfires in the U.S. West, and truckloads of supplies and equipment are needed to keep them effective at fighting flames for weeks on end.

"We'll set up a small village," said Evans Kuo, a "Type 1" incident commander assigned to the nation's biggest and most dangerous wildfires. His incident command team has 44 members. "The main idea of the camp is to not only house the incident command team, but also house the base camp that has food, water, sleeping and showers."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 86 of 90

HOW LARGE ARE FIRE CAMPS?

The size of each camp is determined by the size and complexity of the wildfire, with the largest blazes drawing more than 1,000 firefighters and support staff that are directed by Type 1 incident command teams.

U.S. Interior Department agencies, primarily the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service supply firefighters, as do state agencies and tribes.

There also are Type 2 command teams on smaller and less complex blazes that draw from about 200 to 500 firefighters. Type 3 incidents may or may not have a fire camp.

More than 95% of all wildfires are put out quickly or within days by local firefighters, and are classified as Type 4 or 5. They typically don't have fire camps.

Food caterers, semi-trailers with shower stalls and portable bathrooms are brought into large fire camps to make sure firefighters get enough food and a chance to wash off the dirt, ash and sweat.

"That's a huge morale boost out on the line," said Bubba Pugh, who has been fighting wildfires with the Idaho Department of Lands for about a decade. "Having the fire camp helps us get the job done."

WHO'S IN CHARGE OF A FIRE CAMP?

An incident commander with decades of firefighting experience runs the show, plotting short-term and long-term strategy that's recalibrated daily. Fire camp responsibilities are separated into divisions that include planning, logistics, communications, medical and even security.

Large fires will also have an air operations branch to coordinate fire retardant drops by jets or other aircraft, as well as water drops by helicopters. Some camps will also have a person in charge of night operations, when firefighters can make good progress.

Public information officers help inform area residents through social media and news outlets. They also work with law enforcement officials on evacuations and road closures.

While fire camps are hierarchical, the system includes an outlet for firefighters to anonymously report safety concerns to an employee relations person at a camp or online.

Camps also include someone tracking the overall cost of fighting the fire, which can run into the millions of dollars. The federal government spent \$2.3 billion fighting wildfires last year, a number that's expected to grow significantly this year.

WHERE ARE FIRE CAMPS LOCATED?

Kuo said schools make good fire camps because they have electricity and internet access, something that has become increasingly important in fighting fires. Information can be distributed to firefighters on smartphones using code scanners.

Firefighters bring their own tents, and can set up on athletic fields or, if in more remote areas, anywhere from meadows to cow pastures.

"Sometimes we don't get the most luxurious fields to sleep in," Pugh said. "But find a nice, flat piece of ground, and just expect to be there for the duration."

Communication in remote locations is mainly done through handheld radios. Communications teams put repeaters — devices that receive radio signals and retransmit them — on ridgetops so commanders can communicate with firefighters in the field.

The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise has the largest store of handheld radios outside the U.S. Department of Defense. Center spokeswoman Jessica Gardetto said most of the center's radios, about 23,000, are at large wildfires. All radios are not in use at the same time as they need to be charged.

Remote command posts are often operated from yurts, or office trailers, with different divisions having their own workspace.

Large fires also often have satellite camps to save time because it can take hours to drive from a command post to other areas of the fire.

HOW AND WHEN IS FOOD SERVED?

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 87 of 90

Firefighters get three calorie-heavy meals a day and snacks to keep them fueled for the physically intensive work.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, firefighters gathered in chow halls in the morning and evening, enjoying the camaraderie of the job while away from the fire line. Now, firefighters disperse to eat their meals, sometimes going back to their tents or finding a tree to sit under. Lunch is typically a bag lunch eaten in the field.

At satellite camps, pre-cooked food is flown to them.

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Type 1 and Type 2 incident command teams each day produce an incident action plan that spells out goals and responsibilities, typically looking four days ahead. Each day the plan is recalibrated based on a variety of factors, chief among them weather. The plan is typically 12 to 20 pages long, and is made available as a PDF so it can be viewed on smartphones or other devices.

Kuo gets up at 5 a.m. to prepare for the 6 a.m. morning briefing, which is followed by other briefings and planning sessions during the day that lasts to 10 p.m.

"Somewhere in there you try to grab some food," he said.

Most firefighters have been on the job for months, and will likely be needed for more than another month as some fires are expected to burn well into September.

"There is some burnout factor," Kuo said, summing up the current atmosphere among firefighters. "But this is what we signed up for, so you dig deep and get through it."

Contact tracing takes a back seat during latest COVID surge

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

Health investigators across the U.S. are finding it nearly impossible to keep up with the deluge of new COVID-19 infections and carry out contact tracing efforts that were once seen as a pillar of the nation's pandemic response.

States are hiring new staff and seeking out volunteers to bolster the ranks of contact tracers that have been overwhelmed by surging coronavirus cases.

Some states trimmed their contact tracing teams this spring and summer when virus numbers were dropping and are now scrambling to train new investigators. Others have triaged their teams to focus on the most vulnerable, such as cases involving schools or children too young to be vaccinated.

Texas got out of the business entirely, with the new two-year state budget that takes effect Sept. 1 explicitly prohibiting funds being used for contact tracing. That left it up to local health officials, but they can't keep up at a time when Texas is averaging more than 16,000 new cases a day.

Mississippi has 150 staff working full time to identify people who have had close contact with an infected person, but they are swamped, too.

"A lot of times by the time of cases are reported, transmission has already occurred by the time we reach that person," state epidemiologist Dr. Paul Byers said.

Since the pandemic began, states have been relying on the practice of contact tracing to track down, notify and monitor those who were exposed to someone who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Dr. Yvonne Maldonado, a professor of global health and infectious diseases at the Stanford University School of Medicine, said that while contact tracing can be time-intensive, especially if one person potentially exposed a lot of people, "it does in the end prevent additional cases."

Maldonado said it's a "staple of public health" and can be the only way someone can find out a stranger may have potentially exposed them to the disease.

The contact tracing response has varied from state to state throughout the pandemic.

New York, which has had a robust team, has adjusted its contract tracing staff with the pandemic's waves. The state had more than 8,000 contract tracers in February and March of this year but now has 3,860 staff working on contract tracing. That does not include New York City, which has its own \$600

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 88 of 90

million tracing initiative with thousands of staff.

Arkansas has hired two outside firms, General Dynamics Information Technology and Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care, to handle the investigations for the state. The firms have about 257 people working right now and are each trying to add about 100 more.

In Louisiana, another virus hotspot, state officials have added 130 people in recent weeks to their staff working on contact tracing. They now have more than 560 people working on tracing efforts.

In Idaho, a new public health website, VolunteerIdaho.com, encourages people with health care skills or a simple willingness to volunteer for Idaho's Medical Reserve Corps. Among the volunteers they are seeking are people who can with contact tracing and data entry

Health officials say with the overwhelming number of new cases, they're not able to track every case and instead try to focus on infections that could have exposed large numbers of people or vulnerable groups.

That's the case in Alabama. Dr. Karen Landers with the Alabama Department of Health said her agency encourages anyone who tests positive or is exposed to follow isolation and quarantine guidelines and notify anyone they had close contact with, but the health department is focusing its resources on bigger outbreaks, clusters and group settings.

In Nevada, the investigators are prioritizing their efforts around cases involving children or schools, according to Julia Peek, Deputy Administrator of Community Health Services at Nevada's health department.

In Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott last year approved a \$295 million contract with a firm to run contact tracing for the state, but the deal drew conservative backlash and a lawsuit from lawmakers who said the governor overstepped his authority by approving the deal with the Legislature was not in session.

Abbott eventually won the lawsuit, but contact tracing funds were stripped from the new budget.

Local governments say they're continuing the effort and trying to ramp up staffing as cases climb. In Austin, for example, the local health department had about 50 investigators working on contact tracing at the peak of the pandemic. But when cases dropped, they reduced their staff to 12, according to Austin Public Health spokesman to Matt Lara.

In California, state workers have been dispatched to help county health department teams working on contract tracing. At the peak of the pandemic, Los Angeles County had about 2,800 people working on the effort until this spring, when cases began falling, said True Beck, a public health worker who manages a team of contract tracers for the county.

Beck said some staff in the spring were reassigned to make calls encouraging people to get vaccines and others were sent back to their regular jobs at other county departments, but lately they've been bringing people back and have about 1,000 working.

She said the work is relentless and the calls, which can last an hour, can be emotional. Workers making contract tracing calls not only help people learn about what they should do to keep themselves and others safe, but they can hear from people who are scared, lonely or grieving or in need of assistance, such as with paying rent or getting food. Beck said the staff on her team try to help and connect people with other resources.

"It's hard to do this day in and day out calling perfect strangers," she said.

She said people are not as eager to talk or do interviews as they were earlier in the pandemic, when there was a lot more fear and unknowns about the virus.

"Now I think people are a little tired of COVID. I think we all are, frankly."

Follow Price on Twitter at twitter.com/michellelprice. Associated Press writers Leah Willingham in Jackson, Mississippi, Paul Weber in Austin, Texas, Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Arkansas, Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Michelle Liu in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined
Today in History

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 89 of 90

Today is Sunday, Aug. 29, the 241st day of 2021. There are 124 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast near Buras, Louisiana, bringing floods that devastated New Orleans. More than 1,800 people in the region died.

On this date:

In 1862, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began operations at the United States Treasury.

In 1864, the Democratic National Convention, which nominated Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan for president, opened in Chicago.

In 1943, responding to a clampdown by Nazi occupiers during World War II, Denmark managed to scuttle most of its naval ships.

In 1944, 15,000 American troops of the 28th Infantry Division marched down the Champs Elysees (shahms ay-lee-ZAY') in Paris as the French capital continued to celebrate its liberation from the Nazis.

In 1957, the Senate gave final congressional approval to a Civil Rights Act after South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond (then a Democrat) ended a filibuster that had lasted 24 hours.

In 1962, Malvin R. Goode began covering the United Nations for ABC-TV, becoming network television's first Black reporter.

In 1966, the Beatles concluded their fourth American tour with their last public concert, held at Candlestick Park in San Francisco.

In 2008, Republican presidential nominee John McCain picked Sarah Palin, a maverick conservative who had been governor of Alaska for less than two years, to be his running mate.

In 2009, funeral services were held in Boston for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who was eulogized by President Barack Obama; hours later, Kennedy's remains were buried at Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington.

In 2013, in a sweeping new policy statement, the Justice Department said it would not stand in the way of states that wanted to legalize, tax and regulate marijuana as long as there were effective controls to keep marijuana away from kids, the black market and federal property.

In 2018, Sen. John McCain was remembered as a "true American hero" at a crowded service at the North Phoenix Baptist Church after a motorcade carried McCain's body from the state Capitol. Kanye West apologized on a Chicago radio station (WGCI) for calling slavery a "choice."

In 2019, President Donald Trump said the United States planned to withdraw more than 5,000 troops from Afghanistan, and would then determine future drawdowns.

Ten years ago: In a sign Moammar Gadhafi had lost grip on his country, his wife and three of his children fled Libya to neighboring Algeria. Grammy-winning blues musician David "Honey Boy" Edwards, believed to be the oldest surviving Delta bluesman, died in his Chicago home at age 96.

Five years ago: Huma Abedin (HOO'-muh AB'-uh-deen), a top aide to Hillary Clinton, announced she was separating from her husband, Anthony Weiner, after the former congressman was accused in yet another sexting scandal. Gene Wilder, the frizzy-haired actor who brought his deft comedic touch to such unforgettable roles as the neurotic accountant in "The Producers" and the deranged animator of "Young Frankenstein," died in Stamford, Connecticut, at age 83.

One year ago: Clashes broke out as a caravan of hundreds of vehicles packed with supporters of President Donald Trump drove through Portland, Oregon, and was met with counterprotesters; about 15 minutes after the caravan left the city, a supporter of the right-wing group Patriot Prayer was fatally shot. (The suspect in the shooting, a self-described anti-fascist, was killed the following week by law enforcement as they tried to arrest him in Washington state.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Betty Lynn (TV: "The Andy Griffith Show") is 95. Movie director William Friedkin is 86. Actor Elliott Gould is 83. Actor Deborah Van Valkenburgh is 69. Former Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew is 66. Dancer-choreographer Mark Morris is 65. Country musician Dan Truman (Diamond Rio) is 65. Actor Rebecca DeMornay is 62. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch (GOR'-suhch) is 54. Singer Me'Shell NdegeOcello (n-DAY'-gay-OH'-chehl-oh) is 53. Actor Carla Gugino is 50. Rock musician Kyle Cook (Matchbox Twenty) is 46. Actor John Hensley is 44. Actor Kate Simses is 42. Rapper A+ is 39. Actor Jennifer Landon

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 053 ~ 90 of 90

is 38. Actor Jeffrey Licon is 36. Actor-singer Lea Michele is 35. Actor Charlotte Ritchie is 32. Actor Nicole Gale Anderson is 31. MLB pitcher Noah Syndergaard (SIHN'-dur-gahrd) is 29. Rock singer Liam Payne (One Direction) is 28.