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Community Events

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

**Today on
GDILIVE.COM**



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Area gridiron posts 37-6 win over Webster Area

Groton Area's football team dominated Webster Area in all aspects of the game and posted a 37-6 win. The game was played Friday night in Webster.

Groton Area had had twice as many first downs as Webster, 20-10, had more yards rushing, 153-83, more yards passing, 231-41, and threw for three touchdowns while Webster had two interceptions. But the Tigers also had twice as many penalized yards, 50-23.

Groton Area led, 7-6, after the first quarter, but then led at halftime after scoring two more touchdowns in the second quarter, 21-6. Groton Area added a touchdown in the third quarter to make it 27-6, and then added a touchdown and a field goal in the fourth quarter for the final 37-6 win.

Rushing: Groton: 39-153 (Andrew Marzahn 13-



Groton Quarterback Kaden Kurtz is directing traffic as he prepares to launch a pass. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Favian Sanchez got in good position to intercept this pass intended for Webster's Ethan Opitz. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

50, Kaden Kurtz 11-32, Favian Sanchez 4-35, Pierce Kettering 6-13, Taylor Diegel 1-10, Christian Ehresmann 1-2). Webster: 32-83 (Jaydon Keller 23-95, Brent Bearman 5-9, Isaac Zacher 1-2).

Passing: Kaden Kurtz completed 17 of 24 passes for 231 yards for three touchdowns. Receivers: Jordan Bjerke 7-25-1 TD, Favian Sanchez 4-35-2 TD, Andrew Marzahn 2-28, Ethan Gengerke 1-15, Jackson Cogley 2-25). Webster: Completed 5 of 17 for 41 yards, 2 interceptions. Receivers: Ethan Opitz 2-19, Jacob Pereboom 1-11, Jaydon Keller 1-11, Brent Bearman 1-6.

Fumbles: Groton had 4, lost 1. Webster had 5, lost 1. Penalties: Groton 3-50, Webster 3-23.

Defensive Leaders: Groton: Marcos Garcia 8 tackles, Logan Ringgenberg 8 tackles, Pierce Kettering 8 tackles, Christian Ehresmann 6 tackles, Jackson Cogley 5 tackles, Ethan Gengerke 5 tackles and fumble recovery, Jordan Bjerke interception for touchdown, Favian Sanchez 1

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interception. For Webster: Jacob Keller and Jaydon Keller each had 11 tackles and Brent Snaza had 10.

Groton Area, now 2-1, will travel to Deuel on Friday. Webster, now 0-3, has next week off.

Scoring:

First Quarter:

Groton: 2:05, Favian Sanches 9 yard pass from Kaden Kurtz. PAT kick by Jackson Cogley was good.

0:37: Webster: Jaydon Keller 30 yard run. Two-point conversion no good.

Second Quarter:

10:26: Groton: Jordan Bjerke 15 yard pass from Kaden Kurtz. PAT kick by Jackson Cogley was good.

6:20: Groton: Favian Sanchez 5 yard pass from Kaden Kurtz. PAT kick by Jackson Cogley was good.

Third Quarter:

6:26: Groton: Kaden Kurtz 3 yard run. PAT pass was no good.

Fourth Quarter:

6:01: Groton: Jackson Cogley 39 yard field goal.

4:15: Groton: Jordan Bjerke interception return for 35 yards. PAT kick by Jackson Cogley was good.

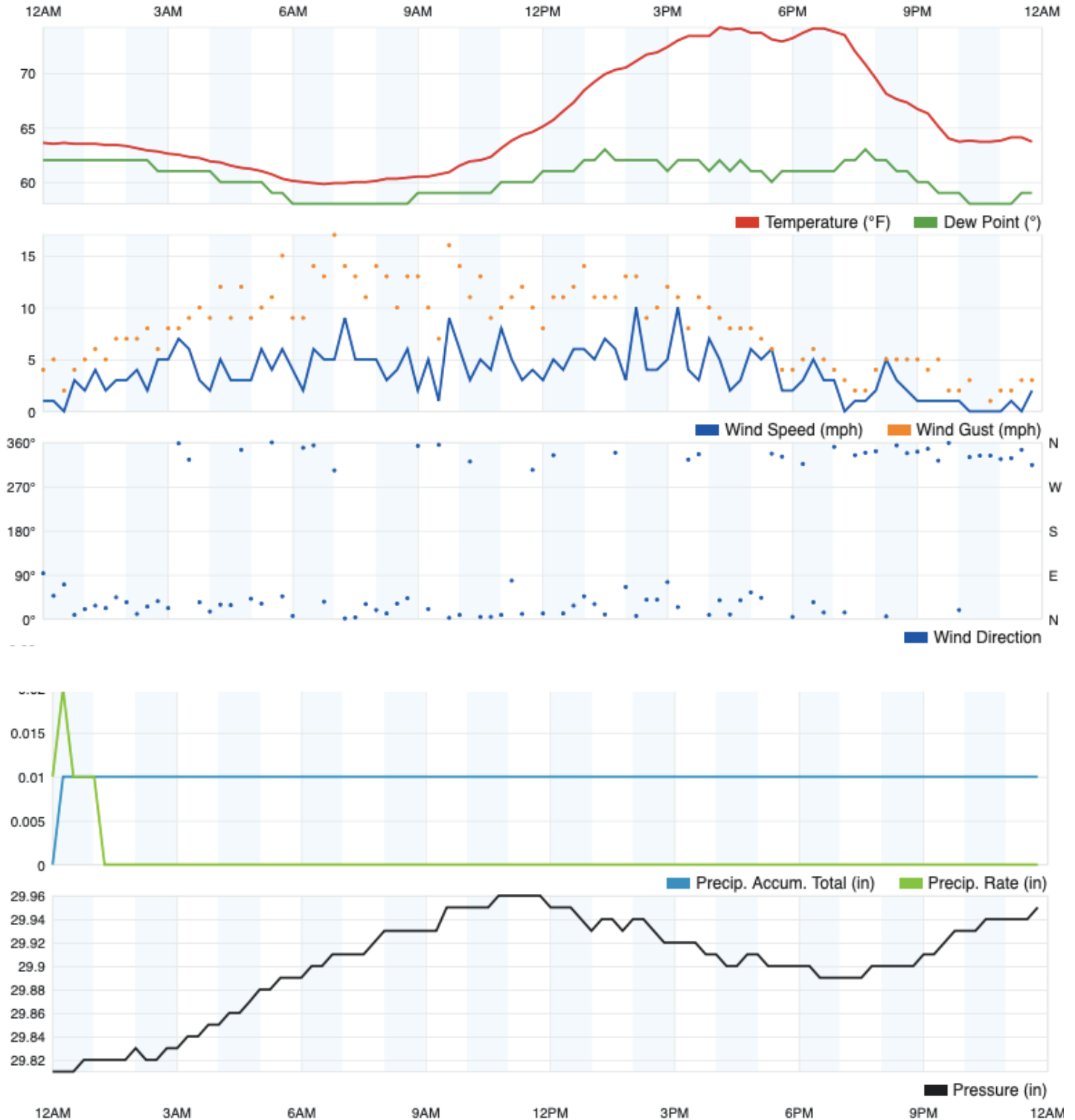


Andrew Marzahn finds an opening as Pierce Kettering makes an opening. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Labor Day
				
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 77 °F	Low: 50 °F	High: 78 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 87 °F

Updated: 9/4/2021 5:01 AM Central



Saturday & Sunday

70 to 85°

Monday

80 to 95°

Plenty of sunshine & warming temperatures

LABOR DAY WEEKEND

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Aberdeen, SD
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Plenty of sunshine and warming temperatures are expected through the Labor Day weekend.

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Today in Weather History

September 4, 2001: Near record or record heat hit central and north-central South Dakota on this day in 2001. High temperatures during the afternoon were in the upper 90s to around 105 degrees. Pierre and Kennebec set record highs of 105 and 106, respectively. Mobridge rose to a high of 96, and Timber Lake topped out at 98 degrees on this day in 2001.

1766: A hurricane made landfall at modern-day Galveston, Texas. The following is from David Roth of the Weather Prediction Center. "A mission, named San Augustine de Ahumado was located in what is now-days known as Chambers County. This mission was destroyed and subsequently abandoned. A seven-foot storm surge put the area under water. A richly-laden treasure fleet of 5 galleons en route from Vera Cruz to Havana was driven ashore and had to wait many weeks for assistance to come. La Caraqueña wrecked on Galveston Island while El Nuevo de Constante sank along the western Louisiana coast. Fortunately, much of the treasure and people aboard were saved."

1941: A violent tornado ripped through Northeast and North Minneapolis shortly afternoon on this day. The hardest-hit location was the Soo Line Railroad's Shoreham Yards where four people died, and at least 50 were injured. The death toll at Soo Line could have been higher, but the tornado struck five minutes after the lunch bell went off, meaning 100 men left the shops.

2000: Houston and College Station, Texas recorded their hottest day on record when highs reached 109° and 112° respectively. Houston has tied their record on August 27th, 2011. Other daily record highs included: Wichita Falls, TX: 111°, Waco, TX: 111°, Dallas, (DFW), TX: 111°, Austin, (Bergstrom), TX: 110°, Austin (Camp Mabry), TX: 110°, Dallas, TX: 110°, Victoria, TX: 110°, San Antonio, TX: 109°, Shreveport, LA: 108°, Corpus Christi, TX: 107 °F.

2007: Hurricane Felix came ashore in the pre-dawn hours as a Category 5 storm on the northeastern coast of Nicaragua. At the time of its landfall, the maximum sustained surface winds were approximately 160 mph. Felix killed at least 130 people along the coast, with damage in Nicaragua totaling \$46.7 million.

1939 - A thunderstorm deluged Washington D.C. with 4.4 inches of rain in two hours. September of that year was very dry across much of the nation, and Washington D.C. received more rain in that two hour period than most other places in the country that entire month. (David Ludlum)

1970 - The greatest natural disaster of record for Arizona occurred. Unprecedented rains caused rivers in central Arizona to rise five to ten feet per hour, sweeping cars and buildings as far as 30 to 40 miles downstream. Flooding claimed the lives of 23 persons, mainly campers, and caused millions of dollars damage. Water crested 36 feet above normal near Sunflower AZ. Workman's Creek was deluged with 11.40 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. Moisture from Pacific Tropical Storm Norma led to the severe flooding. (4th-6th) (The Weather Channel)

1986 - An unusually strong dust devil moved across the Flagstaff Pulliam Airport. The dust devil blew open the doors of the National Weather Service office scattering papers and bringing down a ceiling-mounted light fixture. (Storm Data)

1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced heavy rain across the Southern Atlantic Coast States. Up to eight inches was reported north of Charleston SC. Serious flooding was reported in Monks Corner SC. Seven cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Houlton ME dipped to 32 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - The western U.S. experienced another day of record heat. The afternoon high of 91 degrees at Stampede Pass WA established an all-time record for that location, and Los Angeles CA equalled their all-time record high with a reading of 110 degrees. A record high of 107 degrees at San Diego CA was their hottest reading in 25 years. Red Bluff CA was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon reading of 118 degrees. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - Overnight thunderstorm rains of four and a half to seven inches drenched eastern Nebraska during the morning hours, pushing creeks out of their banks, and flooding fields, country roads and city streets. Totals ranged up to 6.97 inches south of Creston. It was also a soggy Labor Day for northern Florida. Jacksonville reported 6.82 inches of rain, and evening thunderstorms produced 2.75 inches of rain in one hour at Sandlewood. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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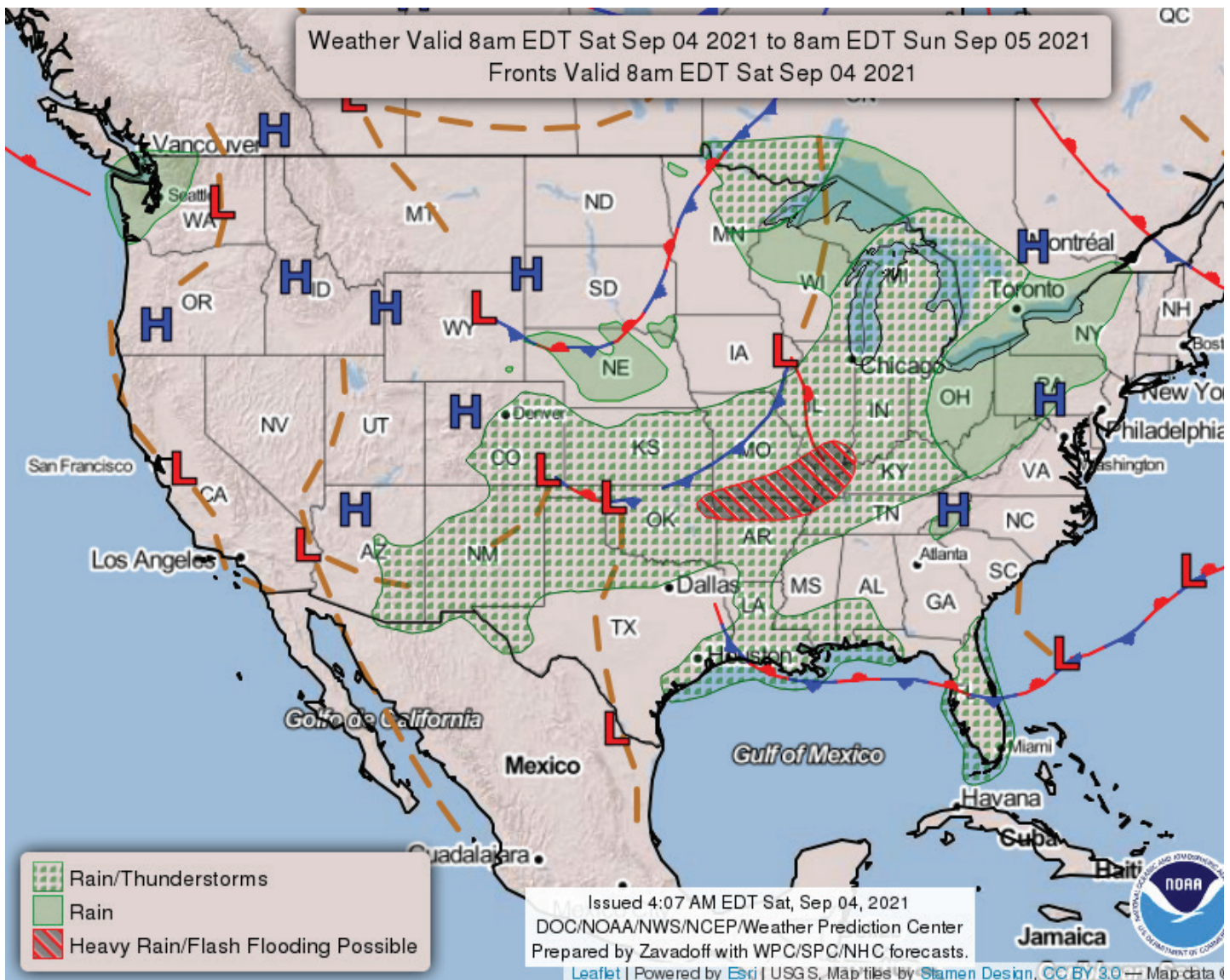
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 74.2 °F at 4:15 PM
Low Temp: 59.8 °F at 6:45 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 6:45 AM
Precip: 0.01

Today's Info

Record High: 100° in 1931
Record Low: 30° in 1961
Average High: 79°F
Average Low: 51°F
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.27
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.77
Average Precip to date: 16.61
Precip Year to Date: 14.91
Sunset Tonight: 8:05 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:57 a.m.



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WHO MADE GOD?

A small child recently asked me, "Mr. Larry, I believe there is a God. And I know He's in my heart. But who made Him?"

"Nobody," I answered.

"Well, when did He begin to live?" she asked politely.

"He always was," I replied.

"Well, will He ever stop living?" she wondered.

"No," I answered. "He always was, and always will be," I responded.

"But," she admitted, "I don't understand."

"Neither do I," came my confession.

We who are finite cannot ever understand the Infinite.

Every rational person who is endowed with a mind that has the capacity to reason finds unanswerable questions about God - even in early childhood. The search for God, at an early age, is significant. Obviously, this question about God arising in the mind of a child seems to provide convincing evidence that there is a compassionate Creator who has planted Himself in the mind and heart and very being of everyone. Otherwise, why would anyone, especially a child, ask the question, "Is there a God?"

Questions about the existence of God are nothing new. God Himself put a curiosity within each of us to ask questions and seek answers. If we did not have a capacity to question things, we would not be human. Remember, it was God who said, "You will find Me when You seek Me with all your heart." All seeking hearts find God.

Prayer: We thank You, Lord, that You created us with minds to seek You, and the truth we find in Your Word that reveals You. May we seek and find. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You are from all eternity. Psalm 93:2b

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2021 Community Events

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

News from the Associated Press

South Dakota St. beats Colorado St. 42-23 in FCS-FBS matchup

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — Chris Oladokun passed for 224 yards with two touchdowns and ran for another, Pierre Strong, Jr. rushed for two more scores as South Dakota State thundered past Colorado State 42-23 on Friday night.

Oladokun, who came to SDSU as a graduate transfer (Samford, USF) over the summer was 18-for-28 passing without an interception. Strong piled up 106 yards by halftime, finishing with 138. Sophomore Isaiah Davis rushed for 84 yards and a TD, most in the second half. Jadon Janke caught six passes for 92 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

The FCS versus FBS matchup was the season opener for each team, and out of four meetings Friday between the two college football subdivisions, South Dakota State was the lone FCS team to pull out the upset.

Lightning and a brief downpour delayed kickoff by 40 minutes, but South Dakota State — ranked No. 3 in the FCS poll and runner-up in the May FCS championship game — brought the lightning after halftime.

The Rams failed to convert a risky fourth-and-1 in their own territory on their first possession of the third quarter when David Bailey was stopped for no gain at the 38. The Jackrabbits scored in two plays when Oladokun passed for 21 and 17 yards, the latter to Janke, pushing the lead to 28-10.

After pinning South Dakota State at the 3 with a deep punt, Colorado State regained possession at midfield, but Todd Centeio was sacked and fumbled. Davis capped SDSU's eight play drive with three straight carries including a fourth-down conversion from the 3 and a touchdown from the 2.

The score blew the game open at 35-10, and the teams traded touchdowns over the final quarter.

Centeio was 30-of-43 passing for 316 yards with a TD, David Bailey rushed 19 times for 46 yards and a touchdown.

The win was SDSU's second over an FBS opponent in 11 tries, first since 2015 (Kansas). Colorado State has not won a season opener since 2017.

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/tag/Collegefootball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

South Dakota native makes mark as YouTube, TikTok influencer

By MAKENZIE HUBER Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Shanell Peterson moved nearly 8,000 miles away after graduating from South Dakota State in 2017 for a change in scenery and a chance at adventure.

But the Alexandria native never dreamed that she'd be one of New Zealand's top influencers just a few years after moving away.

Shortly after moving to New Zealand, which has a population of 4.9 million, Peterson met and fell in love with a man named Kishan Chavan who'd moved from India years earlier to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.

As an aspiring influencer who'd made YouTube videos since she was a teenager, Peterson blogged and recorded her early adventures in her new home country. Despite her journey, she didn't find the success she was hoping for until Chavan offered to team up with her and create their own brand together.

Now, the two, who got engaged last year, are known as Kishanell on YouTube, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

Together, 26-year-old Peterson and 34-year-old Chavan have more than 1.42 million subscribers in over two years on the platform, ranking them as the 12th most popular YouTubers in the country. They're also the third most popular TikTok account based out of New Zealand, with 2.4 million followers on the app.

"Honestly, it's the coolest thing ever," said Peterson, who added that their YouTube channel has allowed them to support themselves financially. "I've been dreaming about this since I was 16 years old."

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The couple had similar stories, choosing to leave their homes and families to live abroad in a foreign country, but had vastly different backgrounds and understandings of the world. Together, they record not only their lives and typical viral challenges, but the perspectives of each being part of a biracial couple and learning about each other's cultures.

"It's our life now," Chavan said. "It's normal to blog our life. Our audience feels like family members when they watch our videos."

Their audience especially grew after Peterson visited India pre-pandemic and met Chavan's family for the first time, without Chavan present, Peterson said. Viewers enjoyed seeing how Peterson and Chavan's family interacted together even when there was a language barrier separating them. The video of it has 10 million views now.

"People liked how even though we don't speak the same language, there's still love and appreciation for each other," Peterson said of her visit.

Peterson and Chavan recently posted a visit to her hometown in South Dakota, adding up tens of thousands of views right away to the video blog, or vlog.

The channel also allows for the two to challenge stereotypes against Indian men, families and cultural practices. The same goes for American stereotypes.

The video of Chavan's proposal to Peterson has over 3.6 million views.

"It's really important for me to create understanding between cultures," Peterson said. "I think Americans have a lazy or hyper-sexual stereotypes... I feel like we're breaking those stereotypes."

In the end, Peterson's goal is to represent her hometown and home state well on an international stage.

"I just feel like South Dakota is never in the movies, especially not a 600-population town like Alexandria," Peterson said. "I think that it made me who I am and I just want people to look at South Dakota and be like, 'wow, South Dakota can do amazing things.'"

Kansas scores late to beat S. Dakota 17-14 in Leipold debut

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Wins have been so rare at Kansas over the last decade-plus that it wasn't too surprising when students spilled from the stands and rushed the field to celebrate Lance Leipold's first victory as head coach of the Jayhawks.

Who cares if it came against lower-level South Dakota?

It wasn't easy, either. Jason Bean connected with Lawrence Arnold for their second touchdown of the game, giving the Jayhawks the lead back with 1:12 remaining Friday night, and their rebuilt defense held the Coyotes on downs to preserve a nervy 17-14 victory that brought an end to a 13-game skid dating to Oct. 26, 2019.

"Right now we're not going to get concerned about style points and things like that. We needed to get a win," Leipold said. "Getting a victory was first and foremost right now and as I said, then we go to the film and work to get better."

The Coyotes, who trailed 10-0 late in the third quarter, had pulled ahead when Kansas native Travis Theis ran 25 yards for a score with 5:16 to go. But the Jayhawks answered by driving 64 yards in less than four minutes, converting fourth-and-10 along the way and getting some help from a targeting penalty on South Dakota freshman Myles Harden.

Then the touchdown pass to Arnold that set off the wild celebration.

"I feel like it was never in doubt about us coming back," Arnold said. "There's always momentum changes in the game, it's about how you respond. We never looked at it like we couldn't come back or couldn't do this."

Bean, the North Texas transfer, also found Arnold for a score late in the second quarter. He finished 17 of 26 for 163 yards while adding 54 yards on the ground. But he didn't get much help from the rest of the offense — Velton Gardner carried 19 times for 21 yards, and the Jayhawks' rebuilt offensive line provided little resistance.

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"We didn't run the ball the way we hoped. I'm not going to make any statements about where we're at without watching the film," Leipold said. "To be a better offensive football team, we're going to have to play better as a unit. But again, this gives us an idea of what we need to work on."

South Dakota couldn't take advantage of it, though.

The Coyotes, who have beaten Minnesota and Bowling Green over the years, were penalized eight times, went 3 for 13 on third down and 0 for 3 on fourth. Carson Camp was just 10-for-22 passing for 98 yards.

Leipold was hired earlier this year when Les Miles, the latest in a growing list of failed Kansas coaches, resigned following sexual harassment allegations dating to his national championship-winning tenure at LSU.

A longtime Division III coach, Leipold promised to bring along fundamentally sound football, relying on the same formula that produced six lower-level national titles in eight seasons and an impressive turnaround at Buffalo.

Instead, the Jayhawks mostly looked like the same team that hasn't had a winning season in more than a decade.

They went three-and-out on their first three possessions, a streak of ignominy interrupted only by two false start penalties, and by the end of the first quarter had more penalty yards (20) than yards of offense (18). And after taking a 10-0 lead on Bean's TD pass to Arnold and Jacob Borcila's field goal, their meager advantage was quickly wiped out.

South Dakota's first score came when Lawrence made a defender whiff in the defensive backfield and scooted 29 yards late in the third quarter. Then, after the Coyotes stuffed Kansas on fourth-and-inches at their own 46-yard line, Theis took a handoff two plays later 25 yards for a touchdown and their first lead of the night.

The Jayhawks managed to answer down the stretch to avoid an embarrassing start to Leipold's time in Lawrence.

"This is about a program, not a coach," Leipold said, "and were going to work to build on this, but to see the excitement from the fans and even from the staff members will always be memorable."

THE TAKEAWAY

South Dakota gained 165 yards rushing and two touchdowns, but they couldn't sustain drives when it mattered. But at least the Coyotes got to play; they went 1-3 in the spring with five games canceled due to the pandemic.

Kansas nearly paid \$450,000 for South Dakota to come into Memorial Stadium and deal it a defeat. It was nevertheless a good barometer for Leipold of just how far his coaching staff needs to go to turn around a downtrodden program. Kansas hasn't won more than three games in a season since 2009, the final year of Mark Mangino's tenure.

UP NEXT

South Dakota plays its home opener against Northern Arizona next Saturday.

Kansas visits No. 22 Coastal Carolina next week for another Friday night game.

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

07-10-12-61-65, Mega Ball: 3, Megaplier: 2

(seven, ten, twelve, sixty-one, sixty-five; Mega Ball: three; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$323 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$367 million

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Friday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Gillette Invite=

Rapid City Central def. Buffalo, Wyo., 10-25, 25-21, 15-12

Rapid City Stevens def. Scottsbluff, Neb., 25-23, 25-16

Rapid City Stevens def. Sheridan, Wyo., 25-14, 25-14

Thunder Basin, Wyo. def. Rapid City Central, 26-28, 25-20, 15-13

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

Rapid City Marshals reveal name in Black Hills showdown

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — There's a new team in town in the Black Hills, the Rapid City Marshals.

The arena football team revealed its name in a skit depicting a classic western showdown Friday, pitting two no-good outlaws against a fearless marshal, who rode into the Main Street Square complex on horseback aiming to restore order.

The marshal put a stop to the outlaws' attempt to kidnap a general manager and co-owner by gunning down the hoodlums and rescuing the GM, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"We want to be good for people who love football, and for families, so it shows what you're going to get every time you come to one of our games," general manager Nick Tomlinson said of the skit.

The Rapid City Marshals are the eighth member of the Champions Indoor Football league, which also has teams in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Texas. It plays a 12-game schedule from March through June, with playoffs in July. The Marshals will play their six home games at the new Summit Arena.

This is the second indoor football franchise for Rapid City. The first played as the Black Hills Red Dogs and the Rapid City Flying Aces from 2000 to 2006 before folding.

Noem says National Guard troops to return from border

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem announced Friday that National Guard troops that she deployed to the U.S. border with Mexico will return later this month.

The Republican governor deployed 48 National Guard troops to Texas in July. The deployment came in response to a request from Texas and Arizona to send law enforcement officers under an agreement between states to assist during emergencies. Noem said the soldiers encountered more than 6,000 people crossing the border in the month and a half they were stationed there.

"Unfortunately, because of the Biden Administration's failed border policies, the system has become one of facilitating the crossing of illegal immigrants into our country," she said in a statement.

Overall, U.S. authorities stopped migrants about 210,000 times at the border in July, up from 188,829 in June and the highest in more than 20 years. But the numbers aren't directly comparable because many crossed repeatedly under a pandemic-related ban that expelled people from the country immediately without giving them a chance to seek asylum but carried no legal consequences.

A federal judge ruled Thursday that the U.S. government's practice of denying migrants a chance to apply for asylum on the Mexican border until space opens up to process claims is unconstitutional.

After a visit to the border in July, Noem had said she would consider keeping the troops in Texas beyond a two-month deployment but wanted Texas to cover some of that cost. Noem said Friday that Texas no longer needed South Dakota's help and that it would increase "its financial commitment and manpower from within the state."

Noem was heavily criticized for accepting a \$1 million donation from a private foundation to fund the

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National Guard's deployment. Experts said it set a troubling precedent in which a wealthy patron can effectively commandeer U.S. military might to address private political motivations.

But with the support of the top general of the South Dakota National Guard, Noem did not back down. However, the House Armed Services Committee this week moved to block states from accepting private funds to pay for cross-state National Guard deployments. The proposed condition was added to the annual National Defense Authorization Act.

South Dakota will send 125 National Guard troops to the southern border next month as part of a federal deployment.

South Dakota Gov. Noem runs \$9,000 bill for custom desk

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's order for a customized, personal desk from a state prison work program will cost nearly \$9,000 after modifications such as brass embossing, a gun drawer with leather inserts and a footrest were added to the order.

The governor's spokesman Ian Fury said Friday that taxpayers won't be saddled with the bill because it's a personal order for Noem and that the initial bid for the black walnut executive desk ranged from \$5,000 to \$6,000.

Dakota News Now, citing unnamed corrections officers, reported that the bill had run to \$9,000 after the modifications, which included increasing the length of the desk to 100 inches to allow two people to work side-by-side at the desk. The unnamed corrections officers alleged that prison officials had ordered the bill be discounted by \$3,000.

Fury disputed that the governor would receive a discount. He said Noem would pay the full amount of the final bill.

He said the order had always been a personal purchase for the governor but that she may use it in her official office.

"She wanted a new desk," Fury said.

Democratic Sen. Troy Heinert slammed the expense of the desk, saying it is "troubling that the governor needs a \$9,000 desk when quite a few South Dakotans don't have a \$9,000 car."

Noem in August fired the director of the prison work program, Pheasantland Industries, amid a human resources investigation into low employee morale and sexual harassment among employees at the prison. The warden and deputy warden at the state penitentiary were also fired in the probe.

The governor said in July that she was pushing for widespread changes in the prison system after holding a meeting with employees.

"We are looking at evaluating every single policy," she said at a news conference following the July meeting.

Pheasantland Industries allows inmates to learn a trade while incarcerated and pays them 50 cents per hour for their work.

Jessica Chastain and real-life pal Oscar Isaac redo Bergman

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Jessica Chastain has been friends with Oscar Isaac since their Julliard days but says it was "a blessing and a curse" to play his wife in a remake of Ingmar Bergman's classic "Scenes From a Marriage," which premiered Saturday at the Venice Film Festival.

It was a blessing because they didn't need to get to know one another and could be brutally honest with one another. But it was also a curse because they couldn't take a break from their togetherness and got to the point "where we were reading each others minds!"

"So I was like 'Get out of my head!'" Chastain told reporters ahead of the premiere. "I felt on this job that there was no quiet time."

The project was an intense one, reimagining in a contemporary American context the unravelling of a marriage depicted in Bergman's 1973 Swedish television miniseries that starred Bergman's longtime part-

ner, Liv Ullmann. In this five-episode HBO series directed by Hagai Levi, the gender roles are essentially flipped and the circumstances brought up-to-date.

Isaac, who has two other movies showing at Venice, agreed that their close friendship posed "its own challenges" when filming such an inherently fraught project since "you care about the person so much."

The two, who starred together in the 2014 "A Most Violent Year," used an intimacy coordinator and lots of talking to map out the bedroom scenes to make sure both were comfortable.

Isaac, who noted that their children are together in the same play group, said he and Chastain also watched films together try to figure out how to represent the sexual side of their relationship to make it seem truthful without going overboard.

"There are so many times you don't buy it, and then it can get too gratuitous and you don't really buy that either," Isaac said.

Chastain said she appreciated talking through the characters and mapping out their relationship ahead of time.

"I would still get embarrassed, so bourbon helped a lot," Chastain said, giggling. "But the level of trust was high."

Taliban special forces bring abrupt end to women's protest

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Taliban special forces in camouflage fired their weapons into the air Saturday, bringing an abrupt and frightening end to the latest protest march in the capital by Afghan women demanding equal rights from the new rulers.

Also on Saturday, the chief of Pakistan's powerful intelligence agency, which has an outsized influence on the Taliban, made a surprise visit to Kabul.

Taliban fighters quickly captured most of Afghanistan last month and celebrated the departure of the last U.S. forces after 20 years of war. The insurgent group must now govern a war-ravaged country that is heavily reliant on international aid.

The women's march — the second in as many days in Kabul — began peacefully. Demonstrators laid a wreath outside Afghanistan's Defense Ministry to honor Afghan soldiers who died fighting the Taliban before marching on to the presidential palace.

"We are here to gain human rights in Afghanistan," said 20-year-old protester Maryam Naiby. "I love my country. I will always be here."

As the protesters' shouts grew louder, several Taliban officials waded into the crowd to ask what they wanted to say.

Flanked by fellow demonstrators, Sudaba Kabiri, a 24-year-old university student, told her Taliban interlocutor that Islam's Prophet gave women rights and they wanted theirs. The Taliban official promised women would be given their rights but the women, all in their early 20s, were skeptical.

As the demonstrators reached the presidential palace, a dozen Taliban special forces ran into the crowd, firing in the air and sending demonstrators fleeing. Kabiri, who spoke to The Associated Press, said they also fired tear gas.

The Taliban have promised an inclusive government and a more moderate form of Islamic rule than when they last ruled the country from 1996 to 2001. But many Afghans, especially women, are deeply skeptical and fear a roll back of rights gained over the last two decades.

For much of the past two weeks, Taliban officials have been holding meetings among themselves, amid reports of differences among them emerging. Early on Saturday, neighboring Pakistan's powerful intelligence chief Gen. Faiez Hameed made a surprise visit to Kabul. It wasn't immediately clear what he had to say to the Taliban leadership but the Pakistani intelligence service has a strong influence on the Taliban.

The Taliban leadership had its headquarters in Pakistan and were often said to be in direct contact with the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency. Although Pakistan routinely denied providing the Taliban military aid, the accusation was often made by the Afghan government and Washington.

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Faiez' visit comes as the world waits to see what kind of government the Taliban will eventually announce, seeking one that is inclusive and ensures protection of women's rights and the country's minorities.

The Taliban have promised a broad-based government and have held talks with former president Hamid Karzai and the former government's negotiation chief Abdullah Abdullah. But the makeup of the new government is uncertain and it was unclear whether hard-line ideologues among the Taliban will win the day — and whether the rollbacks feared by the demonstrating women will occur.

Taliban members whitewashed murals Saturday that promoted health care, warned of the dangers of HIV and even paid homage to some of Afghanistan's iconic foreign contributors, like anthropologist Nancy Dupree, who singlehandedly chronicled Afghanistan's rich cultural legacy. It was a worrying sign of attempts to erase reminders of the past 20 years.

The murals were replaced with slogans congratulating Afghans on their victory.

A Taliban cultural commission spokesman, Ahmadullah Muttaqi, tweeted that the murals were painted over "because they are against our values. They were spoiling the minds of the mujahedeen and instead we wrote slogans that will be useful to everyone."

Meanwhile, the young women demonstrators said they have had to defy worried families to press ahead with their protests, even sneaking out of their homes to take their demands for equal rights to the new rulers.

Farhat Popalzai, another 24-year-old university student, said she wanted to be the voice of Afghanistan's voiceless women, those too afraid to come out on the street.

"I am the voice of the women who are unable to speak," she said. "They think this is a man's country but it is not, it is a woman's country too."

Popalzai and her fellow demonstrators are too young to remember the Taliban rule that ended in 2001 with the U.S.-led invasion. They say their fear is based on the stories they have heard of women not being allowed to go to school and work.

Naiby, the 20-year-old, has already operated a women's organization and is a spokesperson for Afghanistan's Paralympics. She reflected on the tens of thousands of Afghans who rushed to Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport to escape Afghanistan after the Taliban overran the capital on Aug. 15.

"They were afraid," but for her she said, the fight is in Afghanistan.

Admirers still urging sainthood for chaplain killed on 9/11

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Among the nearly 3,000 people killed in the 9/11 terror attacks, Mychal Judge, a Catholic chaplain with New York's fire department, left a uniquely complex legacy that continues to evolve 20 years after his death.

Some of his many admirers point to Judge — a gay man who devoted himself to ministering to vulnerable populations such as the homeless or people with HIV/AIDS — as a reason for the U.S. Catholic Church to be more welcoming to LGBTQ people.

And some argue passionately that Judge should be considered for sainthood, with a new initiative to be launched in the coming days. Though Judge's religious order has not embraced that cause, a Rome-based priest who helps the Vatican investigate possible candidates for canonization is urging Judge's supporters not to give up the effort.

Judge died in the line of duty two decades ago after hurrying with firefighter colleagues to the burning World Trade Center. As he prayed in the north tower's lobby for the rescuers and victims, the 68-year-old priest was crushed by debris from the falling south tower.

"Mychal Judge shows us that you can be gay and holy," said the Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest who advocates for greater LGBTQ inclusion in the church.

"Father Judge's selflessness is a reminder of the sanctity that the church often overlooks in LGBTQ people," Martin said via email. "Heaven is filled with LGBTQ people. All the church has to do is start to recognize this."

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The son of Irish immigrants, Judge grew up in Brooklyn and decided while still in his teens to join the Franciscan religious order. He was ordained as a priest in 1961, battled alcoholism with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous and developed a passion for ministering to marginalized communities.

After serving in localities across the Northeast, Judge became a pastor at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City in 1986. At a peak in the AIDS crisis in 1989, he founded one of the first Catholic HIV/AIDS ministries, recruiting a handful of volunteers to visit hospitalized patients and their families.

In 1992, he became a chaplain with the city's fire department, a post he held until his death.

During those decades, only a few friends knew Judge was gay. It became more widely known after his death, when some in his inner circle wrote about it and passages from his diaries were disclosed. Yet according to friends and biographers, he honored his vow of celibacy.

Many of Judge's admirers took heart in 2017 when Pope Francis proclaimed a new pathway to sainthood, recognizing those who sacrifice their lives for others.

After that announcement, the Rev. Luis Escalante, who has investigated possible sainthood cases for the Vatican's Congregation for Causes of Saints, began receiving testimonies supporting Judge's canonization.

Those accounts depicted Judge as "the best icon" of humanity, Escalante told The Associated Press via email this week. But there was a hitch: The Franciscans — who normally would be expected to lead a sainthood campaign on behalf of someone from the order — declined to do so for Judge.

"We are very proud of our brother's legacy and we have shared his story with many people," the Rev. Kevin Mullen, leader of the Franciscans' New York-based Holy Name Province, told the AP via email, "We leave it to our brothers in the generations to come to inquire about sainthood."

Escalante hopes supporters don't give up and instead form a viable organization that could pursue sainthood in the coming years. Among the tasks: building a case that a miracle occurred through a prayer to Judge.

"The negative decision of the Friars cannot be seen as a preclusion to going ahead with Fr. Judge's cause," Escalante wrote. "It's just a challenge to American people."

Francis DeBernardo, leader of the LGBTQ Catholic advocacy group New Ways Ministry, was among those who provided testimonies to Escalante from people attesting to Judge's holiness.

DeBernardo told the AP he'll soon be announcing plans to form an association promoting Judge's sainthood, ideally with help from firefighters, LGBTQ people and other communities he ministered to.

"It would be a testimony to Fr. Judge's legacy if these diverse sectors of society came together to work for the canonization of a man they already know is a saint," DeBernardo said via email.

A forceful appeal for canonization came last year in an essay by professor Kathleen Sprows Cummings, director of the University of Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for American Catholicism.

"Judge's reputation for holiness had been established through his ministry to AIDS victims throughout the deadliest years of that plague," Cummings wrote. "Putting him on a path to official sainthood now would inspire us to respond with compassion and courage to the current pandemic."

She suggested that the case for sainthood was strengthened by Judge's acceptance of his sexual orientation.

"Canonizing this people's saint would compel the Catholic Church to be more welcoming to LGBT Catholics," she wrote. "More powerfully, it would help to shatter the strict code of silence surrounding all things sexual that exacerbated clerical abuse and its cover-up."

Sal Sapienza, now a Protestant minister in Michigan, was a 20-something wavering Catholic in New York in 1989 when he saw an ad in a gay publication seeking volunteers to do AIDS/HIV outreach. Answering the ad, Sapienza met Judge at St. Francis of Assisi.

Throughout their collaboration, Sapienza marveled at Judge's faith and generous spirit.

"It was so clearly obvious you were with someone so spiritually connected, so different from other people," Sapienza said. "What is a saint? Part of it is they inspire us to want to rise higher along our spiritual path, to be the best versions of what God wanted us to be. Mychal was the best example of that."

Particularly striking, Sapienza said, was how Judge interacted lovingly with others, whether they were homeless people or wealthy celebrities.

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"He met people exactly where they were," Sapienza said. "The macho group of fire department guys, they kind of claimed him for their own. The Catholic gay community also claimed him, thinking 'Father Mychal is our guy,' because he was really able to connect with everybody."

The turnout of more than 2,000 people at Judge's funeral proved that point. The mourners included Bill and Hillary Clinton, as well as hundreds of firefighters.

Sapienza had joined the Marist Brothers, a Catholic order, and took a pledge of celibacy after years of an active gay social life. But within a few years, he left the church, no longer able to reconcile his faith with a disapproving view of homosexual relations as "intrinsically disordered."

He remains grateful to Judge for supporting that decision.

"It was really a struggle, and Mychal helped me figure out what was best for me," Sapienza said. "He was all about how God loves you. No matter what you decide, God is not going to love you any less."

To whatever extent he was saintly, Judge is remembered for earthly traits — a vibrant sense of humor, a willingness to critique the church hierarchy, a penchant for wearing his Franciscan friar's robes even when that wasn't required.

According to Sapienza's biography of Judge, the priest awoke one morning early in his career after a night of heavy drinking to discover he'd acquired a shamrock tattoo on his buttocks.

In 1974, long before settling in New York, Judge was pastor of St. Joseph Church in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

John Barone, then a youthful truck driver and now the 68-year-old owner of an engineering firm, was impressed by Judge's caring way of ministering to his family when his mother-in-law became seriously ill. Sometimes in church, Barone recalled, Judge would become so impassioned that he'd descend from the pulpit and preach from the aisle.

"He was genuine — you knew he truly walked in Christ's shoes," Barone said. "If someone was an underdog, he was their champion."

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Hurricane Ida turns spotlight on Louisiana power grid issues

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

Power out, high voltage lines on the ground, weeks until electricity is restored in some places: The dismal state of power in Hurricane Ida's wake is a distressingly familiar scenario for Entergy Corp., Louisiana's largest electrical utility.

The power company has grappled with other widespread outages after Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike — not to mention Laura, Delta and Zeta — over the past decade and a half. Other Louisiana and Gulf Coast utilities have faced similar disasters, sometimes needing to rebuild entire networks. If anything, power restoration has gotten faster in recent decades.

Still, critics question the enormity of the outage from Hurricane Ida and why it is still so widespread nearly a week after the storm slammed into the state with 150 mph (241 kph) winds.

The concerns are most acute in the New Orleans area. All eight of the transmission lines that link a region of more than 900,000 people to power from the outside world failed during Ida — even though storm damage in the area was less severe than to the south and west. As of Friday, Entergy had restored three of the lines.

"For all eight to fail, I'm just wondering whether this could have been prevented and that's what we're going to be looking into," New Orleans City Council Member Helena Moreno, who oversees energy regulation in the city, told WWL-TV.

While Entergy was heavily criticized for widespread failures and slow restoration after Hurricane Gustav in 2008, many are holding back from pointing fingers post-Ida. Gov. John Bel Edwards said Wednesday

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that “nobody” is satisfied with a weeklong restoration process. “But I am mindful that we just had the strongest hurricane, at least tied for the strongest, that the state has ever experienced.”

However, Entergy critic Logan Burke of the Alliance for Affordable Energy, a New Orleans group that seeks lower costs and greener energy, says the company’s grid hasn’t met expectations.

“We’ve been led to believe the transmission system was built for this level of wind, but it couldn’t have possibly been,” Burke said.

The isolation of metro New Orleans has always made power supply tricky, because there aren’t enough power plants inside the area to meet needs. But regulators are likely to ask why Entergy didn’t use a new \$210 million plant in eastern New Orleans to restart electricity.

When it was lobbying the city to build the facility — a process during which the company hired actors to pose as plant supporters, prompting a \$1 million fine — Entergy told officials the plant would have what’s called “black start” capability, the ability to power up a blacked-out grid.

“It didn’t work as advertised,” said Andrew Tuozzolo, Moreno’s chief of staff.

The plant does have black start capability, but Entergy determined that a small disturbance could knock the plant offline and that it would be better to use it along with electricity from elsewhere for greater stability in balancing the power load, said Entergy Louisiana CEO Philip May.

“If we have the ability to pursue a path ... that allows us to do this in a more controlled and more robust way, that’s going to be the path we pursue,” he said.

Entergy’s transmission troubles were underscored when a high voltage tower crumpled beside the Mississippi River in the New Orleans suburb of Avondale during Ida. The utility says it builds new transmission towers to withstand winds up to 150 mph, but the company has said its oldest towers were only designed to withstand 100 mph (160 kph) winds. It’s unclear how many older towers remain.

Asked that question, Entergy spokesman Jerry Nappi replied in an email that the company seeks to upgrade “priority structures” under yearly plans and bring up damaged towers to “more resilient standards” when repairing or replacing them.

Flying debris hitting lines is often a bigger problem than damage to towers, and the overall transmission system may have been knocked offline not by destroyed towers but as circuits tripped. May has said the Avondale tower recently passed an inspection and hadn’t been reinforced because it was already “robustly engineered.”

Regulators could force Entergy to further toughen its grid, lessening future risks from the more frequent and severe storms wrought by climate change. Florida, for example, now requires every privately owned utility to submit an annual plan for making the electrical system more resistant to outages.

But upgrades cost money — and money usually comes from customers.

“When you’re looking at something like storm hardening, the important thing to remember is that ultimately it is going to be the people that are paying all of these costs,” said Ted Kury, director of energy studies at the University of Florida’s Public Utility Research Center.

Shouldering upgrade costs could burden customers who are still paying for old repairs. Louisiana Public Service Commission documents show Entergy customers outside the city of New Orleans have been charged nearly \$2 billion to rebuild lines and refill storm damage reserve funds since 2005.

Customers will be paying for 2008 hurricanes Gustav and Ike through next summer; and Isaac, which hit in 2012, through 2026. Entergy wants another \$2 billion to cover costs from Laura, Delta and Zeta last year. Repairing Ida’s damage will cost still more.

With customers paying for old damage, it’s hard to focus on investing for the future, Burke said.

“It sucks up all the time and energy and capacity as costs start hitting bills,” he said.

Some upgrade ideas have been rejected as too expensive or technically impractical. While Louisiana encourages burying local distribution lines in new developments, studies have suggested that burying high voltage transmission lines could cost billions. There are also questions about feasibility, Kury said, because underground transmission lines can overheat and be damaged by water.

David Dismukes executive director of the Center for Energy Studies at Louisiana State University, said he would “caution people that redundancy comes with a big cost, and usually when you start working and

penciling the numbers out, the economics usually don't work out on this kind of thing."

Associated Press writer Melinda Deslatte contributed to this report.

Florida grapples with COVID-19's deadliest phase yet

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Funeral director Wayne Bright has seen grief piled upon grief during the latest COVID-19 surge.

A woman died of the virus, and as her family was planning the funeral, her mother was also struck down. An aunt took over arrangements for the double funeral, only to die of COVID-19 herself two weeks afterward.

"That was one of the most devastating things ever," said Bright, who also arranged the funeral last week of one of his closest friends.

Florida is in the grip of its deadliest wave of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, a disaster driven by the highly contagious delta variant.

While Florida's vaccination rate is slightly higher than the national average, the Sunshine State has an outside population of elderly people, who are especially vulnerable to the virus; a vibrant party scene; and a Republican governor who has taken a hard line against mask requirements, vaccine passports and business shutdowns.

As of mid-August, the state was averaging 244 deaths per day, up from just 23 a day in late June and eclipsing the previous peak of 227 during the summer of 2020. (Because of both the way deaths are logged in Florida and lags in reporting, more recent figures on fatalities per day are incomplete.)

Hospitals have had to rent refrigerated trucks to store more bodies. Funeral homes have been overwhelmed.

Cristina Miles, a mother of five from Orange Park, is among those facing more than one loss at a time. Her husband died after contracting COVID-19, and less than two weeks later, her mother-in-law succumbed to the virus.

"I feel we are all kind of in a weird dream state," she said, adding that her children are grieving differently, with one shutting down, another feeling inspired to pass a hard swimming test, and the oldest going about her life as usual.

Hospitals have been swamped with patients who, like Miles' husband and mother-in-law, hadn't gotten vaccinated.

In a positive sign, the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 in Florida has dropped over the past two weeks from more than 17,000 to 14,200 on Friday, indicating the surge is easing.

Florida made an aggressive effort early on to vaccinate its senior citizens. But Dr. Kartik Cherabuddi, a professor of infectious diseases at the University of Florida, said the raw number of those who have yet to get the shot is still large, given Florida's elderly population of 4.6 million.

"Even 10% is still a very large number, and then folks living with them who come in contact with them are not vaccinated," Cherabuddi said. "With delta, things spread very quickly."

Cherabuddi said there is also a "huge difference" in attitudes toward masks in Florida this summer compared with last year. This summer, "if you traveled around the state, it was like we are not really in a surge," he said.

Gov. Ron DeSantis has strongly opposed certain mandatory measures to keep the virus in check, saying people should be trusted to make decisions for themselves. He has asserted, too, that the spike in cases is seasonal as Floridians spend more time indoors to escape the heat.

At his funeral home in Tampa, Bright is working weekdays and weekends, staying past midnight sometimes.

"Usually we serve between five and six families a week. Right now, we are probably seeing 12 to 13 new families every week," he said. "It's nonstop. We are just trying to keep up with the volume."

He had to arrange the burial of one of his closest friends, a man he had entrusted with the access code

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to his house. They used to carpool each other's kids to school, and their families would gather for birthday and Super Bowl parties.

"It is very, very difficult to go through this process for someone you love so dearly," he said.

Pat Seemann, a nurse practitioner whose company has nearly 500 elderly, homebound patients in central Florida, had not lost a single patient during the first waves. And then the variant she calls "the wrecking ball" hit.

In the past month, she lost seven patients in two weeks, including a husband and wife who died within days of each other.

"I cried all weekend. I was devastated, angry," she said.

Overall, more than 46,300 people have died of COVID-19 in Florida, which ranks 17th in per-capita deaths among the states.

The majority of the deaths this summer — like last summer — are among the elderly. Of the 2,345 people whose recent deaths were reported over the past week, 1,479 of them were 65 and older — or 63%.

"The focus needs to be on who's dying and who's ending up in the hospital," Seeman said. "It's still going after the elderly."

But the proportion of under-65 people dying of COVID-19 has grown substantially, which health officials attribute to lower vaccination rates in those age groups.

Aaron Jaggi, 35, was trying to get healthy before he died of COVID-19, 12 hours after his older brother Free Jaggi, 41, lost his life to the virus. They were overweight, which increases the risk of severe COVID-19 illness, and on the fence about getting vaccinated, thinking the risk was minimal because they both worked from home, said Brittany Pequignot, who has lived with the family at various times and is like an adopted daughter.

After their death, the family found a whiteboard that belonged to Aaron. It listed his daily goals for sit-ups and push-ups.

"He was really trying," Pequignot said.

The Latest: Austria says Afghan migration wave to be avoided

The Associated Press undefined

BELGRADE, Serbia — Austria's leader says any migration wave from Afghanistan should be handled in neighboring countries.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Saturday in Belgrade that a potential wave toward Europe must not take place. He adds that "this is why we are in contact with countries in the region."

Kurz spoke after meeting Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic. Thousands of migrants from the Middle East, Africa or Asia have been stranded in Serbia and neighboring countries situated on the so-called Balkan migration route toward Western Europe.

Kurz has long taken a tough approach to migration issues. He recently said that Austria won't accept any migrants from Afghanistan because it has taken in a "disproportionately high" number since 2015, when one million people entered Europe from the Middle East, Africa or Asia.

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HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

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KABUL, Afghanistan — Pakistan's powerful intelligence chief has made a surprise visit to the Afghan capital of Kabul. That's according to two Pakistan officials who asked not to be named because they are not authorized to speak to the media.

It wasn't immediately clear what Gen. Faiez Hameed had to say Saturday to the Taliban leadership but the Pakistani intelligence service has perhaps the greatest outside influence over the Taliban.

The Taliban leadership had its headquarters in Pakistan and were often said to be in direct contact with the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency.

Although Pakistan routinely denied giving the Taliban military aid, the accusation was often made by the Afghan government and Washington.

ISTANBUL — An official at Emergency Hospital in Kabul says two people were killed and 12 wounded after Taliban fighters in the capital fired their weapons into the air in celebration.

Taliban in Kabul fired into the air Friday night to celebrate gains on the battlefield in Panjshir province, which still remains under the control of anti-Taliban fighters.

The hospital official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on Twitter criticized the practice of firing into the air and called on the militants to stop it immediately

Tolo TV reported 17 bodies and 41 wounded people were transferred to Emergency Hospital.

Cattle producers have a beef with 35-year marketing campaign

By ROXANA HEGEMAN Associated Press

BELLE PLAINE, Kan. (AP) — Cattle producers for 35 years have been bankrolling one of the nation's most iconic marketing campaigns, but now many want to end the program that created the "Beef. It's What's for Dinner" slogan.

What's the ranchers' beef? It's that their mandatory fee of \$1 per head of cattle sold is not specifically promoting American beef at a time when imports are flooding the market and plant-based, "fake meat" products are proliferating in grocery stores.

"The American consumer is deceived at the meat counter and our checkoff funds do not do anything to help create clarity or answer the question of where was that sirloin born, raised and harvested," said Karina Jones, a Nebraska cattle rancher and field director for the R-CALF USA trade group that is seeking to end the checkoff.

Opponents of the beef checkoff program, which was established by federal law in 1986, are urging cattle producers to sign a petition calling for a referendum vote on terminating the program.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack last month granted an extension until Oct. 3 for them to collect the required signatures due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Petition supporters argue the beef checkoff is a government-mandated assessment to fund government speech. Beef checkoff funds by law cannot be used to advertise against other meats such as pork or chicken, nor can they be used for lobbying. But they complain much of the money nonetheless props up lobbying groups such as the National Cattlemen's Beef Association that oppose mandatory country-of-origin labels.

They also point out that today's U.S. cattle industry is radically different than it was when the checkoff program was put into place, with more imported beef and greater meatpacker concentration.

"Now we are paying the advertising bill for four major meatpacking plants that are able to import beef and source it from cheaper countries and fool our consumers," Jones said.

The petition has created a schism in the livestock industry between those who support the checkoff and those who don't.

But consumers have a stake in the fight as well.

One way to look at this is that consumers probably should not like the checkoff program because it raises their beef prices, and some consumer groups are opposed to it for that reason, said Harry Kaiser, director of Cornell University's Commodity Promotion Research Program. Another way to look at it is that

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the checkoff also funds research into beef safety and the development of new beef products, he said.

"Consumers pay a few pennies more, but it is a safer product, a better quality product," Kaiser said.

Kaiser, who conducts research for the U.S. Agriculture Department on commodity advertising and promotion programs, wrote in an economic analysis that domestic beef demand between 2014 and 2018 would have been 14.3% lower without the consumer advertising and other promotional activities of the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. In 2019, the board had a budget of \$40.5 million to spend on activities that aim to increase beef demand.

Kaiser also noted in a phone interview that the checkoff-funded marketing research found that one reason consumers have been reluctant to purchase beef is because they felt it takes too long to prepare after coming home from work. That led to development of more easy-to-prepare beef products that consumers can buy at the supermarket and just pop into the microwave to cook.

But cattle producers say it's been two decades since checkoff-funded beef innovations like the flat iron steak, a high-value cut that came out of a low-value area of the carcass that previously had just been made into chuck roast.

Since 1966, Congress has authorized industry-funded research and promotion boards to help agricultural producers pool resources and develop new markets. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service now provides oversight for 22 such commodity programs, according to its website.

The mandatory nature of the various commodity checkoff programs has been controversial, sparking thousands of lawsuits over the years. Three cases reached the U.S. Supreme Court with mixed outcomes, Kaiser said.

The nation's highest court ruled in 1997 in a case by fruit tree farmers that commodity advertising was constitutional because it was a part of a broader regulatory program. But four years later, the Supreme Court ruled a federally mandated mushroom advertising program was not part of a larger regulatory program and was therefore unconstitutional as compelled private speech. And in 2005, the Supreme Court found the beef checkoff program was constitutional on government speech grounds.

While these programs are now constitutional as part of a broader regulator scheme, Kaiser said a conservative Supreme Court could overturn these precedents, which are similar to requiring workers to be in labor unions.

This is not the first time critics of the beef checkoff program have tried to wrangle enough signatures on a petition. The Agricultural Marketing Service received a petition from cattle producers in 1999 and determined the signatures fell short of the required number.

It takes the petition signatures of 10% of the nation's cattle producers — in this case 88,269 valid signatures — to put the issue before the agriculture secretary. Any cattle producer who has owned, sold or purchased cattle from July 2, 2020 through July 1, 2021 is eligible to sign the petition. Vilsack would then decide whether to hold a referendum on ending the program.

So far, checkoff opponents have gathered around 30,000 signatures, Jones said.

Kansas rancher Steve Stratford, one of the people who initiated the petition, said meatpackers — who do not pay into the checkoff program — are the ones whose profit margin has increased while the checkoff has been in existence.

"Long story short: The person that is paying the dollar is not the one reaping the benefits of better demand and higher beef prices," Stratford said.

But Greg Hanes, the chief executive officer of the beef board that runs the checkoff program, said that when it was established there was a "conscientious decision" not to have the packers participate so that it is driven by producers. He noted that market dynamics are always changing and, at times, the packers are doing better than producers and sometimes producers are doing better than packers.

Hanes defended the checkoff, saying that it is especially important for research in nutrition and that without the program consumers don't get information on the benefits of beef.

Origin story of the Texas law that could upend Roe v. Wade

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By JESSICA GRESKO and PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

The road to a Texas law that bans most abortions in the state, sidestepping for now the Supreme Court's landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, began in a town called Waskom, population 1,600.

The Supreme Court's decision this past week not to interfere with the state's strict abortion law, provoked outrage from liberals and cheers from many conservatives. President Joe Biden assailed it. But the decision also astonished many that Texas could essentially outmaneuver Supreme Court precedent on women's constitutional right to abortion.

Texas' abortion law S.B. 8 follows a model first used in Waskom to ban abortion within its boundaries in 2019. The novel legal approach used by the city on Texas' border with Louisiana is one envisioned by a former top lawyer for the state.

Right to Life East Texas director Mark Lee Dixon, 36, a Southern Baptist minister, championed Waskom's abortion ban. Through his state senator, Bryan Hughes, he met Jonathan F. Mitchell, a former top lawyer for the state of Texas. Mitchell became his attorney and advised him on crafting the ordinance, Dixon said in an interview.

The ordinance shields Waskom from lawsuits by saying city officials can't enforce the abortion ban. Instead, private citizens can sue anyone who performs an abortion in the city or assists someone in obtaining one. The law was largely symbolic, however, because the city did not have a clinic performing abortions.

Nearly three dozen other cities in the state followed Waskom's lead. Among them is Lubbock, where a Planned Parenthood clinic stopped performing abortions this year as a result.

Mitchell has declined interviews, but Dixon called him a "brilliant guy" and said he was "extremely grateful" for his help. Hughes, who later became the author of the Texas law, echoed those sentiments. The two have known each other for years.

Though Hughes would not assign credit for Texas' approach to a single person, saying many lawyers and law professors advised on the legislation, ultimately S.B. 8 followed the Waskom model in terms of how the law is enforced.

The law, signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in May, prohibits abortions once medical professionals can detect cardiac activity, usually around six weeks and before many women know they're pregnant. At least 12 other states have enacted bans early in pregnancy, but all have been blocked from going into effect.

Unlike laws in other states, however, Texas' law is unique in prohibiting state officials from enforcing the ban. Instead, it created a so-called private right of action allowing anyone — even someone outside Texas — to sue abortion providers and anyone else who helps someone get an abortion. Under the law, anyone who successfully sues another person would be entitled to at least \$10,000.

The private right-of-action wrinkle envisioned by Mitchell has so far kept challenges to the law from succeeding.

Mitchell, 45, has spent the last 15 years moving back and forth between working in government and teaching at law schools such as Stanford and the University of Texas at Austin. A graduate of Wheaton College and the University of Chicago Law School, he was a law clerk to the late conservative Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

And he went on to serve as Texas solicitor general from 2010 to 2015. He was a volunteer attorney on former President Donald Trump's transition team and was unsuccessfully nominated by Trump to lead an agency tasked with making the government work better.

University of Chicago law professor William Baude called him a "born law professor," "creative and knowledgeable."

A law review article Mitchell wrote that was published in 2018 gave guidance to lawmakers worried about courts blocking their laws. He said lawmakers could protect their legislation by including a private right of action. He said the strategy could apply to a wide range of laws such as campaign finance, gun control and abortion.

"It is practically impossible to bring a pre-enforcement challenge to statutes that establish private rights of action, because the litigants who will enforce the statute are hard to identify until they actually bring

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suit," he wrote in one footnote.

In the case of Texas' law, things have played out as he predicted.

Still, even some conservatives have questioned Texas' approach. Dissenting from the high court's decision not to step in this past week, Chief Justice John Roberts called Texas' law "not only unusual, but unprecedented."

"The legislature has imposed a prohibition on abortions after roughly six weeks, and then essentially delegated enforcement of that prohibition to the populace at large," he wrote. "The desired consequence appears to be to insulate the State from responsibility for implementing and enforcing the regulatory regime."

Liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayor was blunt. "It cannot be the case that a State can evade federal judicial scrutiny by outsourcing the enforcement of unconstitutional laws to its citizenry," she wrote.

The high court's action, however, is unlikely to be the final word on the law. More legal challenges now that the law is in force are likely.

GOP lawmakers and abortion opponents in at least five other Republican-controlled states — Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, North Dakota and South Dakota — said they are considering pushing bills similar to the Texas law and its citizen-enforcement provision.

Gresko reported from Washington and Weber from Austin, Texas.

Hurricane Ida evacuees urged to return to New Orleans

By REBECCA SANTANA, MELINDA DESLATTE and KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — With power due back for almost all of New Orleans by next week, Mayor LaToya Cantrell strongly encouraged residents who evacuated because of Hurricane Ida to begin returning home. But outside the city, the prospects of recovery appeared bleaker, with homes and businesses in tatters.

Six days after Hurricane Ida made landfall, hard-hit parts of Louisiana were still struggling to restore any sense of normalcy. Even around New Orleans, a continued lack of power for most residents made a sultry stretch of summer hard to bear and added to woes in the aftermath of Ida. Louisiana authorities searched Friday for a man they said shot another man to death after they both waited in a long line to fill up at a gas station in suburban New Orleans.

Cantrell said the city would offer transportation starting Saturday to any resident looking to leave the city and get to a public shelter. It already began moving some residents out of senior homes.

At the Renaissance Place senior home Friday, dozens of residents lined up to get on minibuses equipped with wheelchair lifts after city officials said they determined conditions at the facility were not safe and evacuated it.

Reggie Brown, 68, was among those waiting to join fellow residents on a bus. He said residents, many in wheelchairs, have been stuck at the facility since Ida. Elevators stopped working three days ago and garbage was piling up inside, he said. The residents were being taken to a state-run shelter, the mayor's office said.

"I'm getting on the last bus," Brown said. "I'm able-bodied."

A phone message for the company that manages the Renaissance site, HSI Management Inc., was not immediately returned.

But Cantrell also encouraged residents to return to the city as their power comes back, saying they could help the relief effort by taking in neighbors and family who were still in the dark. Only a small number of city residents had power back by Friday though almost all electricity should return by Wednesday, according to Entergy, the company that provides power to New Orleans and much of southeast Louisiana in the storm's path.

"We are saying, you can come home," Cantrell told a news conference.

The outlook was not as promising south and west of the city, where Ida's fury fully struck. The sheriff's office in Lafourche Parish cautioned returning residents about the difficult situation that awaited them —

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no power, no running water, little cellphone service and almost no gasoline.

Late Friday, Entergy said its damage assessments across southeast Louisiana were almost complete, and the company posted restoration times for most customers. Some parishes outside New Orleans were battered for hours by winds of 100 mph (160 kph) or more.

President Joe Biden arrived Friday to survey the damage in some of those spots, touring a neighborhood in LaPlace, a community between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain that suffered catastrophic wind and water damage that sheared off roofs and flooded homes.

"I promise we're going to have your back," Biden said at the outset of a briefing by officials.

The president has also promised full federal support to the Northeast, where Ida's remnants dumped record-breaking rain and killed at least 50 people from Virginia to Connecticut.

At least 14 deaths were blamed on the storm in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, including those of three nursing home residents who were evacuated along with hundreds of other seniors to a warehouse in Louisiana ahead of the hurricane. State health officials have launched an investigation into those deaths and a fourth one at the warehouse facility in Tangipahoa Parish, where they say conditions became unhealthy and unsafe.

The health department on Friday reported an additional death — a 59-year-old man who was poisoned by carbon monoxide from a generator that was believed to be running inside his home. Several deaths in the aftermath of the storm have been blamed on carbon monoxide poisoning, which can happen if generators are run improperly.

More than 800,000 homes and businesses remained without power Friday evening across southeast Louisiana, according to the Public Service Commission. That's about 36% of all utility customers statewide, but it's down from the peak of around 1.1 million after the storm arrived Sunday with top winds of 150 mph (230 kph). Ida is tied for the fifth-strongest hurricane ever to strike the mainland U.S.

Deslatte reported from Baton Rouge and Santana reported from Marrero. Associated Press writers Chevel Johnson in New Orleans; Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta; and Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

Extremist was released from New Zealand jail despite fears

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand authorities imprisoned a man inspired by the Islamic State group for three years after catching him with a hunting knife and extremist videos — but at a certain point, despite grave fears he would attack others, they say they could do nothing more to keep him behind bars.

So for 53 days from July, police tracked the man's every move, an operation that involved some 30 officers working around the clock. Their fears were borne out Friday when he walked into an Auckland supermarket, grabbed a kitchen knife from a store shelf and stabbed five people, critically injuring three.

Two more shoppers were injured in the melee. On Saturday, three of the victims remained hospitalized in critical condition and three more were in stable or moderate conditions. The seventh person was recovering at home. The youngest victim was a 29-year-old woman, the oldest a 77-year-old man.

Court documents named the attacker as 32-year-old Ahamed Aathil Mohamed Samsudeen, a Tamil Muslim from Sri Lanka who arrived in New Zealand 10 years ago on a student visa seeking refugee status, which he was granted in 2013.

Undercover officers monitoring Samsudeen from just outside the supermarket sprang into action when they saw shoppers running and heard shouting, police said, and shot him dead within a couple of minutes of him beginning his attack. A bystander's video records the sound of 10 shots being fired in rapid succession.

The attack has highlighted deficiencies in New Zealand's anti-terror laws, which experts say are too focused on punishing actions and inadequate for dealing with plots before they are carried out. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said lawmakers were close to filling some of those legislative holes when the at-

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tack occurred. She vowed law changes by the end of the month.

Police Commissioner Andrew Coster said the law they were working under required a suspect to make the first move.

"We might have an understanding of intent, and ideology, and we might have high levels of concern," Coster said. "But that is not sufficient for us to take any enforcement action."

Samsudeen was first noticed by police in 2016 when he started posting support for terror attacks and violent extremism on Facebook.

Police twice confronted him but he kept on posting. In 2017, they arrested him at Auckland Airport. He was headed for Syria, authorities say, presumably to join the Islamic State insurgency. Police searches found he had a hunting knife and some banned propaganda material, and he was later released on bail. In 2018, he bought another knife, and police found two Islamic State videos.

He spent the next three years in jail after pleading guilty to various crimes and for breaching bail. On new charges in May, a jury found Samsudeen guilty on two counts of possessing objectionable videos, both of which showed Islamic State group imagery, including the group's flag and a man in a black balaclava holding a semi-automatic weapon.

However, the videos didn't show violent murders like some Islamic State videos and weren't classified as the worst kind of illicit material. High Court Judge Sally Fitzgerald described the contents as religious hymns sung in Arabic. She said the videos described obtaining martyrdom on the battlefield by being killed for God's cause.

A court report warned Samsudeen had the motivation and means to commit violent acts in the community and posed a high risk. It described him as harboring extreme attitudes, living an isolated lifestyle, and having a sense of entitlement.

But the judge decided to release him, sentencing him to a year's supervision at an Auckland mosque, where a leader had confirmed his willingness to help and support Samsudeen on his release.

The judge said she rejected arguments Samsudeen had simply stumbled on the videos and was trying to improve his Arabic. She said an aggravating factor was that he was on bail for earlier, similar offenses and had tried to delete his internet browser history.

Fitzgerald noted the extreme concerns of police, saying she didn't know if they were right, but "I sincerely hope they are not."

The judge also banned Samsudeen from owning any devices that could access the internet, unless approved in writing by a probation officer, and ordered that he provide access to any social media accounts he held.

"I am of the view that the risk of you reoffending in a similar way to the charges upon which you were convicted remains high," the judge concluded. "Your rehabilitation is accordingly key."

Two months later, Samsudeen took a train from a mosque in the Auckland suburb of Glen Eden where he was living to a Countdown supermarket in New Lynn, tailed at a distance by police. He wheeled a shopping cart around the store like the other customers for about 10 minutes. The store was less crowded than normal due to coronavirus distancing requirements, and undercover police were hanging back so as not to be noticed.

At about 2:40 p.m. he began shouting "Allahu akbar" — meaning "God is great" — and started stabbing random shoppers, sending people running and screaming, unleashing an attack that shocked a nation.

On Saturday, Samsudeen's brother Aroos said the family wanted to send their love and support to everyone hurt in the attack. He said Samsudeen had been suffering from mental health problems, wanted to impress his friends on Facebook and had no support.

"He would hang up the phone on us when we told him to forget about all the issues he was obsessed with. Then he would call us back again himself when he realized he was wrong," Aroos said. "Aathil was wrong again yesterday. Of course we feel very sad he could not be saved."

Shadow docket Supreme Court decisions could affect millions

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By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Traditionally, the process of getting an opinion from the U.S. Supreme Court takes months and those rulings are often narrowly tailored. Emergency orders, especially during the court's summer break, revolve around specific issues, like individual death penalty cases.

But that pattern has changed in recent years with decisions coming outside the court's normal procedures. That has been especially true in the past two weeks. Since Aug. 24, that truncated process known as the shadow docket has moved at astronomical speed, producing decisions related to immigration, COVID-19 and evictions and, most recently, abortion. Those three decisions, with the conservative wing of the court in the majority, have the potential to affect millions of people, in a fraction of the time and outside the normal scrutiny signed opinions can bring.

"My memory is, typically, if the Supreme Court was acting in July and August, it was really that quintessential emergency appeal, dealing with something like a death penalty situation. It wasn't like: What is immigration law going to be in our country? It wasn't: Will tenants have certain rights? It wasn't the big substantive questions," said Jessica Levinson, a professor at Loyola Law School.

WHAT IS THE NORMAL PROCESS?

Participants petition the court to hear cases. If accepted, there are oral arguments before the justices, although during the coronavirus era that has meant via telephone. Before this happens, a case usually has gone through a full review and appeal in lower courts. Those deliberations are part of the material the justices reference. Amicus briefs are submitted by parties interested in the case.

Once the arguments are heard the judges meet in conference, discuss the cases and take preliminary votes. Opinions are assigned to be written and draft opinions are exchanged and often amended and changed.

The overall process is deliberative and one where the justices justify their conclusions in somewhat lengthy written legal opinions. The process between oral argument and issued opinion takes months.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE SHADOW DOCKET?

The shadow docket, a phrase coined by University of Chicago Law School professor William Baude, skips many if not all of those steps. The biggest element: It does not possess the transparency and disclosure of a typical docket. Outside of a flurry of court filings between the plaintiffs and defendants in the three recent, prominent cases, there was little interaction between the court and the participants. None of the orders issued by the majority in the three cases was signed, although at least one of them ended the protection for roughly 3.5 million people in the United States who said they faced evictions in the next two months, according to Census Bureau data from early August.

WHAT ARE THE CASES?

The first decision dealt with the Biden administration's attempt to end a Trump-era program that forces people to wait in Mexico while seeking asylum in the U.S. With three liberal justices in dissent, the high court refused to block a lower court ruling ordering the administration to reinstate the program informally known as Remain in Mexico.

Days later the court's conservative majority said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lacked the authority to reimpose a moratorium on evictions, a temporary ban that was put in place because of the coronavirus pandemic.

And this past week, the court allowed a new Texas law to go forward that bans most abortions in the state and is the biggest curb to the constitutional right to an abortion in decades, despite the fact the justices said there are serious questions about the constitutionality of the law.

DO ANY JUSTICES OPPOSE THE ABBREVIATED PROCESS?

The liberal wing of the court has been vocal, but Chief Justice John Roberts' comments in the abortion

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law case may have been the most straightforward in indicating a desire for the traditional process to give courts time to examine the “not only unusual, but unprecedented” statutory scheme.

“We are at this point asked to resolve these novel questions — at least preliminarily — in the first instance, in the course of two days, without the benefit of consideration by the District Court or Court of Appeals,” Roberts wrote. “We are also asked to do so without ordinary merits briefing and without oral argument.”

Justice Elena Kagan joined Roberts in his dissent in the abortion law case and wrote one of her own specifically about the shadow docket. “Today’s ruling illustrates just how far the Court’s ‘shadow-docket’ decisions may depart from the usual principles of appellate process,” she wrote. “That ruling, as everyone must agree, is of great consequence.”

She added that the majority ruling was missing guidance from the appeals court, included only cursory review of party submissions, and was done hastily and with little explanation for its conclusion. “In all these ways, the majority’s decision is emblematic of too much of this Court’s shadow docket decisionmaking,” Kagan wrote.

Jimmy Page at Venice film fest to present Led Zeppelin doc

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Guitarist Jimmy Page says he turned down a lot of “pretty miserable” pitches over the years to make a documentary about Led Zeppelin. But he finally bit when he received a deeply-researched proposal focusing almost exclusively on the music and chronicling the band’s birth in 1968 and its meteoric early rise.

The result is “Becoming Led Zeppelin,” one of the most eagerly anticipated documentaries at the Venice Film Festival, which made its premiere Saturday with Page on the red carpet.

Producers Bernard MacMahon and Allison McGourty — avowed Zeppelin fans — obtained never-before-seen footage of some of the band’s early U.S. and British concerts as well as an astonishing audio interview that drummer John Bonham gave to an Australian journalist before he died in 1980.

The interview, concert footage and other archive material are spliced into contemporary interviews with the three surviving band members — Page, Robert Plant and John Paul Jones — to create a montage that maps the frenetic first two years of the band’s existence and its early musical influences.

MacMahon, who along with McGourty launched the PBS “American Epic” documentary series, said it took a year to locate the Bonham recording, after hearing a bootleg version of the interview on a vinyl record.

From the sound, he knew that it had been converted into a quarter-inch tape. He then “went to every Australian journalist that we knew from that era saying do you recognize this voice? Because the journalist doesn’t identify himself.”

“Eventually I tracked down someone who said, ‘We know who it was but he died.’”

MacMahon then drew on previous contacts he had with a sound archive in Canberra, Australia, which went through “30,000 unmarked reels” to find the one with the interview.

He went to similar lengths to get full concert recordings of the songs as performed, sometimes finding reels of uncut songs that had never before been seen. He said he went to such lengths because he wanted the film to essentially be a musical interspersed with interviews.

Page said he particularly appreciated the focus on the music — the songs are played at full-length, not just snippets. And it lets the band members tell their own story in their own words. There are no other on-camera interviews.

Page said he agreed to the producers’ pitch after he received a leather-bound storyboard mapping out the movie as they had researched it and envisaged it.

“When we first met we were probably a little nervous of each other. But the conduit was the storyboard,” Page said. “And I thought they’ve really got it, they really understand what it was about.”

He said he had received plenty of proposals over the years to tell Led Zeppelin’s story, but “they were pretty miserable. Miserable and also to the point where they would want to be concentrating on anything but the music.”

"This one, it's everything about the music, and what made the music tick," he said. "It's not just a sample of it with a talking head. This is something in a totally different genre."

Scenes from Week 3 of the R. Kelly sex-trafficking trial

By TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The third week of the R. Kelly sex-trafficking trial in New York City saw more accusers — including for the first time, a man — coming forward with array of disturbing allegations and a former assistant providing a glimpse into how he lorded over his inner circle. The accusers have testified without using their full real names to protect their privacy.

Defense attorneys for the 54-year-old "I Believe I Can Fly" artist continued to counter by saying his alleged victims had every opportunity to reject him after they say he sexually abused them starting when they were underage, but instead chose to take advantage of his lavish lifestyle.

There will be a break in the trial until Thursday. Here are a few scenes from week three:

R. KELLY'S MINIONS

The trial has given an inside look at how R. Kelly assembled a crew of assistants — some called "runners" — to cater to his every whim.

They faithfully drove the R&B celebrity, fed him, booked his travel and provided security for him. For some, their only job was to be on call to join in for one of his favorite pastimes: pick-up basketball games.

His minions have testified they were subject to deductions from their paycheck — "fines" — if they screwed up. Prosecutors say the crew members also were expected to turn a blind eye to the sexual abuse of women and girls, never daring to intervene.

A former assistant who worked for Kelly from 2015 to 2017, Suzette Mayweather, testified she was involved with enforcing rules imposed by her boss to keep one of his underage victims in line.

She said he once reprimanded her for allowing the victim to leave a van to go to the bathroom without getting his permission first. He also flew into a rage when she was caught discussing his relationship with another woman.

"It was the first time that I had ever seen Rob really upset," she said. "It wasn't the tone. It was the look in his eyes."

THE PIE INCIDENT

Mayweather also provided a description of one the more bizarre displays of fealty toward Kelly.

She testified how Kelly once contacted her in the middle of the night, demanding that she bring a sweet potato pie to his studio. With no objection, she hurriedly looked up a 24-hour Walmart and found out it carried Patti LaBelle-brand sweet potato pies.

Mayweather bought every pie in sight and delivered them by Uber to the studio. She testified Kelly greeted her by saying, "I thought you were going to fail your test."

She said she watched as Kelly put the pies away without taking a bite.

DEN OF INIQUITY

Two witnesses described the garage at R. Kelly's Chicago-area mansion as a den of iniquity where he indulged his kinky side.

Both said the garage had been converted into a gym, with a boxing ring, workout equipment and a sauna. A male witness told the jury how Kelly once took him there and, with a snap of his fingers, made a naked "young lady" emerge from underneath the box ring to give both of them oral sex.

A woman also testified about agreeing to have threesomes with Kelly and other women. One time, she said, the defendant had her put on lingerie and interact with a girlfriend who was wearing a leash and collar, describing it as an S&M role-playing experience.

"She was on her hands and knees and I was walking her," she said.

DEFIANT WITNESS

The jury also heard from another woman who accused Kelly of giving her herpes and told of filing police reports and suing him for failing to disclose an STD.

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She also went public with her allegations, including on a podcast where she said: "I don't like the word victim because I don't feel like a victim" and "let's be clear, I made a choice to be involved with that person."

Kelly attorney Deveraux Cannick confronted her with the comments, and peppered her with questions about why she stayed in a sexual relationship with Kelly that began when she was 19 if she thought she was being exploited.

"You made a choice," Cannick said, adding, "you participated of your own will."

When a prosecutor had a chance to question the witness again, she defiantly stood by her statements, agreeing she "didn't like the term survivor." The prosecutor then turned the question of choice around on Kelly.

"The defendant also made some choices," the prosecutor said. "The defendant chose not to tell you he had herpes, correct?"

"Correct," the woman replied.

For more coverage of the R. Kelly trial in New York, visit our hub: <https://apnews.com/hub/r-kelly>

Surviving 9/11 was 'just the first piece of the journey'

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) —

Trapped deep in the wreckage of the World Trade Center, Will Jimeno lived through the unthinkable. Twenty years later, he's still living with it.

A brace and a quarter-sized divot on his left leg reflect the injuries that ended his police career, a life-time dream. He has post-traumatic stress disorder. He keeps shelves of mementoes, including a cross and miniature twin towers fashioned from trade center steel. He was portrayed in a movie and wrote two books about enduring the ordeal.

"It never goes away, for those of us that were there that day," he says.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed when hijackers in Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network rammed four commercial jets into the trade center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001. Yet an estimated 33,000 or more people successfully evacuated the stricken buildings.

They navigated mountains of smoky stairs in the World Trade Center's twin towers or streamed out of a flaming Pentagon. Some fled an otherworldly dust cloud at ground zero. Others willed their way out of pitch-dark rubble.

Sept. 11 survivors bear scars and the weight of unanswerable questions. Some grapple with their place in a tragedy defined by an enormous loss of life. They get told to "get over" 9/11. But they also say they have gained resilience, purpose, appreciation and resolve.

"One of the things that I learned," Jimeno says, "is to never give up."

'IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU'RE REBORN'

It wasn't Bruce Stephan's first incredibly close call.

In 1989, his car got perilously wedged on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge when the Loma Prieta earthquake hit and the upper deck collapsed while he was driving across.

Twelve years later, the engineer and lawyer was settling into his workday on the 65th floor of the trade center's north tower when one of the planes crashed about 30 stories above.

Only after his roughly hourlong walk down the crowded stairs did Stephan learn that another plane had hit the south tower — the building where his wife, Joan, also an attorney, worked on the 91st floor. Above the impact zone.

Unable to reach her by cell phone, Bruce Stephan dashed to a payphone and called her relatives, who told him she'd gotten out.

Then the south tower fell, and Stephan's fear spiked anew. Had Joan been caught in the collapse? Hours later, he finally learned that she was OK. (At least one other couple, elevator operators Arturo and Carmen Griffith, also survived; their story inspired a recent film, "Lovebirds of the Twin Towers.")

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"My experience from the first disaster was that it's a strangely happy moment when you know that you've survived," Bruce Stephan says. "It's almost like you're reborn... to know that you're alive and that you still have a shot at life, and here's your chance to do something."

"When it happened a second time, it's just like, 'Oh, my God.'"

After the earthquake, the New York City natives resolved to change their workaholic lives. After 9/11, they did.

Within two months, the couple moved to Essex, a northern New York town of roughly 700 people. While telecommuting and sometimes actually commuting, they made time for other things — church, a book club, amateur theater, gardening, zoning meetings, a local newsletter. They cherished a newfound sense of community.

But a work opportunity pulled them back to San Francisco in 2009. They loved it, until the pandemic made them rethink their lives again.

"One of the things that that we discovered as a result of the disasters was that being in a community ... is maybe the biggest reward you can have," Stephan, 65, says from their front porch in Essex. They moved back last year.

'I WAS A WALKING ZOMBIE'

Désirée Bouchat pauses by one of the inscribed names on the 9/11 memorial: James Patrick Berger. She last saw him on the 101st floor of the trade center's south tower.

"Some days, it feels like it happened yesterday," she says.

At first, people figured the plane crash at the north tower was accidental. There was no immediate evacuation order for the south tower. But Berger ushered Bouchat and other Aon Corp. colleagues to the elevators, then turned back to check for more people.

Just as Bouchat exited the south tower, another plane slammed into it. Nearly 180 Aon workers perished, including Berger.

For a while, Bouchat told everyone, including herself: "I'm fine. I'm alive."

But "I was a walking zombie," she says now.

She couldn't multitask anymore. Remarks that used to bother her stirred no reaction. She was functioning, but through a fog that took more than a year to lift.

Bouchat eventually felt that she needed to talk about 9/11. The Springfield, New Jersey, resident has now led about 500 tours for the 9/11 Tribute Museum (it's separate from the larger National September 11 Memorial & Museum).

Bruce Powers has traveled from Alexandria, Virginia, to lead Tribute Museum tours, too. And every Sept. 11, the 82-year-old repeats his seven-mile (11 km) walk home from the Pentagon after the attack that killed 184 people, 10 of whom he knew.

The walk, the tours and hearing other guides' personal stories "serve well in helping me deal with what happened," says Powers, a now-retired Navy aviation planner.

The public hasn't fully recognized the losses survivors felt, says Mary Fetchet, a social worker who lost her son Brad on 9/11 and founded Voices Center for Resilience, a support and advocacy group for victims' families, first responders and survivors. "Although they are still living, they're living in a very different way."

'I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW I GOT OUT OF THERE ALIVE'

For a time after 9/11, Police Department Officer Mark DeMarco replayed the what-ifs in his mind. If he'd gone right instead of left. A bit earlier. Or later.

"I couldn't figure out how I got out of there alive," he says.

After helping evacuate the north tower, the Emergency Service Unit officer was surrounded by a maze of debris when parts of the skyscraper tumbled onto a smaller building where he'd been directed. Some officers with him were killed.

Barely able to see his own boots with a small flashlight, DeMarco inched through the ruins with two officers behind him.

Then he took a step and felt nothing underfoot. He looked below and saw utter darkness.

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Only later — after the officers turned around and eventually clambered through shattered windows to safety — did DeMarco realize he'd nearly tumbled into a crater carved by the collapse.

Now 68 and retired, DeMarco still wears a wristband with the names of the 14 ESU members killed that day. He worries that the public memory of the attacks is fading, that the passage of time has created a false sense of security.

"Have fun with life. Don't be afraid," he says. "But be mindful."

'IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO BE GOTTEN OVER'

A tsunami of dust washed over emergency medical technician Guy Sanders, so thick that it clogged his surgical mask.

The 47-story building at 7 World Trade Center had just collapsed, about seven hours after the burning towers fell and debris ignited fires in the smaller high-rise.

A part-time EMS supervisor for a private ambulance company in the city, Sanders had scrambled to respond from his day job at a Long Island collections agency. He was en route when the towers collapsed, killing eight EMA workers, including his colleague Yamel Merino. Sanders went to funeral after funeral for EMTs, firefighters and police.

Yet 9/11 only deepened his commitment to EMS. Though it was tricky financially, he soon went full-time.

"I never wanted to be in a situation where people needed me and I couldn't immediately respond," he says.

He still doesn't. But health problems — including a rare cancer that the federal government has linked to trade center dust exposure — forced his 2011 retirement, says Sanders, 62, now living near Orangeburg, South Carolina.

"You get people telling you, 'Well, (9/11) happened so long ago. Get over it.' But it is a trauma," says Sanders, who joined a first responders' and survivors' support group. "It's not something to be gotten over. It's something to be addressed."

'SURVIVING IS ONLY THE FIRST PIECE OF THE JOURNEY'

Breathing through an oxygen mask in a hospital bed, Wendy Lanski told herself: "If Osama bin Laden didn't kill me, I'm not dying of COVID."

Nearly two decades earlier, the health insurance manager escaped the north tower's 29th floor and ran, barefoot, through the dust cloud from the south tower's collapse. Eleven of her Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield colleagues died.

"The only good thing about surviving a tragedy or a catastrophe of any kind is: It definitely makes you more resilient," says Lanski, who was hospitalized with the coronavirus — as was her husband — for two touch-and-go-weeks in spring 2020.

But "surviving is only the first piece of the journey," says Lanski, 51, of West Orange, New Jersey.

She has the twin towers, "9/11/01" and "survivor" tattooed on her ankle. But the attacks also left other marks, ones she didn't choose.

Images and sounds of falling people and panes of glass lodged in her memory. She was diagnosed in 2006 with sarcoidosis, she said; the federal government has concluded the inflammatory disease may be linked to trade center dust. And she has asked herself: "Why am I here and 3,000 people are not?"

Over time, she accepted not knowing.

"But while I'm here, I've got to make it count," says Lanski, who has spoken at schools and traveled to conferences about terror victims. "I've got to make up for 3,000 people who lost their voice."

'IT MOTIVATES ME TO LIVE A BETTER LIFE'

Buried in darkness and 20 feet (6 meters) or more of rubble from both towers, Will Jimeno was ready to die.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department rookie was in searing pain from a fallen wall pinning his left side. Fellow officer Dominick Pezzulo had died next to him. Flaming debris had fallen on Jimeno's arm and heated the cramped area enough that Pezzulo's gun fired, sending a flurry of bullets past Jimeno's head. He had yelled for help for hours. He was terribly thirsty.

"If I die today," he remembers thinking, "at least I died trying to help people."

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Then Jimeno, who is Catholic, had what he describes as a vision of a robed man walking toward him, a bottle of water in his hand.

We're going to get out, he told Sgt. John McLoughlin, who was trapped with him.

It was hours — of pushing back pain, thinking of rescues in past disasters, talking to keep alert — before they were found and gruelingly extricated by former U.S. Marines, NYPD officers, a onetime paramedic and firefighters as blazes flared and debris shifted and fell.

"If you wanted to picture what hell looked like, this was probably it," recalls then-NYPD Officer Ken Winkler.

Jimeno was freed around 11 p.m., McLoughlin the next morning. Jimeno underwent surgeries and lengthy rehabilitation.

But he says his psychological recovery was harder. Trivial things made him lose his temper — fueled, he now realizes, by anger about the deaths of colleagues and people rescuers couldn't help. At times, he says, he thought of suicide. It took three years and multiple therapists before he mastered warding off the outbursts.

It has helped to tell his story in talks, in the 2006 Oliver Stone movie "World Trade Center," and in Jimeno's two newly released books — the illustrated "Immigrant, American, Survivor" for children, and "Sunrise Through the Darkness," about coping with trauma.

The Colombian-born U.S. Navy veteran hopes that people see in his story "the resiliency of the human soul, the American spirit," and the power of good people stepping up in bad times.

Sept. 11 "motivates me to live a better life," says Jimeno, 53, of Chester, New Jersey. "The way I can honor those we lost and those that were injured is to live a fruitful life. To be an example to others that Sept. 11 did not destroy us."

New York City-based AP reporter Jennifer Peltz has covered the aftermath of 9/11 for more than a decade, including the rebuilding and memorial efforts at ground zero.

Virus pummels French Polynesia, straining ties with Paris

By ESTHER CUNEO Associated Press

PAPEETE, Tahiti (AP) — France's worst coronavirus outbreak is unfolding 12 times zones away from Paris, devastating Tahiti and other idyllic islands of French Polynesia.

The South Pacific archipelagos lack enough oxygen, ICU beds and morgue space — and their vaccination rate is barely half the national average. Simultaneous outbreaks on remote islands and atolls are straining the ability of local authorities to evacuate patients to the territory's few hospitals.

"The problem is, there are a lot of deaths before we get there," lamented Vincent Simon, the head of the regional emergency service.

French Polynesia is France's latest challenge in juggling resources to battle the pandemic in former colonies that stretch around the world. With more than 2,800 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, it holds the national record for the highest infection rate.

And that's only an estimate: Things are so bad that the multi-ethnic territory of about 300,000 residents stopped counting new infections as local health authorities redeployed medical staff to focus on patient care and vaccination instead of testing.

Of the 463 virus-related deaths reported in French Polynesia throughout the pandemic, most took place over the past month. Vaccine skepticism, high obesity and diabetes rates, and the decision to reopen to some tourists this summer have been among the explanations for the current health crisis.

Tensions have surfaced with other virus-ravaged French territories. While the central government in Paris sent hundreds of health care workers to the French Caribbean over the summer, Polynesia received just 10 backup nurses. After weeks of pleading by Polynesian officials, the government promised this week to send 100 more.

French Polynesia, whose 118 islands stretch across an area as large as Europe, has broad autonomy from Paris but relies on the central government for health care.

"We need help. We have said it before: we cannot get by without it," Tony Tekuataoa, the head of emer-

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gency services at the French Polynesia Hospital Center in Tahiti, told local television.

More than 330 people are currently hospitalized with the virus, including 55 in intensive care – well beyond the territory's capacity.

Beds, mattresses, oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators: Everything is lacking. With 15 to 20 new deaths per day, funeral directors can no longer meet the demands of families. The macabre dance of ambulances and coffins animates local media coverage.

Hospital authorities are opening new COVID-19 wards. All medical and paramedical professionals have been requisitioned. The regulatory agency dispatches equipment and personnel in a permanent state of emergency.

The surge is taking a toll on the mental health of medics. Meanwhile, disputes over vaccinations are tearing some families apart.

"The caregivers were not prepared to see so many deaths," Philippe Dupire, medical director of the French Polynesia Hospital Center, said.

The hospital's workers appealed directly to Macron with a photo shared on its Facebook page showing the lobby where the president made a speech during a July visit and the same lobby a month later – now packed with 20 hospital beds occupied by virus patients.

To curb infections, local authorities imposed a curfew at first, then localized lockdowns, and now they've shut down schools. Obligatory vaccinations have been announced for some sectors, despite objections in certain quarters.

Vaccinations are rising, but eight months into the campaign, only 38% of the total population is fully vaccinated, while 50% have received a first dose. That compares to 67% and 73% nationwide.

Meanwhile, more than 90% of those in intensive care are unvaccinated, as are a large majority of those who have died.

The government's minister for overseas territories, Sebastien Lecornu, blamed the lag on vaccine skepticism in a population particularly sensitive to disinformation. Distrust of authorities is also an issue among indigenous populations, scarred by the legacy of France's nuclear tests on Polynesian atolls and decades of efforts for reparations.

Concerned about the potentially deadly consequences of vaccine avoidance, the leader of an independence party appealed to all communities to get the injections and to reject false information shared online.

While infections may be peaking in French Polynesia, experts fear a long, high plateau instead of a quick recovery. Epidemiologist Jean-Marc Séguin said that "nothing very significant is happening that shows an improvement."

The territory has one bright spot: Nuku Hiva, in the Marquesas Islands, where French Polynesia's vaccination campaign began in January and 85% of the population is fully vaccinated.

In a Tahiti rehab center, a 50-year-old man said he had avoided vaccines because of social media posts calling them dangerous. Choking with emotion, he described the fear and regret that consumed him while hospitalized.

One woman described struggling for air while in intensive care, and being unable to keep her eyes open. She urged anyone within earshot to get vaccinated.

Angela Charlton in Paris contributed.

Biden tells storm-ravaged Louisiana: 'I know you're hurting'

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

LAPLACE, La. (AP) — Giant trees knocked sideways. Homes boarded up with plywood. Off-kilter street signs.

Less than a week after Hurricane Ida battered the Gulf Coast, President Joe Biden walked the streets of a hardhit Louisiana neighborhood and told local residents, "I know you're hurting, I know you're hurting."

Biden pledged robust federal assistance to get people back on their feet and said the government already

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had distributed \$100 million directly to individuals in the state in \$500 checks to give them a first slice of critical help. Many people, he said, don't know what help is available because they can't get cellphone service.

Residents welcomed Biden's Friday presence, one of them drawing a sign with his last name and a heart for the dot on the "i." They laughed and posed for selfies.

More formally, Biden met with state and local officials in LaPlace, a community between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain that suffered major wind and water damage and was left with sheared-off roofs and flooded homes.

"I promise we're going to have your back," Biden said.

He also took a flyover tour of pummeled areas including Lafitte, Grand Isle, Port Fourchon and Lafourche Parish, where Parish President Archie Chaisson said 25% of the homes in his community of 100,000 were gone or had catastrophic damage.

The president later met privately with Gov. John Bel Edwards, House Republican Whip Steve Scalise, who is from Louisiana, and local officials including Chaisson.

The devastation was clear even as Air Force One approached New Orleans, with uprooted trees and blue tarps covering shredded houses coming into view. The road to LaPlace exhibited power-line wood poles jutting from the ground at odd angles.

Trips to natural disaster scenes have long been a feature of U.S. presidencies, moments to demonstrate compassion and show the public leadership during a crisis. They are also opportunities to hit pause, however temporarily, from the political sniping that often dominates Washington.

In shirtsleeves and boots, Biden was welcomed at the airport by Edwards, a Democrat. Several Republicans, including Sen. Bill Cassidy and Rep. Scalise, were also on hand.

Edwards said Biden has "been a tremendous partner," adding that he intended to keep asking for help until the president said no.

In the aftermath of Ida, Biden is focusing anew on the threat posed by climate change and the prospect that disaster zone visits may become a more regular feature of the presidency. The storm has killed at least 14 people in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and at least 49 in the Northeastern U.S.

The president has pointed to that destruction to call for greater public resolve to confront climate change. His \$1 trillion infrastructure legislation intends to ensure that vital networks connecting cities and states and the country as a whole can withstand the flooding, whirlwinds and damage caused by increasingly dangerous weather.

At Friday's briefing with local officials, Biden insisted the infrastructure bill and an even more expansive measure later on would more effectively prepare the country.

"It seems to me we can save a whole lot of money, a whole lot of pain for our constituents, if we build back, rebuild it back in a better way," Biden said. "I realize I'm selling as I'm talking."

Sen. Cassidy tweeted later that in his conversation with Biden, "we spoke about the need for resiliency. We agreed putting power lines beneath the ground would have avoided all of this. The infrastructure bill has billions for grid resiliency."

Past presidents have been defined in part by how they handled such crises.

Seemingly casually, Donald Trump lobbed paper towels to people in Puerto Rico after a hurricane, generating scorn from critics but little damage to his political standing. Barack Obama hugged New Jersey Republican Gov. Chris Christie in 2012 after Superstorm Sandy, a brief respite from partisan tensions that had threatened the economy. George W. Bush fell out of public favor after a poor and unprepared response to Hurricane Katrina, which swamped New Orleans in 2005.

Scientists say climate change increases the frequency of extreme weather events — such as large tropical storms, and the droughts and heatwaves that create conditions for vast wildfires. U.S. weather officials recently reported that July 2021 was the hottest month recorded in 142 years of record-keeping.

Biden's nearly eight-month-old presidency has been shaped in part by perpetual crises. The president went to Texas in February after a cold winter storm caused the state's power grid to fail, and he has closely

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monitored the wildfires in Western states.

Besides natural disasters, the president has had to contend with a multitude of other challenges. He is searching for ways to rescue the 100-200 Americans stuck in Afghanistan after the longest war in U.S. history ended a matter of days ago. He is also confronting the delta variant of the coronavirus that has plunged the country into an autumn of uncertainty only months after he declared independence from the disease at a July 4 celebration on the White House lawn.

Ida was the fifth-most powerful storm to strike the U.S. when it hit Louisiana on Sunday with maximum winds of 150 mph (240 kph), likely causing tens of billions of dollars in flood, wind and other damage, including to the electrical grid. The storm's remnants dropped devastating rainfall across parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey on Wednesday, causing significant disruption to major cities.

Associated Press writers Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Christina Larson and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

Surviving 9/11 was 'just the first piece of the journey'

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) —

Trapped deep in the wreckage of the World Trade Center, Will Jimeno lived through the unthinkable. Twenty years later, he's still living with it.

A brace and a quarter-sized divot on his left leg reflect the injuries that ended his police career, a life-time dream. He has post-traumatic stress disorder. He keeps shelves of mementoes, including a cross and miniature twin towers fashioned from trade center steel. He was portrayed in a movie and wrote two books about enduring the ordeal.

"It never goes away, for those of us that were there that day," he says.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed when hijackers in Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network rammed four commercial jets into the trade center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001. Yet an estimated 33,000 or more people successfully evacuated the stricken buildings.

They navigated mountains of smoky stairs in the World Trade Center's twin towers or streamed out of a flaming Pentagon. Some fled an otherworldly dust cloud at ground zero. Others willed their way out of pitch-dark rubble.

Sept. 11 survivors bear scars and the weight of unanswerable questions. Some grapple with their place in a tragedy defined by an enormous loss of life. They get told to "get over" 9/11. But they also say they have gained resilience, purpose, appreciation and resolve.

"One of the things that I learned," Jimeno says, "is to never give up."

'IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU'RE REBORN'

It wasn't Bruce Stephan's first incredibly close call.

In 1989, his car got perilously wedged on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge when the Loma Prieta earthquake hit and the upper deck collapsed while he was driving across.

Twelve years later, the engineer and lawyer was settling into his workday on the 65th floor of the trade center's north tower when one of the planes crashed about 30 stories above.

Only after his roughly hourlong walk down the crowded stairs did Stephan learn that another plane had hit the south tower — the building where his wife, Joan, also an attorney, worked on the 91st floor. Above the impact zone.

Unable to reach her by cell phone, Bruce Stephan dashed to a payphone and called her relatives, who told him she'd gotten out.

Then the south tower fell, and Stephan's fear spiked anew. Had Joan been caught in the collapse? Hours later, he finally learned that she was OK. (At least one other couple, elevator operators Arturo and Carmen Griffith, also survived; their story inspired a recent film, "Lovebirds of the Twin Towers.")

"My experience from the first disaster was that it's a strangely happy moment when you know that

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you've survived," Bruce Stephan says. "It's almost like you're reborn... to know that you're alive and that you still have a shot at life, and here's your chance to do something."

"When it happened a second time, it's just like, 'Oh, my God.'"

After the earthquake, the New York City natives resolved to change their workaholic lives. After 9/11, they did.

Within two months, the couple moved to Essex, a northern New York town of roughly 700 people. While telecommuting and sometimes actually commuting, they made time for other things — church, a book club, amateur theater, gardening, zoning meetings, a local newsletter. They cherished a newfound sense of community.

But a work opportunity pulled them back to San Francisco in 2009. They loved it, until the pandemic made them rethink their lives again.

"One of the things that that we discovered as a result of the disasters was that being in a community ... is maybe the biggest reward you can have," Stephan, 65, says from their front porch in Essex. They moved back last year.

'I WAS A WALKING ZOMBIE'

Désirée Bouchat pauses by one of the inscribed names on the 9/11 memorial: James Patrick Berger. She last saw him on the 101st floor of the trade center's south tower.

"Some days, it feels like it happened yesterday," she says.

At first, people figured the plane crash at the north tower was accidental. There was no immediate evacuation order for the south tower. But Berger ushered Bouchat and other Aon Corp. colleagues to the elevators, then turned back to check for more people.

Just as Bouchat exited the south tower, another plane slammed into it. Nearly 180 Aon workers perished, including Berger.

For a while, Bouchat told everyone, including herself: "I'm fine. I'm alive."

But "I was a walking zombie," she says now.

She couldn't multitask anymore. Remarks that used to bother her stirred no reaction. She was functioning, but through a fog that took more than a year to lift.

Bouchat eventually felt that she needed to talk about 9/11. The Springfield, New Jersey, resident has now led about 500 tours for the 9/11 Tribute Museum (it's separate from the larger National September 11 Memorial & Museum).

Bruce Powers has traveled from Alexandria, Virginia, to lead Tribute Museum tours, too. And every Sept. 11, the 82-year-old repeats his seven-mile (11 km) walk home from the Pentagon after the attack that killed 184 people, 10 of whom he knew.

The walk, the tours and hearing other guides' personal stories "serve well in helping me deal with what happened," says Powers, a now-retired Navy aviation planner.

The public hasn't fully recognized the losses survivors felt, says Mary Fetchet, a social worker who lost her son Brad on 9/11 and founded Voices Center for Resilience, a support and advocacy group for victims' families, first responders and survivors. "Although they are still living, they're living in a very different way."

'I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW I GOT OUT OF THERE ALIVE'

For a time after 9/11, Police Department Officer Mark DeMarco replayed the what-ifs in his mind. If he'd gone right instead of left. A bit earlier. Or later.

"I couldn't figure out how I got out of there alive," he says.

After helping evacuate the north tower, the Emergency Service Unit officer was surrounded by a maze of debris when parts of the skyscraper tumbled onto a smaller building where he'd been directed. Some officers with him were killed.

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"Have fun with life. Don't be afraid," he says. "But be mindful."

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He still doesn't. But health problems — including a rare cancer that the federal government has linked to trade center dust exposure — forced his 2011 retirement, says Sanders, 62, now living near Orangeburg, South Carolina.

"You get people telling you, 'Well, (9/11) happened so long ago. Get over it.' But it is a trauma," says Sanders, who joined a first responders' and survivors' support group. "It's not something to be gotten over. It's something to be addressed."

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Breathing through an oxygen mask in a hospital bed, Wendy Lanski told herself: "If Osama bin Laden didn't kill me, I'm not dying of COVID."

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"The only good thing about surviving a tragedy or a catastrophe of any kind is: It definitely makes you more resilient," says Lanski, who was hospitalized with the coronavirus — as was her husband — for two touch-and-go-weeks in spring 2020.

But "surviving is only the first piece of the journey," says Lanski, 51, of West Orange, New Jersey.

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Over time, she accepted not knowing.

"But while I'm here, I've got to make it count," says Lanski, who has spoken at schools and traveled to conferences about terror victims. "I've got to make up for 3,000 people who lost their voice."

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Jimeno was freed around 11 p.m., McLoughlin the next morning. Jimeno underwent surgeries and lengthy rehabilitation.

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New York City-based AP reporter Jennifer Peltz has covered the aftermath of 9/11 for more than a decade, including the rebuilding and memorial efforts at ground zero.

Osaka weighs another break from tennis after US Open loss

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Naomi Osaka looked over at her agent and said she wanted to tell the world what the two of them had discussed privately in an Arthur Ashe Stadium hallway after her U.S. Open title defense ended with a racket-tossing, composure-missing, lead-evaporating defeat in the third round.

His reply: "Sure."

And then Osaka, pausing every so often as her voice got caught on her words and her eyes filled with tears, said Friday night she is thinking about taking another break from tennis "for a while."

"I feel like for me, recently, when I win, I don't feel happy, I feel more like a relief. And then when I lose, I feel very sad," Osaka said at her news conference following a 5-7, 7-6 (2), 6-4 loss at Flushing Meadows to Leylah Fernandez, an 18-year-old from Canada who is ranked 73rd and never had been this far in Grand Slam competition. "I don't think that's normal."

The moderator in charge of the session with reporters attempted to cut things off, but Osaka said she wanted to continue.

"This is very hard to articulate," she said, resting her left cheek in her hand. "Basically, I feel like I'm kind of at this point where I'm trying to figure out what I want to do, and I honestly don't know when I'm going to play my next tennis match."

Crying, she lowered her black visor over her eyes and offered an apology, then patted her palms on both cheeks.

"Yeah," Osaka added as she rose to leave, "I think I'm going to take a break from playing for a while."

This was the first Slam tournament for the 23-year-old Osaka since she pulled out of the French Open before the second round to take a mental health break after having announced she would not participate in news conferences in Paris.

She also sat out Wimbledon, before participating in the Tokyo Olympics, where she lit the cauldron as

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one of Japan's most famous athletes.

Osaka owns four Grand Slam titles, including at the U.S. Open in 2018 — beating Serena Williams in a chaotic final — and a year ago, plus two more on the hard courts of the Australian Open. When she took a hiatus after Roland Garros, she revealed that she endures waves of anxiety before meeting with the media and has dealt with depression for three years.

Over the last week, Osaka has written on social media and spoken about her thoughts on the importance of self-belief and how she wants to ignore others' expectations.

The first sign Friday that things were not entirely OK with Osaka came when she smacked her racket against the court after dropping one point. Moments later, Osaka chucked her equipment, sending it bouncing and skidding halfway to the net. Then came a full-on spike near the baseline.

Afterward, she compared that behavior to acting "kind of like a little kid."

"I was telling myself to be calm, but I feel like maybe there was a boiling point," Osaka said. "Like, normally, I feel like I like challenges. But recently I feel very anxious when things don't go my way, and I feel like you can feel that."

Her game was off. Her game face was gone. By the end, the crowd was booing her for turning her back to the court and taking too much time between points.

Soon enough, the No. 3-seeded Osaka was out of the bracket.

This day had that sort of vibe: Earlier in Ashe, another 18-year-old new to this territory surprisingly eliminated a No. 3 seed when Carlos Alcaraz of Spain edged French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 0-6, 7-6 (5) to become the youngest man into the fourth round at Flushing Meadows since Michael Chang and Pete Sampras in 1989.

Osaka came in with a 16-match winning streak at majors. Still, Fernandez declared: "Right before the match, I knew I was able to win."

For Osaka, maybe the time away from high-level competition was an issue.

Another possible factor in her failure to close things out while serving for the victory against the left-hander Fernandez at 6-5 in the second set: Osaka hadn't played a match since Monday. The usual day-on, day-off rhythm at Slams was disrupted because the woman Osaka was supposed to meet in the second round, Olga Danilovic, withdrew with an illness.

"I've never had a walkover in a Grand Slam, so that was definitely a really weird feeling," Osaka said.

On Friday, Osaka was quite good down the stretch in the opening set. She grabbed 12 of 13 points, including the last nine, with a break at love to go up 6-5, and a hold at love with the help of a pair of aces at 112 mph and 114 mph to end it.

Seemed on track for a similar conclusion in the second set, leading 6-5 and serving. But when Osaka sailed a forehand wide, Fernandez had her first break of the match to make it 6-all.

"Finally, I found a pattern to her serve," Fernandez said. "I just trusted my gut and hit the ball."

And so began Osaka's downward spiral. She fell behind 5-0 in the ensuing tiebreaker, missing shots and displaying her frustration as she occasionally has done in the past — by flinging her racket.

Chair umpire Alison Hughes did not sanction Osaka then, although later a warning was issued for hitting a ball into the stands.

"I wasn't really focused on Naomi," Fernandez said. "I was only focused on myself, my game, what I needed to do."

More to the point, Osaka was not at her best. She left the court with a white towel draped over her head after the second set, then sat in her changeover chair in that same block-out-the-world manner.

Fernandez, smiling and holding her right fist overhead after the biggest of points, certainly had something to do with the outcome.

She won 18 of 19 first-serve points — and never faced a break point — in the third set.

Fernandez's knee-to-the-ground, quick-redirect style at the baseline is reminiscent of another lefty, Angelique Kerber, a three-time Grand Slam champion who won the 2016 U.S. Open.

And who just so happens to be the next opponent for Fernandez.

"I'm going to put on a show like I did tonight," Fernandez said, "and we're going to see how it goes."

More AP tennis: <https://apnews.com/hub/tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Brazil starts booster shots while many still await a 2nd jab

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and DÉBORA ÁLVARES Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Some cities in Brazil are providing booster shots of the COVID-19 vaccine, even though most people have yet to receive their second jabs, in a sign of the concern in the country over the highly contagious delta variant.

Rio de Janeiro, currently Brazil's epicenter for the variant and home to one of its largest elderly populations, began administering the boosters Wednesday. Northeastern cities Salvador and Sao Luis started on Monday, and the most populous city of Sao Paulo will begin Sept. 6. The rest of the nation will follow the next week.

France, Israel, China and Chile are among those countries giving boosters to some of their older citizens, but more people in those countries are fully vaccinated than the 30% who have gotten two shots in Brazil. A U.S. plan to start delivery of booster shots by Sept. 20 for most Americans is facing complications that could delay third doses for those who received the Moderna vaccine, administration officials said Friday.

About nine out of 10 Brazilians have been vaccinated already or plan to be, according to pollster Datafolha. Most have gotten their first shot but not their second.

Brazil's cases and deaths have been falling for two months, with 621 deaths reported in the seven days through Sept. 2 — far below April's peak of more than 3,000 reported deaths over a seven-day period. Older Brazilians have expressed concern about the efficacy of the Chinese Sinovac vaccine against the delta variant, prompting authorities to offer the booster shots.

Diana dos Santos, 71, received two shots of the Sinovac vaccine even after President Jair Bolsonaro spent months publicly criticizing it. Dos Santos, who lives Rio's low-income Maré neighborhood, is diabetic and was hospitalized for a heart condition. She refuses to leave home until she gets her booster.

"I can't go out like before and I'm still afraid of all of this," dos Santos said. "I will feel safer (with a booster)."

Because of the variant, some experts say the government should slow the rollout of boosters and focus on distributing second doses. Delta is the most contagious variant identified, and many studies have suggested that one dose doesn't protect against it. Two shots provide strong protection, with nearly all hospitalizations and deaths among the unvaccinated.

Ethel Maciel, an epidemiologist and professor at the Federal University of Espirito Santo, said pushing boosters at this early stage recalls the lack of concern given the gamma variant that overwhelmed Amazonian city Manaus earlier this year, only to feed a new wave nationwide. Brazil has seen more than 580,000 deaths from COVID-19, making it home to world's eighth-highest toll on a per-capita basis.

"It seems we're in the same movie, repeating the same errors," Maciel said. "It's only a matter of time until what's happening in Rio leads to a greater number of more serious cases in the rest of the country."

The delta variant already is dominant in Rio de Janeiro state, detected in 86% of the samples collected from COVID-19 patients, according to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. Intensive care units have reached full capacity in eight municipalities, although only a small rise in deaths have been recorded so far.

Authorities in Sao Paulo state expect a similar scenario within weeks. It registered its first confirmed death from the delta variant on Tuesday, a 74-year-old woman who had received two Sinovac shots.

Globally, doubts have plagued Chinese vaccines, especially as the delta variant has gained hold in many countries. Chinese officials have maintained the vaccine protects against delta, particularly preventing hospitalizations and severe cases.

Still, Brazil's Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga said Aug. 25 that people aged 70 or older or who have a weak immune system will be eligible for a third dose, starting Sept. 15 -- preferably with the Pfizer vac-

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cine. He said that people over 18 will have received their first doses by then, although he didn't address their vulnerability to the delta variant without a second shot.

He also criticized governors and mayors who sought to deliver booster shots earlier, saying it could lead to vaccine shortages.

Carla Domingues, former coordinator of Brazil's national immunization program, agrees with the need to provide the elderly boosters, but not for people aged 70 and up right away. Shots should first go to nursing homes and people who are bed-ridden, she said, then people 80 and above, with the age slowly decreasing as supply allows.

"Certainly there will be problems with shortage, because there won't be enough vaccine," Domingues said.

Japan and South Korea both wrestled with slow vaccine rollouts, and under half their populations are fully vaccinated; their governments are only planning booster shots in the fourth quarter of this year. Malaysia also is considering boosters, but Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the priority is those who haven't received a first dose.

Thailand began giving booster shots even as most people wait to be vaccinated — but only for health and front-line workers who received two Sinovac shots. The decision came after a nurse died of COVID-19 in July.

Russia, Hungary and Serbia also are giving boosters, although there has been a lack of demand in those countries for the initial shots amid abundant supplies.

In addition to doubts over boosters, the issue is sensitive due to implications for global vaccine distribution. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has called for a moratorium on boosters "to allow those countries that are furthest behind to catch up."

Epidemiologist Denise Garrett, vice president of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, which advocates for expanding global vaccine access, said in an interview there is no doubt about the need for two jabs, but she sees no scientific or moral justification for a third.

"Authorities giving a third dose are prioritizing protection against light disease instead of shielding people in poor countries from death," said Garrett, who is Brazilian. "That is shameful, immoral, and this vaccine inequity must end."

That doesn't sway 97-year-old Maria Menezes, who wants to spend time outside her home where she has lived for the last seven decades in Rio's western region. Her two daughters say Menezes wants a booster shot.

"She asked us to take her for the third vaccine," said daughter Cristina França, 38. "It will be important to beef up her immunity to reduce her risks. Her life won't change much after the third dose, because she is more frail now, but she would live with more calm."

Alvares reported from Brasilia. Also contributing were Associated Press writers David Biller and Diane Jeantet in Rio de Janeiro, along with AP writers around the world.

Judge shields Texas clinics from anti-abortion group's suits

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A state judge has shielded, for now, Texas abortion clinics from lawsuits by an anti-abortion group under a new state abortion law in a narrow ruling handed down Friday.

The temporary restraining order Friday by state District Judge Maya Guerra Gamble in Austin in response to the Planned Parenthood request does not interfere with the provision. However, it shields clinics from whistleblower lawsuits by the nonprofit group Texas Right to Life, its legislative director and 100 unidentified individuals.

A hearing on a preliminary injunction request was set for Sept. 13.

The law, which took effect Wednesday, allows anyone anywhere to sue anyone connected to an abortion in which cardiac activity was detected in the embryo — as early as six weeks into a pregnancy before most women even realize they are pregnant.

In a petition filed late Thursday, Planned Parenthood said about 85% to 90% of people who obtain

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abortion in Texas are at least six weeks into pregnancy.

The order "offers protection to the brave health care providers and staff at Planned Parenthood health centers throughout Texas, who have continued to offer care as best they can within the law while facing surveillance, harassment, and threats from vigilantes eager to stop them," said Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Helene Krasnoff in a statement.

However, the order will not deter Texas Right to Life's efforts, said Elizabeth Graham, the group's vice president. In a statement, the group said: "We expect an impartial court will dismiss Planned Parenthood's lawsuit. Until then, we will continue our diligent efforts to ensure the abortion industry fully follows" the new law.

Power to be restored to New Orleans by middle of next week

By REBECCA SANTANA, MELINDA DESLATE and KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Power should be restored to New Orleans by the middle of next week, utility officials said Friday, and sheriff's deputies warned people returning to communities outside the city to come equipped like survivalists because of the lack of basic services in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida.

The storm knocked out electricity to more than 1 million customers in Louisiana, but almost all lights in the city should be back on by Wednesday, according to Entergy, the company that provides power to New Orleans and much of southeast Louisiana in the storm's path.

The lack of power has made a sultry stretch of summer hard to bear and added to woes in the aftermath of Ida. Louisiana authorities searched Friday for a man who shot another man to death after they both waited in a long line to fill up at a gas station in suburban New Orleans.

The utility issued a statement asking for patience and acknowledging the heat and misery in the storm's wake. More than 25,000 workers from 40 states are trying to fix 14,000 damaged poles, more than 2,200 broken transformers and more than 150 destroyed transmission structures.

"Please know that thousands of employees and contractors are currently in the field working day and night to restore power. We will continue working until every community is restored," said Rod West, a group president for utility operations.

The outlook was bleaker south and west of the city, where Ida's fury fully struck. The sheriff's office in Lafourche Parish cautioned returning residents about the difficult situation that awaited them — no power, no running water, little cellphone service and almost no gasoline.

"Residents can return to the parish outside of curfew times but are advised to come prepared with all provisions necessary to self-sustain," deputies wrote on Facebook.

The utility offered no promises for when the lights will come back on in the parishes outside New Orleans, some of which were battered for hours by winds of 100 mph (160 kph) or more.

President Joe Biden arrived Friday to survey the damage. He met with local officials and toured a neighborhood in LaPlace, a community between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain that suffered catastrophic wind and water damage that sheared off roofs and flooded homes. The president also planned a flyover tour of other hard-hit communities, including Lafitte, Grand Isle, Port Fourchon and Lafourche Parish.

"I promise we're going to have your back," Biden said at the outset of a briefing by officials.

But some people could not wait for the power to come back, and a second evacuation was underway. New Orleans and neighboring Jefferson Parish continue to help people find shelters or connect with family members outside the heavily damaged areas.

C.J. Conrady was at one of those centers Friday in Marrero with his brother and their mother. She was in a wheelchair after a surgery just before Ida struck left her with incisions all the way up her back. An intravenous line to give her antibiotics fell out the day before, and there was no refrigeration in their home to keep the insulin for her diabetes cold.

"We decided to tough it out and see if the power would come back on soon. It did not," Conrady said.

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell said the city on Friday started helping to relocate residents of senior

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homes. At the Renaissance Place senior home, dozens of residents lined up to get on minibuses equipped with wheelchair lifts after city officials said they determined conditions at the facility were not safe and evacuated it.

Reggie Brown, 68, who was waiting to join fellow residents on a bus, said residents, many in wheelchairs, have been stuck at the facility since Ida. He said elevators stopped working three days ago and garbage was piling up inside. The residents were being taken to a state-run shelter, the mayor's office said.

"I'm getting on the last bus," Brown said. "I'm able-bodied."

A phone message for the company that manages the Renaissance site, HSI Management Inc., was not immediately returned.

On Saturday, the city was to start providing daily transportation for other residents seeking to leave for public shelters, Cantrell said.

Gwen Warren was already trying to get out on Friday, waiting for a bus to Alexandria or maybe farther north to Monroe. She stayed after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 knocked out power for weeks. But at 61, Warren said the stifling September weather was just too much.

"Any place the Lord blesses us to go out of this heat, where we're able to get some food, get a hot bath and, you know, just some comfort, is fine," Warren said.

In other developments, Louisiana health officials started an investigation into the deaths of four nursing home residents who were evacuated to a warehouse ahead of the severe weather.

The residents who died were among hundreds from seven nursing homes taken to the warehouse in Independence, where health officials received reports of people lying on mattresses on the floor, not being fed or changed and not being socially distanced to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, which is currently ravaging the state.

A coroner classified three of the deaths as storm-related.

When a large team of state health inspectors showed up on Tuesday to investigate the warehouse, the owner of the nursing homes demanded that they leave immediately, Louisiana Department of Health spokesperson Aly Neel said.

Neel identified the owner as Bob Dean. The Associated Press called several numbers connected to Dean and attorneys who have represented him in the past, but they did not respond.

Dean told Baton Rouge television station WAFB that the inspectors were on his property illegally.

"We only had five deaths within the six days, and normally with 850 people, you'll have a couple a day, so we did really good with taking care of people," Dean said.

Louisiana's health department said Friday that two dozen nursing homes have been evacuated from parishes hard-hit by Ida.

Gov. John Bel Edwards promised a full investigation and "aggressive legal action" if warranted and said none of the other nursing homes were having issues.

Biden has promised full federal support to Gulf Coast states and the Northeast, where Ida's remnants dumped record-breaking rain and killed at least 50 people from Virginia to Connecticut.

At least 14 deaths were blamed on the storm in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, including the three nursing home deaths. The Louisiana Department of Health on Friday reported an additional death — a 59-year-old man who was poisoned by carbon monoxide from a generator that was believed to be running inside his home. Several deaths in the aftermath of the storm have been blamed on carbon monoxide poisoning, which can happen if generators are run improperly.

"The most dangerous part of a hurricane is after the storm," said Entergy New Orleans CEO Deanna Rodriguez, who asked people to be careful around generators. "Here it's sadly happening again."

More than 800,000 homes and businesses remained without power Friday evening across southeast Louisiana, according to the Public Service Commission. That's about 36% of all utility customers statewide, but it's down from the peak of around 1.1 million five days ago as the storm arrived with top winds of 150 mph (230 kph). It is tied for the fifth-strongest hurricane ever to strike the mainland U.S.

Deslatte reported from Baton Rouge and Santana reported from Marrero. Associated Press writers Chevel

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Johnson in New Orleans; Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta; and Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

Biden walks storm-ravaged Louisiana: 'I know you're hurting'

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

LAPLACE, La. (AP) — Giant trees knocked sideways. Homes boarded up with plywood. Off-kilter street signs.

Less than a week after Hurricane Ida battered the Gulf Coast, President Joe Biden walked the streets of a hardhit Louisiana neighborhood on Friday and told local residents, "I know you're hurting, I know you're hurting."

Biden pledged robust federal assistance to get people back on their feet and said the government already had distributed \$100 million directly to individuals in the state in \$500 checks to give them a first slice of critical help. Many people, he said, don't know what help is available because they can't get cellphone service.

Residents welcomed Biden's presence, one of them drawing a sign with his last name and a heart for the dot on the "i." They laughed and posed for selfies.

More formally, Biden met with state and local officials in LaPlace, a community between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain that suffered major wind and water damage and was left with sheared-off roofs and flooded homes.

"I promise we're going to have your back," Biden said.

He also took a flyover tour of pummeled areas including Lafitte, Grand Isle, Port Fourchon and Lafourche Parish, where Parish President Archie Chaisson said 25% of the homes in his community of 100,000 were gone or had catastrophic damage.

The president later met privately with Gov. John Bel Edwards, House Republican Whip Steve Scalise, who is from Louisiana, and local officials including Chaisson.

The devastation was clear even as Air Force One approached New Orleans, with uprooted trees and blue tarps covering shredded houses coming into view. The road to LaPlace exhibited power-line wood poles jutting from the ground at odd angles.

Trips to natural disaster scenes have long been a feature of U.S. presidencies, moments to demonstrate compassion and show the public leadership during a crisis. They are also opportunities to hit pause, however temporarily, from the political sniping that often dominates Washington.

In shirtsleeves and boots, Biden was welcomed at the airport by Edwards, a Democrat. Several Republicans, including Sen. Bill Cassidy and Rep. Scalise, were also on hand.

Edwards said Biden has "been a tremendous partner," adding that he intended to keep asking for help until the president said no.

In the aftermath of Ida, Biden is focusing anew on the threat posed by climate change and the prospect that disaster zone visits may become a more regular feature of the presidency. The storm has killed at least 14 people in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and at least 48 in the Northeastern U.S.

The president has pointed to that destruction to call for greater public resolve to confront climate change. His \$1 trillion infrastructure legislation intends to ensure that vital networks connecting cities and states and the country as a whole can withstand the flooding, whirlwinds and damage caused by increasingly dangerous weather.

At Friday's briefing with local officials, Biden insisted the infrastructure bill and an even more expansive measure later on would more effectively prepare the country.

"It seems to me we can save a whole lot of money, a whole lot of pain for our constituents, if we build back, rebuild it back in a better way," Biden said. "I realize I'm selling as I'm talking."

Sen. Cassidy tweeted later that in his conversation with Biden, "we spoke about the need for resiliency. We agreed putting power lines beneath the ground would have avoided all of this. The infrastructure bill has billions for grid resiliency."

Past presidents have been defined in part by how they handled such crises.

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Seemingly casually, Donald Trump lobbed paper towels to people in Puerto Rico after a hurricane, generating scorn from critics but little damage to his political standing. Barack Obama hugged New Jersey Republican Gov. Chris Christie in 2012 after Superstorm Sandy, a brief respite from partisan tensions that had threatened the economy. George W. Bush fell out of public favor after a poor and unprepared response to Hurricane Katrina, which swamped New Orleans in 2005.

Scientists say climate change increases the frequency of extreme weather events — such as large tropical storms, and the droughts and heatwaves that create conditions for vast wildfires. U.S. weather officials recently reported that July 2021 was the hottest month recorded in 142 years of record-keeping.

Biden's nearly eight-month-old presidency has been shaped in part by perpetual crises. The president went to Texas in February after a cold winter storm caused the state's power grid to fail, and he has closely monitored the wildfires in Western states.

Besides natural disasters, the president has had to contend with a multitude of other challenges. He is searching for ways to rescue the 100-200 Americans stuck in Afghanistan after the longest war in U.S. history ended a matter of days ago. He is also confronting the delta variant of the coronavirus that has plunged the country into an autumn of uncertainty only months after he declared independence from the disease at a July 4 celebration on the White House lawn.

Ida was the fifth-most powerful storm to strike the U.S. when it hit Louisiana on Sunday with maximum winds of 150 mph (240 kph), likely causing tens of billions of dollars in flood, wind and other damage, including to the electrical grid. The storm's remnants dropped devastating rainfall across parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey on Wednesday, causing significant disruption to major cities.

Associated Press writers Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Christina Larson and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

Biden moves to declassify documents about Sept. 11 attacks

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday directed the declassification of certain documents related to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, a supportive gesture to victims' families who have long sought the records in hopes of implicating the Saudi government.

The order, coming little more than a week before the 20th anniversary of the attacks, is a significant moment in a yearslong tussle between the government and the families over what classified information about the run-up to the attacks could be made public. That conflict was on display last month when many relatives, survivors and first responders came out against Biden's participation in 9/11 memorial events if the documents remained classified.

Biden said Friday that he was making good on a campaign commitment by ordering the declassification review and pledged that his administration "will continue to engage respectfully with members of this community."

"The significant events in question occurred two decades ago or longer, and they concern a tragic moment that continues to resonate in American history and in the lives of so many Americans," the executive order states. "It is therefore critical to ensure that the United States Government maximizes transparency, relying on classification only when narrowly tailored and necessary."

The order directs the Justice Department and other executive branch agencies to begin a declassification review, and requires that declassified documents be released over the next six months.

Brett Eagleson, whose father, Bruce, was among the World Trade Center victims and who is an advocate for other victims' relatives, commended the action as a "critical first step." He said the families would be closely watching the process to make sure that the Justice Department follows through and acts "in good faith."

"The first test will be on 9/11, and the world will be watching. We look forward to thanking President Biden in person next week as he joins us at Ground Zero to honor those who died or were injured 20

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years ago," Eagleson said.

Still, the practical impact of the executive order and any new documents it might yield was not immediately clear. Public documents released in the last two decades, including by the 9/11 Commission, have detailed numerous Saudi entanglements but have not proved government complicity.

A long-running lawsuit in federal court in New York aims to hold the Saudi government accountable and alleges that Saudi officials provided significant support to some of the hijackers before the attacks. The lawsuit took a major step forward this year with the questioning under oath of former Saudi officials, and family members have long regarded the disclosure of declassified documents as an important step in making their case.

The Saudi government has denied any connection to the attacks.

Fifteen of the hijackers were Saudi, as was Osama bin Laden, whose al-Qaida network was behind the attacks. Particular scrutiny has centered on the support offered to the first two hijackers to arrive in the U.S., Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar, including from a Saudi national with ties to the Saudi government who helped the men find and lease an apartment in San Diego and who had earlier attracted FBI scrutiny.

Though many documents examining potential Saudi ties have been released, U.S. officials have long regarded other records as too sensitive for disclosure. On Thursday, victims' families and survivors urged the Justice Department's inspector general to investigate the FBI's apparent inability to locate key pieces of evidence they've been seeking.

The Justice Department revealed last month that the FBI had recently completed an investigation examining certain 9/11 hijackers and potential co-conspirators, and that it was working toward providing more information.

Under the terms of the executive order, the FBI must complete by Sept. 11 its declassification review of documents from that probe, which it has referred to as the "Subfile Investigation." Additional documents, including any phone and bank records and reports with investigative findings, are to be reviewed with an eye for disclosure over the course of the next six months.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Ida evacuee's thought: 'How am I going to get out of this?'

By WAYNE PARRY and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

MANVILLE, N.J. (AP) — One after another, storm evacuees in Manville, a central New Jersey town along the rain-swollen Raritan River, told the same story: an urgent late-night knock on the door, a wall of water crashing into their apartments, being rescued by boat and taken to higher ground.

Until that ground also flooded, necessitating a second rescue.

Richie Leonardis, a 60-year-old who has had one leg amputated and uses a wheelchair, said an air raid siren went off around 4 a.m. Thursday. Within minutes, police knocked on his door urging him to evacuate.

"When I opened the door, the water rushed in and almost knocked me out of my wheelchair," he said. "The cops had to grab me to keep me from going under the water."

On Friday afternoon, Leonardis was at a Veterans of Foreign Wars post near downtown that was being used as a temporary shelter for displaced flood victims. He joined a couple dozen others, amid rows of folding cots and blankets and tables laden with mountains of donated clothing and toys.

Police had brought a boat to Leonardis' door to bring him and several others from his apartment complex to a Quick-Check convenience store nearby that was on higher ground.

But before long, the Quick Check started to flood. Store workers told everyone to leave, as they, too, were evacuating, Leonardis said.

He called 911 and said they needed to be re-evacuated. "Outside, there was a 25 mph (40 kph) speed limit sign that was a good 12 feet (3.6 meters) tall; you could only see the top 2 inches (5 centimeters) of it."

Richard Leoncini, 65, also had to be rescued by boat from his apartment.

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"I woke up, looked outside and opened the door, and the water rushed in, 6 feet (2 meters) of it, and it knocked me backward," he said. "The fire department came and got me in a boat. You're waiting for that boat to arrive and you're surrounded by water in your apartment and you're thinking, 'How am I going to get out of this?'"

Hurricane Ida's remnants hit the Northeast hard. Rainfall overwhelmed drainage systems, setting records in some places including New York City. At least 25 people died in New Jersey alone, most from drowning.

Manville, which lies along the Raritan River, is almost always hard-hit by major storms; it was the scene of catastrophic flooding in 1998 as the remnants of Tropical Storm Floyd swept over New Jersey. It also sustained serious flooding during the aftermath of Hurricane Irene in 2011 and Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

About 30 miles (50 kilometers) away in Elizabeth, at least three dozen people sat and stood on the steps of the Dunn Sports Center. Some had Red Cross blankets, others had piled belongings into bags and suitcases.

The shelter is a waystation on what could be a long road back home for many, displaced by flooding that left the city streaked with rust-colored mud and littered with broken-down cars near the Elizabeth River.

Kelly Martins, spokeswoman for Elizabeth, confirmed that 600 people have been displaced by the storm in the city.

Buses idled, waiting to carry people to hotels. They can stay for free for up to a week, said Schenqia Harris, who left the apartment she shares with her mother, Taisy Harris, because the bottom floor had been flooded and there is a threat of mold.

Taisy Harris said she got warnings on her phone about the weather, but was shocked at how quickly her street turned into a river.

Food in foil-wrapped containers and trolleys stacked high with donated diapers shuttled into the center. Inside there was pizza, chicken, rice and hamburgers, Schenqia Harris said.

Ira Dettaway, whose basement apartment was flooded in the storm, marveled at the generosity.

"Some people probably got better today than they've had in a long time," she said about the food.

Back in Manville, Stacey Schember had been asleep in her apartment when she was awakened by sog-giness wicking up through her mattress. She stepped out of bed into knee-high water that quickly rose.

"My personal hygiene stuff was floating all around the living room," she said. "I'm on 14 different pre-scriptions, and my medicines were all floating around my apartment, bobbing in the waves. I managed to get one small bag of clothes that were still dry and I climbed into the rescue boat."

Jeremy Rogers had just dragged the 13th large plastic bag of household belongings that was now waterlogged trash to the curb outside his house on Friday.

"We watched the water come up one side from the valley and meet up with the water on the other side of the house coming up from the sewer," he said. "My basement has two feet (0.6 meters) of raw sewage in it now."

Evacuees were split on whether they would continue to live here. Some, expressing satisfaction with decent landlords, trusted them to clean up and repair the dwellings. Others, however, had finally had enough and vowed to move to somewhere not in a known flood plain.

"That goes without saying now," Schember said.

Robert Martes and his girlfriend waited Friday at the Elizabeth shelter for a bus to take them to a hotel. Martes said he realized the storm was going to be bad Wednesday night after he got off work as an Amazon employee, headed to a convenience store to stock up — and saw a wall of water in the street on his way home.

He said he walked back to his basement apartment through chest-high water to get his girlfriend, who was home alone.

"We lost everything," he said. "I don't even have words."

As for what's next, Martes said they're going to use their vouchers for a hotel stay and that he's going to stay in the city of Elizabeth. Beyond that, he said, he just appreciates the help.

"I gotta be grateful," he said.

Catalini reported from Elizabeth, New Jersey.

New Zealand police were following extremist who stabbed 6

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand authorities were so worried about an extremist inspired by the Islamic State group that they were following him around the clock and were able to shoot and kill him within 60 seconds of him unleashing a knife attack that wounded six people Friday at an Auckland supermarket.

Three of the shoppers were taken to Auckland hospitals in critical condition, police said. Another was in serious condition, while two more were in moderate condition.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described the violence as a terror attack. She said the man was a Sri Lankan national who was inspired by the Islamic State group and was well known to the nation's security agencies.

Ardern said she had been personally briefed on the man in the past but there had been no legal reason for him to be detained.

"Had he done something that would have allowed us to put him into prison, he would have been in prison," Ardern said.

The attack unfolded at about 2:40 p.m. at a Countdown supermarket in New Zealand's largest city.

Police Commissioner Andrew Coster said a police surveillance team and a specialist tactics group had followed the man from his home in the suburb of Glen Eden to the supermarket in New Lynn.

But while they had grave concerns about the man, they had no particular reason to think he was planning an attack on Friday, Coster said. The man appeared to be going into the store to do his grocery shopping.

"He entered the store, as he had done before. He obtained a knife from within the store," Coster said. "Surveillance teams were as close as they possibly could be to monitor his activity."

Witnesses said the man shouted "Allahu akbar" — meaning "God is great" — and started stabbing random shoppers, sending people running and screaming.

Coster said that when the commotion started, two police from the special tactics group rushed over. He said the man charged at the officers with the knife and so they shot and killed him.

A bystander video taken inside the supermarket records the sound of 10 shots being fired in rapid succession.

Coster said there would be questions about whether police could have reacted even quicker. He said the man was very aware of the constant surveillance and they needed to be some distance away for it to be effective.

Ardern said the attack was violent and senseless, and she was sorry it had happened.

"What happened today was despicable. It was hateful. It was wrong," Ardern said. "It was carried out by an individual. Not a faith, not a culture, not an ethnicity. But an individual person who is gripped by ideology that is not supported here by anyone or any community."

Ardern said the man had first moved to New Zealand in 2011 and had been monitored by security agencies since 2016. She said authorities are confident he acted alone.

Ardern said legal constraints imposed by New Zealand courts prevented her from discussing everything that she wanted to about the case, but she was hoping to have those constraints lifted soon.

Some shoppers in the supermarket tried to help those who had been wounded by grabbing towels and diapers and whatever else they could find from the shelves.

"To everyone who was there and who witnessed such a horrific event, I can't imagine how they will be feeling in the aftermath," Ardern said. "But thank you for coming to the aid of those who needed you when they needed you."

Auckland is in a strict lockdown as it battles an outbreak of the coronavirus. Most businesses are shut and people are generally allowed to leave their homes only to buy groceries, for medical needs or to exercise.

Sri Lanka's government expressed shock and sadness over the attack attributed to a person of Sri Lankan origin.

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"Sri Lanka condemns this senseless violence, and stands ready to cooperate with New Zealand authorities in any way necessary," its Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Extremist ideology is rare in New Zealand, and Ardern said only a tiny number of people would be subject to such intense surveillance.

In 2019, a white supremacist gunned down worshippers at two Christchurch mosques, killing 51 people and injuring dozens more. After pleading guilty last year, Brenton Tarrant was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. The killings sparked changes to gun laws in New Zealand, which has now banned the deadliest types of semi-automatic weapons.

Among those to condemn the attack Friday were members of the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, which was at the center of the mosque attacks two years ago.

"We stand with the victims of the horrible incident," said Gamal Fouda, the imam of Al Noor. "We feel strongly the pain of terrorism, and there are no words that can convey our condemnation of such a horrible act."

Searches, sorrow in wake of Ida's destructive, deadly floods

By MIKE CATALINI, WAYNE PARRY and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

ELIZABETH, N.J. (AP) — Police went door to door in search of more possible victims and drew up lists of the missing as the death toll rose to 49 on Friday in the catastrophic flooding set off across the Northeast by the remnants of Hurricane Ida.

The disaster underscored with heartbreaking clarity how vulnerable the U.S. is to the extreme weather that climate change is bringing. In its wake, officials weighed far-reaching new measures to save lives in future storms.

More than three days after the hurricane blew ashore in Louisiana, Ida's rainy remains hit the Northeast with stunning fury on Wednesday and Thursday, submerging cars, swamping subway stations and basement apartments and drowning scores of people in five states.

Intense rain overwhelmed urban drainage systems never meant to handle so much water in such a short time — a record 3 inches (7.5 centimeters) in just an hour in New York. Seven rivers in the Northeast reached their highest levels on record, Dartmouth College researcher Evan Dethier said.

On Friday, communities labored to haul away ruined vehicles, pump out homes and highways, clear away muck and other debris and restore mass transit.

Even after clouds gave way to blue skies, some rivers and streams were still rising. Part of the swollen Passaic River in New Jersey wasn't expected to crest until Friday night.

"People think it's beautiful out, which it is, that this thing's behind us and we can go back to business as usual, and we're not there yet," New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy warned.

At least 25 people perished in New Jersey, the most of any state. Most drowned after their vehicles were caught in flash floods. A family of three and their neighbor were killed as 12 to 14 feet (3.5 to 4 meters) of water filled their apartments in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Across the street, Jennifer Vilchez said she could hear people crying, "Help! Help!" from their windows. At least six people remained missing in the state, Murphy said.

In New York City, 11 people died when they were unable to escape rising water in their low-lying apartments. A man, woman and 2-year-old boy perished as their Queens street turned into a raging gully, hemmed in by a concrete wall on the nearby Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.

Officials said Friday that five of the six apartments where people died were illegally converted.

New York's subways were running Friday with delays or not at all. North of the city, commuter train service remained suspended or severely curtailed. In the Hudson Valley, where several feet of mud covered tracks, Metro-North President Catherine Rinaldi said she didn't expect service to be restored until early next week.

Floodwaters and a falling tree also took lives in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New York.

While the storm ravaged homes and the electrical grid in Louisiana and Mississippi, leaving more than 800,000 people without power as of Friday, it seemingly proved more lethal over 1,000 miles (1,600 kilome-

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ters) away, where the Northeast death toll outstripped the 14 lives reported lost so far in the Deep South. Ida stands as the deadliest hurricane in the U.S. in four years.

In a second wave of calamity in the Northeast, fires broke out in swamped homes and businesses, many inaccessible to firefighters because of floodwaters. Authorities said gas leaks triggered by flooding were likely to blame.

A Manville, New Jersey banquet hall exploded in flames around 2 a.m. Friday. Its owner, Jayesh Mehta, said he felt helpless and heartbroken looking at videos of his burning business.

"I don't know what to do and how to deal with something like this," Mehta told NJ Advance Media.

In Philadelphia, part of the crosstown Vine Street Expressway remained flooded after the Schuylkill River reached its highest level since 1902. An inch-thick (2.5-centimeter-thick) layer of mud was left where the road had dried.

Officials said they wanted to get the highway reopened by Saturday afternoon, when thousands of people are expected for the two-day Made in America music festival, which Mayor Jim Kenney insisted will go on as planned.

In New York City, teams of police officers knocked on doors to check for anyone left behind. Police reviewed emergency calls from when the storm hit to pinpoint where people may have been in harm's way. Calls to the city's 911 system Wednesday night peaked at 12 times above normal.

In Wilmington, Delaware, crews rescued more than 200 people after the Brandywine River reached record levels, swamping roads, bridges and homes. No major injuries were reported.

Ida came ashore Sunday in Louisiana tied as the fifth-strongest storm to ever hit the U.S. mainland, then moved north. Forecasters warned of hazardous flooding, but the ferocity of the storm caught the nation's most densely populated metropolitan corridor by surprise.

In Manville, on the Raritan River, storm evacuees told the same story: an urgent knock on the door, a wall of water crashing into their apartments, being rescued by boat and taken to higher ground — until that ground also flooded, necessitating a second rescue.

Richie Leonardis, a 60-year-old who has had one leg amputated and uses a wheelchair, said a siren went off around 4 a.m. Thursday. Within minutes, police knocked on his door, urging him to evacuate.

"When I opened the door, the water rushed in and almost knocked me out of my wheelchair," he said. "The cops had to grab me to keep me from going under the water."

Richard Leoncini said 6 feet (2 meters) of water rushed in when he opened his door, knocking him backwards.

"The fire department came and got me in a boat," Leoncini, 65, said. "You're waiting for that boat to arrive and you're surrounded by water in your apartment and you're thinking, 'How am I going to get out of this?'"

Leaders in some states pledged to examine whether anything could be done to prevent a catastrophe like this from happening again.

New Jersey and New York have both spent billions of dollars improving flood defenses after Superstorm Sandy hit in 2012, but much of that work was focused primarily on protecting communities from seawater, not rain.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said the region needs to turn its attention to storm water systems unprepared to handle a future of more frequent flash flooding because of climate change.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said the city will work to clear people from roads, subway trains and basement apartments in advance of major rainstorms, and will ban travel as it does during major snowstorms. He said the city will also send cellphone alerts warning people to leave basement apartments and dispatch city workers to get them to shelters.

"It's not just saying to people you have to get out of your apartment," de Blasio said. "It's going door to door with our first responders and other city agencies to get people out."

Parry reported from Manville, New Jersey. Associated Press writers Bobby Caina Calvan, Jim Mustian and Karen Matthews in New York City, Marina Villeneuve and Michael Hill in Albany, Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia

and Seth Borenstein in Washington contributed to this report.

Booster shots hitch: Some may miss the Sept. 20 start

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's plans to start delivery of booster shots by Sept. 20 for most Americans who received the COVID-19 vaccines are facing new complications that could delay the availability of third doses for those who received the Moderna vaccine, administration officials said Friday.

Biden announced last month that his administration was planning for boosters to be available for all Americans who received the mRNA vaccines in an effort to provide more enduring protection against the coronavirus, pending approvals from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration.

Those agencies, though, are awaiting critical data before signing off on the third doses, with Moderna's vaccine increasingly seen as unlikely to make the Sept. 20 milestone.

According to one official, Moderna produced inadequate data for the FDA and CDC to recommend the third dose of its vaccine and FDA has requested additional data that is likely to delay those boosters into October. Pfizer, which is further along in the review process, in part because of data collected from the vaccine's use in Israel, is still expected to be approved for a third dose for all by Sept. 20. A key FDA panel is to review Pfizer's data on boosters on Sept. 17.

Data for boosters on Johnson & Johnson's single-dose vaccine won't be available for months, since that shot wasn't approved until February, officials said.

Dr. Janet Woodcock, the acting FDA commissioner, and CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky, briefed White House COVID-19 coordinator Jeff Zients and other officials about the expected Moderna delay on Thursday, officials said.

Most of the 206 million Americans at least partially vaccinated against COVID-19 received the Pfizer shot, but about 80 million received the Moderna vaccine, according to CDC data.

The administration's public pronouncement about booster availability, a break from the more deliberate and behind-the-scenes planning that defined its early vaccination campaign, sparked concerns from some that the White House was getting ahead of the science on boosters.

"The announcement in August kinda jumped the gun," said Dr. Stephen Ostroff, former acting FDA commissioner during the Obama administration. "They needed to say something, but they could have just said, 'we're working on boosters, more to come.'"

The White House said it was merely preparing for the boosters' eventual approval, and that the reviews were "all part of a process that is now underway."

"We are awaiting a full review and approval by the FDA and a recommendation by the ACIP," said White House spokesman Chris Meagher, referencing the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. "When that approval and recommendation are made, we will be ready to implement the plan our nation's top doctors developed so that we are staying ahead of this virus."

Even before Biden's announcement last month, his administration had been preparing for months for the possibility that boosters would be required, maintaining America's supply of doses and devising promotion plans with the same "intensity" that it brought to the initial vaccination campaign, Zients told reporters Thursday.

Biden on Aug. 18 touted boosters as a protection against the more transmissible delta variant of the virus, which is raging across the country and slowing the economic recovery from the pandemic, as well as potential variants to come.

"Just remember, as a simple rule — rule: Eight months after your second shot, get a booster shot," he said then, adding that health experts were aiming to be ready to administer them by Sept. 20, pending approval by the regulatory agencies.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, has become an outspoke champion of the booster campaign, as the Biden administration looks to curtail the delta variant.

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He told reporters on Thursday he believes it is likely that Americans will all need to get a third dose of the mRNA vaccines to be considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

"From my own experience as an immunologist, I would not at all be surprised that the adequate, full regimen for vaccination will likely be three doses," he said.

A formal determination that the third dose is required for "full vaccination" would have broad implications for schools, businesses and other entities that have implemented vaccination mandates.

—
AP writer Matthew Perrone contributed.

Efforts grow to stamp out use of parasite drug for COVID-19

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Health experts and medical groups are pushing to stamp out the growing use of a decades-old parasite drug to treat COVID-19, warning that it can cause harmful side effects and that there's little evidence it helps.

With a fourth wave of infections, more Americans are turning to ivermectin, a cheap drug used to kill worms and other parasites in humans and animals.

Federal health officials have seen a surge in prescriptions this summer, accompanied by worrying increases in reported overdoses. The drug was even given to inmates at a jail in northwest Arkansas for COVID-19, despite federal warnings against that use. On Wednesday, podcaster Joe Rogan, who has been dismissive of the COVID-19 vaccine, announced he had tested positive for the virus and was taking the medication.

Ivermectin has been promoted by Republican lawmakers, conservative talk show hosts and some doctors, amplified via social media to millions of Americans who remain resistant to getting vaccinated. It has also been widely used in other countries, including India and Brazil.

This week, the top U.S. professional groups for doctors and pharmacists appealed for an "immediate end" to the drug's use outside of research.

"We are urging physicians, pharmacists, and other prescribers — trusted healthcare professionals in their communities — to warn patients against the use of ivermectin outside of FDA-approved indications and guidance," said the American Medical Association and two pharmacist groups.

Large studies are now underway in the U.S. and overseas to determine if the drug has any effect on preventing or blunting COVID-19.

The latest plea follows similar warnings from federal and state regulators who are tracking side effects and hospital admissions tied to the drug.

Louisiana and Washington issued alerts after an uptick in calls to poison control centers. Some animal feed supply stores have run out of the drug because of people buying the veterinary form to try and treat COVID-19.

"There's just not any good evidence right now suggesting this is a good treatment for treating or preventing COVID-19," said Randy McDonough, a pharmacist in Iowa City, Iowa

Ivermectin is approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat infections of roundworms and other tiny parasites in humans and animals like cows, horses and dogs. Tablets are used for internal parasites while ointments are used to treat head lice and other skin infections. The generic drug works by paralyzing the worms and killing their offspring.

The FDA has tried to debunk online claims that animal-strength versions of the drug can help fight COVID-19.

"Taking large doses of this drug is dangerous and can cause serious harm," the FDA warned in a public advisory. The drug can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, delirium and even death, said the agency.

Dr. David Boulware of the University of Minnesota says the drug's side effects are mild at two or even three times the usual human dose. But formulations for farm animals might contain 1,000 times what's safe for humans.

"It's pretty easy to get into toxic levels," said Boulware, an infectious disease specialist. "All these concentrated doses that are meant for a 2,000 pound horse can certainly get people sick or hospitalized for

toxicity.”

Boulware says he prescribes the drug to patients a few times a year in the U.S. and more routinely when working in countries where intestinal parasites are common. But he and other experts have been alarmed by the explosive growth in U.S. ivermectin prescribing.

By mid-August U.S. pharmacies were filling 88,000 weekly prescriptions for the medication, a 24-fold increase from pre-COVID levels, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Meanwhile, U.S. poison control centers have seen a five-fold increase in emergency calls related to the drug, with some incidents requiring hospitalization.

The CDC cited one case of a man who drank an injectable form of ivermectin intended for cattle. He suffered hallucinations, confusion, tremors and other side effects before being hospitalized for nine days.

The World Health Organization, the National Institutes of Health and other medical experts have also recommended against using it outside of carefully controlled patient studies. An NIH panel found “insufficient evidence” for or against the drug for COVID-19, calling for more large, well-designed trials.

The experts noted that early laboratory research showed ivermectin slowed the replication of coronavirus when grown in monkey cells. But such studies are not useful for gauging real-world effectiveness in humans. And they noted other research suggesting the drug would need to be given at levels 100 times the standard dose to have antiviral effects in humans.

The NIH is studying the drug in a large trial comparing a half-dozen established drugs to see if they have some effect against COVID-19.

Experts say those interested in ivermectin should ask about enrolling in such studies.

“By participating in a clinical trial you’re not going to harm yourself and you’re going to help society generate the knowledge we need to know if this works or doesn’t work,” said Boulware.

AP Writer Andrew DeMillo contributed to this story from Little Rock, Arkansas

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‘Loss of hope’: Idaho hospitals crushed by COVID-19 surge

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The intensive care rooms at St. Luke’s Boise Medical Center are full, each a blinking jungle of tubes, wires and mechanical breathing machines. The patients nestled inside are a lot alike: All unvaccinated, mostly middle-aged or younger, reliant on life support and locked in a silent struggle against COVID-19.

But watch for a moment, and glimpses of who they were before the coronavirus become clear.

Artfully inked tattoos cover the tanned forearm of a man in his 30s. An expectant mother’s slightly swollen belly is briefly revealed as a nurse adjusts her position. The young woman is five months pregnant and hooked to a breathing machine.

Down the hall, another pregnant woman, just 24 and on a ventilator, is lying prone — on top of her developing fetus — to get more air into her ravaged lungs.

Idaho hit a grim COVID-19 trifecta this week, reaching record numbers of emergency room visits, hospitalizations and ICU patients. Medical experts say the deeply conservative state will likely see 30,000 new infections a week by mid-September.

With a critical shortage of hospital beds and staff and one of the nation’s lowest vaccination rates, Idaho health providers are growing desperate and preparing to follow crisis standards of care, which call for giving scarce resources to patients most likely to survive.

St. Luke’s Boise Medical Center invited The Associated Press into its restricted ICUs this week in hopes that sharing the dire reality would prompt people to change their behavior.

“There is so much loss here, and so much of it is preventable. I’m not just talking about loss of life.

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Ultimately, it's like loss of hope," said Dr. Jim Souza, chief medical officer. "When the vaccines came out in December, those of us in health care were like, 'Oh, my God, it's like the cavalry coming over the hill.' ... To see now what's playing out? It's all so needless."

Inside the ICUs, Kristen Connelly and fellow nurses frequently gather to turn over each patient, careful to avoid disconnecting the tangle of tubes and wires keeping them alive. With breathing tubes, feeding tubes and half a dozen hanging bags of medications intended to halt a cascade of organ damage, turning a patient is a dangerous but necessary endeavor that happens twice a day.

When Idaho's hospitals were nearly overwhelmed with coronavirus patients last winter, Connelly wasn't fazed, believing she could make a difference. Now, instead of focusing on one patient at a time, she cares for multiple. Many colleagues have quit, burned out by the relentless demands of the pandemic.

"At this point, I'm overwhelmed. I don't have much left," the 26-year ICU nursing veteran said Tuesday. Connelly's own life is in triage mode as she tries to maintain her last reservoirs of energy. She doesn't eat at home anymore and has cut out all activities except for walking her dog. Her normally deep sense of compassion — which Connelly considers a critical job skill — has been shadowed by a seething anger she can't shake.

"We had a mother-daughter team in the hospital last week, and the mother died and the daughter was still here," Connelly said. "In that moment, I had a reprieve from the anger, because I got to be just overwhelmed with sadness."

"It's devastating," she said. "Where we are right now is avoidable — we didn't have to go here."

All of the ICU coronavirus patients were generally healthy people who simply didn't get vaccinated, Dr. Bill Dittrich said. Idaho could enact crisis care standards in days, leaving him to make gut-wrenching decisions about who gets life-saving treatment.

"I don't think anybody will ever be ready to have the kinds of conversations and make the kinds of decisions that we're concerned we're going to have to be making in the next several weeks. I'm really terrified," Dittrich said.

Most of the ICU patients fell prey to con artists before they fell ill with the virus, said Souza, the chief medical officer. He points to a patient who first tried the anti-parasite drug ivermectin. U.S. health officials have warned it should not be used to treat COVID-19. The man, in his 50s, refused standard medical treatments until he became so sick he needed to be hospitalized.

"What we're left with is organ supportive therapy. Misinformation is hurting people and killing people," Souza said.

What the science is clear on? Vaccines, he said. "We don't have any vaccinated patients here."

In deep-red Idaho, however, vaccinations, masks and nearly anything related to the coronavirus marks a de facto borderline between more traditional Republicans and the far-right.

Republican Gov. Brad Little urged residents this week to show love for their neighbors by getting vaccinated and announced he was using federal programs and mobilizing the Idaho National Guard to bring in hundreds of additional health care workers. In response, Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin called the statement "shameful."

McGeachin, who is running against Little in the Republican gubernatorial primary and has tried to bar schools and cities from enacting mask rules, said people should make their "own health choices."

The rift exists at the local level, too. Ada County commissioners voted to nominate a local pathologist to a regional public health board who has referred to COVID-19 vaccines as "needle rape" and the "clot shot." Dr. Ryan Cole's appointment still depends on votes by other county leaders.

Even families who have witnessed the trauma of COVID-19 firsthand are on opposite sides.

Lisa Owens' 48-year-old stepbrother, Jeff Scott, has been in the Boise hospital's ICU since early August. "My kids call him the 'Candy Man' because he always brings candy when he comes," Owens said. "He really is this kind, loving, jovial person, and I wish with all my heart that he'd gotten vaccinated."

She's vaccinated, along with about half of her extended family. But Scott, their aunt and uncle, Scott's daughter and a few others are not. Her stepbrother likely caught COVID-19 from the aunt and uncle, Owens said. The aunt was hospitalized — she developed blood clots from the virus — but has since recovered.

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If anything, those experiences entrenched other relatives in their anti-vaccination beliefs, Owens said. "Sure, they see Jeff in the hospital, but they also see his aunt and uncle, and they're OK. The last update we had is even if he does recover, he's looking at eight months of rehab," she said. "If he pulls through, I'm going to march him into the nearest vaccine clinic myself."

Owens fears her stepbrother may be taken off life support if someone with a better chance of survival needs the bed.

"I don't even want to think about it. ... I mean, he's been in there for a month. If it comes to crisis standards of care, they're going to say he's not showing enough improvement, because he's not," she said, fighting back tears. "I hope he pulls through it."

This story has been updated to correct the last name of the man in the ICU. He is Jeff Scott, not Jeff Owens.

Rocket 'terminated' in fiery explosion over Pacific Ocean

VANDENBERG SPACE FORCE BASE, Calif. (AP) — A privately designed, unmanned rocket built to carry satellites was destroyed in an explosive fireball after suffering an "anomaly" off the California coast during its first attempt at reaching Earth's orbit.

Firefly Aerospace's Alpha rocket was "terminated" over the Pacific Ocean shortly after its 6:59 p.m. Thursday liftoff from Vandenberg Space Force Base, according to a base statement. Video from the San Luis Obispo Tribune showed the explosion.

Firefly said an "anomaly" occurred during the first-stage ascent that "resulted in the loss of the vehicle" about two minutes, 30 seconds into the flight. Vandenberg said a team of investigators will try to determine what caused the failure.

The rocket was carrying a payload called DREAM, or the Dedicated Research and Education Accelerator Mission. It consisted of items from schools and other institutions, including small satellites and several demonstration spacecraft.

"While we did not meet all of our mission objectives, we did achieve a number of them: successful first stage ignition, liftoff of the pad, progression to supersonic speed, and we obtained a substantial amount of flight data," Firefly said in a statement. The information will be applied to future missions.

Austin, Texas-based Firefly is developing various launch and space vehicles, including a lunar lander. Its Alpha rocket was designed to target the growing market for launching small satellites into Earth orbit.

Standing 95 feet (26 meters) high, the two-stage Alpha is designed to carry up to 2,200 pounds (1,000 kilograms) of payload into low orbit. The company wants to be capable of launching Alphas twice a month. Launches would have a starting price of \$15 million, according to Firefly.

Firefly will have to catch up with two Long Beach, California-based companies that are ahead in the small satellite launch sector.

Rocket Lab has put 105 satellites into orbit with multiple launches from a site in New Zealand and is developing another launch complex in the U.S.

Virgin Orbit has put 17 satellites into space with two successful flights of its air-launched LauncherOne rocket, which is released from beneath the wing of a modified Boeing 747.

EXPLAINER: The language, reach of new Texas abortion law

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The nation's highest court has allowed a Texas law banning most abortions to remain in effect, marking a turning point for abortion opponents who have been fighting to implement stronger restrictions for nearly a decade.

The Texas law, pegged a "fetal heartbeat bill," bans abortions at the point of the "first detectable heartbeat," which could happen around six weeks into pregnancy, although that timeframe isn't specified in the measure. Medical experts say the heart doesn't begin to form until the fetus is at least nine weeks

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old, and they decry efforts to promote abortion bans by relying on medical inaccuracies.

Nonetheless, at least 13 other states with Republican-dominated legislatures have adopted similar bans, although courts have blocked them all from being implemented. Democrats call the new Texas law an unconstitutional assault on women's health.

The growing anti-abortion campaign is intended to reach the U.S. Supreme Court. Abortion opponents hope the conservative coalition assembled under President Donald Trump will end the constitutional right to abortion as established by the high court in the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling.

THE TERM 'FETAL HEARTBEAT' TWISTS THE SCIENCE

Advanced technology can detect a first flutter of electric activity within cells in an embryo as early as six weeks. This flutter isn't a beating heart, it's cardiac activity that will eventually become a heart. An embryo is termed a fetus after the eighth week of pregnancy, and the actual heart begins to form between the ninth and 12th weeks of pregnancy.

"It's not a heartbeat, it's the motion of the neural cells going up and down tubes in an embryo," said Dr. Michael Cackovic, a maternal fetal medicine specialist at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center, where some 5,300 babies are born each year.

Cackovic said ultrasound technology significantly advances each year, allowing physicians to provide better information to their patients, but he's alarmed that such advances in medicine have been used to promote misinformation.

"We're using technology to detect early cardiac motion, basically it's a reflexive moment," Cackovic added. "But now people are using this technology to forward their agenda."

In 2013, a pioneering University of Leeds study found that while four clearly defined chambers appear in the human heart from the eighth week of pregnancy, they remain "a disorganized jumble of tissue" until around the 20th week, much later than previously believed.

ANTI-ABORTION ACTIVIST TAPS INTO EMOTION

The notion that abortion as early as six weeks into pregnancy "stops a beating heart" is a concept originated by Ohio activist Janet Folger Porter, one of the nation's fiercest advocates for banning the procedure.

Porter found that hearts were easy to market and punctuated her decade-long lobbying efforts by distributing heart-shaped balloons and teddy bears, all while side-stepping whether the packaging of the proposal was medically true.

She's a polarizing figure, even among Republicans, due to her lobbying stunts and other controversial actions she's exercised over the years. Notably, she arranged "testimony" via ultrasound by an in utero fetus. She also questions President Barack Obama's citizenship and more recently served as spokeswoman for Senate candidate Roy Moore, of Alabama, who has denied allegations that he molested a 14-year-old girl.

OTHER STATES JUMP ON BOARD

It took Ohio nearly a decade to sign off on the abortion ban backed by Porter, but other states eventually got on board, after advocates for similar bans mirrored her tactics lobbying lawmakers and using emotive phrases such as "take heart" or "have a heart."

Arkansas and North Dakota were among the first states to pass these types of bills in 2013. Iowa became the third in 2018. About two dozen states have since introduced similar measures inside their legislatures, but only Texas' version has been enacted.

NOT THE FIRST TIME ABORTION HAS SPARKED WAR OVER WORDS

Plenty of battles have taken place over politically charged, inaccurate or vague terminology over abortion laws.

"Dismemberment abortion" is a term abortion opponents use to describe dilation and evacuation, a common second trimester abortion method. Others used "partial-birth abortion" to describe what is medically called intact dilation and extraction.

In the fight over fetal cardiac activity, anti-abortion advocates counter that using medical terminology dehumanizes the unborn.

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US hiring slows as delta variant weakens travel and tourism

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — America's employers added just 235,000 jobs in August, a surprisingly weak gain after two months of robust hiring and the clearest sign to date that the delta variant's spread has discouraged some people from flying, shopping and eating out.

The August job growth the government reported Friday fell far short of the sizable gains of roughly 1 million in each of the previous two months. The hiring jumps in June and July had followed widespread vaccinations that allowed the economy to fully reopen from pandemic restrictions. Now, with Americans buying fewer plane tickets, reducing hotel stays and filling fewer entertainment venues, some employers in those areas have slowed their hiring.

Still, the number of job openings remains at record levels, with many businesses eager for workers, and hiring is likely to rebound in the coming months. Even last month's modest job growth was sufficient to lower the unemployment rate to 5.2% from 5.4% in July. With consumers willing to spend and companies trying to hire, the U.S. economy looks healthy.

The details of Friday's jobs report showed how the delta variant held back job growth last month. The sectors of the economy where hiring was weakest — restaurants, hotels and retailers — were mainly those that require face-to-face contact with the public. More Americans said they were unable to work in August because their employer closed or lost business to the pandemic than said so in July.

Hiring in the category that includes restaurants, bars and hotels sank to zero in August after those sectors had added roughly 400,000 jobs in both June and July. Restaurant dining, after having fully recovered in late June, has declined to about 9% below pre-pandemic levels, according to reservations website OpenTable.

Some live shows, including the remaining concerts on country star Garth Brooks' tour, have been canceled. Businesses are delaying their returns to offices, threatening the survival of some downtown restaurants, coffee shops and dry cleaners.

"The delta variant has taken a bigger toll on the job market than many of us had hoped," said Sarah House, a senior economist at Wells Fargo. "It's going to take workers longer to come back to the labor market than we expected."

As a consequence, many economists now predict that the Federal Reserve won't make a long-awaited announcement that it will begin dialing back its low-interest rate policies until November or later.

The August jobs report "slams the door" on the prospect of the Fed announcing a pullback when it meets later this month, House said. Fed Chair Jerome Powell made clear last week that the central bank would begin to reverse its ultra-low-rate policies later this year if the economy continued to improve.

A lack of available workers remains a major hurdle to robust hiring. A few months ago, many economists had expected a fading pandemic to encourage more people to resume their job searches. Worries about getting sick on the job would fade, they hoped. And as schools reopened, more parents, particularly women, would return to the workforce.

So far, that hasn't happened. But the demand for workers remains strong. The job listings website Indeed says the number of available jobs grew in August. And the National Federation for Independent Business said its surveys show that half of small businesses have jobs they cannot fill.

Across the economy, that difficulty is compelling employers to offer higher pay. Average hourly wages rose a robust 4.3% in August compared with a year earlier.

Walmart announced this week that it will hire 20,000 people to expand its supply chain and online shopping operations, including jobs for order fillers, drivers, and managers. Amazon said Wednesday that it is looking to fill 40,000 jobs in the U.S., mostly technology and hourly positions.

And Fidelity Investments said Tuesday that it is adding 9,000 more jobs, including in customer service and IT. In such sectors, where face-to-face contact with the public isn't generally required, hiring remains strong.

Among the beneficiaries is Hailey Uejo, who began working Aug. 1 as a project manager at VIDSIG, a San Francisco-based company that provides a live video chat platform whereby customers can interact with celebrities and experts. Previously, Uejo, 24, had worked as a special education teacher. But she felt

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burnt out by online classes.

"COVID gave me the excuse to try something new," she said.

Jonathan Yarnold, CEO of VIDSIG, said the delta variant hasn't affected his company's plans to add 20 to 25 jobs.

Likewise, Sean O'Scannlain, chief executive of Fortune International, which imports, processes and distributes seafood, said his company is on track for record sales and has topped pre-pandemic levels. The delta variant hasn't slowed demand from the higher-end restaurants and grocery stores he supplies.

Yet O'Scannlain said he's struggling to fill 42 open jobs for truck drivers, warehouse workers, accountants and sales workers. He said he thinks that a \$300-a-week federal unemployment supplement, which began in March, discouraged some would-be job seekers.

Other factors, too, O'Scannlain said, have made it harder to hire: Because big companies such as Amazon and Walmart have raised wages, he has had to match their higher pay. Overall, he's raised pay 10% to 15% from a year ago. And some people fear becoming sick on the job from delta.

"Those fears were easing in the spring as the numbers were coming down," he said. As infections have spiked, "those concerns have risen again."

Governors in about 25 states stopped paying the \$300-a-week federal jobless benefit in June and July because, they said, the extra money was discouraging recipients from looking for work. Yet the proportion of Americans with jobs or searching for one was flat in August, Friday's report showed, suggesting that the cutoff has had little impact so far. Some academic research has found that the early cutoffs have led to only a small increase in hiring.

The \$300 payment, as well as two federal programs that cover the self-employed and gig workers, and the long-term unemployed, are set to end next week. About 8.9 million people will lose all their unemployment aid as a result.

One of them is Marianne Leblanc. A live-events designer, Leblanc, 58, lives in Las Vegas, where she used to oversee huge corporate displays at conferences such as the Consumer Electronics Show. Once the pandemic hit, all that work dried up.

Leblanc recently accepted a nine-week temporary job that will require her to fly to several cities, many of them with high COVID counts, which she is reluctant to do because she has lupus, which weakens the immune system.

She is also interviewing for a permanent job, but she has seen previous opportunities fall through. She fears losing the home she rents once her jobless aid ends.

"It's been an emotional roller-coaster for the past year and a half," Leblanc said, "and it's just being amplified" by the impending loss of aid.

The hiring slowdown in the U.S. contrasts with an improved picture in Europe, which has passed the U.S. in total vaccine doses and a levelling-off of new infections is helping limit delta's impact.

Retail and recreation activity in Europe has now exceeded its pre-pandemic level, and European Union officials say they've reached their goal of fully vaccinating 70% of adults by summer's end, a higher proportion than in the U.S. In addition, France, Germany and Italy have restricted the access of unvaccinated people to indoor dining and other activities.

AP Writer David McHugh contributed to this report from Frankfurt, Germany.

Afghan women demand rights as Taliban seek recognition

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A small group of Afghan women protested near the presidential palace in Kabul on Friday, demanding equal rights from the Taliban as Afghanistan's new rulers work on forming a government and seeking international recognition.

The Taliban captured most of the country in a matter of days last month and celebrated the departure of the last U.S. forces after 20 years of war. Now they face the urgent challenge of governing a war-ravaged

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country that is heavily reliant on international aid.

The Taliban have promised an inclusive government and a more moderate form of Islamic rule than when they last ruled the country from 1996 to 2001. But many Afghans, especially women, are deeply skeptical and fear a rollback of rights gained over the last two decades.

The protest in Kabul was the second women's protest in as many days, with the other held in the western city of Herat. Around 20 women with microphones gathered under the watchful eyes of Taliban gunmen, who allowed the demonstration to proceed.

The women demanded access to education, the right to return to work and a role in governing the country. "Freedom is our motto. It makes us proud," read one of their signs.

A Taliban fighter ventured into the crowd at one point, but witnesses said he was angry at the bystanders who had stopped to watch the demonstration and not the protesters themselves.

"We are concerned about the issues of human rights in Afghanistan, notably on the rights of women," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Friday. "It is imperative that women have the right to work, to work in a safe environment, and those are some of the issues that have been brought to the attention of our interlocutors in Kabul and elsewhere."

The Taliban have said women will be able to continue their education and work outside the home, rights denied to women when the militants were last in power. But the Taliban have also vowed to impose Sharia, or Islamic law, without providing specifics.

Interpretations of Islamic law vary widely across the Muslim world, with more moderate strains predominating. The Taliban's earlier rule was shaped by Afghanistan's unique tribal traditions, under which women are not to be seen in public. Those customs endure, especially in the countryside, even during 20 years of Western-backed governments.

A potentially more pressing concern for the Taliban is the economy, which is mired in crisis. Civil servants haven't been paid for months, ATM's have been shut down and banks are limiting withdrawals to \$200 per week, causing large crowds to form outside them. Aid groups have warned of widespread hunger amid a severe drought.

The Taliban said Western Union, which halted service after the militants entered Kabul last month, will resume transfers, which may help Afghans to receive cash from relatives living abroad. But most of Afghanistan's foreign reserves are held abroad and frozen while Western nations consider how to engage with the Taliban, putting pressure on the local currency.

There was no immediate comment from Western Union on the resumption of service.

Meanwhile fighting has been brutal in the Panjshir Valley, north of the capital Kabul, a last holdout against the Taliban sweep. Late on Friday celebratory gunfire erupted in the capital as rumors circulated that the Taliban had captured the valley, which was being defended by former vice president Amrullah Saleh and Ahmad Massoud, the British-educated son of Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was killed in a suicide bombing just two days before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in America.

But Afghanistan's popular TOLO TV carried a message from Saleh who said the fighting had been intense and fighters on both sides had died but he was still in the Panjshir Valley and he would stay to defend it.

The staccato of gunfire throughout the capital lasted nearly 15 minutes prompted the Taliban's spokesman and head of its cultural and information commission Zabihullah Mujahid to warn his rank and file against wasting their ammunition.

"Avoid aerial firing, instead thank the God," Mujahid tweeted.

Meanwhile, the Taliban say they want good relations with all countries, even the United States, and have held a string of meetings with foreign envoys in recent days in the Gulf nation of Qatar, where they have long maintained a political office.

Western nations are expected to demand the Taliban live up to their promises to form an inclusive government and prevent Afghanistan from being a haven for terrorist groups. They may also press the Taliban on women's rights, though that could be a harder sell for the group's hard-line base, which is steeped in Afghanistan's deeply conservative, tribal culture.

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Ahmadullah Muttaqi, a spokesman for the Taliban's cultural commission, said a senior official from the United Arab Emirates flew into Kabul's international airport on Friday to meet with Taliban officials, without naming him. Afghanistan's TOLO TV reported that the aircraft was also carrying 60 tons of food and medical aid.

Sher Mohammad Stanikzai, a senior Taliban official based in Qatar, recently met with British and German delegations, according to the Taliban, which said another official, Abdul Salam Hanafi, had a phone call with Chinese deputy foreign minister Wu Jianghao.

Most Western embassies were evacuated and shuttered in the days after the Taliban rolled into Kabul on Aug. 15. The Taliban have urged diplomats to return.

Taliban political leaders have gone on TV to say the world has nothing to fear from them. But many Afghans, as well as Western nations that spent two decades fighting the group, remain deeply skeptical.

Tens of thousands of Afghans fled the country after the Taliban takeover in a massive U.S.-led airlift out of Kabul international airport. The scenes of chaos, from Afghans clinging to military aircraft as they took off before falling to their deaths, to a suicide bombing that killed 169 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members, marked a bitter end to America's longest war.

The Taliban assumed control of the airport after the last American forces flew out and are now working to restore operations with technical experts from Qatar and Turkey. The Taliban say they will allow free travel for anyone with proper documents, but it remains to be seen whether any commercial airlines will offer service.

Officials from Pakistan International Airlines have met with Afghanistan's still-independent civil aviation administration. But Abdullah Hafeez, a spokesman for the airline, said it will take "some time" to clean up the debris and restore normal operations.

"There is still a lot of work to be done before international flights can come into the airport," he said.

Associated Press writer Tameem Akhgar in Istanbul, Turkey and Edie Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

Apple delays iPhone photo-scanning plan amid fierce backlash

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE and MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writers

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Apple is indefinitely delaying plans to scan iPhones in the U.S. for images of child sexual abuse following an outcry from security and privacy experts who warned the technology could be exploited for other surveillance purposes by hackers and intrusive governments.

The postponement announced Friday comes a month after Apple revealed it was getting ready to roll out a tool to detect known images of child sexual abuse. The tool would work by scanning files before they're uploaded to its iCloud back-up storage system. It had also planned to introduce a separate tool to scan users' encrypted messages for sexually explicit content.

Apple insisted its technology had been developed in a way that would protect the privacy of iPhone owners in the U.S. But the Cupertino, California, company was swamped criticism from security experts, human rights groups and customers worried that the scanning technology would open a peephole exposing personal and sensitive information.

"Based on feedback from customers, advocacy groups, researchers, and others, we have decided to take additional time over the coming months to collect input and make improvements before releasing these critically important child safety features," Apple said in an update posted above its original photo-scanning plans.

Apple never set a specific date for when the scanning technology would roll out, beyond saying it would occur some time this year. The company is expected to unveil its next iPhone later this month, but it's unclear if it will use that event to further discuss its change in plans for scanning the devices in the U.S.

The intense backlash to the scanning technology was particularly bruising for a company that has made personal privacy a marketing mantra. Apple contends it is more trustworthy than other major technol-

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ogy companies such as Google and Facebook that vacuum up information about people's interests and location to help sell digital ads. Apple CEO Tim Cook is known to repeat the catchphrase "Privacy is a fundamental human right."

The photo scanning technology was "a really big about-face for Apple," said Cindy Cohn, executive director for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, one of the most vocal critics of the company's plans. "If you are going to take a stand for people's privacy, you can't be scanning their phones."

Cohn applauded Apple for taking more time to reassess its plans and urged the company to talk to a broader range of experts than it apparently did while drawing up its scanning blueprint in its typically secretive fashion.

Matthew Green, a top cryptography researcher at Johns Hopkins University and another outspoken critic of Apple, also supported the delay. He suggested the company talk to technical and policy communities and the general public before making such a big change that threatens the privacy of everyone's photo library.

"You need to build support before you launch something like this," Green said. "This was a big escalation from scanning almost nothing to scanning private files."

When Apple announced the scanning technology last month, Green warned that the system could be used to frame innocent people by sending them seemingly innocuous images designed to trigger matches for child pornography. That could fool Apple's algorithm and alert law enforcement.

Not long after Green and privacy advocates sounded warnings, a developer claimed to have found a way to reverse-engineer the matching tool, which works by recognizing the mathematical "fingerprints" that represent an image.

Apple traditionally has rejected government demands for data and access to devices that it believes are fishing expeditions or risk compromising the security of its customers or devices.

In a highly publicized act of defiance, Apple resisted an FBI demand in 2016 that the company crack the code protecting an iPhone used by one of the killers during a mass shooting in San Bernardino, California. It argued at the time that it would be opening a digital backdoor that could be exploited by hackers and other unauthorized parties to break into devices. In that instance, Apple was widely praised by civil rights and privacy groups.

O'Brien reported from Providence, Rhode Island. AP Business Writer Kelvin Chan contributed to this story from London.

Afghan evacuation raises concerns about child trafficking

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials are looking into reports that in the frantic evacuation of desperate Afghans from Kabul, older men were admitted together with young girls they claimed as "brides" or otherwise sexually abused.

U.S. officials at intake centers in the United Arab Emirates and in Wisconsin have identified numerous incidents in which Afghan girls have been presented to authorities as the "wives" of much older men. While child marriage is not uncommon in Afghanistan, the U.S. has strict policies against human trafficking that include prosecutions for offenders and sanctions for countries that don't crack down on it.

One internal document seen by The Associated Press says the State Department has sought "urgent guidance" from other agencies after purported child brides were brought to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin. Another document, described to the AP by officials familiar with it, says Afghan girls at a transit site in Abu Dhabi have alleged they have been raped by older men they were forced to marry in order to escape Afghanistan.

The State Department had no immediate comment on the documents or the veracity of the details in them. Officials say that they take all such allegations seriously but that many of them are anecdotal and difficult to prove, particularly amid the crush of Afghan evacuees at multiple locations in the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

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An Aug. 27 situation report sent to all U.S. embassies and consulates abroad as well as military command centers in Florida points to potential issues involving young girls and older men, some of whom claim to have more than one wife at Fort McCoy, a sprawling 60,000-acre (243-square-kilometer) Army base in Wisconsin. Relevant portions of the document, titled "Afghanistan Task Force SitRep No. 63," were obtained by the AP.

"Intake staff at Fort McCoy reported multiple cases of minor females who presented as 'married' to adult Afghan men, as well as polygamous families," the document says. "Department of State has requested urgent guidance."

There was no immediate indication from the military or from the departments of homeland security and health and human services, which run the facility, that such guidance had been received.

At the same time, U.S. officials in the United Arab Emirates have expressed similar concerns, sending a diplomatic cable to Washington warning that some young Afghan girls had been forced into marriages in order to escape Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.

Officials familiar with the cable say it describes allegations by several girls at the Humanitarian City in Abu Dhabi that they had been sexually assaulted by their "husbands" and seeks guidance on how to handle such cases. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss internal communications.

Ida: Narrow escapes, deadly delays and a husband's sacrifice

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — Tales of selflessness and heroism — and of deadly delays and heartbreaking missed opportunities — are emerging after the remnants of Hurricane Ida, the deadliest storm the nation has seen since 2017, pummeled the Northeast with record-breaking rain that flooded roads and houses, killing dozens.

Earlier, Ida laid waste to parts of Louisiana and Mississippi after blowing ashore as one of the strongest hurricanes to hit the U.S.

Here are some of the stories of the victims — and of those who narrowly escaped:

QUAKERTOWN, Pa.

As their vehicle filled with floodwater in the far northern suburbs of Philadelphia late Wednesday, Donald Bauer helped his wife Katherine climb through a busted back windshield.

"My father started pushing my mom out, and telling her to go and go and go," said the couple's son, Darby Bauer. "All she remembers from being pushed out of the car was him touching her one last time, shouting at her to go."

Katherine Bauer clung to a tree and watched the rising waters carry their Mazda SUV out of sight. She was rescued about an hour later.

Donald Bauer's body was found the next morning. He was still in the vehicle.

The couple had attended their daughter's college volleyball game and were trying to return to their Perkiomenville home in the worsening storm when their Mazda died and began to float.

Darby Bauer said his father, a 65-year-old retired school bus driver, "100%" saved his mother's life.

"Without his help, I don't think she would've gotten out of the car," he said.

Donald Bauer "had one of the biggest hearts we knew," his son said. "He was selfless down to his last act."

— Michael Rubinkam, Associated Press

ELIZABETH, N.J.

Four people died in this small, industrial city when the swollen Elizabeth River swept through an apartment complex, trapping people in their homes. But there were also lifesaving rescues.

Greg Turner's 87-year-old mother called him from the flooded building complex at 8 p.m. Wednesday to tell him water was "shooting into the apartment." He tried to race over from his home in another part of town, but floodwaters blocked his path.

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Turner hailed firefighters in the street, who told him, "We're swamped, but we'll try to get you over there." Meanwhile, the water kept rising.

By the time rescuers reached Turner's mother a little before midnight, the water was up to her neck. To reach her, they had to cut a hole through the floor of the apartment above hers and pull her through the ceiling.

"She was standing in a sink" to keep above the rising water, Turner said. "At 87 years old."

"She lost everything," Turner said. "I'm going over to the bank to get some money to buy her some shoes, some clothes, some underwear. We've got to go get her medicine, everything."

— David Porter, Associated Press

NEW YORK

Pinned in the door of her boyfriend's sub-basement apartment in Queens, Darlene Hsu struggled to keep her head above water and screamed for help.

Friends, neighbors and building staff dialed 911 for 40 minutes, but couldn't get through, said her ex-husband, Dennis Hsu. He said Darlene's boyfriend — the superintendent of the building — ultimately called a friend on the police force for help, and emergency responders arrived about 40 minutes after that. By then, it was too late.

Dennis Hsu said he's angry about the delays — angry the 911 system failed, and angry at people who ignored storm warnings and required rescue from flooded roadways, which diverted emergency resources.

"What are you guys doing on the highway? You're putting other people's lives at risk," he said.

Darlene Hsu had worked for a property management company and enjoyed sunbathing, swimming, arts and crafts and playing with children.

Hsu described his former wife as a "very kind and lovable person."

— Susan Haigh, Associated Press

LAFITTE, La.

Nora Indovina was desperate to find someone to evacuate her mother before Hurricane Ida came ashore — and thought she had succeeded.

"Last time we talked, I told her to get her stuff together because they're coming to get you," Indovina said. "I guess they couldn't get to her."

Emily Boffone, 65, became trapped in her Lafitte home and died in the floodwaters. Her two beloved dogs survived the storm.

Boffone had worked for the Jefferson Parish sheriff's office, first in tax collection and later at booking intake, before retiring five years ago.

She had decided to ride out Ida because her neighbor was also staying, and she thought he could help her in an emergency, Indovina said. But the water rose so fast on Sunday that the neighbor wasn't able to get to her.

On Friday and Saturday, Indovina had been calling officials, trying to find someone who could help her evacuate. "I told them she was on oxygen, so she wouldn't be OK if the power goes out. They said they would get her out," said Indovina, speaking by phone from the car as she and her family made their way from Missouri to Louisiana.

"She was the best mom in the entire world," she said.

— Travis Loller, Associated Press

This item has been corrected to show that Emily Boffone was 65, not 55.

NEW YORK

The storm was raging, and Knrishah "Nick" Ramskriet, who lived in a basement apartment in Queens, called a friend to say he and his family were leaving.

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He wasn't heard from again.

"We thought he was OK. But my son called him the next morning and couldn't reach him," said his friend's mother, Ahilia Arjun.

Later came the heartbreaking news: Nick and his mother never made it out of their flooded apartment. He had ambitions of going to school to learn plumbing or some other trade, or maybe to become an engineer, Arjun said.

"Nick was like a son to me," she said.

— Bobby Caina Calvin, Associated Press

WOODBURY, Conn.

Sgt. Brian Mohl, a 26-year veteran of the Woodbury department, called for help about 3:30 a.m. Thursday. His cruiser had been swept away.

Police searched the area with divers, helicopters, boats and drones. Finally, after daybreak, they found his body in the swollen river. First responders worked on him, but he was pronounced dead at a hospital.

"His tragic loss is a reminder of the dangers that state troopers and first responders put themselves in every day when responding to emergencies, and they deserve our utmost respect," Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont said in a written statement. "Sergeant Mohl served the people of Connecticut with honor and commitment, and for that he will have our eternal gratitude and respect."

— Pat Eaton-Robb, Associated Press

NEW YORK

Roberto Bravo survived a serious case of COVID-19 last year, only to perish in his flooded basement apartment.

The 66-year-old retired construction worker had temporarily moved into the Brooklyn apartment building owned by his brother, Pablo Bravo, who had been helping Roberto out.

The brothers had come to the United States from Ecuador in the 1980s to make a life for themselves.

"We're the story of foreigners, immigrants, come here to make it, live a decent life," Pablo Bravo said Friday as he and his family arrived to clean up the apartment. "Basically, we came here not only to grow ourselves, but also to contribute and grow the country. Hard-working people."

Roberto, who was divorced with two adult children, enjoyed spending time at a nearby senior citizen center. He had spent weeks in the hospital battling COVID-19 last year.

"I'm very sad to see him go this way," Pablo Bravo said. "To look at the room where he was, to look at the room where it happened, it gives me the chills. ... I'm still shocked. I don't know how I am going to take it tomorrow, or next week."

— David Martin, Associated Press

WESTCHESTER COUNTY, N.Y.

Four storm victims have been identified in suburban Westchester County, including a rabbi and two computer science professors at Iona College who didn't make it home Wednesday after teaching their classes. The body of Ken Bailie was found, while his wife, Fran, who authorities believed was with him in the car, was missing and feared dead.

The college's president issued a statement asking for prayers for the "devoted" professors.

Authorities also recovered the body of 69-year-old Samuel Weissmandl, who had been driving from Rockland County to his home in Mount Kisco when he approached rising flood waters. He called his family to say he was having difficulty in the storm, but they could not get to him in time.

His vehicle ultimately became submerged on an entrance ramp to the Saw Mill River Parkway. Authorities found his body near Route 119 in Elmsford.

Weissmandl was the son of Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandl, who was known for his efforts to save Jews during the Holocaust.

— Jim Mustian, Associated Press

EXPLAINER: How California could recall Gov. Gavin Newsom

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California's Sept. 14 recall election could remove first-term Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom from office. Just over 5 million mail-in ballots — the form of voting most Californians use — already have been returned out of 22 million sent to registered voters.

The contest is unfolding as the state sees a surge in coronavirus cases from the delta variant and the return of masks and other mandates and restrictions in many places. There are raging wildfires in Northern California, crime rates have been spiking and a homeless crisis continues unabated.

Republicans are hoping for an upset in a heavily Democratic state, where the GOP hasn't won a statewide election since 2006. The election is being watched nationally and the outcome could influence the 2022 elections, when a closely divided Congress again will be in play.

How did California arrive at this point? Here are some answers:

WHAT IS A RECALL ELECTION?

California is one of 20 states that have provisions to recall a sitting governor, 19 through elections. The state law establishing the rules goes back to 1911 and was intended to place more power directly in the hands of voters by allowing them to remove elected officials and repeal or pass laws by placing them on the ballot.

Recall attempts are common in the state, but they rarely get on the ballot and even fewer succeed. The only time a governor was recalled was 2003, when Democrat Gray Davis was removed and voters replaced him with Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger. A federal judge in late August rejected a lawsuit that sought to block the election on constitutional grounds.

WHY IS THERE A RECALL DRIVE AGAINST NEWSOM?

The answer is simple and complicated.

The simple part: Californians grew angry during the pandemic. Whipsaw stay-at-home orders by Newsom, crushing job losses from business closures, shuttered schools and the disruption of daily life soured just about everybody. Many of life's routines were cut off at some point if not altogether, whether trips to the beach or lunches at a favorite taco joint.

The complicated part: In a state with nearly 40 million people, there are many grievances, including California's wallet-sapping taxes, rising food and gas prices, the threat of water rationing to contend with a long-running drought, a homeless crisis and the continuing menace of wildfires. As governor, Newsom is a ready target for that resentment from voters who are looking for someone to blame.

He is also being hit by fallout from a multibillion-dollar fraud scandal at the state unemployment agency while weathering a public shaming for going mask-less while dining out with friends and lobbyists at an exclusive restaurant last fall, while telling residents to stay home for safety.

HOW DOES THE ELECTION WORK?

There are two questions: Voters are being asked if Newsom should be removed, yes or no, and then who should replace him. They will choose from dozens of replacement candidates. If a majority of voters approve Newsom's removal, the candidate who gets the most votes on the second question becomes governor. If Newsom is recalled, his replacement could be elected with just a fraction of the votes. With dozens of candidates dividing those ballots, it's possible a winner could get 25% or less.

Statistics compiled by Political Data Inc., a firm that gathers voting information for Democrats, independents and academics, found that just over 5 million voters have returned mail-in ballots, which would equal about a 23% turnout rate with voting continuing through Sept. 14. Senior citizens are voting in their usual high numbers, while younger voters are mostly ignoring the contest so far.

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WHAT REPLACEMENT CANDIDATES HAVE ENTERED THE RACE?

There are 46 names on the certified ballot, including former Congressman Doug Ose, who withdrew because of health reasons. The 24 Republican candidates include talk radio host Larry Elder; Kevin Faulconer, the former San Diego mayor; businessman John Cox, who was defeated by Newsom in 2018; Caitlyn Jenner, a reality TV personality and former Olympian; and Assemblyman Kevin Kiley.

There are nine Democrats, 10 independents, two Green Party members and one Libertarian. No Democrat with political stature decided to run — the best-known Democratic candidate is real estate agent and YouTube personality Kevin Paffrath. Most of the candidates are largely unknown and have not mounted credible campaigns.

WHAT ARE CANDIDATES PROMISING?

Elder, who polls have leading the field of possible replacements, has promised to bring a fresh eye and common sense to Democratic-dominated Sacramento and has said he would swiftly lift state mask and vaccine mandates. Kiley has said he would immediately end the pandemic state of emergency, which would automatically wipe out all state and local orders issued under it.

Faulconer has proposed ending the state income tax for individuals making up to \$50,000 and households up to \$100,000 as part of a plan to make the state more affordable for the middle class. Cox sought to gain attention by campaigning with a 1,000-pound (450-kilogram) Kodiak bear, which he said represented the need for “bestly” changes in the state, and also is calling for a historic-sized tax cut.

WHAT IS NEWSOM SAYING ABOUT THE RECALL?

For months, Newsom steered around questions about a possible recall election, saying he wanted to focus on the coronavirus, vaccinations and reopening schools. But in March, he launched an aggressive campaign strategy and began running ads attacking the recall and doing national TV and cable interviews. The main committee opposing the recall had raised nearly \$50 million by the end of July. Newsom has acknowledged that people were anxious and weary after a difficult year dealing with the virus and restrictions.

Newsom, who was elected in a 2018 landslide, sees the recall as an attack on California’s progressive policies. Democrats say the effort to remove him is being driven by far-right extremists and supporters of former President Donald Trump. The recall is backed by state and national Republicans, but organizers argue they have a broad-based coalition, including many independents and Democrats.

More recently, Newsom has focused his attacks on Elder, calling him more extreme in many ways than former President Donald Trump. Elder dismisses such criticism as a political ploy to divert attention from Newsom’s record on crime and homelessness.

The governor spent much of 2020 on the defensive. But he has benefitted from a record state budget surplus that allowed him to tour the state to announce vast new spending programs, including \$12 billion to fight homelessness; checks up to \$1,100 for millions of low and middle-income earners who struggled during lockdowns; and \$2.7 billion to pay for all of the state’s 4-year-olds to go to kindergarten for free.

HOW PRECARIOUS IS NEWSOM’S HOLD ON HIS JOB?

In the depths of the pandemic, Newsom’s popularity was tumbling and he appeared imperiled, with widespread unrest over long-running school and business closures. Many business owners were infuriated by what they saw as Newsom’s heavy-handed restrictions that had some open and close several times. Others rebelled against mandatory mask-wearing rules.

Earlier this year, a reopened economy and the astounding windfall of tax dollars helped Newsom recover his standing. However, when Newsom fully reopened the state on June 15, virus cases were near record lows. Since then, cases have been climbing, particularly among the unvaccinated.

Los Angeles County, which accounts for a quarter of the state’s population, reimposed a mask mandate on people who are indoors at public places, even if they’re vaccinated. California also is requiring K-12 students to wear masks when they go back to classrooms. Such an order could hurt Newsom, especially

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among those who felt he didn't do enough to reopen schools last year.

Newsom himself has been warning the race is close, and Democrats fear many of their voters are shrugging at the contest while Republicans and conservatives are eager to vote.

Still, Newsom has an advantage over his GOP foes — California is one of the country's most heavily Democratic states. Democratic voters outnumber Republicans by nearly 2-to-1, and the party controls every statewide office and dominates the Legislature and congressional delegation.

Republicans last won a statewide election in 2006, when Schwarzenegger was reelected.

See AP's complete coverage of the California recall election: <https://apnews.com/hub/california-recall>

'Very brutal': In Ethiopia, Tigray forces accused of abuses

DEBARK, Ethiopia (AP) — As they bring war to other parts of Ethiopia, resurgent Tigray fighters face growing allegations that they are retaliating for the abuses their people suffered back home.

In interviews with The Associated Press, more than a dozen witnesses offered the most widespread descriptions yet of Tigray forces striking communities and a religious site with artillery, killing civilians, looting health centers and schools and sending hundreds of thousands of people fleeing in the past two months.

In the town of Nefas Mewucha in the Amhara region, a hospital's medical equipment was smashed. The fighters looted medicines and other supplies, leaving more than a dozen patients to die.

"It is a lie that they are not targeting civilians and infrastructures," hospital manager Birhanu Mulu told the AP. He said his team had to transfer some 400 patients elsewhere for care. "Everyone can come and witness the destruction that they caused."

The war that began last November was confined at first to Ethiopia's sealed-off northern Tigray region. Accounts of atrocities often emerged long after they occurred: Tigrayans described gang-rapes, massacres and forced starvation by federal forces and their allies from Amhara and neighboring Eritrea.

Thousands of people died, though the opaque nature of the war -- most communications and transport links have been severed -- means no one knows the real toll.

The Tigray forces retook much of their home region in a stunning turn in June, and now the fighting has spilled into Amhara. Angered by the attacks on their communities and families, the fighters are being accused of targeting civilians from the other side.

The United States, which for months has been outspoken about the abuses against Tigrayans, this week turned sharp criticism on the Tigray forces.

"In Amhara now, we now know that the (Tigray forces have) ... looted the warehouses, they've looted trucks and they have caused a great deal of destruction in all the villages they have visited," the head of the U.S. Agency for Economic Development, Sean Jones, told the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation.

He called the Tigray fighters "very aggressive." USAID, which feeds millions throughout Ethiopia, has seen Tigray forces looting and emptying some of its warehouses, he said.

While the U.S., United Nations and others urge all sides to stop the fighting and sit down to talks, those on the ground believe there's no peace to come. Many Ethiopians outside Tigray support the federal government's war effort, and as Tigray forces advance, families heed recruiting drives and send loved ones for military training. Ethiopia's government says "millions" have answered the call.

"Our children are living in terror. We are here to stop this," said Mekdess Muluneh Asayehegn, a new Amhara militia recruit. Propping a gun on a full plastic sack, she lay on the ground and practiced sighting.

But the consequences of the call to war are already coming home.

"As we came here, there were lots of dead bodies (of defense forces and civilians) along the way," said Khadija Firdu, who fled the advancing Tigray forces to a muddy camp for displaced people in Debark. "Even as we entered Debark, we stepped on a dead body. We thought it was the trunk of a tree. It was dark. We came here crying."

It is not clear how many people in Amhara have been killed; claims by the warring sides cannot be verified immediately. Each has accused the other of lying or carrying out atrocities against supporters.

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Shaken, the survivors are left to count bodies.

In the town of Debre Tabor, Getasew Anteneh said he watched as Tigray forces shelled and destroyed a home, killing six people.

Getasew helped carry away the dead. "I believe it was a deliberate revenge attack, and civilians are suffering."

In recent interviews with the AP, the spokesman for the Tigray forces Getachew Reda said they are avoiding civilian casualties. "They shouldn't be scared," he said last month. "Wherever we go in Amhara, people are extending a very warm welcome."

He did not respond to the AP about the new witness accounts, but tweeted in response to USAID that "we cannot vouch for every unacceptable behavior of off-grid fighters in such matters."

The Tigray forces say their offensive is an attempt to break the months-long blockade of their region of some 6 million people, as an estimated 400,000 face famine conditions in the world's worst hunger crisis in a decade. The situation "is set to worsen dramatically," the U.N. said Thursday.

The fighters also say they are pressuring Ethiopia's government to stop the war and the ethnic targeting that has seen thousands of Tigrayans detained, evicted or harassed while the prime minister, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, has used words like "cancer" and "weeds" to describe the Tigray fighters.

Ethnic Amhara, more than half a million now displaced, say innocent people have been killed as Tigray forces move in.

"I've witnessed with my own eyes when the (Tigray forces) killed one person during our journey," said Mesfin Tadesse, who fled his home in Kobo town in July. "His sister was pleading with them when they killed him for no reason."

Zewditu Tikuye, who also fled Kobo, said her 57-year-old husband was killed by Tigray fighters when he tried to stay behind to protect their home and cows. "He wasn't armed," she said. Now she shelters with her six children in a small house with 10 other people.

Others seek shelter in schools, sleeping in classrooms as newcomers drenched from the rainy season arrive. They squat in muddy clearings, waiting for plastic plates of the spongy flatbread injera to be handed out for the latest meal.

And as earlier in Tigray, people in Amhara now watch in horror as the war damages religious sites in one of the world's most ancient Christian civilizations.

On Monday, the fourth-century Checheho monastery was hit by artillery fire and partially collapsed.

"This is very brutal," said Mergeta Abraraw Meles, who works there as a cashier. He believes it was intentionally targeted by the Tigray forces. They had come peacefully, he said, but then lashed out after facing battlefield losses.

In the rubble of the monastery was a young boy, dead.

Cara Anna in Nairobi, Kenya contributed.

This version corrects the name of the hospital manager.

Pandemic once again disrupts plans for Jewish High Holy Days

By DAVID CRARY and HOLLY MEYER Associated Press

As customary, there will be celebrations and somber reflections as American Jews observe the upcoming High Holy Days — their faith's most important period. There also will be deep disappointment, as rabbis once again cancel or limit in-person worship due to the persisting COVID-19 pandemic.

The chief culprit is the quick-spreading delta variant of the coronavirus, dashing widespread hopes that this year's observances, unlike those of 2020, could once again fill synagogues with congregants worshipping side by side and exchanging hugs.

"I'm crushed emotionally that we're not able to be in-person," said Rabbi Judith Siegal, whose Temple Judea in Coral Gables, Florida, will hold only virtual services for the holy days as the pandemic's upsurge

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buffets South Florida.

"For many rabbis, this is our favorite time of the year — we're extroverts who love to be with people," Siegal said. "We really miss being able to be together."

Instead, Siegal and her staff are filling the synagogue's sanctuary with cardboard cutouts of congregation members, including children and pets.

At many synagogues, such as The Temple in Nashville, Tennessee, there will be a mix of in-person services, including indoor and outdoor options, and virtual offerings for people staying home. In many cases, plans keep changing with the approach of Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, which starts the evening of Sept. 6, followed by Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, on Sept. 15-16.

"There's an asterisk by everything," said The Temple's senior rabbi, Mark Schiftan. "We're not even sending out more than very tentative information about Yom Kippur because that's too far out."

At Temple Beth El in Charlotte, North Carolina, Rabbi Asher Knight and his staff have planned meticulously for holiday services, requiring advance registration for congregants whether they want to participate in person or online.

Everyone attending in person must wear a mask, and vaccinations are mandatory for all those 12 and over.

"Everything we do leads to the preservation of life," Knight said.

Another Temple Beth El, in Augusta, Maine, also will require masks inside the synagogue. But workers have erected a big tent in the yard for an outdoor service Sept. 7.

"The ability to see people face to face is wonderful, whatever way they choose to come," Rabbi Erica Asch said. "But there's a little bit of sadness that we can't all be together the way we'd like."

At Valley Beth Shalom, a Conservative synagogue in Los Angeles serving about 10,000 people, no unvaccinated worshippers will be allowed on the campus during the holy days. That includes all children under 12 because they're ineligible for vaccinations, a decision Rabbi Noah Farkas called "the saddest thing we did this year."

"All of us were hoping this holiday season was going to be a do-over from 2020," Farkas said. "After all the pain, all the distancing, I was hoping we could shake it off and everyone could come back and give each other hugs. That's not going to happen."

Amy Asin, who directs the Union for Reform Judaism's "Strengthening Congregations" initiative, said many rabbis feel similar disappointment.

"There's been an incredible amount of resilience over the past 18 months, and now there are very serious levels of exhaustion," she said.

Another emotion — sorrow — pervades the 2,000-strong congregation at the Shul of Bar Harbour, an Orthodox synagogue in Surfside, Florida, the city where 98 people died when a condominium collapsed in June. Rabbi Sholom Lipskar estimates that 40% of those killed were Jewish, including perhaps a dozen or more who were active in the Shul community.

"There's no question that this tragedy, and its lingering pain and anguish, is part of the community at this point," Lipskar said. "At same time, recognizing who we are as Jewish people, we have learned to live with the most extraordinary adversity."

"God has blessed us," he added. "We are here, we are alive, we have a purpose in life. We're going to look to a new year. There's a very big sense of power and renewal."

Lipskar's synagogue is one of about 1,100 across the U.S. affiliated with the Hasidic organization Chabad-Lubavitch. Chabad's media relations director, Rabbi Motti Seligson, said the synagogues will host in-person High Holy Days services, many of them outdoors, following guidelines from local medical authorities.

For those who choose to pray at home, Chabad is distributing a booklet containing Rosh Hashana prayers.

In some communities, pandemic worries are compounded by concerns over possible incidents of anti-semitism during the High Holy Days, which overlap with the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

A Jewish volunteer group, Community Security Services, has been promoting free webinars for New York-area Jews aimed at increasing security awareness. "The threat against Jews in NY has reached record levels," an online ad warned. "The hatred and violence is impacting all of us."

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"What's striking about the threats is that they come from the left and right of the ideological spectrum," said Evan Bernstein, national director of Community Security Services.

"We have to be keenly aware of that and not think it's only coming from one particular group," he said.

Security experts are concerned by white supremacists, pro-Palestinian activists and people embracing conspiracy theories blaming Jews for the pandemic, said Mitch Silber, who heads a regional security initiative on behalf of New York-based Jewish organizations.

"The Jewish community in the U.S is facing what may be the most diverse sets of threats we've ever seen," Silber said.

With more services and events being held outdoors due to the pandemic, security experts say those might be more vulnerable to attacks and are offering advice on minimizing potential dangers.

But for the Chabad Jewish Center of St. Charles County, in greater St. Louis, holding services and events such as study groups outdoors has been essential during its short time in existence, having been founded in 2019 shortly before the pandemic hit.

"We've never had services indoors for high holidays," Rabbi Chaim Landa said. "We're going into the second year of this, but this is all we know thus far."

Last year 120 people participated in the center's Rosh Hashana observance in a park, and this year it's preparing for 200 people.

"We're open for the high holidays," Landa said. "Our calling is to be there at these important times."

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Gift for El Salvador mudslide victims comes at steep price

By ALBERTO ARCE Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — Eulalia García was stunned when she opened an envelope to find an invitation from none other than the president of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele. It promised a bus would take her family the following day to receive a surprise Christmas gift.

Garcia had survived a mudslide that killed four in her extended family and destroyed their humble home on the slopes of the San Salvador volcano. "It will be a good way to end the year after all we've been through," Garcia told her husband, Ramon Sanchez.

A neighbor in Los Angelitos, Inés Flamenco, was so grateful for her invitation that she spent three days' earnings on a gift for the president -- a bouquet of red, white and pink roses that would turn into a beautiful photo opportunity for Bukele.

"I wanted to tell him how happy I was," she recalled.

But the Christmas joy would be short-lived. Flamenco and many other guests of the president would soon discover their gifts came with a steep price tag.

This story is part of a series, *After the Deluge*, produced with support from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season, one of the worst ever for Central America, wiped out homes and crops and displaced more than half a million people. Honduras and Guatemala were hardest hit by back-to-back hurricanes, and their governments' failure to respond fueled soaring migration to the United States.

Even where one government in the region did act, its response was marred by politics, disrespect for the rule of law and a tendency to embrace simple answers to complicated problems.

In El Salvador, a populist president saw opportunity where tragedy struck. After the tropical storm in October, Bukele moved quickly to demonstrate that he could deliver to hundreds of families from Los Angelitos and another community, Nueva Israel, with a program that surely would be appreciated by his countrymen.

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There was a problem, though. Bukele forgot to ask the people what they needed to recover. While some appreciated his help, others said they were left out and still others criticized his program, saying it was typical of the way the president governs -- using public funds for political propaganda.

"He acts fast. He does not consult, does not plan and does not listen to anyone," said Francisco Altschul, a former ambassador of El Salvador to the United States.

On the night of Oct. 29, it rained so hard on the tin roof of their house that Ramon Sanchez fell into a hypnotic "sleep of death," as he called it.

Heaps of broken trees and rocky soil created a dam high on the volcano during the torrent. The accumulation of groundwater throughout the winter, plus days of pounding rain, caused the dam to break and the landslide that devoured Los Angelitos.

Around 10:40 that night, Sánchez was awakened by what felt like an explosion. "A rock had hit a tree behind my house, the walls shook and water started coming in everywhere."

Sanchez and García grabbed their two children and got out, fighting the water. A creek to the left and a road to the right were flooded. They reached high ground nearby and, in minutes, a monstrous ball of earth, logs and water that had traveled nearly four kilometers (2 1/2 miles) down the volcano's slope came to a halt behind them.

Sanchez's mother, brother and two nephews who were sleeping in an adobe house next to theirs were buried alive.

They were among 11 people who died as 78 houses were demolished.

"It was over as quickly as it began," Sánchez said.

Nearby, Inés Flamenco, 73, awoke to see her kitchen gone and her goats bleating for help. "If I tried to get closer and got a foot in the current, I would be pulled away and die with them," she recalled.

She started running only to encounter the mangled body of a neighbor dragged to death by mud and stones. She breaks into tears every time she remembers him.

After the deluge, everything seemed to happen fast, like in a movie. Contrary to what usually happens in Central America, solutions arrived, along with cameras recording everything for the Bukele administration's social media feed.

Within an hour of the mudslide, Defense Minister Rene Merino appeared on the scene and tagged President Bukele in Twitter to let him know that he had taken personal command of the search and rescue operation. Hundreds of soldiers and trusted inmates from a nearby prison started digging for survivors and bodies.

At dawn, Interior Minister Mario Durán joined the effort with drones and cameras. When he spoke to the media, he had smudges of dirt on his face -- proof that the government was in the thick of it.

Almost as quickly, Adolfo Barrios, mayor of Nejapa and a member of the opposition Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, arrived with his own camera and interrupted Durán. "I just want to pose some questions to the minister," he said.

He couldn't even finish his first question when the general director of the police, Mauricio Arriaza Chicas, politely but firmly told him to leave. He organized his own press conference to say he, too, would divert money from the city budget to help the families.

Funerals and burials were held and shelters were set up in schools for the newly homeless. Within 48 hours, Housing Minister Michelle Sol arrived with a promise: The government would give homeless families houses. And while they waited, she gave them money to rent houses.

Less than a month after the deluge, almost every family had moved to rental locations where, another month later, they received the invitation to meet with the president.

The trip to receive their surprise gift was 15 minutes and a world away. When the bus left the main road, they were surrounded by trucks and cranes. García said, "I think the gift is a house."

Her husband, a man of few words still traumatized by what had happened weeks before, replied, "How can they give us a house?"

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They could. And they did.

The mudslide survivors crossed a security barrier and entered Ciudad Marsella, a huge private residential development under construction, then saw a succession of gleaming new houses on a street so clean and perfect that it didn't seem real. With mouths agape, they were taken off the bus and asked to form a line.

"It was very fast. A guide came up to us, checked our names and took us straight to the door of a house, gave us the keys, said it was ours and told us to wait because the president was on his way," Garcia said.

Each family was given a check for \$25,300 to buy their house and documents were exchanged. With the houses came a long list of conditions that they signed without reading them. And suddenly, these homeless families -- small-scale farmers, shopkeepers, gas deliverymen -- were part of a middle-class community.

In record time, 50 days after the storm, the government had delivered its gifts. Survivors from Los Angelitos and Nueva Israel, another neighborhood flooded in the capital in June 2020, received 272 furnished houses in a private development, with access to play spaces for children, a swimming pool, outdoor cinema, medical visits, psychological support, food bags, \$250-a-month checks until August and a temporary exemption from paying the expenses for security and common premises.

President Bukele arrived with cameras for a short speech, hugs and pictures. At a podium, he lambasted Congress for failing to approve an emergency declaration that would have allowed him to use government funds without legislative oversight.

Instead, he had earmarked \$5 million that he said was "saved" from the construction of a hospital in the capital to spend on a privately owned, already built residential community with available houses. There was no public bidding, just his decision to give the victims money to buy houses in Ciudad Marsella.

He knew the decision he had taken was considered unconstitutional by many, but Bukele said, "rain cannot be unconstitutional."

García was grateful: "We lived in adobe in a ravine. When were we going to be able to buy a house? Never."

Then the problems began to emerge.

After hugging and giving the bouquet of roses to Bukele, Inés Flamenco remembered that she had to go back to Los Angelitos to tend her animals. She milks the five cows and some goats that survived the mudslide and sells that milk to make a living. She realized that the bus ride would cost \$3 round trip.

"I panicked. I barely make \$5 a day."

Security guards at the gated community couldn't understand why she had to leave in the wee hours to get to her animals. And she felt they treated people like her differently than the middle-class residents who had bought their own homes.

"Darker, with no vehicles, walking in and out, wearing humble clothes, we feel abused by guards who follow and question us all the time," she said.

Naively perhaps, she asked if she could bring her animals to the residence and let them graze in the common areas. They looked at her as if she was crazy.

"I didn't know who to talk to," she said. So, she went to the mayor. "How am I going to live?" she asked him.

On Jan. 15, he called another press conference, this time to criticize the president's actions, surrounded by a dozen people who were ready to give the houses back to the government.

Flamenco was the first person to speak. "The house is beautiful, but I feel depressed, it is not for me. I want to ask the government if they could look for a place in the countryside," she said.

Others continued with similar complaints. In Ciudad Marsella, it is prohibited to keep animals, and that means no chickens and no eggs to eat or sell. In any case, they weren't allowed to set up small stores to sell their farm goods. They also cannot plant trees for shade and fruit to eat.

Unemployed, displaced, earning \$3 a day, they said they wouldn't be able to afford utility payments of about \$70 per month when the government-subsidized period ends.

And there is no agricultural employment near Ciudad Marsella for laborers who earn \$200 a month when they find consistent work.

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"The minister called me immediately, outraged, asking me why I was so ungrateful with a government that had given me so much, and had agreed to be used in an opposition political show," Flamenco said in tears.

"They took me to a place without asking and then accused me of being ungrateful for a gift that I didn't ask for."

García and Sánchez do not plan to give up their houses, but share the concerns of those who do. "We have no income, we have no idea how we are going to survive, the government will have to give us solutions," García said.

Sánchez's grandmother, Victoria Crisóstoma, added, "We are not allowed to cook with wood and we have to pay for gas. I cannot afford it. We are not allowed to grind corn so I cannot make my own tortillas and I have to buy them. I have no income."

As of July, at least 28 families had decided to return the houses. Like Flamenco, most of them went back to Los Angelitos.

"I am defeated. I'm afraid of dying here as soon as it starts raining again," Flamenco said.

For now, popular support is going Bukele's way. He is getting credit for providing housing to the victims of mudslides as his counterparts in Honduras and Guatemala have yet to do.

After trying to stop the president's plans since the first night of the tragedy, the opposition mayor of Nejapa, lost local elections in a political landslide to the candidate of Nuevas Ideas -- Bukele's party.

But the problems continue.

The Orellana family is among the residents of Los Angelitos who did not receive an invitation from the president and feel no one is listening. Their shack of wood pallets and aluminum sheeting held up in the tropical storm, so they await the next hurricane season with fear.

"They say we are not in danger," said Lourdes Orellana, 27. "How do they know how high the water will rise the next time it rains?"

Cecilia Flores' ailing mother got a house in Ciudad Marsella because she held the title to their family house even though it was not completely destroyed.

But her mother, who did not want to be identified for fear of reprisals, could not live alone in the new house because of her health, and it was not large enough for all 11 family members. If Flores was to move in with her mother, she'd have to leave her children behind with the others. She'd also have to leave her business selling lunches to workers at a nearby factory -- her only source of income.

They thought of renting out the new house to live off the income and fix up the old house, but it turned out they weren't allowed to do that in the new neighborhood.

"What is this property that cannot be sold or rented? Either it is ours or not," Flores said.

So they abandoned the gift house, which now sits empty, and returned to the adobe house where they survived the tragedy. But now the house in Los Angelitos has been seriously damaged by government when it cleared land after the mudslide. There are cracks running along the walls and the floor is sinking.

"There were options for land nearby and tailored to our needs," Flores said, "but instead of sitting down to listen and think about the options, Bukele looked for a quick photo op and created a bigger problem for people who already had a lot of problems."

Suga bows out of party vote, paves way for new Japan leader

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Amid growing criticism of his handling of the pandemic, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said Friday he won't run for the leadership of the governing party later this month, paving the way for a new Japanese leader after just a year in office.

Suga told reporters that heading Japan's pandemic response and campaigning to lead his governing Liberal Democratic Party at the same time divided his energies. "I have decided not to run for the party leadership elections, as I would like to focus on coronavirus measures," Suga told reporters who rushed

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to his office after the news broke.

Suga has faced criticism and nosediving public support over a coronavirus response seen as too slow and limited and for holding the Olympics despite the public's health concerns. His hope of having the Olympic festivities help turn around his plunging popularity was also dashed.

He said he had put all his energy into important issues including the virus response since he took office. "But doing both takes enormous energy and I have decided that I should just choose one or the other," he said. "As I have repeatedly said, protecting people's lives and health is my responsibility as prime minister, and that's what I will dedicate myself to."

The Liberal Democrats and their coalition partner have a majority in parliament, meaning whoever wins the Sept. 29 party vote is virtually guaranteed to become the new prime minister.

The official start of the party campaign is Sept. 17. Candidacy requires factional support largely controlled by party heavyweights, and their choices may not match those favored in public opinion surveys.

Two Cabinet ministers in former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government have come out as potential candidates: dovish former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, currently seen as a top contender, and former Interior Minister Sanae Takaichi, who shares Abe's rightwing ideology.

Current Vaccinations Minister Taro Kono also expressed interest on Friday, saying he will make a final decision after consulting fellow lawmakers. Former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba, a favorite in media surveys, and Seiko Noda, former gender equality minister, also reportedly have expressed intentions to run.

Kishida has criticized Suga's handling of the pandemic and recently proposed a series of virus measures, including more funding, a pledge to secure more hospital beds and creation of a health crisis management agency to centralize pandemic measures.

Kono, the son of the longest-serving lower house speaker and grandson of a former deputy prime minister, is a political blue blood and has served as foreign and defense ministers. He regularly communicates on social media and is popular among younger voters.

Suga's decision is largely seen as a political move so the party can have a fresh leader before national elections later this year. The lower house term ends in late October and elections must be held by late November.

Suga took office last September after Abe resigned due to health problems, to fill in the remainder of Abe's term.

The son of a strawberry farmer from Japan's northern prefecture of Akita, Suga enjoyed support ratings as high as 70% early in his tenure because he was seen as a leader from the common people rather than blue-blood political families like Abe.

Suga introduced a series of pragmatic measures, including digital transformation of the economy, administrative reforms and a pledge to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, but his support ratings slid quickly over his coronavirus measures as Japan's outbreak grew.

His downfall started late last year when he bumbled a travel promotion campaign as the pandemic was worsening. He was forced into declaring a state of emergency in January and has since repeatedly expanded and extended the emergency measures, most recently until Sept. 12. In the latest media surveys, his support ratings have declined to around 26%.

"Being forced to live under restrictions, people have become increasingly frustrated and their dissatisfaction is nearing its peak, and that's the biggest reason causing Suga's administration to end," the Mainichi newspaper commented.

The emergency has largely focused on requests for eateries to close early and not serve alcohol, while requests for people to stay home and social distance have largely been ignored.

Suga has been criticized for presenting an overly optimistic outlook on the pandemic and for not sending convincing messages to the people to instill a sense of crisis. His vaccine-dependent policies also exposed people to risk while the vaccination campaign faced delays.

Although the pace of new cases in Tokyo has somewhat slowed, experts say a resurgence can occur any time and the health care system is under severe pressure with hospitals filled with serious cases and

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tens of thousands of sick people recovering at home.

"I hope this won't create a vacuum, as it's a crucial time" for the virus situation, said Dr. Shigeru Omi, the government's top medical adviser. He urged officials to strengthen the country's medical system and accelerate tests and the vaccine rollout.

"Problems are mounting," said Masakazu Tokura, chairman of the Japan Business Federation, a powerful business lobby. "Delays in the coronavirus measures are unacceptable."

Follow Mari Yamaguchi on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/mariyamaguchi>

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Sept. 4, the 247th day of 2021. There are 118 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 4, 1957, Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus used Arkansas National Guardsmen to prevent nine Black students from entering all-white Central High School in Little Rock.

On this date:

In 1781, Los Angeles was founded by Spanish settlers under the leadership of Governor Felipe de Neve.

In 1862, during the Civil War, Confederate forces led by Gen. Robert E. Lee began invading Maryland.

In 1893, English author Beatrix Potter first told the story of Peter Rabbit in the form of a "picture letter" to Noel Moore, the son of Potter's former governess.

In 1944, during World War II, British troops liberated Antwerp, Belgium.

In 1969, the Food and Drug Administration issued a report calling birth control pills "safe," despite a slight risk of fatal blood-clotting disorders linked to the pills.

In 1972, U.S. swimmer Mark Spitz won a seventh gold medal at the Munich Olympics in the 400-meter medley relay.

In 1974, the United States established diplomatic relations with East Germany.

In 1998, Internet services company Google filed for incorporation in California.

In 1999, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat signed a breakthrough land-for-security agreement during a ceremony in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

In 2006, "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin, 44, died after a stingray's barb pierced his chest.

In 2014, comedian Joan Rivers died at a New York hospital at age 81, a week after going into cardiac arrest in a doctor's office during a routine medical procedure.

In 2018, Amazon became the second publicly-traded company to reach \$1 trillion in market value, following closely behind Apple.

Ten years ago: Jerry Lewis was conspicuously absent from the Muscular Dystrophy Association's 46th annual Labor Day weekend telethon, having hosted the previous 45 broadcasts; the MDA had announced earlier that Lewis had "completed his run" as national chairman and that he would not be appearing on the telethon.

Five years ago: Elevating the "saint of the gutters" to one of the Catholic Church's highest honors, Pope Francis canonized Mother Teresa, praising her radical dedication to society's outcasts and her courage in shaming world leaders for the "crimes of poverty they themselves created."

One year ago: A federal judge ordered the Trump administration to stop detaining immigrant children in hotels before expelling them from the United States, saying the much-criticized practice skirted "fundamental humanitarian protections." Americans headed into the Labor Day weekend amid warnings from public health experts that backyard parties, crowded bars and other gatherings could cause the coronavirus to come surging back. At the direction of President Donald Trump, the Office of Management and Budget cracked down on federal agencies' anti-racism training sessions; agencies were told to identify spending

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related to any training on "critical race theory," "white privilege" or any other material that suggests that the United States or any race or ethnicity is "inherently racist or evil."

Today's Birthdays: Actor Mitzi Gaynor is 90. Soul singer Sonny Charles is 81. Actor Kenneth Kimmins is 80. Singer Merald "Bubba" Knight (Gladys Knight & The Pips) is 79. TV personality and veterinarian Dr. Jan (yahn) Pol (TV: "The Incredible Dr. Pol") is 79. World Golf Hall of Famer Raymond Floyd is 79. Actor Jennifer Salt is 77. World Golf Hall of Famer Tom Watson is 72. R&B musician Ronald LaPreard is 71. Actor Judith Ivey is 70. Rock musician Martin Chambers (The Pretenders) is 70. Actor Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs is 68. Actor Khandi Alexander is 64. Actor-comedian Damon Wayans Sr. is 61. Rock musician Kim Thayil is 61. Actor Richard Speight Jr. is 52. Actor Noah Taylor is 52. Actor Ione (eye-OH'-nee) Skye is 51. Actor-singer James Monroe Iglehart is 47. Pop-rock singer-DJ-musician-producer Mark Ronson is 46. R&B singer Richard Wingo (Jagged Edge) is 46. Rock musician Ian Grushka (New Found Glory) is 44. Actor Wes Bentley is 43. Actor Max Greenfield is 42. Country singer Granger Smith is 42. Singer Dan Miller (O Town) is 41. Singer Beyonce (bee-AHN'-say) Knowles is 40. Actor-comedian Whitney Cummings is 39. Actor-comedian Kyle Mooney (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 37. Folk-rock musician Neyla Pekarek (NEE'-lah peh-KAYR'-ehk) (formerly with The Lumineers) is 35. Pop-rock singer-songwriter James Bay is 31. Actor Carter Jenkins is 30. Actor Trevor Gagnon is 26.