

Groton Daily Independent

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Upcoming Events

Monday, Oct. 18

Volleyball at Langford. JV at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity.

Tuesday, Oct. 19

Volleyball hosts Northwestern. 7th/C match at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., Varsity to follow

Wednesday, Oct. 20

Senior Scholarship Info Night at GHS Library Conference Room, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 21

First Round Football Playoffs

Friday, Oct. 22

End of First Quarter

Volleyball at Aberdeen Roncalli. (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

Saturday, Oct. 23

State Cross Country at Yankton Trail Park in Sioux Falls.

Oral Interp at NSU Invitational

ACT Testing at GHS, 8 a.m. to Noon

From the SDHSAA: 11 B Football Bracket - we had a miscalculation with the seed points. St. Thomas More will travel to Elk Point Jefferson and Redfield will travel to Aberdeen Roncalli.

Starting 10/24/21, you must dial the area code for all calls. This change supports 988 as the new 3-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Laity Sunday/ Children's Sabbath
Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Sunday School 10:00 AM
UMW Bake Sale 10:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM
UMW Awards Presentations 11:00 AM

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM
Conde Ad Council 5:00 PM

Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM
Confirmation Snack Time 3:30 PM
Confirmation 4:00 PM

Groton Ad Council 7:00 PM

Thursday, October 21, 2021

Newsletter Items Due
UMW 1:30 PM

Sunday, October 24, 2021

United Nations Day
Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM
Sunday School -after children's sermon 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Oct. 17

9am Worship w/ Communion
10:15 Sunday School
3pm Avantara (Sunday School serving)

Monday, Oct. 18

6:30am Bible Study

Wednesday, Oct. 20

6pm Confirmation
7th & 8th grade
7:30pm Conf. 9th grade
Newsletter deadline

Sunday, Oct. 24

9am Worship
10:15 Sunday School
Milestones Jr. K & Kind.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

Weekend Mass Schedule

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

Weekday

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

Confessions:

Sat. 3:45-4:15pm & Sun. 7:45am to 8:15am (G)
Sun. 10:30-10:45am (T)

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Oct. 17

8 a.m.: Bible Study
Worship with Holy Communion
9 a.m.: St. John's
11 a.m.: Zion
10:00 a.m.: Sunday School

Monday, Oct. 18

7:30 p.m.: Christian Literature Circle

Tuesday, Oct. 19

12:30 p.m.: Quilting

Wednesday, Oct. 20

3:45 p.m.: Confirmation

Sunday, Oct. 24

8 a.m.: Bible Study
9 a.m.: St. John's
11 a.m.: Zion
9:45 a.m.: Sunday School

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

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Wolves Rushing Attack Leads NSU over Minot State

Aberdeen, S.D. – Despite trailing for a majority of the contest, the Northern State University football team came away with a 1-point victory over Minot State Saturday evening. A 13-point fourth quarter led the Wolves to their third home win of the season and fifth overall, while handing the Beavers their seventh loss.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 36, MINOT 35

Records: NSU 5-2, MINOT 0-7

Attendance: 3886

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Vance Barnes got the Wolves out to a quick start, recording a 77-yard touchdown run on their third play of the contest
- Minot State responded, tying the game a 7-all with a rushing score of their own mid-way through the first quarter
- Payton Eue returned the lead into the Wolves hands, sending a 19-yard field goal attempt through the uprights
- The Beavers opened the second quarter with their second rushing score of the contest and grabbed their first lead of the game
- Eue added his second field goal of the evening at 10:25 in the second, a 22-yard attempt that brought the Wolves within one
- The two teams then traded rushing touchdowns with a 4-yard run from Minot State and 18-yard score by Hunter Trautman with just over five minutes remaining in the half
- Minot extended their lead on the following drive, notching the first receiving touchdown of the contest; a 49-yard completion from Macleary to Lundeen
- The Wolves closed out the scoring in the first half as Eue tallied his third field goal of the evening, a 26-yard attempt
- Neither team was able to get things rolling early in the second half, however the Beavers tallied their final touchdown of the contest with 3:26 remaining in the third
- Northern trailed 35-23 heading into the fourth and it was all Brett Brenton for the Wolves in the 15 minutes of action
- Brenton notched two short yardage touchdowns at 14:22 and 10:58 giving Northern a 36-35
- The Wolves defense and special teams squad held Minot State at bay in their final drive forcing a 38-yard field goal attempt that was blocked by Taylor Hojer
- NSU recorded a single season game high of 278 yards rushing, averaging 7.3 yards per carry
- In addition, they added 155 yards receiving for 433 yards of total offense
- The Wolves returners notched 154 yards on kickoffs, averaging 25.7 yards per kick return
- Defensively, NSU tallied two interceptions by Chance Olson and added one forced fumble
- Northern converted on 6-of-12 third down and scored each of the six times they entered the red-zone
- On the kicking front, Eue averaged 59.0 yards per kickoff and 37.0 yards per punt, going 3-of-3 in field goal attempts and PAT

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Hunter Trautman: 9-of-16, 120 yards passing, 75 yards rushing, 1 rushing touchdown
- Brett Brenton: 87 yards rushing, 2 rushing touchdowns
- Vance Barnes: 85 yards rushing, 1 rushing touchdown, 57 kick return yards
- Jimmy Kepouros: 52 yards receiving, 63 kick return yards
- Hunter Hansen: 10 tackles, 6 solo tackles
- Chance Olson: 4 tackles, 2 interceptions, 50 return yards

UP NEXT

The Wolves hit the road for the next two weeks, facing off against Concordia-St. Paul and MSU Moorhead. Kickoff times are set for 12 p.m. versus the Golden Bears on October 23 and the Dragons on October 30.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*There is no fear in love;
but perfect love casts out fear,
because fear involves torment.*

*But he who fears has not been
made perfect in love.*

🌀 1 JOHN 4:18 🌀

Detail from "The Scream" by Edvard Munch (1895)



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email: WaltersWork54@gmail.com

KIRK



**WARNING: THIS PRODUCT
MAY HARM CHILDREN,
LEAD TO DEPRESSION IN
ADOLESCENT GIRLS,
CAUSE CANCER IN CIVIL
DISCOURSE, AND RIP
OUR NATION APART.**

BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

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

2. From 1 Kings 20, how many kings came with Ben-Hadad against King Ahab? 2, 4, 7, 32

3. Which has 1, 2 and 3 books, as in first, second and third? *Peter, Thessalonians, John, Corinthians*

4. From Judges 20, what tribe had 700 left-handed men? *Benjamites, Samaritans, Pharisees, Sadducees*

5. What part of David's mighty men could run like gazelles? *Revlons, Gadites, Madaites, Henochs*

6. Which priest took the first census of the Hebrews? *Eleazar, Melchizedek, Ehud, Jabin*

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) 32; 3) John; 4) Benjamites; 5) Gadites; 6) Eleazar

Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patreon.com/triviaguy.

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Comfort foods Made fast and healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

Cranberry Graham Squares

While cranberry sauce is always appropriate, why not share this cranberry-studded recipe this season? After all, it won't be long before these ruby delights won't be anywhere to be found.

- 12 (2 1/2-inch) graham crackers
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free vanilla instant pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 3/4 cups water
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix
- 1 cup reduced-calorie cranberry juice cocktail
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping

1. Evenly arrange 9 graham crackers in a 9-by-9-inch cake pan. In a large bowl, combine dry instant pudding mix, dry milk powder and 1 1/4 cups water. Mix well using a wire whisk. Pour mixture evenly over graham crackers. Refrigerate while preparing cranberry sauce.

2. In a medium saucepan, combine dry cook-and-serve pudding mix, cranberry juice cocktail, remaining 1/2 cup water and cranberries. Cook over medium heat for about 5 minutes or until cranberries soften, stirring often.

3. Remove from heat, place saucepan on a wire rack and allow to cool for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Evenly spoon cooled mixture over set filling.

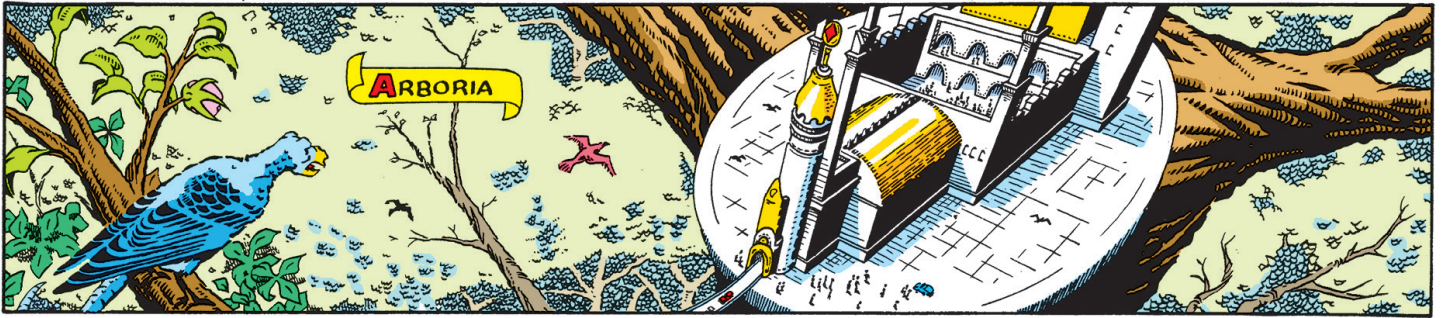
4. Spread whipped topping evenly over cranberry mixture. Crush remaining 3 graham crackers into fine crumbs. Evenly sprinkle crumbs over top. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Serves 8.

* Each serving equals: 93 calories, 1g fat, 2g protein, 19g carb., 297mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch.

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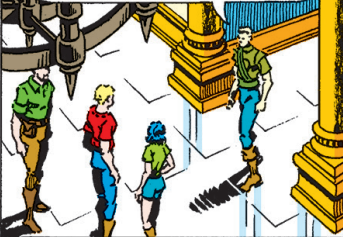
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FLASH GORDON
By JIM KEEFE
10-10

HAVING TRANSPORTED TENGSI AND VULTAN BACK TO THEIR RESPECTIVE KINGDOMS, FLASH REJOINS KING BARIN IN ARBORIA.

I'VE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT THE MEN OF THE RECONNAISSANCE MISSION YOU RESCUED ARE ALL IN STABLE CONDITION.



GOOD TO HEAR, BARIN.

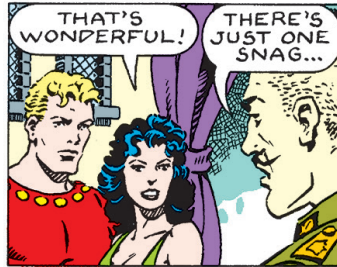
WHAT'S THE WORD ON THE RADIUM MINES THEY FOUND?



THINGS LOOKED BLEAK WITH ALL THEIR NAVIGATIONAL FILES LOST, BUT THE CAPTAIN BELIEVES HE COULD LOCATE THE AREA AGAIN...

THAT IS, ONCE HE RECUPERATES.

...IT'S PROBABLY JUST SOME DOWNED ANTENNAS IN NEED OF REPLACING.



THAT'S WONDERFUL!

THERE'S JUST ONE SNAG...

THE JUMPING-OFF POINT FOR THE EXPEDITION IS FRIGIA, BUT SINCE THE STORM WE'VE BEEN UNABLE TO CONTACT THEM.



GIVE ME A SHIP, AND DALE, DR. ZARKOV AND I WILL CHECK IT OUT...



GET QUEEN FRIA TO SAFETY!

I'LL HOLD THEM OFF AS LONG AS I CAN...

CONT'D

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

MANY GOLFERS AREN'T AWARE THAT THE CORRECT CLUBHEAD PATH FOR A STRAIGHT GOLF SHOT IS FROM INSIDE THE TARGET LINE, TO STRAIGHT ALONG IT AT IMPACT, THEN TO THE INSIDE AGAIN.

"SEEING" THAT PATH AT ADDRESS MAKES IT EASIER TO ACHIEVE.

ANGLING THE EYE-LINE RIGHT OF TARGET PROMOTES HITTING TOO MUCH FROM INSIDE TO OUT. ANGLING THE EYES LEFT OF TARGET PROMOTES HITTING FROM OUT TO IN.

SETTING UP WITH THE EYES PARALLEL TO THE TARGET LINE PROMOTES THE CORRECT IMPACT "GEOMETRY."



Help With Parkinson's Disease Symptoms

DEAR DR. ROACH: Is acupuncture a possible therapy to relieve back pain and stiffness associated with Parkinson's disease? -- R.G.

ANSWER: There have been many trials that show acupuncture is superior to no treatment for various symptoms of Parkinson's disease. This is true especially for fatigue, but also in a composite score that includes stiffness. A systematic review of published studies found that "acupuncture has significant positive effects."

Other studies have shown that sham acupuncture, where random areas of the body were needled, was also effective in treating symptoms. This has led some skeptical authors to conclude that acupuncture is a placebo effect: The treatment convinces people that they are getting better, so they do feel better. However, if acupuncture were completely harmless and improved symptoms, I would recommend it to people who were interested.

Acupuncture is mostly, but not entirely, harmless. Adverse events are not common with acupuncture, but they do happen. Minor adverse effects happen in about 9% of cases. Serious adverse events such as pneumothorax (sometimes called a collapsed lung) and nerve damage are occasionally reported.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I recently read in a magazine that it would be better to contact a registered nurse over a physician assistant for medical questions. I was surprised. Just what is the hierarchy below a doctor? How about a nurse practitioner? -- P.H.

ANSWER: I don't look at doctors, nurses and physician assistants as being in a strict hierarchy, but as important members of a team, whose job is to provide care. All of us on a team have different strengths and different knowledge. There are many parts of a nurse's role that I (like the vast majority of doctors) am unqualified to perform, and any hospital (and many doctor's offices, including mine) would descend into chaos within hours without nurses.

Individual offices have different ways of answering patient's questions by phone. In some offices, the doctor answers it directly, but in others, the nurse or PA might. Both have knowledge and expertise to do so, and can contact other members of the team if necessary. Both PAs and RNs are trained and skilled professionals.

Nurse practitioners are clinicians. They act in nearly all ways as a doctor does with their patients. Most NPs I have known have specialized areas of knowledge. In my first faculty position at the University of Chicago, the NPs there had near-encyclopedic knowledge of gynecologic care of healthy women, and not only did they teach me a great deal, they were a valued resource when I had questions about well-woman care or common gynecologic issues.

My NP colleagues at Cornell have great expertise in care of diabetes, and I frequently solicit their advice; I am also delighted to answer questions my NP colleagues have of me in other areas. Years of practicing together has led to a mutual respect for each other's strengths.

However, NPs are not physicians and generally do not perform surgery as a gynecologist does, nor usually take care of complex cases of Type 1 diabetes with insulin pumps, for example. It's important for all of us clinicians not to exceed our level of competence, and to recognize when we need help and to make appropriate consultations.

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

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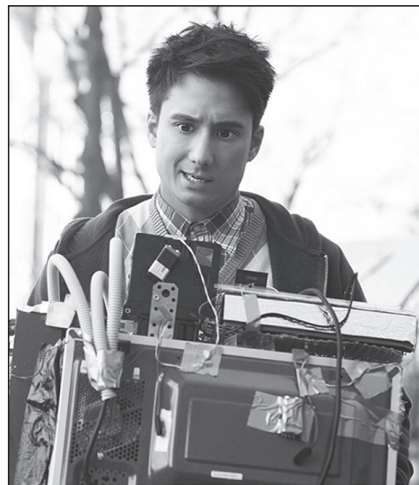


The Way Down — This three-part documentary exposes The Remnant Fellowship, a Southern megachurch that seemed to follow the Scientology playbook of brainwashing, intimidation and guilt-based money-grubbing. The church was created and led by Gwen Shamblin, a diet guru obsessed with weight loss and big hair (and money, and power). The film was well into production when Shamblin, her husband and five others from the church were killed in a small-plane crash in Tennessee in May 2021. As such, two more upcoming episodes will be released in early 2022 to cover the fallout of the loss of the church's leadership, including pending lawsuits. (HBOMax)

Life's a Glitch With Julien Bam (16+) — Imagine being a wildly famous internet influencer when out of the blue, a "Back to the Future"-like car crash transports you and your best buddy to a parallel universe where you are now a big fat nobody but your friend is a world-famous rapper. Such is the plot of this four-episode German comedy series starring Julien Bam — an actual YouTube celebrity — and Joon Kim. While attempting to find their way back to their previous reality, the two gents encounter various misadventures from mistaken identity hijinks to an MMA beatdown. Premieres Oct. 21. (Netflix)

Invasion — A series of unexplained and seemingly random incidents, accidents and tragedies fall upon the planet. But the increasingly destructive events are soon determined to be interconnected, and their origin is not of the earth. Crashes, explosions, sickness, plagues; will it be the end of humanity? The 10-episode original series feels very "War of the Worlds '05," but it stars Sam Neill, so there's still hope. Premieres Oct. 22. (Apple TV+)

Behind the Music — From 1997 to 2014, VH1's "Behind the Music" was the ultimate weekend couch-vegging program. Every episode brought to light all of the darkest days of our favorite musicians. It seemed every musical act from Leif Garrett to Hall & Oates to Anthrax was featured, exposing their addictions, bankruptcies and broken relationships. It was awesome. And now it's back! Eight all new episodes are currently available, some with artists who have been previously featured on the show. My episode recommendations: Huey Lewis and Duran Duran. (Paramount+)



Netflix

Julien Bam in "Life's a Glitch"

Dopesick — In the mood for an emotional series about how corporation-encouraged opioid addiction has overtaken and destroyed America's already financially depressed coal mining towns? Look no further than this original series based on a true story. In it, Michael Keaton plays Samuel Finnix, a local physician who believed the hype about Purdue Pharma's painkiller, OxyContin. After widely prescribing the alleged miracle drug, he comes to realize he unwittingly contributed to the addiction and deaths of many of his patients. Dr. Finnix then joins the fight against Purdue alongside the U.S Drug Enforcement Agency. The cast also features Peter Sarsgaard, Rosario Dawson and Will Poulter. (Hulu)

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1. Name the group who released a debut album titled "Children of the Future."

2. What was the real name of Iron Butterfly's song "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida"?

3. What is Styx's "Renegade" about?

4. Dead or Alive had to fund recording of one of their songs because the record company hated it. What was it?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "See the way he walks down the street, Watch the way he shuffles his feet."

Answers

1. The Steve Miller band, in 1968. The album didn't do well, topping out at No. 134. The next one, "Sailor," did better, however, reaching No. 24.

2. "In the Garden of Eden." It was written wrong by someone who was taking down the lyrics. The 1968 song was over 17 minutes long.

3. "Renegade" is a message from an outlaw to his mother saying he'd been caught.

4. "You Spin Me Round (Like a Record)," in 1984. The song went to No. 1.

5. "He's A Rebel," allegedly by The Crystals in 1962, but actually recorded by The Blossoms because The Crystals weren't available. In his rush to get the song out, producer Phil Spector hired The Blossoms, but credited The Crystals (one of his own acts).

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

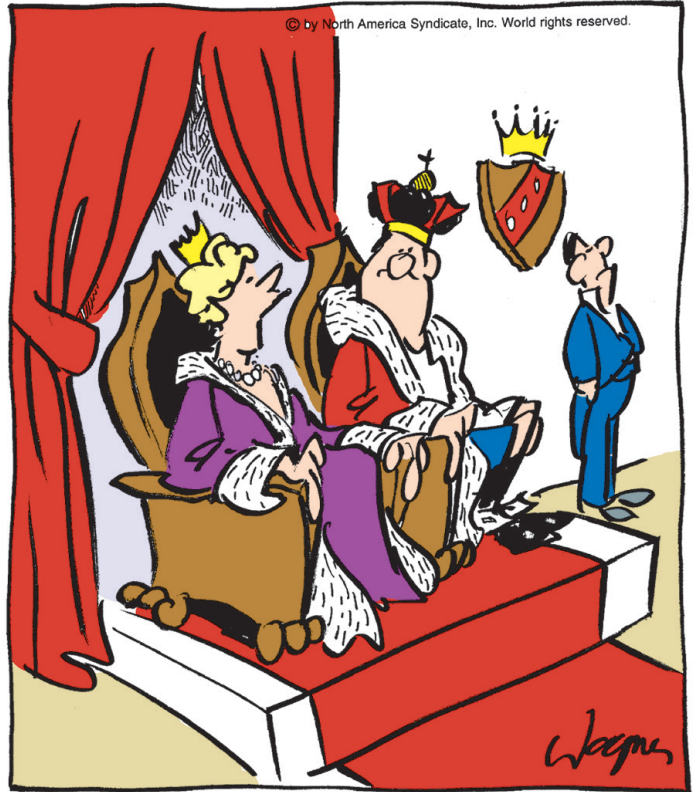
by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT

Wagner



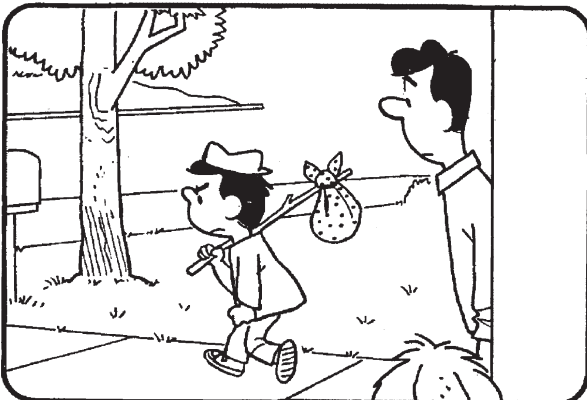
“Do you think you could convert the dungeon to a mother-in-law suite?”

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Fewer leaves on tree. 2. Bag is smaller. 3. Cap is reversed. 4. Sleeve is longer. 5. Shoe is different. 6. Branch is missing.

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- “If you heat a pita in the microwave first, it will be easier to open and will rip less. About 10 seconds should do it.” — *M.E. in Georgia*

- Baby have diaper rash? One of the best remedies is “air time” — that is, letting baby go without a diaper for a bit. Another simple soother is a baking soda bath. Try adding 2-4 tablespoons of baking soda to Junior’s bathwater.

- Use this tip to vacuum seal your meat for the freezer without any special equipment! Add meat pieces to a plastic, zipper-top bag. Fill a large pot several inches deep with water. Seal all but an inch or so of the bag. As you lower the bag into the water (zipper top up) the air will escape through the unsealed portion. When no air remains, seal the bag and then remove from the water.

- “Have you tried this single-serving

blender hack using a mason jar? Many standard-size blender blades can be screwed on to a pint Mason jar. If you’re one of the lucky ones, you can make single servings of smoothies to blend and go.” — *T.U. in South Carolina*

- “Apply petroleum jelly to the panes of your windows before painting the trim. This works better than masking tape in many ways. It is easily removed, and even large paint flecks come right off.” — *P.S. in Illinois*

- After you’ve cooked your chicken whole, remove the meat and throw the bones and remaining carcass in the slow cooker with 3-4 cups of water. Let it cook on low for several hours for a spectacularly flavorful broth.

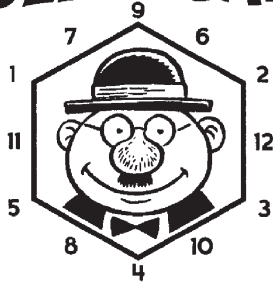
Send your tips to Now Here’s a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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PUZZLE CARD



HEX NUT! The sum of the three numbers along any one of the six sides totals 17. Rearrange the numbers so that they total 22 along each side.

Starting at the top and going clockwise, the numbers are 4, 7, 11, 1, 10, 3, 9, 5, 8, 2, 12 and 6.

ODD MAN OUT! To the right is a list of five words. Can you figure out which word doesn't belong on the list?

Abstain. The other four words all contain three letters in a row that are in alphabetical order.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

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WEIRD RINGS

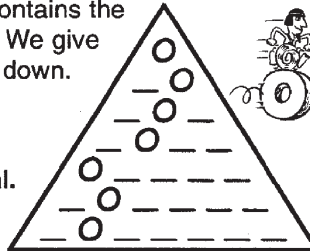
THE people listed below have all lost their rings. Your job is to find matching words for each of them that contain the word "ring." For example: A pirate's ring could be found in the word "plundering" (plunde-ring).

1. A herpetologist's ring.
2. A Norwegian fisherman's ring.
3. A helicopter pilot's ring.
4. A writer's ring.
5. An archer's ring.
6. A thief's ring.
7. A liar's ring.
8. A magician's ring.
9. A code breaker's ring.
10. An actor's ring.

THE "O" PYRAMID! Pictured at right is a word pyramid. As you go down from the top, each word contains the same letters as the word above it, plus a new letter. We give you all of the O's. Here are some hints from the top down.

- 1) Blood type (given).
- 2) Toward.
- 3) Small child.
- 4) To haul.
- 5) Webbed-foot animal.
- 6) Turn on an axis.
- 7) Kitchen appliance.

The words are O, to, tot, tote, other, rotate, toaster.



Illustrated by David Coulson

1. Silt-hing, 2. Her-ring, 3. Hove-ring, 4. Autho-ring, 5. Bowst-ring, 6. Pite-ring, 7. Perju-ring, 8. Conju-ring, 9. Cipeh-ring, 10. Enco-ring.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Request
- 4 Lawyers' org.
- 7 Jab
- 11 Grub
- 13 Sinbad's bird
- 14 Way out
- 15 Spanish greeting
- 16 Somewhat (Suff.)
- 17 Memorandum
- 18 You'll get a rise out of it
- 20 Iowa crop
- 22 Owned
- 24 Beginnings
- 28 Pudding variety
- 32 Lebanon's neighbor
- 33 Press
- 34 Rage
- 36 Joyful tune
- 37 Plaintive poem
- 39 Sees the world
- 41 Country singer West
- 43 "Caught ya!"
- 44 Frank
- 46 Gold mold
- 50 Writer Didion
- 53 Flushed
- 55 Fascinated by
- 56 Byron or Tennyson
- 57 Nest-egg acronym

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

- 58 Car
- 59 Oil cartel
- 60 Many millenia
- 61 Drunkard
- DOWN**
- 1 Needing liniment
- 2 Oxford, for one
- 3 Caffeine source
- 4 "Entourage" character
- 5 Pear type
- 6 Sneeze sound
- 7 The White
- 8 Kitchen gadget brand
- 9 Tool set
- 10 Tours season
- 12 U.S. capital on the Potomac
- 19 Eastern "way"
- 21 ER workers
- 23 601, to Nero
- 25 Canal of song
- 26 Cash drawer
- 27 Pre-college exams
- 28 Even
- 29 Woody's son
- 30 Bard
- 31 Illustrations
- 35 Historic time
- 38 Shriek bark
- 40 Sushi fish
- 42 Haunting
- 45 Sleuth Wolfe
- 47 Wildebeests
- 48 "Beetle Bailey" dog
- 49 Horn sound
- 50 "The Wedding Planner" actress, to fans
- 51 "Alley —"
- 52 Exist
- 54 Dapper fellow

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

A	S	K		A	B	A		P	O	K	E		
C	H	O	W		R	O	C		E	X	I	T	
H	O	L	A		I	S	H		N	O	T	E	
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LAFF - A - DAY



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“My wife and I had a great vacation trip — we went through 82414, 59101, 59908...”

Out on a Limb



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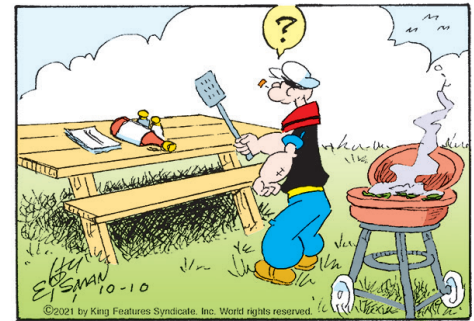
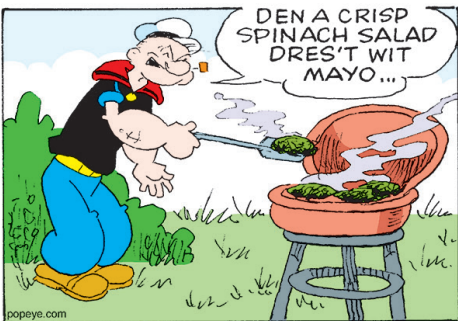
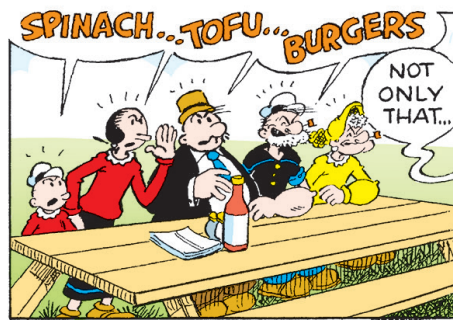
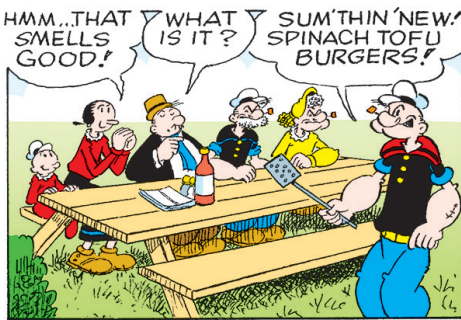
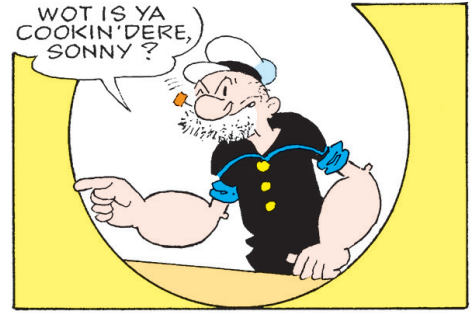
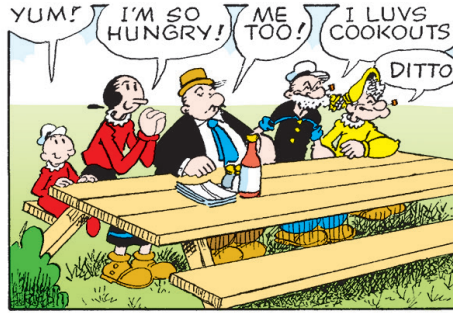
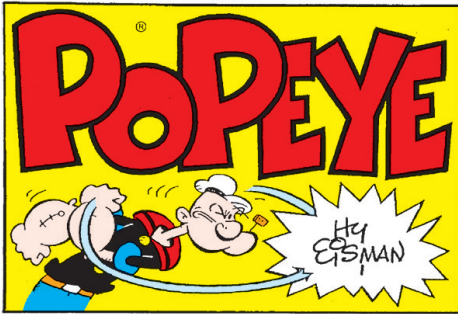
by Gary Kopervas

A HOARDER'S
DREAM
JOB

KOPERVAS

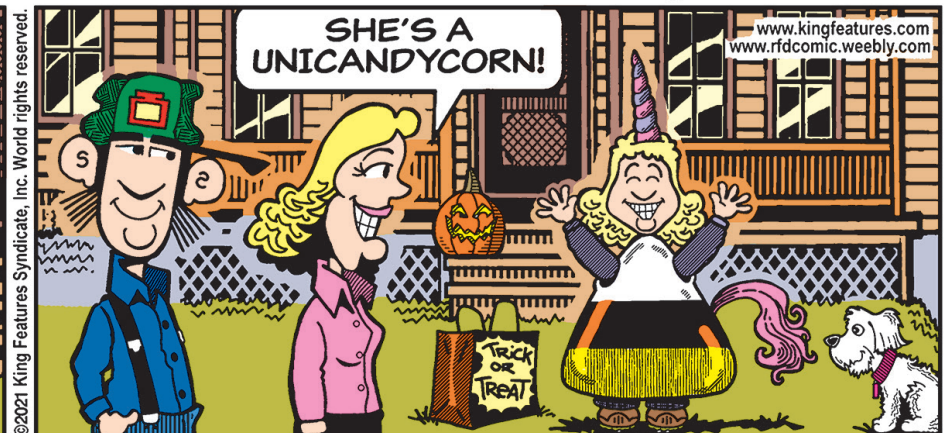
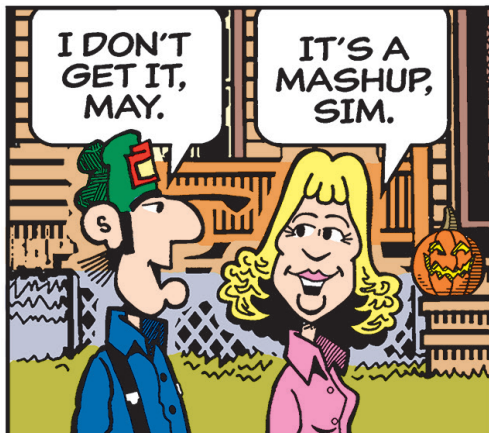
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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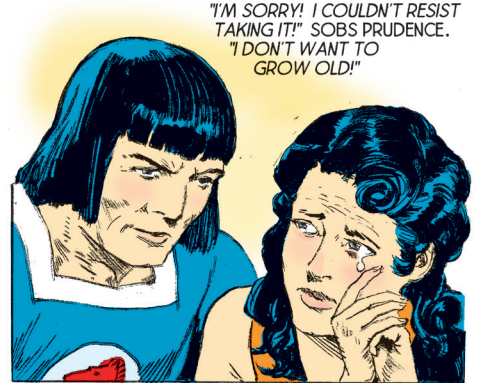
HAL FOSTER'S BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ
Prince Valiant

VAL AND COMPANY LEARN THE AWFUL TRUTH BEHIND THEIR SURGE OF YOUTHFUL SPIRITS.

"OF COURSE, WE HAVE NO REAL IDEA WHAT WE'VE INGESTED," GROWLS VAL.



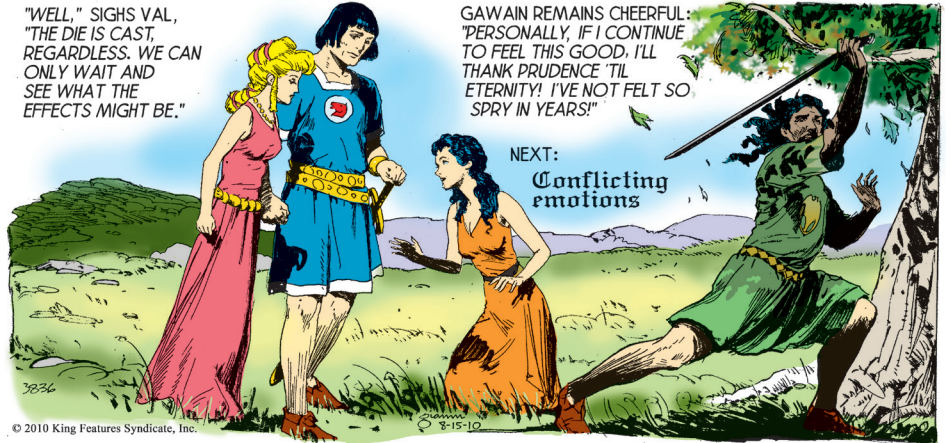
"IT'S TRUE!" WAILS PRUDENCE. "I STOLE THE ELIXIR FOR LONG LIFE - AND BOANN MISTAKENLY MIXED IT IN THE STEW!"



"I'M SORRY! I COULDN'T RESIST TAKING IT!" SOBS PRUDENCE. "I DON'T WANT TO GROW OLD!"



"YOU SILLY THING!" SCOLDS ALETA. "AT YOUR AGE, YOU WORRY ABOUT OLD AGE? BETTER YOU DID AGE A BIT AND GAIN SOME WISDOM. NOW YOU MIGHT NEVER!"



"WELL," SIGHS VAL, "THE DIE IS CAST, REGARDLESS. WE CAN ONLY WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE EFFECTS MIGHT BE."

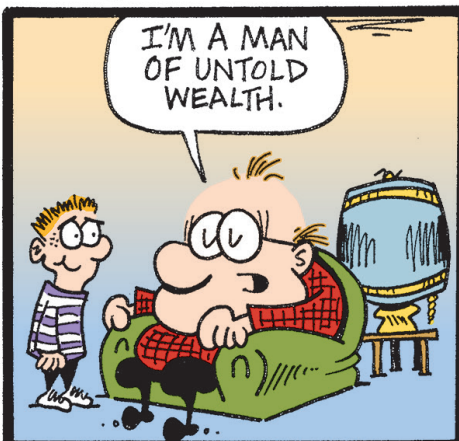
GAWAIN REMAINS CHEERFUL: "PERSONALLY, IF I CONTINUE TO FEEL THIS GOOD, I'LL THANK PRUDENCE 'TIL ETERNITY! I'VE NOT FELT SO SPRY IN YEARS!"

NEXT:
Conflicting emotions

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Rec Center Almost Opened Again

My local recreation center almost opened again. A month ago, the center opened for indoor walking with strict rules. One week later, during a heated board meeting, mostly about masks versus no masks, the rec center supervisor said he was shutting it down for the foreseeable future.

Since then there's been a hue and cry, mostly between the mask police and the anti-mask folks.

The center supervisor, ever accommodating but safety minded, declared that there would be certain days for people who wanted masks and days for those who didn't want to wear masks. Walking on the track, he said, would be the only center activity.

"Not fair," cried those (mostly teen boys) who also wanted basketball, and no, they didn't want to wear masks.

Fine, he replied, there could be one-on-one basketball in three of the center's courts.

But, said others, if teen basketball was allowed, why couldn't there be adult classes as well? So, the supervisor adjusted the schedule, did measurements on the floor, and outlined space on a basketball court where a no-mask yoga class could be held in the mornings with participants 8 feet apart.

You know what happened next, right? The aerobics people wanted a class as well. The spin class wanted space and time (and the bikes). Then those from the still-closed senior center line-dance group wanted to use rec center space.

It was right about that time that the supervisor quietly quit. I wasn't there, but I have it on good authority that he handed the center's keys to the loudest anti-mask person, saying, "You're in charge. When the COVID rates go higher in this town, it's all on you."

The next day, the town changed the locks on the rec center doors. The supervisor, as I heard it, packed a bag and retreated to his cabin in the woods, where he plans to stay until everyone comes to their senses.

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1. The Las Vegas Posse, Shreveport Pirates, Memphis Mad Dogs and Birmingham Barracudas were teams that briefly played in what league during the 1990s?

2. Name the head coach who led the Notre Dame Fighting Irish women's basketball team to nine Final Four appearances and two NCAA championships from 1987-2020.

3. What team sport designed for visually impaired athletes was introduced as an official event at the 1976 Summer Paralympics in Toronto?

4. What TV personality and former NFL player authored the book "Everyone Can Be a Ninja: Find Your Inner Warrior and Achieve Your Dreams"?

5. In 2002, what New York Yankees outfielder took teammate Derek Jeter's bat and glove and sold them to



a memorabilia dealer?

6. What Ole Miss running back was selected by the New Orleans Saints in the first round of the 2001 NFL Draft?

7. What catcher holds the record for the longest last name in Major League Baseball history with 14 letters?

Answers

1. The Canadian Football League (CFL).

2. Muffet McGraw.

3. Goalball.

4. Akbar Gbajabiamila.

5. Ruben Rivera.

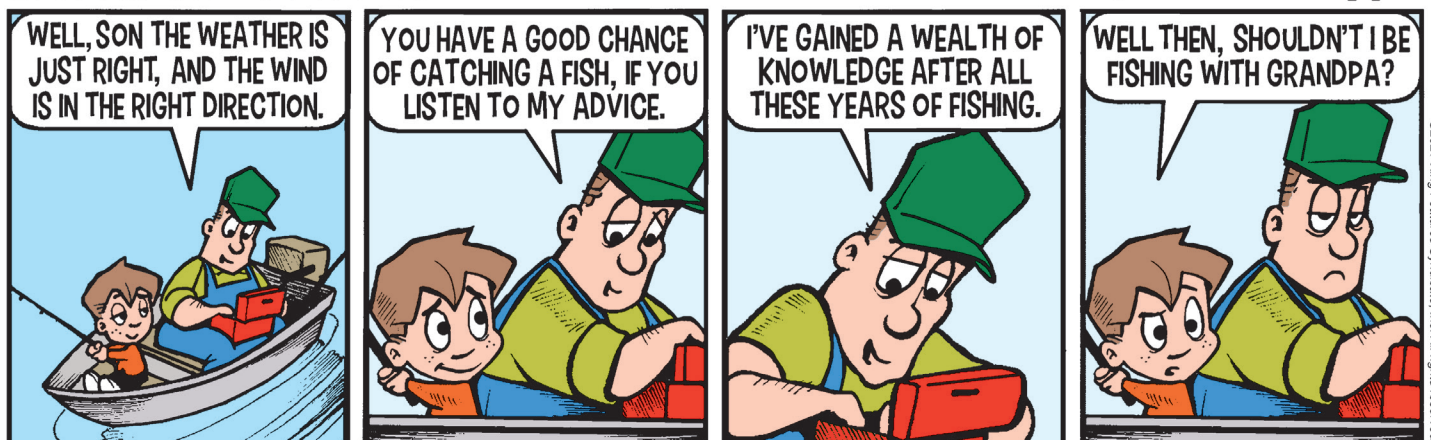
6. Deuce McAllister.

7. Jarrod Saltalamacchia.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Professional Pet Sitter Is Teen's Dream Job

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I read your column about a pet sitter who had to deal with a sick cat. Even though it was a scary story, I still want to be a professional pet sitter. I'm still in high school, but this is a dream job for me. How do I get started? Do I need to be certified by a national organization? — *Sarah, Blue Ridge, Georgia*

DEAR SARAH: Pet sitting can be a rewarding career, especially if you do the groundwork needed to really succeed at it. You don't need a certificate from an organization like the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters, but having a certificate helps prospective clients feel more confident that you know your job and take it seriously.

Here's a few steps to take before starting a pet sitting business.

— Talk to your parents about what you want to do. Because you're under 18, it's important to involve them in this decision.

— Do some trial pet-sitting. With your parents' permission and supervision, pet sit for family friends or relatives. You'll get valuable experience and learn if you really like doing this.

— Join pet sitting groups on social media. You can glean lots of useful advice from experienced pet sitters.

— Learn about starting and running a small business. If your high school doesn't offer a class or a club, sign up at a nearby community college.

— Contact the Small Business Association (SBA.gov). They offer free counseling services to help you get a small business off the ground.

— Check out some major pet sitting organizations online. The NAPPS (<https://petsitters.org>) in the U.S. and Pet Sitters International (<https://www.petsit.com/>) have lots of information and advice on running a great pet-sitting business.

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

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Those having received at least one shot of the COVID-19 vaccine were eligible for a free marijuana joint in New York City and Washington, D.C., thanks to "Joints for Jabs." The organization behind the 4/20 event hoped to help counter vaccine hesitancy.

* The first lawnmower was an adapted carpet-cutting machine.

* Theodore Seuss Geisel dropped out of Oxford before getting his Ph.D. and called himself Dr. Seuss as a nod to his father.

* The four-penny coffin was one of the first homeless shelters created for the people of central London by the Salvation Army during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For that amount, they received food and shelter, and could sleep in a coffin-shaped wooden box with a tarp.

* When you snap a whip, that sound you hear is the whip breaking the sound barrier.

* In 2015, a fan of the Australian band Peking Duk got backstage at their concert by adding himself as a family member on their Wiki page and showing it to security. The duo wasn't upset, however, noting that they "ended up having a bunch of beers with him and he was an absolute legend."

* Swedish wasn't the official language of Sweden until 2009.

* The phrase "take something with a grain of salt" refers to an ancient Roman recipe for an antidote that protects against poisons.

* Phobophobia is the fear of phobias, or the fear of fear.

* Lee Hadwin "sleepdraws" gorgeous works of art, of which he has no recollection afterward. He has been drawing in his sleep since he was 4 years old.

* The ancient Aztecs believed that Techichis, forerunners of today's Chihuahua, would absorb their owners' sins while escorting them to the afterlife.

Thought for the Day: "Quality is not an act. It is a habit." -- Aristotle

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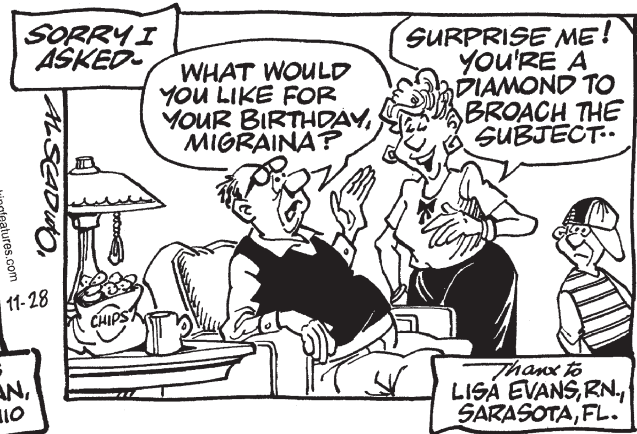
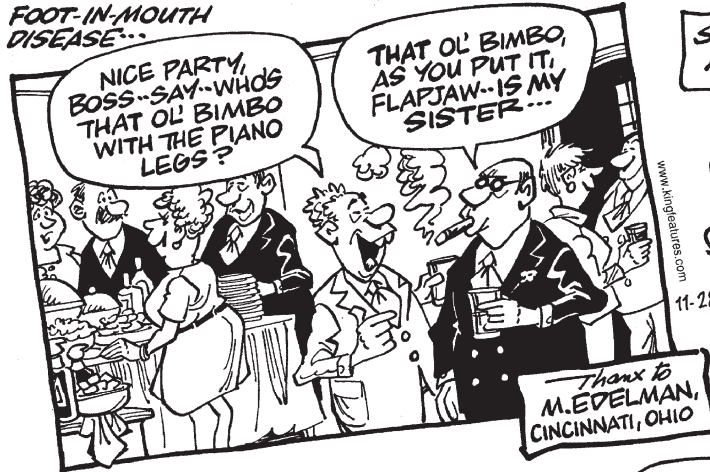
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

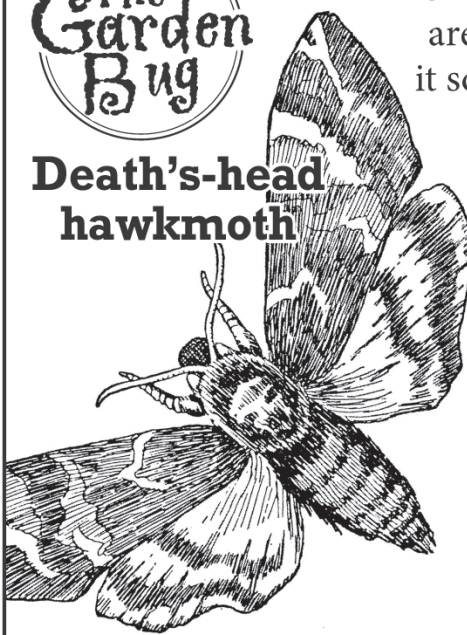
BY AL SCADUTO

FOOT-IN-MOUTH DISEASE...



The Garden Bug

Death's-head hawkmoth



This insect's skull-like markings on its back are unsettling, and when it is disturbed, it squeaks loudly, hops about and shrugs its wings up and down. It has long been superstitiously regarded as a harbinger of war, pestilence, hunger and death. Entomologists drew from mythology to name it: *acherontia*, from the river of pain in the underworld, and *atropos*, the Fate who cuts the thread of life.

- Brenda Weaver
Source: www.nhm.ac.uk

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

Annual Suicide Report

The 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report shows a decrease in veteran suicides from 2018 and 2019 when compared with previous years.

For example, 2019 saw 399 fewer suicides than 2018. Rates for male veterans dropped by 3.8% in those two years. However, the suicide rate per 100,000 was 31.6 ... much higher than for non-veterans at 16.8 per 100,000.

While figures from 2018 and 2019 are helpful and it was a mere two and three years ago, it feels like a lifetime when you consider our new normal with the anxiety and stress of COVID, not to mention the required isolation. What do more-current numbers, say for 2020, show?

The Department of Veterans Affairs news release says specifically that they have “not observed increases in VHA documented suicide-related indicators during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Yet they don't provide any statistics. Instead, they say that they'll examine suicide mortality when national death certificate data becomes available.

I assume they mean the National Death Index. It says the file for 2019 is available for searching, and that the early release file for 2020 is available. From that, one can click on the whole list of states and the percentages of demographic data each has completed. Nationally, the page says, states have completed an average 96% of their data input. Some states have completed 100%.

But you can't just wander the stacks without an access application, as I found out when I tried. But surely the VA qualifies to access the National Death Index and could give initial 2020 figures.

Of note: Of the half-dozen 2019 state files I looked at, the veteran age group most in danger of suicide was 55-74 years.

The Veterans Crisis Line is open 24/7 and can be reached at 1-800-273-8255, then Press 1. Or text 838255, or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.

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



Pheasant Season is Here

Break out your blaze orange vests; pheasant season is back again in South Dakota!

As the leaves begin to turn and the air turns crisp, I am taken back to the many fall afternoons I've spent walking fields in the hopes of flushing a rooster. Like many South Dakotans, I cherish the great memories made during the tradition of sportsmanship with my family and friends.

The success of pheasant hunting in South Dakota is a testament to how private enterprise and local government can work together to promote both economic development and wildlife conservation.

Effective management of our pheasant populations has turned what was already a long-standing pastime into a real driver of economic growth for the state. From lodging to licenses, pheasant hunting generated \$218 million for South Dakota in 2018. Overall, outdoor recreation generates an estimated \$1.3 billion in economic activity annually.

It is equally important to remember that as sportsmen, it is our duty to preserve our state's wildlife and natural resources for future generations. The South Dakota Department of Tourism has renewed its partnership with Pheasants Forever, a nonprofit organization dedicated to habitat conservation to ensure that South Dakota remains the "Pheasant Capital of the World" for years to come.

While many in Washington are pushing for increased environmental regulations across the board, South Dakota has shown how successful a local approach can be to wildlife management. Our pragmatic approach is the reason so many people can experience and enjoy one of South Dakota's greatest traditions.

Happy opening weekend, South Dakota!

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*



National Disability Employment Awareness Month

In a state that prides itself on freedom, having businesses that provide these individuals with economic stability and independence is vital. We want to be a state that offers everyone a chance to achieve their version of the American Dream.

ABOVE: Governor Kristi Noem poses with Eric Larson and his family. Eric Larson, of Meno, was honored at the 2021 Governor's Awards as an Outstanding Employee with a Disability.

It's National Disability Employment Awareness Month

I've spent a lot of time lately talking about South Dakota being ranked one of the hardest working states in the nation. And we continue to be the number one state for economic recovery — Moody's Analytics has our economy operating at 105% on its "Back to Normal Index". Despite all these positive economic indicators, businesses here are still struggling with a common challenge: workforce shortages.

Now is a great time to remind employers across South Dakota that it's National Disability Employment Awareness Month. South Dakota is already among the top states for employing individuals with disabilities, according to data from the Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. And we lead the nation in the percentage of individuals with disabilities working in management occupations.

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That's because we understand that these folks aren't defined by their disabilities. They are defined by their strong work ethic, strength of spirit, and their ability to overcome adversity. Those are strong characteristics that any employer should want in their workforce.

The Centers for Disease Control estimate that about 25% of adults in South Dakota have a disability — the lowest in the country. And yet, about 52% of individuals with disabilities in the state are currently employed. We are far outpacing states like California and Florida, where barely a third of individuals with disabilities are employed. Nationally, the average is around 38% employment rate for individuals with disabilities.

As businesses look for ways to address workforce shortages, I encourage them to reach out to the Department of Human Services for information and resources on hiring individuals with disabilities. The Department of Labor and Regulation is also an excellent resource for businesses.

On October 5th, the Department of Human Services hosted the Governor's Awards in the Capitol Rotunda. This annual event recognizes individuals with disabilities who are advocates and active in the community, as well as businesses that support and work with individuals with disabilities. This year's honorees were:

Outstanding Individual with a Disability: Mark Sternhagen, Brookings;
Outstanding Employee with a Disability: Eric Larson, Menno;
Outstanding Private Employer (small): TMA of Mitchell;
Outstanding Private Employer (large): MasterBrand Cabinets/Starmark Cabinetry, Sioux Falls;
Outstanding Employer (other): Brown County Register of Deeds, Aberdeen;
Outstanding Transition Services: Cindy Bierman, Mitchell; and
Distinguished Service: Vicki Nelson, Sioux Falls.

Each one of these individuals and businesses is doing their part to empower people with disabilities in our state. They're providing jobs and workforce training. They're working in their communities to encourage other businesses to offer employment opportunities to those with disabilities.

In a state that prides itself on freedom, having businesses that provide these individuals with economic stability and independence is vital. We want to be a state that offers everyone a chance to achieve their version of the American Dream.

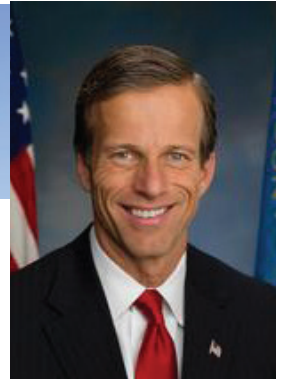
I am grateful to every person who is playing a role in this issue and fighting for positive outcomes. We are proud that our state is open for business and that unemployment rates remain among the lowest in the country. That should be the case for everyone in our state, regardless of disability status.

If you are a business owner or employer looking for solutions to your workforce shortage, take the time to learn more about hiring someone with a disability. You will be glad you did.

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John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



An Ode to the Pheasant Capital of the World

For many South Dakotans, the third Saturday of October is Christmas morning's toughest competition. Opening weekend is a time when friends and loved ones can come together, enjoy a beautiful fall weekend, and hopefully bag a few ringnecks in the "pheasant capital of the world."

I know I'm not alone when I say this unofficial holiday is circled on my calendar every year. For me, this has always been a family experience. I'm forever grateful to my dad for instilling this South Dakota tradition in me and my siblings. And I'm even more grateful to be able to pass this tradition down to future generations.

The hunt itself can sometimes be overshadowed by the anticipation – digging up the blaze orange, cleaning shotguns, and telling stories about seasons past. It's all part of the tradition, and it never gets old.

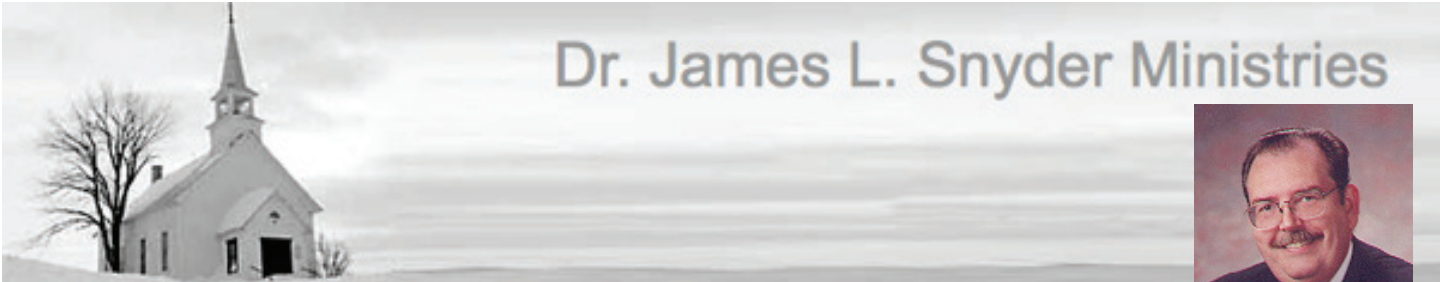
It's hard to picture what fall in South Dakota would be like without hunting ringnecks. For hotels, restaurants, sporting goods stores, and hardware stores, opening weekend signifies weeks and months of hard work and preparation. Folks from around the world travel to South Dakota to experience pheasant hunting season, and they bring hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity with them. Small businesses across the state depend on the revenue generated from the influx of hunters and out-of-town visitors throughout the season.

This may be obvious, but without pheasants, there's no pheasant hunting. A key contributor to South Dakota's pheasant population is the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which was created to take environmentally sensitive land out of production and increase wildlife habitat. Now, CRP has evolved into a 20+ million-acre program that saves millions of tons of soil from erosion and improves water quality so pheasants can adequately nest and raise their young. CRP also provides a sound economic alternative to placing expensive seed, fertilizer, and chemicals on high-risk marginal land. As a longtime member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and a lifelong hunter, I am a strong supporter of CRP and grateful for the farmers and landowners who participate in the program.

Hunting season in South Dakota is a special time of year. I hope folks are able to carve out some time in the next few months to get outside and partake in this timeless tradition. I wish all the hunters a safe and successful season.

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Green Thumb Versus Black and Blue Thumb

If you came to our parsonage, you would discover all over our property, plants and flowers. Just don't ask me to identify what they are. I can tell a plant from a flower, but that's as far as it goes with me.

That is not true with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. She gets all the credit for all the plants and flowers on our property. She knows them all by name. But, of course, I'm not sure if she's making up those names because I couldn't tell one plant from another plant.

Walking up to our house, you will see right next to the door a pineapple plant. I never knew exactly what it was, but my wife kept telling me it was a pineapple. Then this year, the pineapple actually developed. It took several years for it to get to this stage. It has grown quite a bit during this year. Looking at it, you would think you were in Hawaii.

When she first planted it she asked me, "Did you see my new plant out front?"

I did not, but I did not want to tell her that I did not. I try to keep things on the even as much as possible.

So I just said, "Yes, I saw it, and it looks wonderful." I smiled a very gregarious smile at her.

I thought I was off the hook with that, but guess what? I was not off the hook, because then she said, "What kind of a plant is it?"

If I would've had all day and a thousand guesses, I could not have guessed what kind of plant it was. For me, one plant is the same as another. It makes no difference to me.

"For your information," she said somewhat sarcastically, "it is a pineapple plant."

I only thought they grew pineapples in Hawaii. Then, of course, there was the proposition that she was fooling with me. Why in the world would anybody want to grow a pineapple plant?

"Oh," I said as humbly as I possibly could, "I didn't recognize it because I've never seen a pineapple plant before."

Then she said, "Why don't you go out front and look at it?"

When you're in as much trouble as I am, you do what you are invited to do. So, I went out, and she followed me to the front to look at the pineapple plant. It was a very profitable session. First, she gave me a very detailed lecture on the pineapple plant, planting it and watering it through the year. Then she

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told me how long it takes a pineapple to grow to the point of harvesting.

Then, the other night she brought in from the backyard an armful of yellow dandelions. So, it seems that she has planted dandelions, and they have grown and produced these beautiful yellow flowers.

As far as I'm concerned, a flower is a flower. But with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, every flower has its own story.

I had the story of the pineapple plant, and now I was privileged to hear the story of the dandelion flowers. Again, whether it's true or not is above my pay scale.

I think she is the Martha Stewart of all things growing outside in our backyard.

Walking around our house outside, you would notice all kinds of plants and flowers of different colors. They all look healthy and are very beautiful.

I once walked around trying to identify the plants and the flowers, and I failed miserably. Someone in our home has a green thumb, and someone has a black and blue thumb. No need to explain any further.

The one secret to her plants and flowers is that she talks to them. I didn't know plants and flowers could hear, but obviously, they do.

Last week it hadn't rained for days, and I heard her out on the porch saying, "Don't worry, it will rain very soon. Be ready for it and be patient."

Not knowing what she was talking about or who she was talking to, I just responded by saying, "Thanks, I was wondering about when it would rain."

Evidently, talking to the plants and flowers is very much appreciated by those plants and flowers. I've been tempted to go out and talk to them myself, but I was fearful that they would shrink in fear. Then guess who would be in trouble?

It's pretty evident that I could not take care of plants and flowers as she does. Probably none of them would survive. Those plants and flowers ought to be quite thankful that I am not the one taking care of them. They ought to be thankful for the expert with a wonderful green thumb and not the one with the black and blue thumb.

Even though I can't take care of them, I can appreciate them. Also, I can appreciate the one who does all the work to make them look as good as they do.

Sitting on the back porch drinking some coffee and looking at the flowers, I thought of the wonderful verse in the Bible. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Relationships are not built upon having the same qualities. Rather, it is appreciating our differences that pull us together and enable us to do what God wants us to do.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What is the “Climate Pledge” that Seattle’s new hockey arena is named after all about?

-- E. Howard, Washington, DC

When Seattle’s new sports and concert arena opened its doors to the public in October 2021, many were left scratching heads as to what the heck the building’s name was about. It turns out that hometown e-commerce juggernaut Amazon bought the naming rights and decided to use the opportunity to raise awareness for the Climate Pledge. The Climate Pledge calls on companies to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040, a decade earlier than called for under the terms of the Paris climate accord. Amazon co-founded the Climate Pledge with organizer Global Optimism in 2019, and immediately became the first signatory. Cut to the present and 200 other companies—including Procter & Gamble, Hewlett Packard, Visa and PepsiCo—have since signed on.

Seattle’s Climate Pledge Arena is indeed an apt showpiece for what signatory companies hope to achieve. The new building—home to the National Hockey League’s expansion team, the Seattle Kraken, as well as Women’s National Basketball League, The Seattle Storm—was designed by architect Jason McLennan. As founder of the International Living Future Institute (ILFI), McLennan helped set the standard for how buildings in the carbon-constrained days ahead will likely operate. Indeed, ILFI’s Living Building Challenge certifies “net-zero” buildings and others at the extreme end of the sustainability spectrum while advocating for the tightening of standards for new construction as to emissions reduction/elimination and energy efficiency across the U.S. and beyond.

At Climate Pledge Arena, rooftop solar panels account for most if not all energy needs. No fossil fuels are used within, making it the first net-zero arena of its size in the world. Ditching fossil fuels inside makes transportation to and from the arena the largest contributor to its overall carbon footprint. Amazon is stepping up and paying for carbon offsets through the non-profit Nature Conservancy, which purchases and expands agricultural and forest lands that serve as carbon sinks. Also, fans who purchase tickets through Climate Pledge Arena’s app can download free public transit ride vouchers to get there and back.

Reusing rainwater is a big part of meeting Living Building Challenge goals, and Climate Pledge Arena was designed from the ground up to utilize a series of chutes and gutters to channel Seattle’s prodigious rain water into cisterns that then feed the arena’s ice making processes and all other on-site water needs.

Another aspect of the arena’s green appeal is that 75 percent of the ingredients for food and drinks served come from sources within a 300-mile radius of the facility, significantly cutting down on “food miles” emissions. Single-use plastics are a no-no; vendors must stick to aluminum or biodegradable/compostable containers, straws, cutlery and to-go packaging. All paper products must contain at least 30 percent post-consumer content while cans, bottles and other non-compostables get recycled. Given there will be no “trash” created inside the arena, visitors will have to get used to seeing only composting and recycling bins for their waste.

Only time will tell whether these green features will become standard in other arenas and new buildings elsewhere moving forward. Environmental advocates among others are sure hoping so.



Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle, the first net-zero-emissions arena of its size in the world, is home to the NHL’s Kraken and WNBA’s Storm.

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Groton Area places seventh at Milbank Tourney

Groton Area took part in the Milbank Pool Play Tournament held Saturday.

In the first match, Groton Area lost to Sisseton, 2-0.

The first set was tied nine times and the lead changed hands eight times before the Redmen scored six unanswered points to take a 21-16 lead and went on to win, 25-20. Anna Fjeldheim had two kills and two ace serves, Elizabeth Fliehs had an ace serve, Alyssa Thaler had a kill, Madeline Fliehs and Maddie Bjerke each had a kill and a block assist and Aspen Johnson had two kills and a block.

The second set was tied 12 times and the lead changed hands seven times. Groton Area held a 23-20 lead, but the Redmen would score the last five points with the game winning kill coming from Krista Langager. Anna Fjeldheim had three kills and three ace serves, Elizabeth Fliehs had a kill, Sydney Leicht had four kills and a block, Madeline Fliehs had a kill and Aspen Johnson and Maddie Bjerke each had two kills.

Leight had 14 digs while Elizabeth Fliehs had eight and Thaler five. Elizabeth Fliehs had 14 assists while Allyssa Locke had two.

Sisseton used its height to create issues for the Tigers at the net with the Langager girls having six blocks at the net.

Groton Area came back from a bad second set to win the third and take a 2-1 win over Sioux Valley.

Groton Area won the first set, 25-18. That set was three times and just two lead changes as Groton Area led all the way except for one time. Anna Fjeldheim had a kill, Elizabeth Fliehs had an ace serve, Sydney Leicht four kills, Madeline Fliehs four kills and an ace serve, Allyssa Locke had a kill, Aspen Johnson had a kill and a block and Maddie Bjerke had two kills.

Groton Area fell flat in the second set, trailing early, 10-1, and ended up losing, 25-13. Fjeldheim had an ace serve, Elizabeth Fliehs had a kill and an ace serve, Liecht and Allyssa Locke each had a kill and Madeline Fliehs had a kill and a block.

Groton Area regrouped in the third set to post a 25-22 win. The set was tied eight times and the lead changed hands three times. The Tigers held a 22-16 lead. Sioux Valley closed to within one, 23-22, but Groton Area would post a 25-22 win. Madeline Fliehs had four kills and a block, Aspen Johnson had two kills and a block, Sydney Liecht had two kills, Alyssa Thaler and Maddie Bjerke each had a kill and Elizabeth Fliehs had an ace serve.

Mobridge-Pollock posted a 2-0 win over Groton Area, winning the sets, 25-21 and 25-17.

The first set was tied three times with the lead changing hands once. Groton Area had the early lead at 7-2 and 11-7. Mobridge-Pollock tied the set at 11, and 12 and it was tied at 13 before Mobridge-Pollock took a 17-13 lead. Anna Fjeldheim had three kills, Elizabeth Fliehs a kill, Sydney Leicht five kills, Madeline Fliehs and Aspen Johnson each had three kills and Maddie Bjerke had a kill. Charley Henderson had a kill and a block for Mobridge-Pollock while Katy Kemnitz, Emma Keller and Emily Hatzenbuehler each had a kill, Mariah Goehring had a kill and an ace serve, Ava Sotick had an ace serve and Landyn Henderson had two kills and an ace serve.

Mobridge-Pollock took the early lead in the second set, 4-1, but Groton Area came back to tie it three times and had a 9-8 lead. Mobridge-Pollock then took control the set and went on for the 25-17 win. Fjeldheim, Leicht and Bjerke each had one kill, Johnson had three kills, Elizabeth Fliehs had an ace serve and Madeline Fliehs had an ace serve and a block. Mobridge-Pollock had Charley Henderson with three kills, Sophia Overland had two kills, Landyn Henderson had two kills, Leah Overland and Stoick each had an ace serve, Mariah Goehring had a kill and Keller had two kills.

Groton Area won the final match of the day with a two-set win over Langford Area in the seventh place match.

The first set was tied nine times and there were six lead changes before Groton Area scored five straight points to take a 15-11 lead and then went on to a 25-12 win. Anna Fjeldheim had three ace serves and

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a kill, Elizabeth Fliehs had an ace serve, Sydney Liecht had two kills, Madeline Fliehs had three kills and two ace serves, Aspen Johnson had three kills and a block and Maddie Bjerke had a kill. Olivia Dwight led the Lions with two kills and an ace serve while Megan Gustafson had two kills and Gracie Cadwell and Ashley Cadwell each had a kill.

Groton Area jumped out to a 16-8 lead in the second set, but the Lions came roaring back, scoring seven unanswered points to close to within one, 16-15. Langford would tie the set at 17 and 18 and then would take a 19-18 lead. The Tigers retook the lead, but Langford Area tied the set at 23 and took a 24-23 lead. Groton Area tied the set at 24, took a 25-24 lead and Madeline Fliehs had the game winning kill, 25-24. Leicht had six kills, Madeline Fliehs had four kills, Johnson two, Alyssa Thaler had two ace serves, Elizabeth Fliehs had a kill and Fjeldheim had a block. Dwight and Gracie Cadwell led the Lions with four kills each while Rebecca Hanson had two kills and an ace serve, Gustafson had two kills and Ashley Cadwell had a kill.

Groton Area is now 8-13 on the season and will travel to Langford on Monday.

All Groton Area matches were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Milbrandt Enterprises Inc., Allied Climate Professionals with Kevin Nehls and Bary Keith at Harr Motors.

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South Dakota COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed Cases

267

New Probable Cases

53

Active Cases

5,868
-721

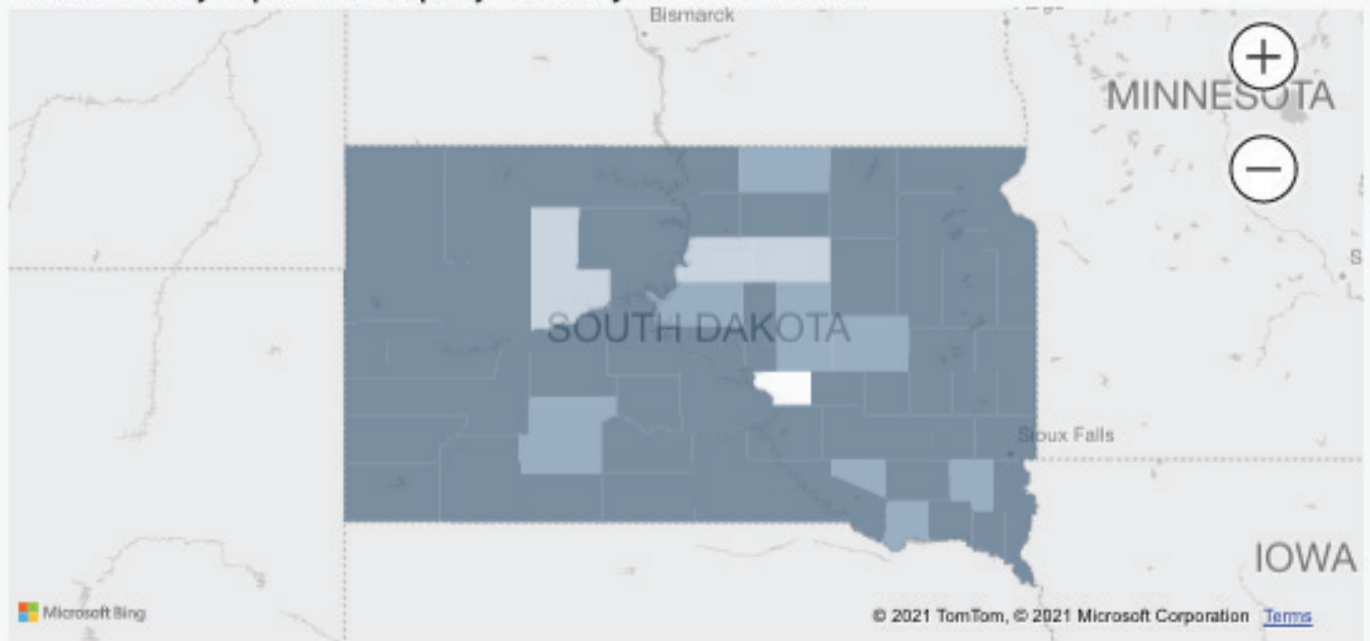
Recovered Cases

141,939

Currently Hospitalized

185

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.

Total Confirmed Cases

130,010

Total Probable Cases

19,986

PCR Test Positivity Rate, Last 7 Days

13.5%

10/7/2021 - 10/13/2021

Total Tests

1,551,880

Ever Hospitalized

7,660

Deaths Among Cases

2,189

% Progress (August Goal: 44233 Tests)

189%

% Progress (September Goal: 44233 Tests)

303%

% Progress (October Goal: 44233 Tests)

103%

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Brown County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed Cases

18

New Probable Cases

2

Active Cases

241
+11

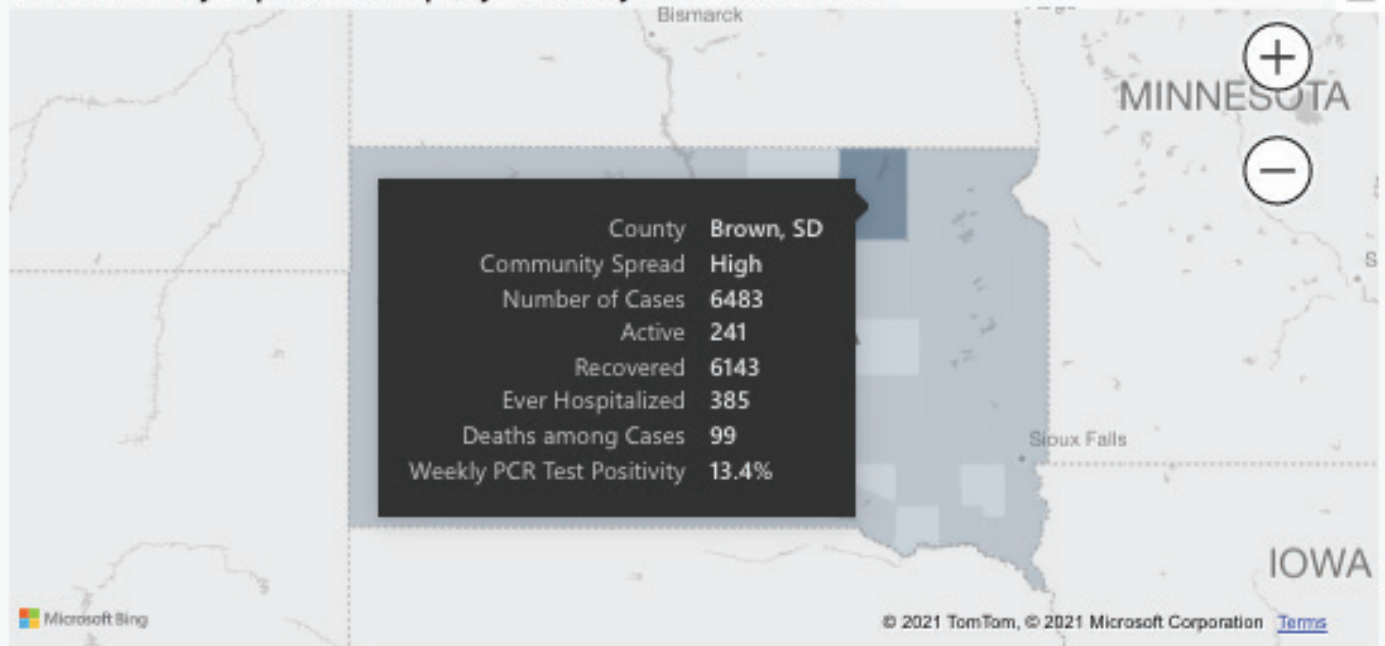
Recovered Cases

6,143

Currently Hospitalized

185

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.

Total Confirmed Cases

5,588

Total Probable Cases

895

PCR Test Positivity Rate, Last 7 Days

16.7%

10/7/2021 - 10/13/2021

Total Tests

75,201

Ever Hospitalized

385

Deaths Among Cases

99

% Progress (August Goal: 44233 Tests)

189%

% Progress (September Goal: 44233 Tests)

303%

% Progress (October Goal: 44233 Tests)

103%

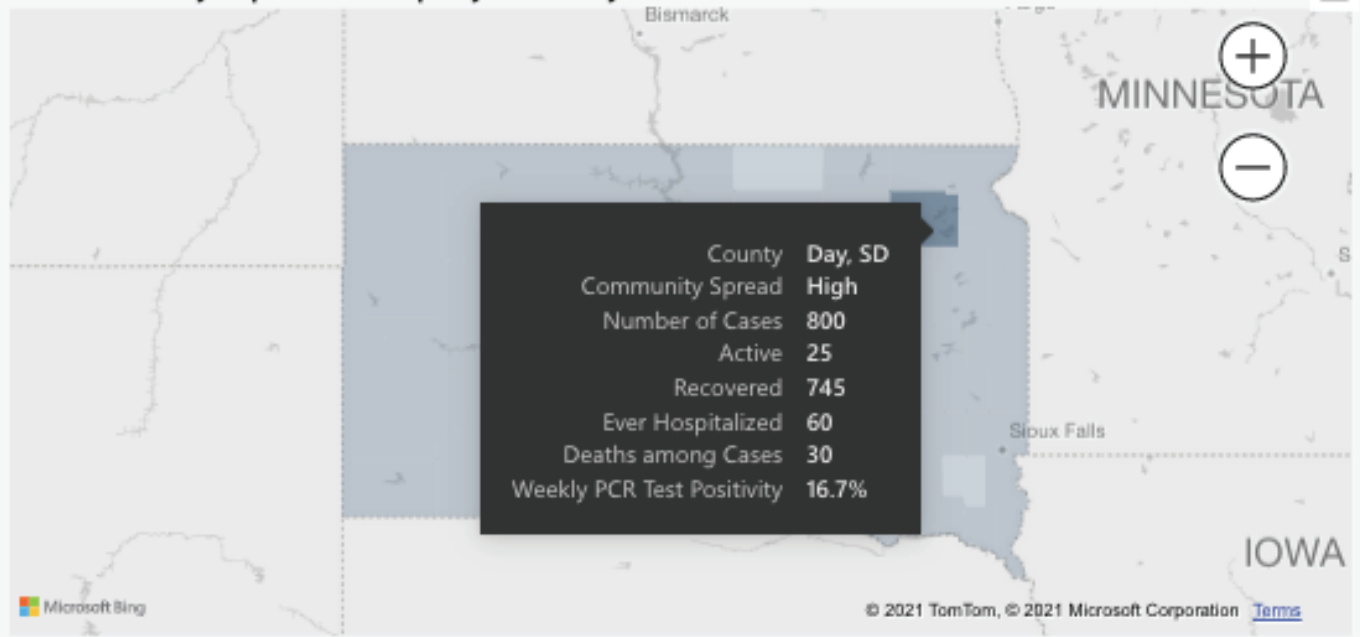
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Day County COVID-19 Report

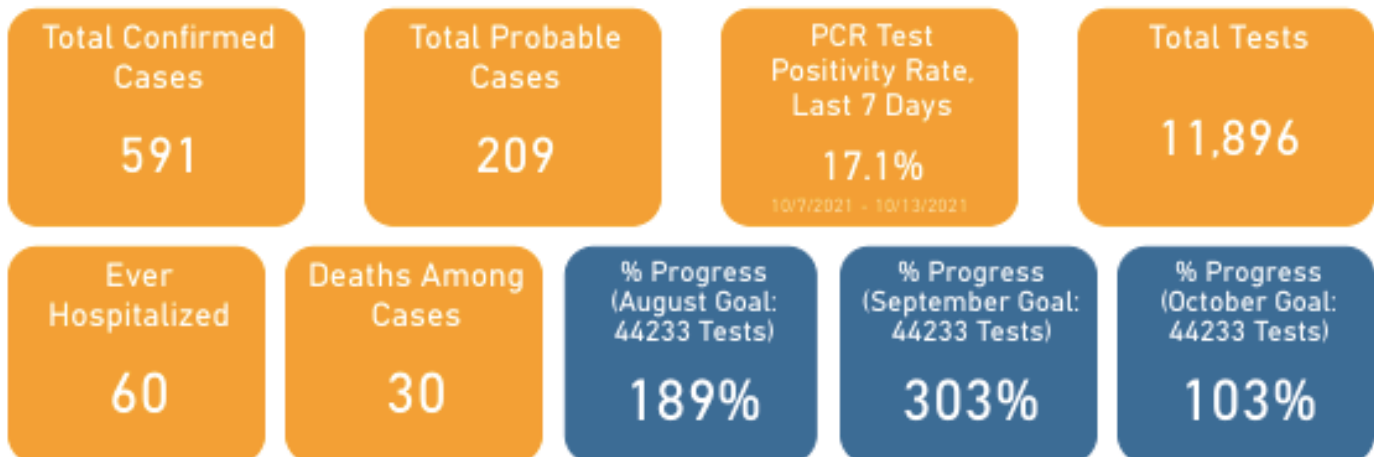


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Currently Hospitalized	-28	185
Deaths Among Cases	+18	2189
Active Cases		5868
Ever Hospitalized		7660
Recovered Cases		141939
Total Cases		149996

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	78247	1010
Male	71749	1179

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
Delta (B.1.617.2, AY.1-AY.25)	626
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	172
Gamma (P.1)	3
Beta (B.1.351)	2

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	7957	0
10-19 years	18308	0
20-29 years	26099	9
30-39 years	24809	33
40-49 years	21019	53
50-59 years	20246	144
60-69 years	16742	315
70-79 years	8808	509
80+ years	6008	1126

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian / Pacific Islander	1986	1%
Black	3578	2%
Hispanic	5919	4%
Native American	17447	12%
Other	1968	1%
Unknown	6241	4%
White	112857	75%

Groton Area School District
 Active COVID-19 Cases
 Updated October 15, 2021; 9:18 AM

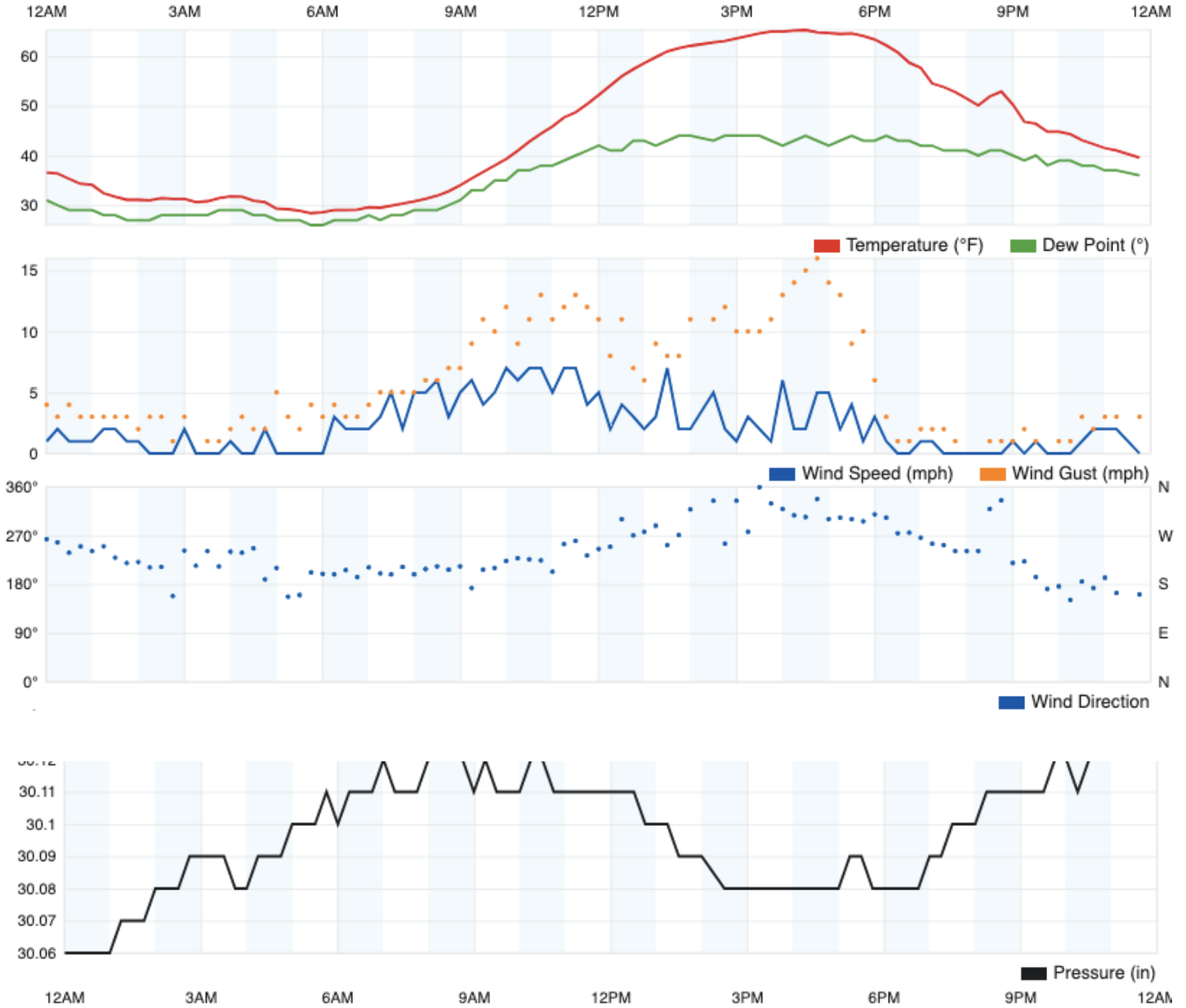
**Same number of cases
as last week**

J	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	S	T
K	G										0	1	2	t	o
														a	t
														f	a
														f	l
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	8

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night
					
Frost then Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	30% → 60% Chance Showers then Showers Likely
High: 71 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 38 °F

Warm & Dry end to the Weekend

Today

69 to 76°

Tonight

mid 40s



NWS Aberdeen, SD

Dry high pressure remains in place across the region, with warming temperatures. Expect highs mainly in the low 70s today. Temperatures will only fall into the mid 40s tonight, or about 10 degrees above average for this time of year. Breezy winds out of the south will return Monday. The next chance of rain showers will arrive Tuesday afternoon over central South Dakota, before expanding across northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota Tuesday night into Wednesday.

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Today in Weather History

October 17, 1910: The temperature in Aberdeen, South Dakota, warmed to 90 degrees on this day. This reading is the latest day in the calendar year in which the high temperature reached 90 degrees.

October 17, 2011: A strong low-pressure system to the northwest and a strong high-pressure system to the southeast brought stiff southerly winds across central and north-central South Dakota from the late morning until the early evening. South winds of 30 to 40 mph with gusts over 60 mph caused spotty damage across the region. The high winds created large waves on Lake Oahe near Pierre, which damaged several docks along with some boats at a marina. There were also some tree branches downed across the region, along with some damage to a few structures. With the high winds, warm temperatures, and low humidity, several grassland fires also broke out across parts of the region. The maximum wind gust of 68 mph occurred in Corson County.

1910: A category 4 hurricane moved north-northeast, passing just east of the Dry Tortugas. The maximum storm surge observed in Key West was 8 feet, with 15-foot waves at what is now Fort Zachary Taylor State Park.

1971: Great balls of fire were observed just ahead of a tornado moving down the main street of Wray, Colorado. However, little other electrical activity accompanied the storm. Nine people were injured in the storm, all at a trailer court at the edge of town.

1984: A snowstorm struck northern Utah producing a record 18 inches in 24 hours at Salt Lake City and 40 inches at the nearby Alta Ski Resort. The town of Magna, located ten miles west of Salt Lake City, did not receive any snow at all. The storm was responsible for a fifty-vehicle pile-up along Interstate 15 near Farmington, Utah.

1997: Late on October 17, Super Typhoon Ivan attained its peak intensity with winds of 185 mph and an official barometric pressure of 905 mbar. On the same day, while near peak intensity, Typhoon Joan was located about 1300 miles east of Typhoon Ivan.

1998: During the weekend of October 17-18, 1998, torrential rains fell over southern and southeast Texas. Up to 22 inches of rain fell, which first resulted in deadly flash flooding from San Antonio to Austin followed by record-breaking river floods along several South Texas rivers the following week. Based on provisional data from the USGS, which is subject to revision, the flood peak for this event was the highest known peak stage at 15 locations. Tragically, a total of 31 people died during the event (26 drownings, two tornado deaths, two heart attacks, and one electrocution/drowning). At least 17 of the drowning victims were in vehicles that were either driven into water or were swept away by rapidly rising water. Preliminary property damage estimates approached three-quarters of a billion dollars.

1781 - General Cornwallis attempted to escape encirclement by crossing York River, "but a violent storm arose" dispersing his boats causing him to ask for an armistice. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1910 - A hurricane made a loop off the southwest coast of Florida. Winds above 100 mph were reported at Fort Myers FL, and the barometric pressure at Sand Key reached 28.40 inches. (David Ludlum)

1950 - Small but powerful Hurricane King struck Miami, FL. The hurricane packs winded to 122 mph, with gusts to 150 mph. Hurricane King then moved up the Florida peninsula to Georgia. Four persons were killed and damage was 28 million dollars. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1971 - Great balls of fire were observed just ahead of a tornado moving down the main street of Wray CO. However, little other electrical activity accompanied the storm. Nine persons were injured in the tornado, all at a trailer court at the edge of town. (The Weather Channel)

1984 - A snowstorm struck northern Utah producing a record 18 inches in 24 hours at Salt Lake City, and 40 inches at the nearby Alta Ski Resort. The town of Magna, located ten miles west of Salt Lake City, did not receive any snow at all. The storm was responsible for a fifty vehicle pile-up along Interstate 15 near Farmington UT. (Storm Data)

1987 - It was a great day for an Oktoberfest, or to enjoy the colors of autumn, as much of the nation enjoyed sunny and mild weather. Columbia SC dipped to 34 degrees, marking their third morning in a row of record cold. Bakersfield CA reached 80 degrees for the 143rd day in a row to break a record established in 1940. (The National Weather Summary)

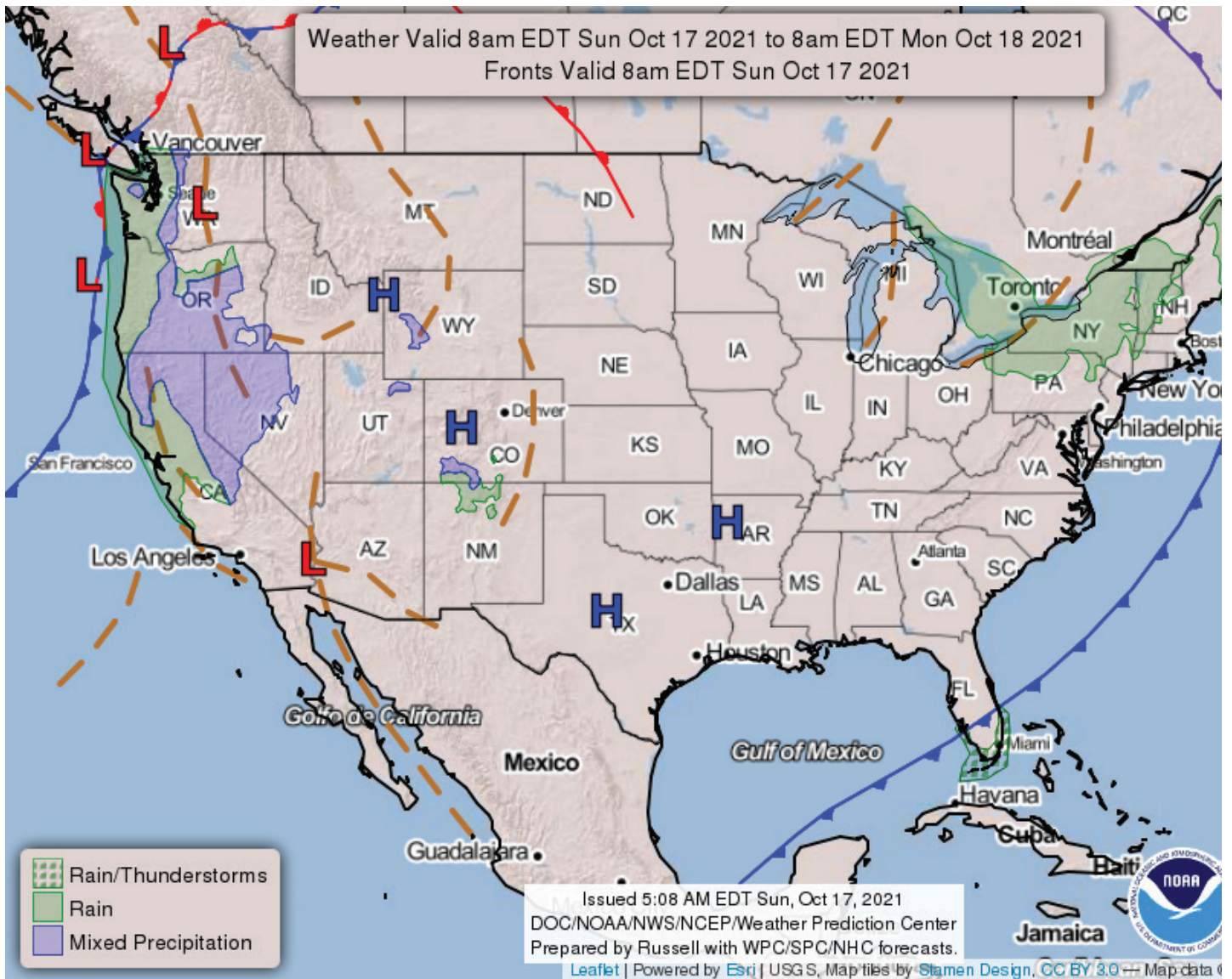
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 65.3 °F at 4:30 PM
Low Temp: 28.4 °F at 5:45 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 4:45 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 92° in 1910
Record Low: 15° in 1976
Average High: 59°F
Average Low: 33°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.29
Precip to date in Oct.: 1.94
Average Precip to date: 19.62
Precip Year to Date: 17.36
Sunset Tonight: 6:44:47 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:51:50 AM



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RESCUED FROM "THE PIT"

Time has a way of bringing about a "lapse in memory." Many of the important events in our lives - especially when God has intervened in a very dramatic way - have been forgotten over the years. Yes, there are moments when they come to mind, but for the most part, unless we record them somewhere, they are forgotten. Certainly, this is a shortcoming for many of us, and it would be good if we had a "remember this gift" list.

No doubt that is why God had David add the "benefit of remembering this gift" to his list of "Do not forget."

"Do not forget that he redeems - or more literally - rescues you - from the pit." In the previous verse, we are reminded of His healing. Now we are reminded to "store this 'benefit' - being rescued from death - inside of us."

"The pit" quite literally means "death." Those who have ever "walked through the valley of the shadow of death" understand the significance of the "walking back into the light" of life. So, we dare not forget the great benefit and blessing of the restoration of health and healing, hope and happiness.

But we must also remember and constantly recall the "benefit" of having been rescued from "eternal death!" Jesus promised us that, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me, will never die." This great benefit, eternity with Him, is the greatest of all benefits!

May we remember and rejoice, recall and realize each day that we experience the benefit of His blessings and eternal life, and the hope it gives us.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to somehow - in some way - understand the value of Your benefits that we enjoy every day - beginning with Your salvation, In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Who redeems your life from the pit. Psalm 103:4a

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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

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News from the  Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined
PREP FOOTBALL=
Little Wound 42, Pine Ridge 0
McLaughlin 52, Standing Rock, N.D. 0
Todd County 44, Lower Brule 42

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

Information from: ScoreStream Inc., <http://ScoreStream.com>

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined
PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:
Dakota Cash
07-19-20-24-25
(seven, nineteen, twenty, twenty-four, twenty-five)
Estimated jackpot: \$148,000
Lotto America
03-10-17-40-48, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 4
(three, ten, seventeen, forty, forty-eight; Star Ball: one; ASB: four)
Estimated jackpot: \$3.31 million
Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$94 million
Powerball
30-31-41-42-48, Powerball: 3, Power Play: 3
(thirty, thirty-one, forty-one, forty-two, forty-eight; Powerball: three; Power Play: three)
Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined
PREP VOLLEYBALL=
Brandon Valley def. Rapid City Stevens, 25-23, 25-17, 23-25, 25-15
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Rapid City Central, 25-11, 25-10, 25-17
Sturgis Brown def. Red Cloud, 27-25, 25-7, 25-19
Yankton def. Aberdeen Central, 25-16, 25-18, 25-22
Douglas Tournament=
Pool C=
New Underwood def. Todd County, 28-26, 25-15
Rapid City Christian def. Todd County, 25-7, 25-5
Pool D=
Bison def. Little Wound, 25-14, 25-15
Philip def. Bison, 25-10, 25-14
DVC Tournament=
Arlington Pod=

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Arlington def. Castlewood, 25-19, 25-14
Arlington def. Colman-Egan, 29-27, 25-13
Arlington def. DeSmet, 25-15, 25-12
Castlewood def. DeSmet, 25-23, 18-25, 25-22
Castlewood def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-15, 25-17
Colman-Egan def. Castlewood, 21-25, 25-19, 25-16
Colman-Egan def. DeSmet, 25-19, 25-16
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Arlington, 22-25, 25-23, 25-23
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Colman-Egan, 27-25, 25-16
Deubrook Pod=
Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Lake Preston, 25-13, 25-20
Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 22-25, 25-19, 25-19
Deubrook def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-18, 25-17
Deubrook def. Estelline/Hendricks, 25-16, 14-25, 25-18
Deubrook def. Lake Preston, 25-7, 25-13
Deubrook def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-17, 25-15
Estelline/Hendricks def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-17, 25-27, 25-22
Estelline/Hendricks def. Lake Preston, 25-4, 25-17
Estelline/Hendricks def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 27-25, 25-21
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Lake Preston, 25-20, 25-18
Lakeville North Invitational=
Pool II=
Marshall, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 26-24, 25-23
Milbank Tournament=
Championship=
Sioux Valley def. Miller, 25-22, 17-25, 25-23
Third Place=
Mobridge-Pollock def. Beresford, 25-18, 25-16
Fifth Place=
Milbank def. Sisseton, 25-20, 25-14
Seventh Place=
Groton Area def. Langford, 25-12, 26-24
Gold Pool=
Groton Area def. Sioux Valley, 25-18, 13-25, 25-23
Mobridge def. Groton Area, 25-21, 25-17
Mobridge def. Sisseton, 25-19, 25-17
Sioux Valley def. Mobridge, 28-26, 21-25, 25-19
Sioux Valley def. Sisseton, 25-15, 25-21
Sisseton def. Groton Area, 25-20, 25-23
Maroon Pool=
Beresford def. Langford, 20-25, 25-23, 25-14
Beresford def. Milbank, 25-22, 25-23
Beresford def. Miller, 25-11, 25-20
Milbank def. Langford, 25-18, 25-23
Miller def. Langford, 25-11, 25-20
Miller def. Milbank, 25-21, 21-25, 25-19
Panhandle Conference Tournament=
Semifinal=
Edgemont def. Hemingford, Neb., 25-23, 25-14
Thunder Nation Tournament=

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Pool A=

Menno def. Centerville, 25-22, 25-15

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

Information from: ScoreStream Inc., <http://ScoreStream.com>

South Dakota State breaks away for 41-17 win over WIU

MACOMB, Ill. (AP) — Chris Oladokun threw for two touchdowns, Pierre Strong Jr. ran for two and South Dakota State broke open a close game with a 21-point third quarter in taking a 41-17 victory over Western Illinois on Saturday.

South Dakota State led 13-10 at halftime before Kinser Madison blocked a punt and Canyon Bauer returned it 9 yards early in the third quarter. After the Leathernecks rebounded with Myles Wanza's 15-yard TD run, the Jackrabbits added TDs on a 17-yard run by Strong and a Jaxon Janke 21-yard reception to lead 34-17 heading into the final quarter.

Strong, who added his second touchdown of the game and ninth this season in the fourth quarter, finished with 122 yards on 19 carries. He collected his fifth 100-yard game this season and 15th of his career.

Janke finished with 101 yards receiving on nine catches for the Jackrabbits (5-1, 2-1 Missouri Valley Football Conference), ranked eighth in the FCS coaches poll.

Connor Sampson was 29-of-51 passing for 207 yards but no scores for the Leathernecks (1-6, 1-3).

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25. Sign up for the AP's college football newsletter: <https://apnews.com/cfbtop25>

Sioux Falls woman pleads guilty to sex trafficking child

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls woman has pleaded guilty in federal court to sex trafficking involving a child.

KELO-TV reports 37-year-old Melanie Hollingsworth faces up to life in prison when she's sentenced in January.

Authorities said Hollingsworth arranged sexual encounters between a teenage girl and two men for money. In court Friday, Hollingsworth acknowledged that the girl was 15-years-old.

Russia sees highest daily new COVID case number

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia is reporting its largest daily number of new coronavirus infections, more than 70% up on the number a month ago as the country faces a sustained rise in cases.

The national coronavirus task force on Sunday said 34,303 new infections were recorded in the previous day, compared with the 20,174 reported Sept. 19.

The death toll of 999 was barely lower than the record 1,002 deaths reported on Saturday.

Russian authorities have tried to speed up the pace of vaccinations with lotteries, bonuses and other incentives, but widespread vaccine skepticism and conflicting signals from officials stymied the efforts. The government said this week that about 43 million Russians, or some 29% of the country's nearly 146 million people, are fully vaccinated.

Despite the mounting toll, the Kremlin has ruled out a new nationwide lockdown like the one early on in the pandemic that badly hurt the economy, eroding President Vladimir Putin's popularity. Instead, it has delegated the power to enforce coronavirus restrictions to regional authorities.

Some of Russia's 85 regions have restricted attendance at large public events and limited access to theaters, restaurants and other venues. However, daily life is going on largely as normal in Moscow, St.

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Petersburg and many other Russian cities.

The highest concentrations of cases are mostly in comparatively urbanized western Russia and in the developed areas along the Pacific Coast such as Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, but the sparsely populated Siberian region of Sakha and Chukotka in the extreme northeast also show high case rates of more than 150 infections per 100,000 people over a seven-day period.

Overall, the coronavirus task force has registered more than 7.99 million confirmed cases and 223,312 deaths — Europe's highest death toll. The official record ranks Russia as having the fifth-most pandemic deaths in the world following the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico.

However, state statistics agency Rosstat, which also counts deaths in which the virus wasn't considered the main cause, has reported a much higher pandemic death toll — about 418,000 people with COVID-19 as of August. Based on that number, Russia would rank as the fourth hardest-hit nation in the world, ahead of Mexico.

Gambian Toufah Jallow tells of surviving rape by dictator

By CARLEY PETESCH Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Toufah Jallow's name resonates deeply in Gambia as one of the few women who has taken a public stand against sexual assault in the small West African state.

She gained fame at the age of 18 when she won a university scholarship in a national talent competition for young women. But in 2015 she fled Gambia, fearing for her life, after dictator Yahya Jammeh allegedly drugged and raped her, angry that she had turned down his marriage proposal.

She lived quietly in Canada, worried that Jammeh would persecute family members in Gambia. After Jammeh fell from power she later found the strength to go public with her story, despite Gambia's culture of silence over sexual assault, she told The Associated Press.

The nation was riveted when she held a press conference to share her account via social media and in a human rights report in June 2019. She also testified months later to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Now, Jallow is telling her story in detail in a newly released memoir: "Toufah: The Woman Who Inspired an African #MeToo Movement."

"In June 2015, Yahya Jammeh, then the president of The Gambia, raped me. He has never been charged. Never convicted ... He thought he would get away with it, tried to erase me. I thought I would never speak of it, that I would remain invisible. We were both wrong, because I am here, shining like the sunrise of the melanated coast," she writes. "I am Toufah Jallow. This is my story."

In the book, co-written with journalist Kim Pattaway, Jallow describes her journey from the daughter and granddaughter of women who in their own way pushed against the country's patriarchy to the evening of her alleged rape and her tense escape and the resulting traumas and challenges.

Jallow said she wants to be a role model for others who have experienced sexual assault and to help them deal with it.

"I wanted to make my life as relatable to young girls as possible so (they see) that what I did is achievable (and) is not seen as a miracle," she said. "It takes an ordinary girl who grew up in a village somewhere in The Gambia with a mother and with 20 siblings in a polygamous home."

Coming from a humble background, Jallow was swept into a high-profile role because of her scholarship, attending many public events with then-president Jammeh. After receiving gifts from Jammeh, who was already married, and rejecting his proposal to become one of his wives, Jallow was lured to the president's private quarters, where she says he drugged and raped her.

Jammeh hasn't reacted, but his party has denied everything.

Jallow didn't tell a soul in Gambia, fearing the worst for herself and her family. She knew there were hundreds of people who had been arrested for daring to question Jammeh.

Terrified, Jallow fled Gambia. She hid her identity by wearing a niqab (head-to-toe veil) so that state agents wouldn't recognize her. She went to Senegal and with the help of trusted allies made it to Canada

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where she now lives.

For years, no one in Gambia knew what had happened to Jallow. She lived as a refugee in Canada, working odd jobs to support her classes.

"For the longest time ... I would always shove it aside," she said of her trauma. But seeing statistics for sexual assault with so few being held accountable bothered her. "I have never felt more invisible," she said of that period.

Speaking about sex and sexuality, "it's just not done," in Gambia, she said. There is not even a word for rape in her native Fula language, she explained to AP. Instead people use phrases like "Somebody fell on me."

Jammeh lost elections and fled the country in 2017. Gambia then opened a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the reports of abuses and killings during his 22-year rule.

When Jallow came forward in 2019 about her assault, it unleashed a movement. More than 50,000 people were glued to social media when she first spoke. Women then marched holding banners saying "#IAmToufah" and there was an outpouring of others' stories of rape.

Jallow speaking out was a "wind of change" in Gambia, said Marion Volkmann-Brandau, a women's rights activist who helped guide Jallow and led the human rights investigation into sexual assault in Gambia that saw her come forward.

"There was this moment of support ... women coming out generally about rape and having a story to share showed they weren't invisible anymore," she said. "Gambians realized too how widespread the issue was."

That hope, however, has unfortunately dwindled, Volkmann-Brandau said, as the legal system must be reformed in order to take sexual assault seriously.

But the groundwork has been laid and Jallow has started the Toufah Foundation, set up to help support of survivors of sexual assault in Gambia. Her goal is to have Gambia's first fully functioning women's shelter.

Her name is now used to discuss rape in communities once unable to talk about it.

She travels to Gambia often, while studying in Canada to be a counselor for women and children victims, and is also working on a documentary that follows survivors of sexual violence.

And if Jammeh returns to Gambia, Jallow says she will fly there to confront him.

"I feel like I am too visible to be invisible anymore," she said. "I have faced the worst fear ... I have survived him physically."

Heavy rains, floods leave 8 dead, 12 missing in south India

Associated Press undefined

NEW DELHI (AP) — At least eight people have died and a dozen are feared missing after a day of torrential rains in the southern Indian state of Kerala.

Rescue operations were underway on Sunday after heavy rains lashed the state the day before, triggering flash floods and landslides, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency reported.

The National Disaster Response Force and the Indian Army deployed teams to help with rescue efforts in two of the worst-hit districts, Kottayam and Idukki, where a dozen people are still feared missing.

On Saturday, when the heavy rains began, television reports showed people wading through chest-deep waters to rescue passengers from a bus that was nearly submerged by the torrents flooding the roads.

Officials said the intense rainfall has subsided, but they fear the death toll could rise as relief and rescue operations continue.

Home Minister Amit Shah said the federal government was monitoring the situation in Kerala and would provide all possible support to the state. "Praying for everyone's safety," he said in a tweet.

In 2018, Kerala suffered catastrophic floods when heavy downpours amid the monsoon season killed 223 people and drove hundreds of thousands from their homes.

US religious group says 17 missionaries kidnapped in Haiti

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A group of 17 U.S. missionaries including children was kidnapped by a gang in Haiti on Saturday, according to a voice message sent to various religious missions by an organization with direct knowledge of the incident.

The missionaries were on their way home from building an orphanage, according to a message from Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries.

"This is a special prayer alert," the one-minute message said. "Pray that the gang members would come to repentance."

The message says the mission's field director is working with the U.S. Embassy, and that the field director's family and one other unidentified man stayed at the ministry's base while everyone else visited the orphanage.

No other details were immediately available.

A U.S. government spokesperson said they were aware of the reports on the kidnapping.

"The welfare and safety of U.S. citizens abroad is one of the highest priorities of the Department of State," the spokesperson said, declining further comment.

Haiti is once again struggling with a spike in gang-related kidnappings that had diminished after President Jovenel Moïse was fatally shot at his private residence on July 7, and following a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck southwest Haiti in August and killed more than 2,200 people.

Gangs have demanded ransoms ranging from a couple hundred dollars to more than \$1 million, according to authorities.

Last month, a deacon was killed in front of a church in the capital of Port-au-Prince and his wife kidnapped, one of dozens of people who have been abducted in recent months.

At least 328 kidnapping victims were reported to Haiti's National Police in the first eight months of 2021, compared with a total of 234 for all of 2020, according to a report issued last month by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti known as BINUH.

Gangs have been accused of kidnapping schoolchildren, doctors, police officers, busloads of passengers and others as they grow more powerful. In April, one gang kidnapped five priests and two nuns, a move that prompted a protest similar to the one organized for this Monday to decry the lack of security in the impoverished country.

"Political turmoil, the surge in gang violence, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions – including food insecurity and malnutrition – all contribute to the worsening of the humanitarian situation," BINUH said in its report. "An overstretched and under-resourced police force alone cannot address the security ills of Haiti."

On Friday, the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to extend the U.N. political mission in Haiti.

The kidnapping of the missionaries comes just days after high-level U.S. officials visited Haiti and promised more resources for Haiti's National Police, including another \$15 million to help reduce gang violence, which this year has displaced thousands of Haitians who now live in temporary shelters in increasingly unhygienic conditions.

Among those who met with Haiti's police chief was Uzra Zeya, U.S. under secretary of state for civilian security, democracy, and human rights.

"Dismantling violent gangs is vital to Haitian stability and citizen security," she recently tweeted.

AP reporter Evens Sanon in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, contributed to this report.

Russian filmmakers land after shoot aboard space station

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Soyuz space capsule carrying a cosmonaut and two Russian filmmakers has landed after a 3 1/2-hour trip from the International Space Station.

The capsule, descending under a red-and-white striped parachute after entering Earth's atmosphere,

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landed upright in the steppes of Kazakhstan on schedule at 0435 GMT Sunday with Oleg Novitskiy, Yulia Peresild and Klim Shipenko aboard.

Actress Peresild and film director Shipenko rocketed to the space station on Oct. 5 for a 12-day stint to film segments of a movie titled "Challenge," in which a surgeon played by Peresild rushes to the space station to save a crew member who needs an urgent operation in orbit. Novitskiy, who spent more than six months aboard the space station, is to star as the ailing cosmonaut in the movie.

After the landing, which sent plumes of dust flying high in the air, ground crews extracted the three space flyers from the capsule and placed them in seats set up nearby as they adjusted to the pull of gravity. They were then taken to a medical tent for examination.

All appeared healthy and cheerful. Peresild smiled and held a large bouquet of white flowers as journalists clustered around her. But she said she also felt a touch of melancholy.

"I'm feeling a bit sad today. It seemed that 12 days would be a lot, but I did not want to leave when everything was over," Peresild said on state TV.

The transfer to the medical tent was delayed for about 10 minutes while crews filmed several takes of Peresild and Novitskiy in their seats, which are to be included in the movie. More scenes remain to be shot on Earth for the film whose release date is uncertain.

Seven astronauts remain aboard the space station: Russia's Anton Shkaplerov and Pyotr Dubrov; Americans Mark Vande Hei, Shane Kimbrough and Megan McArthur; Thomas Pesquet of the European Space Agency; and Japan's Aki Hoshide.

Volunteers in the sky watch over migrant rescues by sea

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

ABOARD THE SEABIRD (AP) — As dozens of African migrants traversed the Mediterranean Sea on a flimsy white rubber boat, a small aircraft circling 1,000 feet above closely monitored their attempt to reach Europe.

The twin-engine Seabird, owned by the German non-governmental organization Sea-Watch, is tasked with documenting human rights violations committed against migrants at sea and relaying distress cases to nearby ships and authorities who have increasingly ignored their pleas.

On this cloudy October afternoon, an approaching thunderstorm heightened the dangers for the overcrowded boat. Nearly 23,000 people have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe since 2014, according to the United Nations' migration agency.

"Nour 2, Nour 2, this is aircraft Seabird, aircraft Seabird," the aircraft's tactical coordinator, Eike Bretschneider, communicated via radio with the only vessel nearby. The captain of the Nour 2, agreed to change course and check up on the flimsy boat. But after seeing the boat had a Libyan flag, the people refused its assistance, the captain reported back on the crackling radio.

"They say they only have 20 liters of fuel left," the captain, who did not identify himself by name, told the Seabird. "They want to continue on their journey."

The small boat's destination was the Italian island of Lampedusa, where tourists sitting in outdoor cafés sipped on Aperol Spritz, oblivious to what was unfolding some 60 nautical miles (111 km/68 miles) south of them on the Mediterranean Sea.

Bretschneider, a 30-year-old social worker, made some quick calculations and concluded the migrants must have departed Libya approximately 20 hours ago and still had some 15 hours ahead of them before they reached Lampedusa. That was if their boat did not fall apart or capsize along the way.

Despite the risks, many migrants and refugees say they'd rather die trying to cross to Europe than be returned to Libya where, upon disembarkation, they are placed in detention centers and often subjected to relentless abuse.

Bretschneider sent the rubber boat's coordinates to the air liaison officer sitting in Berlin, who then relayed the position (inside the Maltese Search and Rescue zone) to both Malta and Italy. Unsurprisingly to them, they received no response.

Running low on fuel, the Seabird had to leave the scene.

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"We can only hope the people will reach the shore at some moment or will get rescued by a European coast guard vessel," Bretschneider told AP as they made their way back.

The activists have grown used to having their distress calls go unanswered.

For years human rights groups and international law experts have denounced that European countries are increasingly ignoring their international obligations to rescue migrants at sea. Instead, they've outsourced rescues to the Libyan Coast Guard, which has a track record of reckless interceptions as well as ties to human traffickers and militias.

"I'm sorry, we don't speak with NGOs," a man answering the phone of the Maltese Rescue and Coordination Center told a member of Sea-Watch inquiring about a boat in distress this past June. In a separate call to the Rescue and Coordination Center in Rome, another Sea-Watch member was told: "We have no information to report to you."

Maltese and Italian authorities did not respond to questions sent by AP.

Trying to get in touch with the Libyan rescue and coordination center is an even greater challenge. On the rare occasion that someone does pick up, the person on the other side of the line often doesn't speak English.

More than 49,000 migrants have reached Italian shores so far this year according to the Italian Ministry of Interior, nearly double the number of people who crossed in the same time period last year.

Although it is illegal for European vessels to take rescued migrants back to Libya themselves, information shared by the EU's surveillance drones and planes have allowed the Libyan Coast Guard to considerably increase its ability to stop migrants from reaching Europe. So far this year, it has intercepted roughly half of those who have attempted to leave, returning more than 26,000 men, women and children to Libya.

Sea-Watch has relied on millions of euros from individual donations over several years to expand its air monitoring capabilities as well. It now has two small aircraft that, with a birds-eye view, can find boats in distress much faster than ships can.

Taking off from Lampedusa, which is closer to North Africa than Italy, the planes can reach a distress case relatively quickly if its position is known. But when there are no exact coordinates, they must fly a search pattern, sometimes for hours, and scan the sea with the help of binoculars.

Even when flying low, finding a tiny boat in the vast Mediterranean can strain the most experienced eyes. The three- to four-person crew of volunteers reports every little dot on the horizon that could potentially be people in distress.

"Target at 10 o'clock," the Seabird's photographer sitting in the back alerted on a recent flight.

The pilot veered left to inspect it.

"Fishing boat, disregard," Bretschneider, the tactical coordinator, replied.

In rough seas, breaking waves can play tricks and for brief moments resemble wobbly boats in the distance. Frequently, the "targets" turn out to be nothing at all, and the Seabird returns to land hours later without any new information.

But finding boats in distress is only the first challenge. Getting them rescued is just as difficult, if not harder.

With the absence of state rescue vessels and NGO ships getting increasingly blocked from leaving port, Sea-Watch often relies on the good will of merchant vessels navigating the area. But many are also reluctant to get involved after several commercial ships found themselves stuck at sea for days as they waited for Italy's or Malta's permission to disembark rescued migrants. Others have taken them back to Libya in violation of maritime and refugee conventions.

This week, a court in Naples convicted the captain of an Italian commercial ship for returning 101 migrants to Libya in 2018.

Without any state authority, the Seabird can only remind captains of their duty to rescue persons in distress. In this way, Bretschneider recently got an Italian supply vessel to save 65 people from a drifting migrant boat, just moments before the Libyan Coast Guard arrived.

On another mission a few days later, the Seabird returned from its flight without knowing what would happen to the people they had seen on the white rubber boat.

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Bretschneider checked his phone at dinner that night, hoping for good news. On the other side of the Mediterranean, 17 bodies had washed up in Western Libya, apparently from a different boat.

The next day the Seabird took off to look for the white rubber boat again, in vain. On their way back, they got a message from land.

The white rubber boat had reached waters near Lampedusa and was picked up by the Italian Coast Guard. The people had made it.

Texas GOP advances new maps that would tighten slipping grip

By ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press/Report for America

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas Republicans on Saturday night closed in on redrawn U.S. House maps that would shore up their eroding dominance as voters peel away from the GOP in the state's booming suburbs.

In a key late-night vote in the Texas House, Republicans gave early sign-off to new congressional boundaries that would give them more breathing room after some close calls in 2018 and 2020, while also opening a new path for the GOP along the border with Mexico.

But in a preview of legal challenges to come, Democrats spent hours blasting the maps as discriminatory and all but blind to the state's surging number of Latino residents, who made up more than half of the nearly 4 million new Texans over the past decade. Many live around Dallas and Houston, where under the GOP-engineered maps, there would be no new districts that give Latinos a majority.

Republican state Rep. Todd Hunter, who has presided over the redrawn maps in the House, defended the changes and said they comply with the law.

The maps will still need final negotiations in the coming days between the House and Senate before being sent to Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, who is expected to sign them.

The redrawn congressional districts would make it easier for many incumbents to hold their seats, but critics say they also threaten Black and Hispanic communities' political influence, even as those voters drive Texas' growth. The new lines, the product of a once-in-a-decade redistricting process, create two new districts and make several less competitive for Republican lawmakers.

Texas was the only state to gain two congressional seats following the 2020 census, which showed that people of color accounted for more than 9 of 10 new residents in Texas.

"Race is clearly the factor here," Democratic state Rep. Rafael Anchia said of how the maps were drawn. "Not partisanship, but rather race."

One revision by the Texas House during hours of debate Saturday would increase the number of Hispanic voters in two districts, but those changes must still make it through another round of approval.

Democrats and voting rights advocates are preparing to challenge the maps in court in what would be yet another high-profile, high-stakes legal battle over Texas politics — already the epicenter of disputes over abortion and voting rights.

Republicans who control both chambers of the Legislature have nearly complete control of the mapmaking process. They are working from maps that experts and courts have already declared as gerrymandered in their favor, and the state has had to defend their maps in court after every redistricting process since the Voting Rights Act took effect in 1965.

But legal challenges face new hurdles this round — the first since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2013 that Texas and other states with a history of racial discrimination no longer need to have the Justice Department scrutinize the maps before they are approved. Plaintiffs must now wait to file claims and must show that maps were intentionally meant to discriminate by race. Drawing maps to engineer a political advantage is not unconstitutional.

Republican state Sen. Joan Huffman, who authored the maps and leads the Senate Redistricting Committee, has told lawmakers they were "drawn blind to race." She said her legal team ensured the proposal followed the Voting Rights Act.

The proposal would make 24 of the state's 38 congressional districts safe Republican districts, with an

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opportunity to pick up at least one additional newly redrawn Democratic stronghold on the border with Mexico, according to an analysis by The Associated Press of data from last year's election collected by the Texas Legislative Council. Currently, Republicans hold 23 of the state's 36 seats.

Republicans with newly fortified advantages include Rep. Van Taylor, whose district in Dallas' exurbs went for President Donald Trump by a single percentage point last year. Under the new maps, Trump would have won the district by double-digits.

Rep. Michael McCaul, who Democrats aggressively targeted the last two cycles, would now represent a solidly pro-Trump district under lines that exclude Houston's suburbs and liberal parts of Austin.

And a long, vertically drawn district stretching from the Rio Grande Valley to San Antonio that President Joe Biden won by just over 2 percentage points would now slightly tilt toward Trump voters.

In a late-night win for Democrats, U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a Democrat who is serving her 14th term, had her home drawn back into her Houston district, which was restored nearly entirely to its former shape. So, too, was the nearby district of U.S. Rep. Al Green after both had seen longtime constituents of minority communities drawn out of their districts.

Texas lawmakers are also redrawing the maps for their own districts, with Republicans following a similar plan that would keep their party in power in the state House and Senate. Those proposals are also expected to be sent to Abbott by next week.

Associated Press writer Paul J. Weber contributed to this report. Coronado is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

Riley's game-winning single in 9th lifts Braves past Dodgers

By CHARLES ODUM AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — A couple of clutch swings from breakout slugger Austin Riley got the underdog Atlanta Braves off to a fast start in the NL Championship Series.

Riley homered and drove in the winning run with a single in the bottom of the ninth inning to give Atlanta a 3-2 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 1 on Saturday night.

Blake Treinen struck out Freddie Freeman to open the ninth before giving up Ozzie Albies' bloop single to center field. Albies stole second and Riley followed with his line drive into the left-field corner.

"That was my mindset — put something in play and see what happens," Riley said after delivering the first walk-off hit of his career.

The 24-year-old slugger spread his arms in celebration as he rounded first base before getting mobbed by teammates in a happy swarm that carried into shallow center field.

"You dream of that as a little kid," Riley said.

Albies told first-base coach Eric Young Sr. he would be taking off to steal second so he could get in scoring position.

"I knew (Riley) was going to do the job," Albies said.

"As soon as he hit it, I took off. I started yelling, screaming all the way to home plate."

Riley also homered in the fourth. The third baseman set career highs across the board for NL East champion Atlanta this year in his third major league season, batting .303 with 33 homers, 107 RBIs and an .898 OPS in a league-leading 160 games.

"He's come a long way in a short time, I feel like. Even last year, I think that he didn't have all these tools. He can beat you in so many ways now, and he always had that power, but now he's putting together such good at-bats," Dodgers infielder Trea Turner said.

"He's a polished hitter and hats off to him because I think he's gotten to the point where he's been a really good player and there's a reason why fans are chanting MVP for him."

Riley's big game was especially important as Braves first baseman Freddie Freeman struck out four times against four different Los Angeles pitchers after having only one four-strikeout game in the regular season.

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Atlanta manager Brian Snitker said Riley has proven he can take that lead role.

"I think that kid has definitely taken the next step forward," Snitker said.

The teams are meeting in the NL Championship Series for the second consecutive season. The Dodgers rallied from a 3-1 deficit to win last year's playoff in seven games before also winning the World Series.

Game 2 is Sunday night in Atlanta before the series shifts to Los Angeles.

The wild-card Dodgers wasted a scoring opportunity in the top of the ninth. Will Smith got two outs before walking Chris Taylor. Pinch-hitter Cody Bellinger hit a soft single to right field, but Taylor got caught and tagged out in a rundown between second and third that started with right fielder Joc Pederson's throw to shortstop Dansby Swanson.

"I thought if he would have kept going, he might have had a chance at third," Riley said. "But that was a great play by Dansby. Just being able to get out of that inning there was huge."

Corey Knebel worked one inning as the Dodgers' opener in a bullpen game, giving up one run. Eddie Rosario led off with a single, stole second, moved to third on Albies' groundout and scored on Knebel's wild pitch to Riley.

The Dodgers, who won 18 more games than Atlanta during the regular season, pulled even in the second on AJ Pollock's two-out double and Taylor's RBI single.

Will Smith's homer in the fourth, his third of the postseason, gave the Dodgers a 2-1 lead. Riley's two-out homer off Tony Gonsolin in the fourth tied it.

The Dodgers outhit the Braves 10-6 but left runners on base in each of the first seven innings except the fourth. Los Angeles hitters were 1 for 8 with runners in scoring position.

"We prevented runs all night. So we didn't not win the game because we didn't prevent runs," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "We just didn't get the hits when we needed."

No Braves pitcher posted a perfect inning until the eighth, when Luke Jackson got three consecutive outs.

Justin Turner, who was 2 for 24 in the Dodgers' first two postseason rounds, had one hit. Albert Pujols was held without a hit on three groundouts before popping out in the ninth.

MIGHTY MAX

Braves starter Max Fried gave up two runs and eight hits in six innings. He threw 23 consecutive strikes, the most in a postseason game in 20 years, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

"I don't know that Max really felt like he was on tonight," Snitker said. "Max just kept pitching."

COUNTING Ks

Snitker was surprised to learn his hitters had 14 strikeouts in the game.

"I had no idea we struck out that many times," he said. "I'm not sitting there with a clicker."

UP NEXT

Braves RHP Ian Anderson faces Dodgers ace Max Scherzer in Game 2.

Scherzer was tentatively scheduled to start Game 1 even though he earned his first career save to close out Thursday night's deciding Game 5 of the Dodgers' NL Division Series win over San Francisco. He was pushed back because he expects to be at full strength following another day of rest.

Scherzer has pitched 12 1/3 innings over three appearances in the playoffs, allowing two runs and six hits with 16 strikeouts. Scherzer, who pitched for Washington for six-plus seasons in the NL East before he was traded to the Dodgers this season, is very familiar with the Braves' lineup, which he said "first and foremost starts with Freddie Freeman."

"Hands down, he's the best hitter I've had to face," Scherzer said. "And I love facing him because that's who you measure yourself against when you have to face the best."

Anderson is 3-0 with a 0.76 ERA in five career postseason starts. He pitched five innings, allowing only three hits without a walk, in a 3-0 win over Milwaukee in the Division Series.

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

Robert Durst hospitalized with COVID-19, his lawyer says

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — New York real estate heir Robert Durst, who days ago was sentenced in a two-decade-old murder case, has been hospitalized after contracting COVID-19, his lawyer said Saturday. Defense Attorney Dick DeGuerin said he was notified that Durst was admitted after testing positive for the coronavirus. DeGuerin told multiple media outlets that Durst is on a ventilator. Additional details on his condition were not immediately made available.

The Los Angeles Superior Court said in a statement Saturday that the court was notified someone present for the sentencing hearing for Durst on Thursday had tested positive for COVID-19.

"As a result, the Court will follow CDC and LA County Department of Public Health guidelines for assessing close contacts of the infected individual," the statement read.

No additional COVID-19 cases have been reported.

Durst, 78, was sentenced Thursday to life in prison without a chance of parole for the murder of his best friend more than two decades ago. Durst, who has numerous medical issues, sat in a wheelchair with a catatonic stare during much of the sentencing hearing.

"He was very, very sick in the courtroom," DeGuerin said Saturday.

He was convicted in Los Angeles Superior Court last month of first-degree murder for shooting Susan Berman point-blank in the back of the head at her home in December 2000.

The killing had been a mystery that haunted family and friends for 15 years before Durst was arrested in 2015 following his unwise decision to participate in a documentary that unearthed new evidence and caught him in a stunning confession.

DeGuerin said Thursday that Durst will appeal.

Venezuela halts talks after Maduro ally's extradition to US

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Venezuela's government said Saturday it would halt negotiations with its opponents in retaliation for the extradition to the U.S. of a close ally of President Nicolás Maduro who prosecutors believe could be the most significant witness ever about corruption in the South American country.

Jorge Rodríguez, who has been heading the government's delegation, said his team wouldn't travel to Mexico City for the next scheduled round of negotiations.

The announcement capped a tumultuous day that saw businessman Alex Saab placed on a U.S.-bound plane in Cape Verde after a 16-month fight by Maduro and his allies, including Russia, who consider the Colombian-born businessman a Venezuelan diplomat.

A few hours after news of Saab's extradition blew up Venezuelan social media, six American oil executives held on house arrest were taken back to jail by security forces — a sign that relations between Washington and Caracas could be upended after months of quiet diplomacy since Joe Biden entered the White House. Families of the men known as the Citgo 6 — for the Houston subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil company where they worked — expressed frustration with both governments.

"The fact that Mr. Saab is in the U.S. before my father is a disgrace," said Cristina Vadell, whose father, Tomeu Vadell, is among the Americans serving out long sentences on what the U.S. government considers trumped-up charges.

"This is additional proof that these Americans are held hostage in Venezuela, and President Biden's administration needs to recognize this and win their release immediately," she added.

Saab is expected to make his initial appearance in court on Monday in Miami, according to Justice Department spokesperson Nicole Navas Oxman, who expressed gratitude and admiration to the government of Cabo Verde for its professionalism and "perseverance with this complex case."

Saab, 49, was arrested in the African archipelago while making a stop on the way to Iran for what Maduro's government later described as a diplomatic humanitarian mission that gives him immunity from prosecution.

He quickly became a revolutionary rallying cry, with Venezuela's government saying months after his arrest that the low-profile businessman had been appointed earlier a representative to the African Union

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— credentials whose authenticity and relevance U.S. prosecutors have questioned.

Rodríguez, standing in front of a sign reading “Free Alex Saab,” blasted what he said was a “brutal aggression” on the part of a U.S. government that has been trying for years, without success, to oust Maduro. He said the Venezuelan government would denounce his illegal “extraction” in multilateral forums and in protest wouldn’t partake in the next round of negotiations, although he stopped short of saying the government would abandon the talks altogether.

“The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela deplores this serious violation against the human rights of a Venezuelan citizen, who is invested as a diplomat and as a representative of our country to the world,” the Maduro government said in a statement. “This fact sets a dangerous precedent for international law.”

Government opponents, including opposition leader Juan Guaidó, who the U.S. recognizes as Venezuela’s legitimate leader, celebrated the prospect of soon seeing one of Maduro’s top insiders behind bars — something of a moral victory after a string of heartbreaking defeats on the streets trying to break the socialist leader’s grip on power.

“What we Venezuelans feel today is justice,” said David Smolansky, a Caracas-area mayor who fled into exile after his arrest was ordered for leading protests against Maduro in 2017. “It’s the same justice that has evaded us for 22 years. A justice that had to be found beyond our borders. A justice that should seek all those guilty of corruption, crimes against humanity, hunger and the migration crisis.”

American authorities have been targeting Saab for years, believing he can unlock the mystery of how Venezuela has been selling gold and tankers full of crude oil in violation of U.S. sanctions. They also believe he holds numerous secrets about how Maduro, the president’s family and his top aides siphoned off millions of dollars in government contracts for food and housing amid widespread hunger in oil-rich Venezuela.

Federal prosecutors in Miami indicted Saab in 2019 on money-laundering charges connected to an alleged bribery scheme that pocketed more than \$350 million from a low-income housing project for the Venezuelan government.

Separately, Saab had been sanctioned by the previous Trump administration for allegedly utilizing a network of shell companies spanning the globe — in the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Hong Kong, Panama, Colombia and Mexico — to hide huge profits from no-bid, overvalued food contracts obtained through bribes and kickbacks.

Some of Saab’s contracts were obtained by paying bribes to the adult children of Venezuelan first lady Cilia Flores, the Trump administration alleged. Commonly known in Venezuela as “Los Chamos,” slang for “the kids,” the three men are also under investigation by prosecutors in Miami for allegedly forming part of a scheme to siphon \$1.2 billion from Venezuela’s state-owned oil company, two people familiar with the U.S. investigation told The Associated Press.

But while in private U.S. officials have long described Saab as a front man for Maduro, he is not identified as such in court filings.

The previous Trump administration had made Saab’s extradition a top priority, at one point even sending a Navy warship to the African archipelago to keep an eye on the captive.

On Saturday, Colombian President Iván Duque lauded the extradition of Saab, calling it a “triumph in the fight against drug trafficking, money laundering and corruption led by the dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro.”

However, the Biden administration has downplayed the importance of Saab’s problems, saying he can defend himself in U.S. courts and that his case shouldn’t affect the ongoing negotiations being sponsored by Norway aimed at overcoming Venezuela’s long running economic crisis and political tug of war.

The families of nine Americans jailed in Caracas are less hopeful that Saab’s legal troubles can be disentangled from the furtive attempts at a détente.

In addition to the Citgo 6 — who were sentenced last year to long prison sentences over a never-executed plan to refinance billions in the oil company’s bonds— they include former U.S. Marine Matthew Heath, who is being held on weapons charges tied to a supposed plan to sabotage refineries, and two former Green Berets Caracas tied to a failed cross-border raid from Colombia to overthrow Maduro.

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"In a very disappointing turn of events, American detainees in Venezuela are now being used as political pawns," former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, who has traveled to Venezuela to try and secure the Americans' release, said in a statement. "We had been hoping to do wellness visits with them, but now we fear we will not be given the opportunity."

—AP Writers Jorge Rueda in Caracas, Venezuela and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Goodman on Twitter: @APJoshGoodman

Grand game: Boston's 2 slams lead 9-5 ALCS win over Astros

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — J.D. Martinez and Rafael Devers helped the Red Sox have a grand old time in Houston.

Boston became the first team to slug two grand slams in a postseason game, with Martinez and Devers connecting in the first two innings of a 9-5 win over the Astros on Saturday that tied their AL Championship Series at one game apiece.

Game 3 is Monday night in Boston. It's the first of three consecutive home games for the Red Sox, back in the playoffs for the first time since winning the 2018 World Series after downing Houston in the ALCS.

Martinez made it 4-0 with his opposite-field shot off rookie Luis García with two outs in the first. It was the first career playoff slam for the four-time All-Star, who began his career with the Astros.

"That situation, the pressure is on him, it's not on me to come through there," Martinez said. "It's the first inning. He has bases loaded. I'm trying to tell myself that, trying to stay relaxed and just looking for a pitch so I can just put a barrel on it."

García exited with right knee discomfort after walking the first batter of the second inning. Jake Odorizzi took over, and shortly after a 13-minute delay while the right-hander warmed up on the field, Devers connected with one out for slam No. 2.

"J.D.'s swing was huge to get us on the board early, and then Raffy, same thing, another granny," red-hot teammate Kiké Hernández said. "Has that ever happened before?"

It has now.

Hernández, who Boston manager Alex Cora referred to Friday night as "en fuego" after a two-homer performance in Game 1, remained on fire Saturday. He had two hits, highlighted by a solo homer in the fourth inning.

Hernández has been this postseason's hottest hitter, leading all players with 16 hits, five homers and four doubles. His nine extra-base hits are also the most in these playoffs and tied a Red Sox postseason record with Mike Lowell (2007), Kevin Youkilis (2007) and David Ortiz (2004 & 2007). His five homers are also tied for most in team history with Ortiz (2004, 2013) and Todd Walker (2003).

"The importance of the game is allowing me to stay focused and stay locked in," Hernández said.

Red Sox starter Nathan Eovaldi permitted five hits and three runs in 5 1/3 innings.

The Astros captured a 5-4 win in the series opener as they rallied behind homers from Jose Altuve and Carlos Correa before falling into the huge hole early in this one.

"That's a tough team," Cora said. "It's never comfortable with them because they're a swing away from getting back in the game."

The Red Sox were up 9-0 when Houston got on the board with an RBI double by Kyle Tucker with two outs in the fourth. The Astros cut the lead to 9-3 when Yuli Gurriel followed with single to right field that scored two more.

Gurriel and Jason Castro added solo homers in the ninth off Darwinson Hernandez before Ryan Brasier got the final out.

"At the end, it was a little too close for comfort, but we got it done," Hernández said.

Manager Dusty Baker isn't sure how long García will be out, but he said that he'd been dealing with this issue "on and off" but didn't tell anyone about it.

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"It wasn't bothering him enough not to pitch," Baker said. "We'll make a determination in a couple of days."

The injury to García is another blow to a Houston team trying to reach the World Series for the second time in three years. The Astros are already reeling after an injury to staff ace Lance McCullers Jr. that kept him off the roster for this series.

They won the championship in 2017, a crown tainted by the team's sign-stealing scandal.

When McCullers went out, Baker said the team would just have to "hit more" to absorb the loss. But now that the rotation is further depleted, it'll be an even taller task for this powerful lineup outgunning a Boston team whose offense has outpaced everyone this postseason.

So what is he asking from his offense now?

"Do some more," he said with a chuckle while shaking his head. "You don't have much choice, so we just have to do some more. That's all."

Odorizzi was left off the Division Series roster after a disappointing first season in Houston before getting a spot in this round after the injury to McCullers. He allowed seven hits and four runs in four innings Saturday in a performance that certainly isn't good news for a team that is running short on starters.

TOUGH UP TOP

Altuve and Michael Brantley, the top two hitters in Houston's lineup, are a combined 2 for 17 in the series with a hit each, including Altuve's homer in Game 1.

WARM IT UP

Odorizzi was caught off guard when he was thrust into the game and hadn't even stretched when he was called to the mound.

"I'm sure it felt like forever for y'all, but for me that was about the fastest I can warm up," he said. "It usually takes me 30-plus minutes."

Cora was asked if the lengthy delay impacted his team's focus.

"It really didn't matter if it was an hour delay or whatever," Cora said. "We were locked in."

UP NEXT

There's a day off Sunday before Houston's José Urquidy makes his first start this postseason in Game 3 Monday. The Red Sox have yet to name their starter but should have starters Nick Pivetta and Eduardo Rodriguez available after neither were needed in the first two games.

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

Strike dodged with deal between film and TV crews, studios

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An 11th-hour deal was reached Saturday, averting a strike of film and television crews that would have seen some 60,000 behind-the-scenes workers walk off their jobs and would have frozen productions in Hollywood and across the U.S.

After days of marathon negotiations, representatives from the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and from the studios and entertainment companies who employ them reached the three-year contract agreement before a Monday strike deadline, avoiding a serious setback for an industry that had just gotten back to work after long pandemic shutdowns.

"This is a Hollywood ending," union president Matthew Loeb said. "Our members stood firm."

The workers still must vote to approve it, but the strike has been called off with the tentative deal.

Many in Hollywood celebrated the news.

"Good for @IATSE for standing your ground. And don't forget we got your back anytime you need us," comedian, actor and writer Patton Oswalt said on Twitter.

Another actor, comic and writer, Yvette Nicole Brown, tweeted "#UnionStrong!" along with a link to a story reporting the agreement.

"Congratulations IATSE brothers and sisters!" Jennifer Garner said on Instagram.

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The effects of the strike would have been immediate, with crews not only on long-term productions but daily series including network talk shows walking off their jobs. Shows with short turnarounds like soap operas would also have felt immediate effects.

The union represents cinematographers, camera operators, set designers, carpenters, hair and makeup artists and many others.

Union members said previous contracts allowed their employers to force them to work excessive hours and deny them reasonable rest via meal breaks and sufficient time off between shifts. Leaders said the lowest paid crafts were receiving unlivable wages and streaming outlets including Netflix, Apple and Amazon were allowed to work them even harder for less money.

IATSE'S statement Saturday said the agreement "addresses core issues, including reasonable rest periods; meal breaks; a living wage for those on the bottom of the pay scale; and significant increases in compensation to be paid by new-media companies."

The union reported on Oct. 4 that its members had voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, setting off industry-wide fears, but talks immediately resumed between IATSE and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents the studios and other entertainment companies in negotiations.

"We went toe to toe with some of the richest and most powerful entertainment and tech companies in the world, and we have now reached an agreement with the AMPTP that meets our members' needs," Loeb said.

AMPTP spokesman Jarryd Gonzales confirmed the agreement had been reached.

A Monday strike deadline was set on Wednesday when talks stagnated, but the union said subsequent negotiations were productive.

It would have been the first nationwide strike in the 128-year history of IATSE, and would have affected not just the Los Angeles area and New York but growing production hubs like Georgia, New Mexico and Colorado.

During negotiations, many prominent names in entertainment spoke out in favor of the union's demands, including Octavia Spencer, Mindy Kaling and Jane Fonda. The Directors Guild of America issued a statement of solidarity too, signed by the likes of Steven Spielberg, Christopher Nolan, Barry Jenkins, Ron Howard and Ava DuVernay.

Associated Press Film Writer Lindsey Bahr contributed to this story from Pittsburgh.

Follow AP Entertainment Writer on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton>.

AP review: At least 13 auto safety rules are years overdue

By HOPE YEN and TOM KRISHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After their 16-year-old daughter died in a car crash, David and Wendy Mills wondered whether she would be alive if federal rules on rear seat belt warnings had been issued on time.

Four years later, with no rule and traffic fatalities spiking, they're still at a loss over the inaction.

The teenager was riding in the back seat of a car to a Halloween party in 2017 just a mile from her house in Spring, Texas, when she unfastened her seat belt to slide next to her friend and take a selfie. Moments later, the driver veered off the road and the car flipped, ejecting her.

Kailee died instantly. Her three friends who remained buckled walked away with minor scrapes.

A 2012 law had directed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an agency of the Department of Transportation, to implement safety rules requiring car manufacturers to install a warning to drivers if an unbuckled passenger is sitting in a rear seat. The agency had three years to act.

But the regulation wasn't done when Kailee climbed into her friend's car, though it's been estimated that it could save hundreds of lives each year. It's one of more than a dozen car safety rules now years overdue, according to an analysis by The Associated Press.

The ever-growing docket has become one of the biggest tests for the federal agency since its founding

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in 1970, when public pressure led by safety activist Ralph Nader spurred NHTSA's mission to "save lives, prevent injuries and reduce economic costs due to road traffic crashes."

Advocates worry that the agency has lost focus and risks getting bogged down under President Joe Biden, at a time of increasing road accidents and reckless driving during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We need a call to action," said Jonathan Adkins, executive director of the Governors Highway Safety Association. He called the pandemic surge in accidents a "car crash epidemic."

The rules backlog would only increase with the sweeping technological requirements included in a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill pending in Congress, from new breathalyzer devices that would disable a car if a driver is drunk to stiffer standards for reporting safety recalls.

Currently, the 600-employee federal agency lacks a permanent leader. Its acting administrator is Steven Cliff, a former deputy executive officer at the California Air Resources Board, which regulates auto emissions, a key component of Biden's climate agenda.

"Government should not take this long to act on safety," said David Mills, who started a Houston-area foundation in Kailee's honor aimed at promoting seat belt safety. The foundation keeps a list, known as "Kailee's Angels," of some of the teenagers around the country who died in car crashes after failing to buckle up.

"It's devastating to families," he said.

The rear seat belt reminder requirement is now scheduled to start moving through the cumbersome regulatory process in January, but a final rule could be years away. The agency in the past has repeatedly blown past deadlines, including those promised in federal court.

The AP review of NHTSA's rule-making activities under the last three presidents found at least 13 auto safety rules that are years overdue based on deadlines set in laws passed by Congress.

In most cases, those rules are opposed by powerful industries as expensive, outdated or restrictive. Other pending rules have been slowed by the bureaucracy or taken a back seat to other priorities under Democratic presidents. For example, a 2011 initiative that large commercial vehicles be equipped with devices to limit their speed was recently put on indefinite hold by Biden.

President Donald Trump sidetracked at least four major road safety proposals, including medical evaluations of commercial truck drivers for sleep apnea.

Pending rules include side-impact standards for child car seats, originally due in 2014. Attorneys general of 17 states and the District of Columbia wrote to the Biden administration in July, urging immediate action. Other pending rules would require car manufacturers to maintain records of safety defects for at least 10 years, as required by Congress and originally due in 2017, and anti-ejection protection measures for larger buses, due in 2014.

Standards for "smart" car headlights, begun in 2018, are incomplete despite car industry support. Smart headlights would adjust a high intensity light to oncoming traffic, so drivers don't have to toggle between high and low beams.

NHTSA declined to make Cliff available for comment. The agency instead released a list of steps it has taken to address auto safety, including recently announced proposed fuel economy standards that Biden has promoted to confront climate change.

The agency points in part to plans to require or set standards for automatic emergency braking systems on new passenger vehicles and heavy trucks, a reversal from the Trump administration, and to move forward on some of the delayed regulations, though it did not offer firm guarantees on timing.

NHTSA has pledged to require what it said are rigorous testing standards for autonomous vehicles and set up a national database to document automated-vehicle crashes. It has prodded electric vehicle maker Tesla to recall dark touch screens and is investigating the company's Autopilot partially automated driving system's failure to stop for parked emergency vehicles.

In recent public remarks, Cliff said the agency is committed to address rising traffic fatalities and he stressed a "transformational and collaborative approach to safety."

Jason Levine, executive director of the nonprofit Center for Auto Safety, and other consumer groups have been urging Biden to quickly nominate an agency leader. The last Senate-confirmed NHTSA administrator

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served under President Barack Obama until 2017.

"You have a Biden administration it seems across the board more interested in acting in a regulatory fashion than the previous administration," Levine said. "That's why there's so much excitement, but also quite frankly frustration that things aren't moving with a greater sense of urgency."

The Alliance for Automotive Innovation, the trade association representing all auto manufacturers but Tesla, declined to comment for this story.

Automakers have made some progress on safety issues on their own or in voluntary agreements with the government. For instance, 20 companies agreed with NHTSA in 2016 to make automatic emergency braking standard on at least 95% of their new passenger vehicles by Sept. 1, 2022. At least 10 have already met the goal. Two years ago, 20 auto companies agreed to install electronic reminders to check back seats so drivers don't leave children in hot cars. The industry would install the reminders in new vehicles by the 2025 model year.

The Governors Highway Safety Association has been strongly pushing for rear seat belt reminders since 2015, noting back then that fewer passengers were buckling up in the back when riding in increasingly popular Uber, Lyft and other for-hire vehicles.

Last year, over half of all crash fatalities involved unbelted drivers or occupants, the highest level since 2012, according to NHTSA.

An estimated 38,680 people were killed in traffic crashes in 2020, the highest total since 2007, even though total miles driven dropped due to stay-at-home orders at the beginning of the pandemic. In the first three months of 2021, 8,730 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, a 10.5% increase from the same period last year.

More than 800 people who were unbelted in the back seat die in car crashes each year, and an analysis of NHTSA's data by the governors' group found that wearing seat belts would have saved more than half of them.

Those grim statistics and rising fatalities have spurred states in recent months to seek ways to boost seat belt use, such as with "Click it or Ticket" law enforcement campaigns. In Connecticut, a law signed by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont took effect this month that requires all rear seat passengers 16 and older to wear a seat belt. Those under 16 already had been required to buckle up.

Adkins said state highway safety officials were heartened to see Biden elevate Jennifer Homendy, a former congressional staffer and member of the National Transportation Safety Board who has spent two decades working on transportation safety, to NTSB chair. In recent months, she's appeared with Lamont to promote the new rear seat belt law, railed against Tesla's "misleading" marketing that she says puts lives at risk and called for stronger federal safety standards.

But as NTSB head, she has no actual regulatory authority, and the buzz at a recent governors' safety conference was the impact she could have if she were NHTSA's administrator.

"We need a NHTSA administrator who is confirmed and has the political ability to get some things done," Adkins said. "There's no time for a learning curve. We're in a bad spot in traffic safety. We've got work to do. And we need the administration's attention."

Various NHTSA delays have led to a patchwork of safety features initiated by the auto industry that have no clear minimum level of standards, said Cathy Chase, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. Many of the features also are typically sold in high-end cars or luxury packages, in effect imposing an "upcharge" for consumer safety.

She noted that a 2008 congressional mandate to install backup cameras in passenger vehicles took NHTSA 10 years and a lawsuit by her group and others before the rule was finally implemented; the original deadline was 2011.

Meanwhile, the European Union began requiring seat belt reminder systems in the front and rear seats of new cars in September 2019.

"I can't say the U.S. regulator of the auto industry is at all on track," Chase said. "We're years behind at this point. I don't want to be critical because they are still in their first year, but the infancy of the new administration will soon expire, and it's time for them to move forward."

Yen reported from Washington and Austin, Texas, and Krisher from Detroit.

Bill Clinton to spend 1 more night in California hospital

By HAVEN DALEY and LOU KESTEN Associated Press

ORANGE, Calif. (AP) — Bill Clinton will spend one more night at a Southern California hospital where he is recovering from an infection, a spokesman said Saturday.

“President Clinton has continued to make excellent progress over the past 24 hours,” spokesman Angel Ureña said in a statement.

Clinton will remain overnight at University of California Irvine Medical Center “to receive IV antibiotics before an expected discharge tomorrow,” the statement said.

Hillary Clinton has been with her husband at the hospital southeast of Los Angeles. She returned Saturday with her daughter Chelsea Clinton around 8 a.m. Saturday in an SUV accompanied by secret service agents.

President Joe Biden said Friday night that he had spoken to Bill Clinton and the former president “sends his best.”

“He’s doing fine; he really is,” Biden said during remarks at the University of Connecticut.

Clinton, 75, was admitted on Tuesday with an infection unrelated to COVID-19, Ureña said.

“He is in great spirits and has been spending time with family, catching up with friends, and watching college football,” said Ureña’s Saturday statement.

An aide to the former president said Clinton had a urological infection that spread to his bloodstream, but he is on the mend and never went into septic shock, a potentially life-threatening condition.

The aide, who spoke to reporters at the hospital on the condition his name wasn’t used, said Clinton was in an intensive care section of the hospital but wasn’t receiving ICU care.

In the years since Clinton left the White House in 2001, the former president has faced health scares. In 2004, he underwent quadruple bypass surgery after experiencing prolonged chest pains and shortness of breath. He returned to the hospital for surgery for a partially collapsed lung in 2005, and in 2010 he had a pair of stents implanted in a coronary artery.

He responded by embracing a largely vegan diet that saw him lose weight and report improved health.

Clinton repeatedly returned to the stump, campaigning for Democratic candidates, most notably Hillary Clinton during her failed 2008 bid for the presidential nomination. And in 2016, as Hillary Clinton sought the White House as the Democratic nominee, her husband — by then a grandfather and nearing 70 — returned to the campaign trail.

Kesten reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Christopher Weber in Los Angeles; Stefanie Dazio in Orange, California; Zeke Miller in Hartford, Connecticut; and Alexandra Jaffe in Washington contributed to this report.

Police: 1 deputy killed, 2 wounded in ambush at Houston bar

HOUSTON (AP) — A man with an AR-15-style rifle ambushed three constable deputies outside a Houston bar early Saturday, killing one and leaving two others wounded, authorities in Texas said.

Authorities detained one person near the scene but he is not believed to be the shooter, according to the Houston Police Department which is investigating the shooting.

The constable deputies were working extra security jobs at the 45 Norte Sports Bar when two of them responded to a witness’ report of a suspected robbery outside the business around 2:15 a.m., according to Harris County Precinct 4 Constable Mark Herman.

The two deputies were trying to arrest someone when another person ambushed them, Herman’s office said in a statement posted on Facebook. That man had an AR-15-style rifle and opened fire on them from behind, according to authorities. The third deputy was shot when he came to help.

One of the first deputies who was shot, Kareem Atkins, died from his wounds, according to the constable's office. Atkins, 30, recently returned to work after parental leave and leaves behind a wife and 2-month-old baby, the statement said.

The constable's office identified the other deputies as Darrell Garrett, 28, and Juqaim Barthen, 26. Garrett was shot in the back and was in intensive care after undergoing surgery. The office did not provide an update on Barthen's condition, but Herman previously had told reporters that he was shot in the foot.

It was not yet clear whether the deputies returned fire, Houston Police Executive Assistant Chief James Jones told reporters.

Constables are licensed peace officers who perform various law enforcement functions, according to the Texas Association of Counties.

This version corrects the name of the bar.

Lawsuits demand unproven ivermectin for COVID patients

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Mask rules, vaccination mandates and business shutdowns have all landed in the courts during the COVID-19 outbreak, confronting judges with questions of science and government authority. Now they are increasingly being asked to weigh in on the deworming drug ivermectin.

At least two dozen lawsuits have been filed around the U.S., many in recent weeks, by people seeking to force hospitals to give their COVID-stricken loved ones ivermectin, a drug for parasites that has been promoted by conservative commentators as a treatment despite a lack of conclusive evidence that it helps people with the virus.

Interest in the drug started rising toward the end of last year and the beginning of this one, when studies — some later withdrawn, in other countries — seemed to suggest ivermectin had some potential and it became a hot topic of conversation among conservatives on social media.

The lawsuits, several of them filed by the same western New York lawyer, cover similar ground. The families have gotten prescriptions for ivermectin, but hospitals have refused to use it on their loved ones, who are often on ventilators and facing death.

There has been a mix of results in state courts. Some judges have refused to order hospitals to give ivermectin. Others have ordered medical providers to give the medication, despite concerns it could be harmful.

In a September case on Staten Island, state Supreme Court Judge Ralph Porzio refused to order the use of ivermectin in a situation where a man sued a hospital on behalf of his ill father, citing its unproven impact.

"This court will not require any doctor to be placed in a potentially unethical position wherein they could be committing medical malpractice by administering a medication for an unapproved, alleged off-label purpose," he wrote.

It's astonishing, said James Beck, an attorney in Philadelphia who specializes in drug and medical device product liability and has written about the influx of cases. "I've never seen anything like this before."

In some cases, an initial order to give the drug has been reversed later.

Hospitals have pushed back, saying their standards of care don't allow them to give patients a drug that hasn't been approved for COVID and could potentially cause harm, and that allowing laypeople and judges to overrule medical professionals is a dangerous road to go down.

"The way medicine works is, they are the experts, the doctors and ... the hospitals," said Arthur Caplan, professor of bioethics at New York University's Grossman School of Medicine. "When you go there, you're not going to a restaurant. You don't order your own treatments."

"You can't have a medical field that's subjected to having to practice according to patient demand backed up by court orders. That is positively horrible medicine" Caplan said.

Ralph Lorigo doesn't see it that way. The attorney from Buffalo, New York, filed his first of several iver-

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mectin lawsuits in January after being approached by the family of an 80-year-old woman who was in the hospital on a ventilator. His second case was later that month, for a hospitalized 65-year-old woman.

In both cases, judges ordered hospitals to give the women ivermectin as their families wanted. Both women survived their hospitalizations.

Lorigo, who has taken on numerous cases since, is adamant that ivermectin works. Health experts and federal agencies say that any evidence of it being effective against COVID-19 is slim and more research needs to be done. Studies are currently underway.

Ivermectin is approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat infections of roundworms, lice and other tiny parasites in humans. The FDA has tried to debunk claims that animal-strength versions of the drug can help fight COVID-19, warning that taking it in large doses can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, delirium and even death.

Lorigo said his clients haven't sought those kinds of doses, only the versions of the medication made for humans.

Of doctors refusing to treat patients with ivermectin, Lorigo said, "they are not gods because they wear white jackets," he said. "I take issue with their stance."

And as for hospital administrators, "it's like only they rule the roost, only they make a decision in their hospital. I'm not accepting that as a rule of law for us."

The court fights over the drug have taken place as courts have also wrestled with issues like whether employers or states can order workers to be vaccinated against the virus, which has killed more than 700,000 people in the U.S.

Beck, the drug liability lawyer, said that doctors do have the power to prescribe ivermectin to treat COVID, even though it hasn't been approved by the FDA for that disease, if they think it has therapeutic value — a so-called "off label" use.

"I have never seen a case before this where the judge was asked to force someone to engage in an off label use," he said.

Lorigo said he has received more inquiries from families about the drug in the last 10 weeks and now has four attorneys working on these cases, including two he recently hired.

Biden: 'Democracy survived' Capitol riot because of police

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Framed by the Capitol, President Joe Biden paid tribute Saturday to fallen law enforcement officers and honored those who fought off the Jan. 6 insurrection at that very site by declaring "because of you, democracy survived."

Biden spoke at the 40th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service to remember the 491 law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty in 2019 and 2020. Standing where the violent mob tried to block his own ascension to the presidency, Biden singled out the 150 officers who were injured and the five who died in the attack's aftermath.

"Nine months ago, your brothers and sisters thwarted an unconstitutional and fundamentally un-American attack on our nation's values and our votes. Because of you, democracy survived," Biden said. "Because of these men and women, we avoided a catastrophe, but their heroism came at a cost to you and your families."

Hundreds of officers and their families sat on chairs assembled on the Capitol's west front. Some in the audience dabbed their eyes as the president drew connections with their loss and his own history of grief, including the deaths of his first wife and two children, comparing it to "losing part of your soul."

Biden also underscored the heavy burden placed on law enforcement officers, and rebuked the "defund the police" political movement, saying that those gathered before him would get "more resources, not fewer, so you can do your job."

"We expect everything of you and it's beyond the capacity of anyone to meet the total expectations," Biden said. "Being a cop today is one hell of a lot harder than it's ever been."

Biden played up his working-class roots, noting that he had many childhood friends who went on to become police officers, and said he had spoken at the event many times before. But while Biden has throughout his political career sought to identify with the uniformed services, the organization that ran Saturday's event, the National Fraternal Order of Police, endorsed Donald Trump in the 2020 election and many rank-and-file police officers supported the former president.

Biden's efforts to pass a police overhaul bill to tighten practices after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis collapsed, with congressional negotiators announcing in September that talks had ended without an agreement. That was a setback for the Democratic president, who campaigned on the need for policing changes and had declared it an early priority.

Additionally, his agenda on gun violence has largely stalled and his initial pick to run the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives stepped aside in the face of staunch opposition. More recently, Biden has expressed hope that he can still sign a comprehensive police overhaul bill into law, while exploring more executive actions to help hold police officers accountable for breaking the law.

At the ceremony, Biden expressed concerns for all officers in the line of duty and mentioned the three constable deputies shot in an ambush early Saturday while working at a Houston bar. One deputy was killed.

'He was Southend': Tributes paid to slain British lawmaker

By MAYUKO ONO and PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LEIGH-ON-SEA, England (AP) — David Amess was a man of the people, a hard-working British lawmaker who had no grand political ambitions beyond serving those who had elected him for nigh-on 40 years.

His shocking death at the hands of a knife-wielding man at a church where he was meeting voters has reopened questions about the security needs of Britain's members of Parliament as they go about their daily work.

Police, who have said it was a terrorist-related attack, continued Saturday to question a 25-year-old British man.

For the second time in five years, Britain's political leaders put their differences aside to gather Saturday morning at the scene of a fallen colleague. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Keir Starmer, leader of the opposition Labour Party, stood side-by-side and laid flowers as they paid tribute to the long-serving lawmaker, who was stabbed to death less than 24 hours earlier.

The slaying of the 69-year-old Conservative lawmaker at a regular meeting with local voters has caused shock and anxiety across Britain's political spectrum, not least because it is reminiscent of the 2016 murder of Labour lawmaker Jo Cox by a far-right extremist in her own small-town constituency.

"He was killed doing a job that he loves, serving his own constituents as an elected democratic member and, of course, acts of this are absolutely wrong, and we cannot let that get in the way of our functioning democracy," British Home Secretary Priti Patel said after paying her respects to Amess at the church where he died.

Patel said she has convened meetings with the speaker of the House of Commons, police and U.K. security services to ensure "all measures are being put in place for the security of MPs so that they can carry on with their duties as elected democratic members."

Tobias Ellwood, a Conservative lawmaker who gave first aid to a police officer stabbed at the gates of Parliament in 2017, said face-to-face meetings with voters should be temporarily halted, as they were during the recent coronavirus lockdowns, and replaced with online interactions.

Amess suffered multiple stab wounds in the attack during his constituency meeting in the church in Leigh-on-Sea, a quintessentially English seaside town 40 miles (62 kilometers) east of London, that has become a magnet in recent years to those tired of life in the capital.

The Metropolitan Police said its early investigation "revealed a potential motivation linked to Islamist extremism," without providing any details about the basis for that assessment. As part of the investigation, officers were searching two locations in the London area.

Amess, who had a wife and five children and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2015, died doing

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what he'd done countless times — listening to the concerns of residents in his seaside constituency of Southend West, which incorporates Leigh-on-Sea.

Under Britain's parliamentary system, lawmakers have direct links with their local voters, often hosting open meetings, or "surgeries." The meetings often take place in local churches and community halls and are publicly advertised. Amess himself posted online where he would be hosting his surgery on Friday.

"The reason he wanted to use the church was because he wanted to be where the people were," said Rev. Clifford Newman at the Belfairs Methodist Church where Amess was killed. "And if you come to somewhere which is in the locality like Belfairs, as opposed to some ivory tower somewhere, people are more likely to feel easier, freer and more likely to open up to him."

At the meetings, the topics raised can range from national matters such as the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic to more mundane issues such as requests for speed bumps on busy roads or a dispute over a neighbor's fence. While members of Parliament don't necessarily have the power to fix the problems directly, they can pressure officials at the national and local levels to get things done.

"I feel as if I have lost a family member. I feel that he was the family of Southend, he was the leader of Southend," resident Erica Keane, 69, said. "And he was everywhere! He was at the football pitches, he was in the choirs, he was in the pubs. He was everywhere and he was Southend."

Amess was clearly a popular lawmaker, winning 10 out of 10 elections since 1983. He was a social conservative on issues like capital punishment and abortion, an active supporter of animal rights and campaigned tirelessly on health matters such as obesity.

While never serving as a government minister, Amess was a fixer, a lawmaker able to forge alliances across the political divide. His door was seemingly always open to any new politician facing the centuries-old parliament.

Friday's killing renewed concern about the risks politicians run as they go about their work. British politicians generally are not given police protection when meeting constituents — unlike the high-security measures that are in place in Parliament.

But the vitriol directed towards them has escalated in recent years, with many blaming the more polarized atmosphere on social media and the political divisions stoked by Britain's departure from the European Union.

"We want to be accessible and approachable, but recently there has been more and more violent abuse," Labour lawmaker Tanmanjeet Dhesi said.

Veteran Labour lawmaker Harriet Harman also said she would write to Johnson and ask him to back a non-partisan conference to review the safety of parliamentarians.

"Since Jo Cox's tragic killing, we've had changes in our home security, we've had changes in security in Parliament, but we haven't looked at the issue of how we go about that important business in our constituency, but do it in a safe way," Harman told BBC radio. "I think we must do that now."

Last year, in his own book "Ayes & Ears: A Survivor's Guide to Westminster," Amess wrote about what he called Cox's "barbaric" murder and how security issues could spoil "the great British tradition" of voters' easy access to their elected leaders.

He warned at the time "it could happen to any of us."

Pylas contributed from London. Jo Kearney in Leigh-on-sea also contributed to this report.

In South Texas, aging water system meets growing population

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — On a scorching afternoon in South Texas, Sonia Lambert looked out at an open-air canal that carries mud-green water from the Rio Grande to nearby towns and farmland, losing much of it to evaporation and seepage along the way.

"That will be someone else's problem," Lambert said, referring to her upcoming retirement as head of an irrigation district near the U.S.-Mexico border.

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In the Rio Grande Valley, a canal system designed more than a century ago for agriculture still delivers water to the region's lush farmland and fast-growing towns and cities. Today, the canals lose as much as 40% of the water they carry, waste that experts say could contribute to steep water shortages in coming decades as the population grows and climate change intensifies droughts.

"As this region continues to become drier due to climate change, water supplies will be greatly reduced," said Guy Fipps, a professor of irrigation engineering at Texas A&M University who has studied the water system since 1998.

State water officials predict that over the next 50 years, demand for water in the area's cities and towns will double. For decades, McAllen developed at a dizzying pace, with newcomers drawn to a large free-trade zone and jobs in health care, education and retail. Between 1990 and 2020, McAllen and the neighboring cities of Edinburg and Mission grew sixfold to nearly 871,000 people, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Similarly, the Mexican cities of Reynosa and Matamoros across the border mushroomed after U.S.-owned assembly plants were established in the mid-1990s.

Further complicating matters is a 1944 treaty between the U.S. and Mexico that defines how the countries share water from the Rio Grande. Mexico is supposed to route 350,000 acre-feet of water every year to the U.S. — enough to supply as many as 700,000 households. But it has periodically failed to meet those obligations, delaying deliveries because of drought, tight water supplies and a thirsty crop industry in northern Mexico.

The late deliveries are a source of frustration, but water managers and farmers in the U.S. are quick to acknowledge a major challenge at home too: the leaky canal system that has long been seen by local and state officials as too expensive to overhaul.

The region's more than 2,000 miles (3,219 kilometers) of pipelines and canals — some 100-feet (30 meters) wide — are meant for large, infrequent deliveries to farmland. Common fixes to modernize the waterways and make them more efficient — attempted by many districts to some degree — include lining earthen canals with concrete and more closely monitoring water use by farms with meters. Another option comes with a bigger price tag: replacing canals with underground pipelines, which lose far less water and are better suited to serving cities.

Converting a mile of open-air canal into underground pipelines costs between \$250,000 and \$1 million, said Lambert, the irrigation district manager for Cameron County, which remains mostly rural. Her district has only been able to bring about a fifth of its 250 miles (402 kilometers) of canals underground in the past two decades, she said.

"It just gets to be an amount that could not be supported by the farming community," Lambert said.

Since the early 1900s, a network of about two dozen independent irrigation districts have served the area's farmers, cities and towns. But as McAllen gobbled up much of the farmland surrounding it, some officials have wanted more control over a water district they say charges the city too much for water deliveries.

Yet the higher rates charged to city water utilities are often how irrigation districts pay for canal repairs, said Fipps. That has meant the water districts serving bigger cities have generally made more progress in bringing canals up to date.

Still, the Rio Grande Valley's water utilities and farms are linked by the same aging system.

Since cities and farms get water from the same canals, hydrologists and water officials say the Rio Grande's shrinking flows and low reservoir levels could eventually spell trouble for everyone in a prolonged drought. When there's little water in a canal, a greater percentage gets lost to evaporation or seepage. And everyone's share of water is threatened.

Already, experts say demand for water from the river exceeds supply.

Small towns, which get relatively small water deliveries, could be especially affected during a severe dry spell, and their irrigation districts are less likely to have the money to repair or replace canals.

"This is an unusual situation, that the agricultural canals are used to help deliver the municipal water," Fipps said.

Over time, experts say the region's farms will face deepening water shortages and be forced to make more difficult choices, a scenario already playing out across parts of the American West. Some irrigation

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districts over the years have received state or federal funding through grants administered by the Bureau of Reclamation for repairs, but water managers, farmers and hydrologists say the money has been insufficient for comprehensive fixes. The Texas Water Development Board predicts that by 2070, water used to irrigate farms in the Rio Grande Valley will fall by 36%, in large part because more farmland will be replaced by urban development.

In rural Cameron County, Lambert is already seeing glimpses of that future. Earlier this year, before rain soaked the region, Lambert told sugarcane farmers in her district that they would only get one water delivery instead of two.

To salvage their thirsty crops, some farmers bought water from neighboring districts for tens of thousands of dollars. Others removed more than a hundred acres of the crop. A few weeks later, the skies opened up.

When farmers ask her how much water they can expect to receive the next season, Lambert says she often doesn't have an answer.

"That's the million dollar question asked by our farmers. And I have no earthly idea," she said.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This is the third story in an occasional series looking at the interaction between population growth and climate change.

The Associated Press receives support from the Walton Family Foundation for coverage of water and environmental policy. The AP is solely responsible for all content. For all of AP's environmental coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/environment>

Lawmaker's killing wounds 'British tradition' of openness

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

The name alone — "the surgery" — evokes a place where help is sought and given. British lawmaker David Amess, like others, hosted his all-are-welcome surgeries regularly, meeting the voters he represented with a smile and a ready ear for whatever concerns, problems, gripes and hopes they might have.

Shockingly for a country proud of its parliamentary democracy that has served as a model for systems of government elsewhere, Amess' availability ultimately also cost him his life.

The fatal stabbing of the long-serving Member of Parliament in an attack Friday that police were investigating as a terrorist incident immediately cast fresh doubt on whether it remains safe and reasonable for British parliamentarians to continue meeting so readily and openly with voters.

Their so-called "surgeries" set British MPs apart from lawmakers in other countries where the governed rarely — if ever — get to meet those who govern them. Being able to drop by, even without an appointment, to chat with and perhaps to chide those in power helps keep British politicians engaged with their communities and allows voters to raise and vent about problems that otherwise could fester if ignored.

Or so the thinking went.

In an era of polarized politics, terrorism threats, social media awash with fury and — not limited to Britain — eroded respect for figures of authority, public accessibility has become increasingly fraught with risk. The stabbing of Amess came five years after another MP, Jo Cox, was slain by a far-right extremist in her small-town constituency. In 2000, a man wielding a sword also attacked lawmaker Nigel Jones and his aide Andrew Pennington, killing him and wounding the MP.

Those assaults did force MPs to be more careful. But they remain remarkably accessible — and potentially vulnerable.

Don Foster, who served for 23 years as MP for Bath until 2015 and now serves in the upper chamber, the House of Lords, says he was often unaccompanied at his surgeries, listening to constituent concerns about housing, schools, money, utilities, hot-button topics like immigration and where the MP stood on this or that issue. Others sent emails or letters and telephoned, generating hundreds of cases each week for Foster and his staff to handle.

At surgeries, "people would turn up, sit in an outer room and be called in by me every 10 minutes or so until I had seen everyone. I would make notes of the issue and suggest what action my staff should

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take," Foster told The Associated Press.

Constituents also came to him during off-hours, collaring him when he was shopping. Following police advice, he beefed up his office security after the attack on Jones. Foster also kept a private list of people whom he would not meet alone. He says they included a stalker "who had a fixation about me" and a man who had lost his job and felt the MP should find him a new one.

"By the time I retired, there were over 20 people on that list," Foster told the AP. "There were several people who came to see me on a very regular basis – often people I judged to have mental health issues."

Police arrested a 25-year-old British man for the attack on Amess. A lawmaker since 1983, Amess would put up a placard outside — "Meet Your Local MP" — to let constituents know when his door was open. He tweeted about his final surgery three days in advance, with an email address and a phone number for people to book appointments and the full address and even a photo of the meeting point, the Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, to make him easy to find.

Even compared to some other European democracies, British MPs stand out with their regular and roving surgeries. Lawmakers are available via appointment in Germany. In France, lawmakers do regularly roam from town to town to make themselves available to voters, and not all require appointments. A Normandy lawmaker has been criss-crossing his constituency in a van with a mobile phone number on the side door and a folding table inside. And in Greece, voters can drop by MPs' offices. But regular open-house meetings aren't a thing in Italy or Spain.

In the United States, Congress members' town meetings with constituents also are less frequent and easy-going than their British counterparts' surgeries. Security precautions have ramped up since 2011, when a gunman killed six people and injured 13, including then-U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, during the Arizona congresswoman's "Congress on your corner" event.

While aware of the risks, Amess didn't want to become inaccessible.

"We are advised to never see people alone, we must be extra careful when opening post and we must ensure that our offices are properly safe and secure," he wrote in "A Survivor's Guide to Westminster," published last year.

"In short," he added, "these increasing attacks have rather spoilt the great British tradition of the people openly meeting their elected politicians."

Bitcoin-mining power plant raises ire of environmentalists

By MICHAEL HILL Associated Press

An obstacle to large-scale bitcoin mining is finding enough cheap energy to run the huge, power-gobbling computer arrays that create and transact cryptocurrency. One mining operation in central New York came up with a novel solution that has alarmed environmentalists. It uses its own power plant.

Greenidge Generation runs a once-mothballed plant near the shore of Seneca Lake in the Finger Lakes region to produce about 44 megawatts to run 15,300 computer servers, plus additional electricity it sends into the state's power grid. The megawatts dedicated to Bitcoin might be enough electricity to power more than 35,000 homes.

Proponents call it a competitive way to mine increasingly popular cryptocurrencies, without putting a drain on the existing power grid.

Environmentalists see the plant as a climate threat.

They fear a wave of resurrected fossil-fuel plants pumping out greenhouse gasses more for private profit than public good. Seeing Greenidge as a test case, they are asking the state to deny renewal of the plant's air quality permit and put the brakes on similar projects.

"The current state of our climate demands action on cryptocurrency mining," said Liz Moran of Earthjustice. "We are jeopardizing the state's abilities to meet our climate goals, and we set the stage for the rest of the country as a result."

The former coal plant, in a touristy region known for its glacial lakes and riesling wines, was converted to natural gas by Greenidge and began producing electricity in 2017. Bitcoin mining at the plant, which

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has a 106-megawatt capacity, started in earnest last year. The company said it was "bringing a piece of the world's digital future" to upstate New York.

"For decades, this region has been told it would see new industries and opportunities," Greenidge said in a prepared statement. "We are actually making it happen, and doing it fully within the state's nation-leading high environmental standards."

Bitcoin miners unlock bitcoins by solving complex, unique puzzles. As the value of Bitcoin goes up, the puzzles become increasingly more difficult, and it requires more computer power to solve them. Estimates on how much energy Bitcoin uses vary.

Greenidge said it mined 729 bitcoins over three months ending Sept. 30. The value of cryptocurrency fluctuates, and on Friday, one bitcoin was worth over \$59,000.

Opponents are frustrated that Greenidge applied to run a power plant but are now operating a mine that is taking up more of the plant's power.

Greenidge says mining was not part of the plan when the plant came back online and note they continue to provide power to the grid. From January through June, Greenidge said it used 58% of its power for mining.

Supporters see it as an economic boon in a part of upstate New York that could use the help. Douglas Paddock, chairman of the Yates County Legislature, testified at a public hearing this week that the plant has brought 45 high-paying jobs and made a "significant contribution" to the area through tax payments and capital investments.

Some opposition to the plant centers on the potential effects of its water withdrawals from Seneca Lake. But air quality issues have taken center stage as the state Department of Environmental Conservation reviews the plant's air emission permits.

Greenidge has said it's in compliance with its permits and that the plant is 100% carbon neutral, thanks to the purchase of carbon offsets, such as forestry programs and projects that capture methane from landfills.

Opponents claim the plant undercuts the state's efforts to dramatically slash greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades under its 2019 climate law.

A large coalition of environmental groups and other organizations this week asked Gov. Kathy Hochul to deny the air permit for Greenidge and to take a similar action to keep an existing plant near Buffalo from becoming a mining site. The coalition wants Hochul to set a "national precedent" and enact a statewide moratorium on the energy intensive "proof-of-work" cryptocurrency used by bitcoin miners.

Environmentalists estimate that there are 30 plants in New York that could be converted into mining operations.

"I really think more than anything, this plant is a significant test for whether the state's climate law is really worth anything," said Judith Enck, who served as the EPA's regional northeastern U.S. administrator under President Barack Obama.

Sens. Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand have separately asked the federal Environmental Protection Agency to exercise oversight.

Around the country, there are other power plants being used for cryptocurrency mining under different types of arrangements.

In Venango County, Pennsylvania, a generation plant that converts coal waste into power is being used to mine bitcoins and can provide electricity to the grid when needed. Stronghold Digital Mining has plans to replicate that kind operation at two other sites in Pennsylvania.

And in Montana, a coal-fired generating station is now providing 100% of its energy to Marathon Digital Holdings for bitcoin mining under a power purchase agreement.

"We had previously done what many miners do, which is you find an industrial building, set it up for mining and then you contract for power from the grid," Marathon CEO Fred Thiel said. "And we wanted to flip that model upside down because we knew that there are lots of underutilized energy generation sources in the U.S."

Thiel said that harmful emissions are low because of the quality of the coal and pollution controls, and

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that the plant would be carbon offset by the end of next year. He said his company is focused on moving toward renewable energy, saying cryptocurrency miners can provide crucial financial incentives to build more clean energy projects.

New York state has yet to make a determination on Greenidge's permits.

Greenidge said that even if the plant ran at full capacity, its potential emissions equate to 0.23% of the state's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2030.

However, state Environmental Commissioner Basil Seggos tweeted last month that "Greenidge has not shown compliance with NY's climate law" based on goals in that law.

"New York state is leading on climate change," Seggos said in a prepared statement, "and we have some major concerns about the role cryptocurrency mining may play in generating additional greenhouse gas emissions."

'God have mercy': Tigray residents describe life under siege

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — As food and the means to buy it dwindled in a city under siege, the young mother felt she could do no more. She killed herself, unable to feed her children.

In a Catholic church across town, flour and oil to make communion wafers will soon run out. And the flagship hospital in Mekele, the capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region, wrestles with whether to give patients the expired medications that remain. Its soap and bleach are gone.

A year of war and months of government-enforced deprivation have left the city of a half-million people with rapidly shrinking stocks of food, fuel, medicine and cash. In rural areas, life is even grimmer as thousands of people survive on wild cactus fruit or sell the meager aid they receive. Man-made famine, the world's worst hunger crisis in a decade, has begun.

Despite the severing of almost all communication with the outside world, The Associated Press drew on a dozen interviews with people inside Mekele, along with internal aid documents, for the most detailed picture yet of life under the Ethiopian government's blockade of the Tigray region's 6 million people.

Amid sputtering electricity supplies, Mekele is often lit by candles that many people can't afford. Shops and streets are emptying, and cooking oil and baby formula are running out. People from rural areas and civil servants who have gone unpaid for months have swelled the ranks of beggars. People are thinner. Funeral announcements on the radio have increased.

"The coming weeks will make or break the situation here," said Mengstu Hailu, vice president for research at Mekele University, where the mother who killed herself worked.

He told the AP about his colleague's suicide last month as well as the deaths of two acquaintances from hunger and a death from lack of medication. "Are people going to die in the hundreds and thousands?" he asked.

Pleas from the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and African nations for the warring sides to stop the fighting have failed, even as the U.S. threatens new sanctions targeting individuals in Africa's second-most populous nation.

Instead, a new offensive by Ethiopian and allied forces has begun in an attempt to crush the Tigray fighters who dominated the national government for nearly three decades before being sidelined by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Ethiopia is one of the top recipients of U.S. humanitarian aid. The government in Addis Ababa, fearing the assistance will end up supporting Tigray forces, imposed the blockade in June after the fighters retook much of Tigray, then brought the war into the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions. Hundreds of thousands are now displaced there, widening the humanitarian crisis.

After the AP last month reported the first starvation deaths under the blockade, and the U.N. humanitarian chief called Ethiopia a "stain on our conscience," the government expelled seven U.N. officials, accusing them of falsely inflating the scale of the crisis. The expulsions were "unprecedented and disturbing," the U.S. said.

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Just 14% of needed aid has entered Tigray since the blockade began, according to the U.N., and almost no medicine at all.

"There is no other way to define what is happening to the people of Tigray than by ethnic cleansing," InterAction, an alliance of international aid groups, said this month of the conflict marked by mass detentions, expulsions and gang-rapes.

"The Tigrayan population of 6 million face mass starvation now," former U.N. humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock wrote in a separate statement.

In response to questions, the spokesperson for the Ethiopian prime minister's office, Billene Seyoum, again blamed Tigray forces for aid disruptions and asserted "the government has worked relentlessly to ensure humanitarian aid reaches those in need." She did not say when basic services would be allowed to Tigray.

At Tigray's flagship Ayder referral hospital, Dr. Sintayehu Misgina, a surgeon and the vice chief medical director, watches in horror.

Patients sometimes go without food, and haven't had meat, eggs or milk since June. Fuel to run ambulances has run out. A diesel generator powers equipment for emergency surgeries only when fuel is available.

"God have mercy for those who come when it's off," he said.

No help is in sight. A World Health Organization staffer told Sintayehu there was nothing left to give, even though a warehouse in neighboring Afar was full of life-saving aid.

Scores of badly malnourished and ill children have come to the hospital in recent weeks. Not all have survived.

"There are no drugs," said Mizan Wolde, the mother of a 5-year-old patient. Mehari Tesfa despaired for his 4-year-old daughter, who has a brain abscess and is wasting away.

"It's been three months since she came here," he said. "She was doing OK, then the medication ceased. She is now taking only oxygen, nothing else."

Across Tigray, the number of children hospitalized for severe acute malnutrition has surged, according to the U.N. children's agency — 18,600 from February to August, compared to 8,900 in 2020. The U.N. says hospitals outside of Mekele have run out of nutrition supplies to treat them.

"According to colleagues in the medical and agricultural sector, hundreds (of people) are dying each day, that's the estimation," Mekele University lecturer Nahusenay Belay said. He said one acquaintance died from lack of diabetes medication, and a young relative in the city's outskirts starved to death.

"I'm surviving by the help of family and friends like anyone else," he said.

Prices for essential goods are spiking. The U.N. last week said cooking oil in Mekele had shot up more than 400% since June and diesel more than 600%. In the town of Shire, swamped by scores of thousands of displaced people, diesel was up 1,200%, flour 300% and salt more than 500%.

The true toll of the deprivation in rural areas of the largely agricultural region is unknown as the lack of fuel prevents most travel.

One internal aid document dated last month and seen by the AP described thousands of desperate people who had fled "trapped and starved communities" near the border with Eritrea, whose soldiers have been blamed for some of the worst atrocities of the war.

"Most are able to eat at least one meal per day, largely thanks to the availability of cactus fruit," the document said. "The situation is likely to deteriorate after September when wild fruits are exhausted."

A document from another part of Tigray described "too many people to count" trying to sell items such as buckets and soap distributed by humanitarian groups. Some people walked straight from the distribution site to the roadside to sell.

"They have no option as they needed the money to buy food to supplement the inadequate food rations," the document stated, adding the forecast for famine is "terrifying."

A Catholic priest in Mekele, the Rev. Taum Berhane, described conditions echoing harsh tales from biblical times. Even before the war, parts of Tigray faced an invasion of desert locusts. Then hostile forces

looted and burned crops and shot farmers' animals. Now, the blockade means people are going hungry despite having money in the bank.

"You see lactating mothers with no milk," he said. "We see babies dying. I saw myself people eating leaves like goats."

While the church struggles to support camps for thousands of displaced people, "they are telling us, 'Let us go back to our villages, even if there's nothing there. It's better to die at home.'"

The Catholic bishop in the town of Adigrat told him eight children have died at the hospital there, he said.

The priest, 70 years old and a diabetic, now watches his medication dwindle. His congregation's spirits, too. With cash in Tigray running out, the collection plate is no longer passed at Mass. The bread for communion will be depleted soon.

"Even if I survive, am I going to preach to a vacuum if all humans perish?" he asked. "The only hope is, to be frank, these people have to stop fighting and talk for sustainable peace."

Horrific delay? Norway eyes police response to arrow attack

By JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Norway on Saturday announced it will hold an independent investigation into the actions of police and security agencies following a bow-and-arrow attack that killed five people and injured three others. Police have been criticized for reacting too slowly to contain the massacre, acknowledging that the five deaths took place after police first encountered the attacker.

Norway's domestic intelligence agency, known by the acronym PST, said it decided to seek the review after consulting with the country's national and regional police commanders about the attack Wednesday night in the southern town of Kongsberg. A 37-year-old local resident who police said has admitted to the killings has been detained and is undergoing psychiatric evaluation.

"Given the seriousness of the matter, it is very important that learning points and any weaknesses and errors are identified quickly in order to be able to implement measures immediately," PST said in a statement.

Norwegian media have questioned how long it took officers to apprehend suspect Espen Andersen Braathen after the regional police department received reports about a man shooting arrows at a supermarket. According to a police timeline, the first information on the attack was logged at 6:13 p.m. and Andersen Braathen was caught at 6:47 p.m.

Authorities haven't revealed what precisely happened within that 34-minute period.

In general, police officials say the first officers on the scene observed the suspect but took cover and called for reinforcements when arrows were fired at them. The officials have acknowledged the armed suspect got away and then likely killed the five victims between the ages of 52 and 78 both outdoors and inside some apartments.

Norway is one of the few dozen countries in the world where law enforcement officers don't automatically carry guns though they have a rapid access to guns and other weapons, depending on the situation. Authorities in a statement said police were unarmed during their first encounter and armed during later encounters with Andersen Braathen.

Authorities said one of the wounded was an off-duty police officer struck inside the supermarket, and that all the wounded have been released from the hospital.

The alleged attacker was known to police before the deadly attack. Norwegian public broadcaster NRK reported that PST security officials received information about Andersen Braathen in 2015 and agents interviewed him in 2017 to determine if he posed a threat. The following year, the agency contacted Norwegian health authorities about him and concluded that he suffered from a serious mental illness, NRK said.

The VG newspaper also reported the agency thought Andersen Braathen might carry out a "low-scale attack with simple means in Norway." PST did not comment on that report.

Police said Saturday that their suspicion that the suspect's apparent mental illness caused the attack had strengthened further, while Andersen Braathen's statement of being a convert to Islam had become

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a less important investigation line.

"He himself has said that he has converted to Islam. It's a hypothesis, but is also a hypothesis that he hasn't done so. The investigation so far shows that he hasn't done this (converting) seriously," police inspector Per Thomas Omholt told a news conference Saturday.

Omholt said Friday that three weapons, including the bow and arrow, were used in the attack, but declined to identify the weapons further or reveal how the five victims were killed due to the ongoing investigation.

A spokesman for Norway's Muslim community told NRK that it was irresponsible for the police to publish the suspect's self-acclaimed conversion to Islam, as they did Thursday.

"It hurts, it's very painful," Waqar Dar told NRK. "There are a lot of young Muslims who write to me and say they have a nasty feeling. They love Norway but feel they are not loved back."

Justice Minister Emilie Enger Mehl, who assumed the post on Thursday along with the rest of Norway's new center-left government, has so far not commented on the police handling of the attack.

"Now it is important that the police get a review and investigate the matter thoroughly," she told the Swedish public broadcaster SVT.

Norwegian police on Saturday identified the four female victims as Andrea Meyer, 52; Hanne Englund, 56; Liv Berit Borge, 75; and Gun Marith Madsen, 78. The male victim was identified as Gunnar Erling Sauve, 75.

Several of them were part of Kongsberg's thriving artists' community, Norwegian media reported. NRK described Englund as a much-respected potter and artist who ran a gallery and lived in Kongsberg. Madsen was a self-taught painter and Borge held board positions in local nonprofit art organizations.

Sauve had a long career as local judge and earlier worked for Norway's environment ministry. He was Borge's partner, NRK said. Meyer had moved to Norway from her native Germany several years ago.

Crown Prince Haakon and Crown Princess Mette Marit will visit Kongsberg on Sunday and attend a memorial service for the victims at the town's main church.

Russia's daily COVID-19 deaths top 1,000 for first time

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's daily death toll from COVID-19 has exceeded 1,000 for the first time as the country faces a sustained wave of rising infections.

The national coronavirus task force on Saturday reported 1,002 deaths in the previous day, up from 999 on Friday, along with 33,208 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, more than 1,000 higher than the day before.

Russian authorities have tried to speed up the pace of vaccinations with lotteries, bonuses and other incentives, but widespread vaccine skepticism and conflicting signals from officials stymied the efforts. The government said this week that about 43 million Russians, or about 29% of the country's nearly 146 million people, are fully vaccinated.

Despite the mounting toll, the Kremlin has ruled out a new nationwide lockdown like the one early on in the pandemic that badly hurt the economy, eroding President Vladimir Putin's popularity. Instead, it has delegated the power to enforce coronavirus restrictions to regional authorities.

Some of Russia's 85 regions have restricted attendance at large public events and limited access to theaters, restaurants and other venues. However, daily life is going on largely as normal in Moscow, St. Petersburg and many other Russian cities.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko acknowledged this week that medical facilities have come under growing strains and said authorities have offered retired medics who have gotten vaccinated the option of returning to work.

Overall, the coronavirus task force has registered more than 7,958,000 confirmed cases and 222,315 deaths — Europe's highest death toll. The official record ranks Russia as having the fifth-most pandemic deaths in the world following the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico.

However, state statistics agency Rosstat, which also counts deaths in which the virus wasn't considered the main cause, has reported a much higher pandemic death toll — about 418,000 people with COVID-19 as of August. Based on that number, Russia would rank as the fourth hardest-hit nation in the world,

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ahead of Mexico.

Follow all AP stories on the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>.

Delicate GOP dance for Trump, Youngkin in Virginia gov race

By JILL COLVIN and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — When Donald Trump rallied Republicans this past week to vote for Glenn Youngkin for governor in Virginia, the former president called in to a gathering of die-hard supporters. That may be the closest he gets to campaigning in the most closely watched election of 2021.

While schedules could change in the final weeks of the race, the two are not expected to turn out together in person before the Nov. 2 election against Democrat Terry McAuliffe.

“Is Trump going to come to Virginia? Yes. But it will be after the election for a victory rally,” said conservative talk show host John Fredericks, who served as Trump’s campaign chairman in the state and also organized Wednesday’s event. Youngkin’s campaign confirmed Friday it does not have any plans for surrogates to join him before Election Day.

The dynamic reflects the complex balancing act between Trump and Youngkin and could emerge as a model for other Republicans who face competitive campaigns in 2022.

Trump is the most popular figure in GOP politics and is eager to remain engaged. Youngkin needs Trump’s supporters to come out and cannot risk giving Trump a reason to turn on him in the race’s final weeks. But Youngkin must avoid being tied too closely to someone who is unpopular in crucial swaths of the state, particularly the suburbs that surround Washington, D.C., and Richmond.

Youngkin steered clear of the Wednesday event that also featured longtime Trump strategist Steve Bannon. He soon could find himself charged with contempt for refusing to cooperate with a U.S. House committee investigating the Capitol riot. The Republican rally drew outrage after attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance to a flag that the emcee said had been flown at the Jan. 6 insurrection. Youngkin later criticized the use of that flag.

While Trump remains the most powerful force in the party nine months after leaving office, he lost Virginia by 10 percentage points in 2020 and is viewed favorably by just 44% of likely voters in the state, according to a recent Fox News poll.

If Trump were to hold a rally in the state, “it would be a disaster for Youngkin,” said Bob Holsworth, a longtime political analyst in the state, adding, “The more he shows up and the more he participates, the worse off it is for Youngkin.”

At the rally, Trump praised Youngkin as “a great gentleman,” while also spreading lies about the 2020 election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Democrats quickly condemned what they said was “Donald Trump’s insurrectionist rally.” McAuliffe’s campaign cut an ad featuring Trump’s praise for Youngkin, and the Democratic nominee held a new conference to criticize his opponent, for his focus on “dangerous conspiracy theories” and his initial silence on the event itself.

Trump has little to gain by spending much more political capital on the race.

If Youngkin wins, Trump is sure to try to take credit, citing his participation in Wednesday’s rally, his May endorsement and any future efforts to get out the vote. If Youngkin loses, Trump can blame him for not aligning himself more closely with the former president.

“The only guys that win are the guys that embrace the MAGA movement,” Trump said in an interview with Fredericks. “When they try and go down a railroad track, you know, ‘Hey, oh yeah, sure, I love it, love it. Oh yeah, I love Trump, love Trump, OK, let’s go, next subject.’ When they do that, they never win. They never win. They have to embrace it.”

Youngkin’s campaign hasn’t featured many big name surrogates at his events, but McAuliffe has summoned Democratic star power. Biden has appeared with McAuliffe and the ex-governor’s campaign told The Associated Press that the president will return before the vote. First lady Jill Biden joined McAuliffe at

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a rally Friday and former President Barack Obama will campaign with him this coming week.

Representatives for Trump did not respond to questions about the race. Youngkin's campaign did not respond to questions about Trump.

Youngkin has aimed his pitch more toward moderate and independent voters since winning the primary. During that campaign, Youngkin declined to say whether Biden was fairly elected. Youngkin has since said he believes Biden was — and that he does not believe there was significant fraud in the 2020 election.

Instead of following in the mold of other blue-state Republican governors like Maryland's Larry Hogan and Massachusetts' Charlie Baker, Youngkin has run on a solidly conservative set of platforms. He has embraced some GOP culture war issues and promised to help reject the "left liberal progressive agenda" that he says is shaping Virginia.

After mostly pivoting away from his focus on election integrity in the nomination contest, he's centered campaign appearances and ads on crime, taxes, school choice and other issues.

Democrats have criticized him for recent remarks about auditing the state's voting machines and for campaigning with state Sen. Amanda Chase, a prominent promoter of election falsehoods who's garnered the nickname "Trump in heels."

Youngkin has also previously said Trump "represents so much of why I'm running."

"What Youngkin is trying to do is he's attempting to maintain the MAGA base while absorbing the suburban defectors from the Democrats. And that's tough," said Holsworth,

Fredericks said it was a winning strategy.

"Here's why Glenn Youngkin is going to win: We're holding the Trump base together by a thread," he said. "Glenn Youngkin and this campaign has never abandoned the core principles that are important to Trump voters, not one day."

Former Republican Gov. Jim Gilmore said Youngkin has done a good job of keeping the race tightly focused on his candidacy.

"I think that nationalizing this campaign is not helpful to either of the candidates," he said.

"Glenn's got to be his own man" and "run his own" race, said former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, who represented a northern Virginia district for 14 years.

Davis said he thinks Virginia voters are more concerned about Biden, whose approval rating has slumped, than Trump. People voted for Biden "to get Donald Trump out of their living room," he said. "But they didn't vote for all this stuff that Biden's bringing with him. And I think they're going to pump the brakes."

Colvin reported from New York.

In New Hampshire, vaccine fights and misinformation roil GOP

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Republican Rep. Ken Weyler was known around the New Hampshire Statehouse for dismissing the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines and opposing tens of millions of dollars in federal funds to promote vaccinations.

But when the 79-year-old Weyler, a retired commercial pilot and Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate who chaired the legislature's powerful fiscal committee, sent a 52-page report likening vaccines to "organized mass murder," Republican leaders were compelled to act.

"I don't know of anyone who agrees with it. It's absolute craziness," said Republican House Speaker Sherman Packard, who quickly accepted Weyler's resignation from his committee post.

The episode was especially piercing in New Hampshire, where the previous House speaker died of COVID-19 last year. It has also exposed Republicans' persistent struggle to root out the misinformation that has taken hold in its ranks across the country.

A year and a half into the pandemic, surveys show Republicans are less worried about the threat from COVID-19 or its variants, less confident in science, less likely to be vaccinated than Democrats and independents and more opposed to vaccine mandates.

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It's a combination of views that comes with clear health risks — and potential political consequences. In a place like New Hampshire, where Republicans are hoping to win back congressional seats next year, politicians with fringe views stand to distract voters from the party's agenda, driving away independents and moderates.

The risk is particularly clear in "Live Free or Die" New Hampshire, where the fight over vaccines has activated the libertarian wing of the GOP. The divisions have the potential to dominate Republican primaries next year.

"What I wonder over the next year is whether all of this is the tip of the iceberg or the whole iceberg," Dante Scala, political science professor at the University of New Hampshire, said.

Republicans in New Hampshire have struggled to unify around a common position since the pandemic first emerged.

Republican Gov. Chris Sununu has been widely praised for his handling of the pandemic, but has also come under fire from conservative critics. They have pushed back on his state of emergency, which put limits on business operations and public gatherings, often holding rowdy protests, including some at his house.

Sununu, who is eyeing a run for Senate next year against Democratic U.S. Sen. Maggie Hassan, joined other Republican leaders in opposing a federal vaccine mandate. But that did little to placate his critics, who repeatedly shouted down fellow Republicans during a press conference last month to protest the federal mandate.

Holding signs saying "I will die before I comply" and including one protester with an automatic weapon strapped to his back, the crowd took over the podium and put up their own speakers who predicted, without evidence, that the mandate would force the state's hospitals to close.

The opposition from Republican leaders to federal vaccine mandates prompted one Republican lawmaker, Rep. William Marsh, to switch parties.

"The belief that is being put forward is that their individual rights trump everything, that no one has the right to impose, in this particular case, a vaccine mandate on a person ever," said Marsh, a retired ophthalmologist, who was the vice chair on the House Health and Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee. "I am of the belief that, for people in a civilized society, individual rights are limited once they start to impinge on the rights of others."

The Weyler controversy started last month when he first questioned Health and Human Services data about hospitalizations in the state. He suggested most of those hospitalized had been vaccinated, which prompted the state's health commissioner to accuse him of spreading misinformation. In fact, 90% of those hospitalized had not been vaccinated, she said.

Gallup polling from September found 57% of Democrats are very or somewhat worried about getting the coronavirus compared with 18% of Republicans. The Democrats are also more confident that vaccines will protect against new variants and more confidence in science — 79% compared to 45% of Republicans..

Weyler was among a group of Republican lawmakers who are so opposed to the Biden administration's vaccine mandates that they pushed to reject millions in federal funding meant to assist with vaccination efforts. This week, \$27 million was rejected by a Republican-controlled Executive Council, a five-member panel that approves state contracts, despite calls from Sununu to accept the funding.

The money would have allowed the state to hire a public health manager and a dozen workers to address public vaccine concerns. But opponents feared it would have required the state to comply with any "future directives" issued by the Biden administration regarding COVID-19, such as vaccine mandates.

After the vote, Sununu was forced to push back against a suggestion that this is the new Republican Party stance.

"I don't believe most of the people protesting were part of the Republican Party. These are anti-government, shut-it-down, no-government-at-all-costs type individuals," he told reporters.

One of the groups opposing the mandates, Rebuild NH, responded Friday to arrests of protesters at the Executive Council meeting by calling Sununu a despot and demanding he be censured for his role in "this crime against the people of New Hampshire."

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Democrats have seized on the GOP divisions, saying Republicans were too slow to seek Weyler's resignation and accusing Weyler and his colleagues of hurting the state's reputation, slowing vaccination efforts and enabling anti-vaccine extremists.

The report Weyler sent alleged that the shots were perpetuating the "greatest organized mass murder in the history of our world." It included claims about vaccines containing living organisms with tentacles and unsubstantiated reports about babies from vaccinated parents in South America born with signs of premature aging.

"I was pretty much astonished that someone would be sending this to us," said Democratic Rep. Mary Jane Wallner, who received the report by email.

In his resignation letter, Weyler said he was stepping down so he wouldn't be a distraction and apologized for not vetting the material that contained "conspiracy theories and sections that are offensive to groups of people." He remains in the 400-member House.

Asked for further comment, Weyler said he had nothing to say to The Associated Press.

Several experts who reviewed the report said it was filled with misinformation and unverifiable claims pulled from social media.

"There is no way for you, me, or anyone on the receiving end to fact-check the content or evaluate the accuracy of the statements therein," Al Ozonoff, an associate professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and associate director of the Precision Vaccines Program at Boston Children's Hospital, said in an email.

The report's authors, which include a doctor who has falsely promoted the use of hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19, told the AP they stood by their findings.

"Sticking your head in the dirt, doesn't change reality. It just makes you blind and ignorant," one of the authors, David Sorensen, said in an email interview.

NASA's asteroid hunter Lucy soars into sky with diamonds

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A NASA spacecraft named Lucy rocketed into the sky with diamonds Saturday morning on a 12-year quest to explore eight asteroids.

Seven of the mysterious space rocks are among swarms of asteroids sharing Jupiter's orbit, thought to be the pristine leftovers of planetary formation.

An Atlas V rocket blasted off before dawn, sending Lucy on a roundabout journey spanning nearly 4 billion miles (6.3 billion kilometers). Researchers grew emotional describing the successful launch — lead scientist Hal Levison said it was like witnessing the birth of a child. "Go Lucy!" he urged.

Lucy is named after the 3.2 million-year-old skeletal remains of a human ancestor found in Ethiopia nearly a half-century ago. That discovery got its name from the 1967 Beatles song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," prompting NASA to send the spacecraft soaring with band members' lyrics and other luminaries' words of wisdom imprinted on a plaque. The spacecraft also carried a disc made of lab-grown diamonds for one of its science instruments.

In a prerecorded video for NASA, Beatles drummer Ringo Starr paid tribute to his late colleague John Lennon, credited for writing the song that inspired all this.

"I'm so excited — Lucy is going back in the sky with diamonds. Johnny will love that," Starr said. "Anyway, if you meet anyone up there, Lucy, give them peace and love from me."

The paleoanthropologist behind the fossil Lucy discovery, Donald Johanson, had goose bumps watching Lucy soar — "I will never look at Jupiter the same ... absolutely mind-expanding." He said he was filled with wonder about this "intersection of our past, our present and our future."

"That a human ancestor who lived so long ago stimulated a mission which promises to add valuable information about the formation of our solar system is incredibly exciting," said Johanson, of Arizona State University, who traveled to Cape Canaveral for his first rocket launch.

Lucy's \$981 million mission is the first to aim for Jupiter's so-called Trojan entourage: thousands — if

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not millions — of asteroids that share the gas giant's expansive orbit around the sun. Some of the Trojan asteroids precede Jupiter in its orbit, while others trail it.

Despite their orbits, the Trojans are far from the planet and mostly scattered far from each other. So there's essentially zero chance of Lucy getting clobbered by one as it swoops past its targets, said Levison of Southwest Research Institute, the mission's principal scientist.

Lucy will swing past Earth next October and again in 2024 to get enough gravitational oomph to make it all the way out to Jupiter's orbit. On the way there, the spacecraft will zip past asteroid Donaldjohanson between Mars and Jupiter. The aptly named rock will serve as a 2025 warm-up act for the science instruments.

Drawing power from two huge circular solar wings, Lucy will chase down five asteroids in the leading pack of Trojans in the late 2020s. The spacecraft will then zoom back toward Earth for another gravity assist in 2030. That will send Lucy back out to the trailing Trojan cluster, where it will zip past the final two targets in 2033 for a record-setting eight asteroids visited in a single mission.

It's a complicated, circuitous path that had NASA's science mission chief, Thomas Zurbuchen, shaking his head at first. "You've got to be kidding. This is possible?" he recalled asking.

Lucy will pass within 600 miles (965 kilometers) of each target; the biggest one is about 70 miles (113 kilometers) across.

"Are there mountains? Valleys? Pits? Mesas? Who knows? I'm sure we're going to be surprised," said Johns Hopkins University's Hal Weaver, who's in charge of Lucy's black-and-white camera. "But we can hardly wait to see what ... images will reveal about these fossils from the formation of the solar system."

NASA plans to launch another mission next month to test whether humans might be able to alter an asteroid's orbit — practice in case Earth ever has a killer rock headed this way.

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Unhappy with prices, ranchers look to build own meat plants

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Like other ranchers across the country, Rusty Kemp for years grumbled about rock-bottom prices paid for the cattle he raised in central Nebraska, even as the cost of beef at grocery stores kept climbing.

He and his neighbors blamed it on consolidation in the beef industry stretching back to the 1970s that resulted in four companies slaughtering over 80% of the nation's cattle, giving the processors more power to set prices while ranchers struggled to make a living. Federal data show that for every dollar spent on food, the share that went to ranchers and farmers dropped from 35 cents in the 1970s to 14 cents recently.

It led Kemp to launch an audacious plan: Raise more than \$300 million from ranchers to build a plant themselves, putting their future in their own hands.

"We've been complaining about it for 30 years," Kemp said. "It's probably time somebody does something about it."

Crews will start work this fall building the Sustainable Beef plant on nearly 400 acres near North Platte, Nebraska, and other groups are making similar surprising moves in Iowa, Idaho and Wisconsin. The enterprises will test whether it's really possible to compete financially against an industry trend that has swept through American agriculture and that played a role in meat shortages during the coronavirus pandemic.

The move is well timed, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture is now taking a number of steps to encourage a more diverse supply in the beef industry.

Still, it's hard to overstate the challenge, going up against huge, well-financed competitors that run highly efficient plants and can sell beef at prices that smaller operators will struggle to match.

The question is whether smaller plants can pay ranchers more and still make a profit themselves. An average 1,370-pound steer is worth about \$1,630, but that value must be divided between the slaughter-

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house, feed lot and the rancher, who typically bears the largest expense of raising the animal for more than a year.

David Briggs, the CEO of Sustainable Beef, acknowledged the difficulty but said his company's investors remain confident.

"Cattle people are risk takers and they're ready to take a risk," Briggs said.

Consolidation of meatpacking started in the mid-1970s, with buyouts of smaller companies, mergers and a shift to much larger plants. Census data cited by the USDA shows that the number of livestock slaughter plants declined from 2,590 in 1977 to 1,387 in 1992. And big processors gradually dominated, going from handling only 12% of cattle in 1977 to 65% by 1997.

Currently four companies — Cargill, JBS, Tyson Foods and National Beef Packing — control over 80% of the U.S. beef market thanks to cattle slaughtered at 24 plants. That concentration became problematic when the coronavirus infected workers, slowing and even closing some of the massive plants, and a cyber-attack last summer briefly forced a shutdown of JBS plants until the company paid an \$11 million ransom.

The Biden administration has largely blamed declining competition for a 14% increase in beef prices from December 2020 to August. Since 2016, the wholesale value of beef and profits to the largest processors has steadily increased while prices paid to ranchers have barely budged.

The backers of the planned new plants have no intention of replacing the giant slaughterhouses, such as a JBS plant in Grand Island, Nebraska, that processes about 6,000 cattle daily — four times what the proposed North Platte plant would handle.

However, they say they will have important advantages, including more modern equipment and, they hope, less employee turnover thanks to slightly higher pay of more than \$50,000 annually plus benefits along with more favorable work schedules. The new Midwest plants are also counting on closer relationships with ranchers, encouraging them to invest in the plants, to share in the profits.

The companies would market their beef both domestically and internationally as being of higher quality than meat processed at larger plants.

Chad Tentinger, who is leading efforts to build a Cattlemen's Heritage plant near Council Bluffs, Iowa, said he thinks smaller plants were profitable even back to the 1970s but that owners shifted to bigger plants in hopes of increasing profits.

Now, he said, "We want to revolutionize the plant and make it an attractive place to work."

Besides paying ranchers more and providing dividends to those who own shares, the hope is that their success will spur more plants to open, and the new competitors will add openness to cattle markets.

Derrell Peel, an agricultural economist at Oklahoma State University, said he hopes they're right, but noted that research shows even a 30% reduction in a plant's size will make it far less efficient, meaning higher costs to slaughter each animal.

Unless smaller plants can keep expenses down, they will need to find customers who will pay more for their beef, or manage with a lower profit margin than the big companies.

"We have these very large plants because they're extremely efficient," Peel said.

According to the North American Meat Institute, a trade group that includes large and mid-size plants, the biggest challenge will be the shortage of workers in the industry.

It's unfair to blame the big companies and consolidation for the industry's problems, said Tyson Fresh Meats group president Shane Miller.

"Many processors, including Tyson, are not able to run their facilities at capacity in spite of ample cattle supply," Miller told a U.S. Senate committee in July. "This is not by choice: Despite our average wage and benefits of \$22 per hour, there are simply not enough workers to fill our plants."

The proposed new plants come as the USDA is trying to increase the supply chain. The agency has dedicated \$650 million toward funding mid-size and small meat and poultry plants and \$100 million in loan guarantees for such plants. Also planned are new rules to label meat as a U.S. product to differentiate it from meat raised in other countries.

"We're trying to support new investment and policies that are going to diversify and address that underlying problem of concentration," said Andy Green, a USDA senior adviser for fair and competitive markets.

Follow Scott McFetridge on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/smcfetridge>

Removing the %&*@ from Maine's vanity plates will take time

By DAVID SHARP Associated Press

Removing the flipping obscenities from license plates on Maine's roads and highways isn't going to happen overnight, even though a law banning such profanities in a state where such regulation has been unusually lax goes into effect Monday.

Currently, there are license plates with salty language including f-bombs, references to anatomy and sex acts, and general insults. One license plate says simply, "F—Y0U" — except that on the plate, it's plainly spelled out.

Now, rule-making is getting underway to ensure the law protects First Amendment rights while getting rid of obscene language.

The process, which includes public comment, could take between two to four months, Secretary of State Shenna Bellows said.

Requests for so-called vanity license plates that are deemed to be potentially offensive will be on hold in the meantime. Eventually, the state will begin recalling previously issued plates, likely this winter.

"Rule-making will delay the process of active removal of plates from the road but will help us balance the free speech rights of citizens and the public interest of removing inappropriate license plates," she said.

A majority of states have restrictions on license plate messages that are considered profane, sexually suggestive, racist, drug related, politically objectionable or religiously offensive.

But Maine became the "wild, wild, wild west of vanity license plates" when the state dropped its review process in 2015. "Our anything-goes approach was unusual," Bellows said.

As a former executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine, Bellows understands the importance of the First Amendment protections on free speech. But she acknowledged she didn't understand the extent of "really disturbing" license plates before she was sworn in as secretary of state earlier this year.

There have been lawsuits over the issue in other states.

Last year, a federal judge ruled that California couldn't enforce a ban on vanity license plates it considers "offensive to good taste and decency."

The California law was overly broad, so states must be careful to target license plates that are profane or obscene, or represent hate speech.

In Maine, there are about 121,000 vanity license plates on the roads in a state with about 1.3 million residents. An estimated 400 offensive plates could be subject to recall, officials said.

Bellows said she's looking at it this way: "If you can't say it on the 6 o'clock news, it shouldn't be on a license plate."

"The license plate is the property of the state," she said. "If you really want an offensive slogan on your car, then you can use a bumper sticker."

Islamic State claims mosque bombing in south Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a deadly suicide bombing on a Shiite mosque in southern Afghanistan that killed 47 people and wounded scores more. Relatives laid the bodies of the victims to rest Saturday and called on the Taliban to protect them.

IS said in a statement posted late Friday on social media that two of the group's members shot and killed security guards manning the entrance of the Fatimiya mosque in Kandahar province.

One detonated his explosives at the entrance of the mosque and the other inside.

IS's news agency Amaq in a statement gave the names of the attackers as Anas al-Khurasani and Abu Ali al-Baluchi, both Afghan nationals.

The families of the victims Saturday dug their graves and carried the bodies to their final resting place.

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In total, 63 graves were dug, but the Taliban's chief for the provincial department of culture and information maintained the official death toll was 47.

"There are so many who have lost body parts, and among those in hospital in serious condition, I don't know how many more numbers will be added to the death toll," said community elder Hajji Farhad.

Shiite leader Sayed Mohammed Agha called on the Taliban government to take serious measures to protect the Shiite minority, "because our enemies will harm our society by any means they can."

The attack came a week after a bombing claimed by the local Islamic State affiliate killed 46 people at a Shiite mosque in northern Afghanistan, raising fears that IS — an enemy of both the Taliban and the West — is expanding its foothold in Afghanistan.

Friday's attack was the deadliest to strike Afghanistan since the dramatic U.S. exit from the country, which allowed the Taliban to seize control of the Afghan capital. It was also the first major attack by the group in the country's south.

IS carries out frequent attacks in its eastern stronghold, but recently has shown signs of expansion, with attacks in the north and Kabul.

The attacks have brought into question the Taliban's ability to counter the growing IS threat.

The Taliban have pledged to restore peace and security after decades of war and have also given the U.S. assurances that they will not allow the country to be used as a base for launching extremist attacks on other countries.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Oct. 17, the 290th day of 2021. There are 75 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 17, 1777, British forces under Gen. John Burgoyne surrendered to American troops in Saratoga, New York, in a turning point of the Revolutionary War.

On this date:

In 1919, Radio Corp. of America was chartered.

In 1931, mobster Al Capone was convicted in Chicago of income tax evasion. (Sentenced to 11 years in prison, Capone was released in 1939.)

In 1933, Albert Einstein arrived in the United States as a refugee from Nazi Germany.

In 1957, the movie "Jailhouse Rock," starring Elvis Presley, had its world premiere in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1966, 12 New York City firefighters were killed while battling a blaze in lower Manhattan. The TV game show "The Hollywood Squares" premiered on NBC.

In 1967, Puyi (poo-ye), the last emperor of China, died in Beijing at age 61.

In 1973, Arab oil-producing nations announced they would begin cutting back oil exports to Western nations and Japan; the result was a total embargo that lasted until March 1974.

In 1978, President Carter signed a bill restoring U.S. citizenship to Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

In 1979, Mother Teresa of India was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1989, an earthquake measuring 6.9 in magnitude struck northern California, killing 63 people and causing \$6 billion worth of damage.

In 2014, the World Health Organization acknowledged it had botched attempts to stop the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, blaming factors including incompetent staff, lack of information and budget cuts.

In 2018, residents of the Florida Panhandle community of Mexico Beach who had fled Hurricane Michael a week earlier returned home to find homes, businesses and campers ripped to shreds; the storm had killed at least 59 people and caused more than \$25 billion in damage in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia.

Ten years ago: Rolling through small Southern towns in a campaign-style bus, President Barack Obama pressed lawmakers back in Washington to start taking up pieces of his rejected jobs bill and mocked the

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Republicans who had shot it down in toto. Financier Carl Lindner Jr., who used his experience running the family dairy store to build a business empire whose reach included baseball, banks and bananas, died at age 92.

Five years ago: A long-awaited offensive to retake the Iraqi city Mosul (MOH'-sul) from the Islamic State group began with a volley of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes and heavy artillery bombardments on a cluster of villages east of the militant-held city. Orbital ATK's unmanned Antares rocket blasted off from Wallops Island in Virginia on a supply mission to the International Space Station; it was the first flight of an Antares since a launch explosion in 2014.

One year ago: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said movie theaters in the state could reopen the following week, with restrictions on audience size and other coronavirus precautions in place; theaters in New York City weren't included. Iran said its death toll from the coronavirus had passed 30,000, in what had been the Mideast's worst outbreak. The Tampa Bay Rays reached the World Series for the second time by beating the Houston Astros 4-2 in Game 7 of the AL Championship Series. (The Rays would lose the World Series to the Los Angeles Dodgers.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Marsha Hunt is 104. Singer Jim Seals (Seals & Crofts) is 79. Singer Gary Puckett is 79. Actor Michael McKean is 74. Actor George Wendt is 73. Actor-singer Bill Hudson is 72. Astronaut Mae Jemison is 65. Country singer Alan Jackson is 63. Movie critic Richard Roeper is 62. Movie director Rob Marshall is 61. Actor Grant Shaud is 61. Animator Mike Judge is 59. Rock singer-musician Fred LeBlanc (Cowboy Mouth) is 58. Singer Rene' Dif is 54. Reggae singer Ziggy Marley is 53. Actor Wood Harris is 52. Singer Wyclef Jean (zhahn) is 52. World Golf Hall of Famer Ernie Els is 52. Singer Chris Kirkpatrick ('N Sync) is 50. Rapper Eminem is 49. Actor Sharon Leal is 49. Actor Matthew Macfadyen is 47. Actor Felicity Jones is 38. Actor Chris Lowell is 37.