

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sunday, June 12

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

2 p.m.: Legion hosts Redfield, DH  
U10 at Aberdeen Tourney (W/B)

## Monday, June 13

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, coleslaw, peaches, whole wheat bread.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center

5 p.m.: Legion at Webster, DH

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Aberdeen, DH

5:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Webster, Nelson Field, (R/B), DH

5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Webster, Nelson Field, (R/B), DH

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

## June 14 - FLAG DAY

Elementary Library Open 9-11 (Reading time 10 a.m.)

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin potatoes, 3-bean salad, fruit cobbler, whole wheat bread.

5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Hannigan, DH

6 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage

**Groton Daily Independent**  
**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**  
**Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460**

**"IF WE FORGAVE FOR AS LONG AS WE HOLD GRUDGES, THE WORLD WOULD BE A HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER PLACE."**

Charmaine J. Forde



## June 15

Senior Menu: Chicken Tetrizzini, peas, honey fruit salad, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

10 a.m.: Little Free Library reading time (south Methodist Church)

5 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Selby, DH

5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Webster, DH

## June 16

Senior Menu: Beef tips in gravy over noodles, Peas, lettuce salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.

4-7 p.m.: Groton Transit Fundraiser at Groton Community Center

10 a.m.: Reading Time at Wage Memorial Library

5:30 p.m.: U120 vs. Rattlers in Watertown, Foundation Fields, (R/W), DH

6 p.m.: U8 SB hosts Mellette, 1 game

7 p.m.: U10 SB hosts Mellette, 1 game

8 p.m.: U12 SB hosts Mellette, 1 game

## **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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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

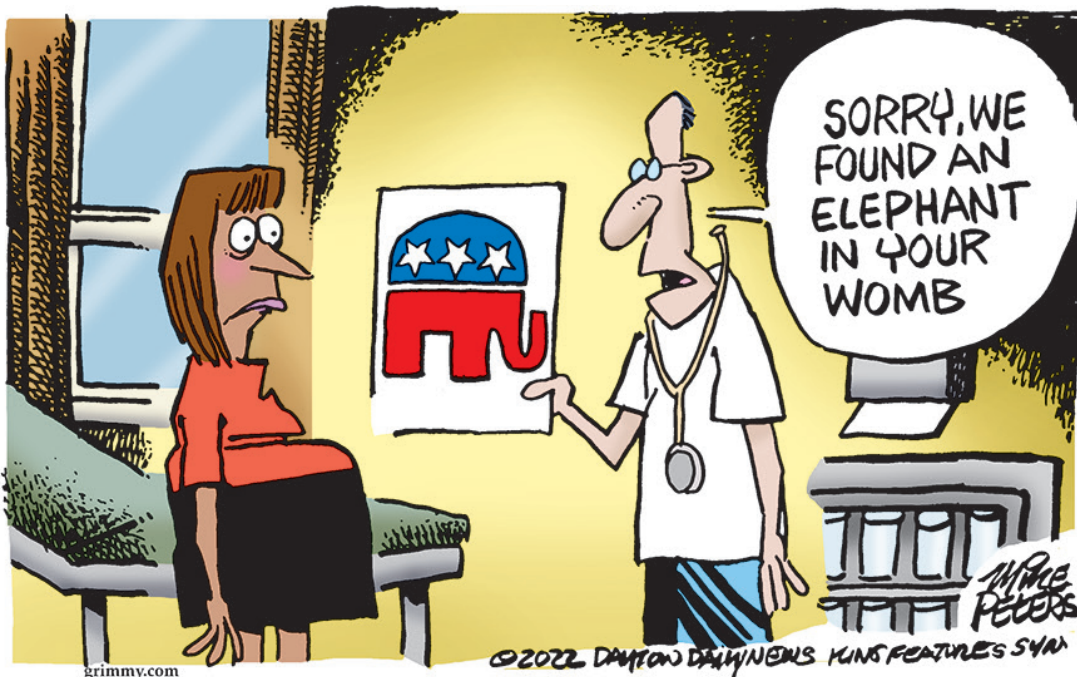


*From heaven the Lord looks down  
and sees all mankind;  
from His dwelling place He watches  
all who live on earth—  
He who forms the hearts of all,  
who considers everything they do.*

Psalm 33: 13-15

*Detail of "Head of a Girl"  
by Leonardo da Vinci (1483)*

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## BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

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

2. From Psalms 141, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a ..."? *Judgment, Scorn, Grief, Kindness*

3. His favorite was Joseph, but how many sons did Jacob have? *2, 5, 8, 12*

4. From Genesis 7, how old was Noah at the time of the flood? *100, 200, 600, 800*

5. In John 10:14, Jesus said, "I am the good ..."? *Samaritan, Storyteller, Fisherman, Shepherd*

6. Which book reads like a love story? *Song of Solomon, Daniel, Titus, Jude*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Kindness (141:5); 3) 12; 4) 600; 5) Shepherd; 6) Song of Solomon

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

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## Comfort foods Made fast and healthy



by Healthy Exchanges  
**Campfire Swiss Steak**

---  
This main dish is so easy, you'll want to camp out under the stars more often. And for those of you who consider sleeping in a motel as "roughing it," you can always make it at home.

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
4 (4-ounce) lean minute or cube steaks  
1 1/2 cups shredded carrots  
1/2 cup chopped onion  
1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper  
1/2 cup finely chopped celery  
2 cups chopped raw potatoes  
1 cup (one 8-ounce can) tomato sauce  
1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1. Cut four (18-inch) pieces of double thickness, heavy-duty aluminum foil. Lightly spray each piece with butter-flavored cooking spray. Place flour in flat saucer. Coat steaks on both sides with flour. Place each steak on piece of prepared foil.

2. In medium bowl, combine carrots, onion, green pepper, celery and potatoes. Evenly place about 1 1/2 cups vegetable mixture over each steak. In small bowl, combine tomato sauce, parsley and black pepper. Spoon about 1/4 cup of sauce mixture evenly over top of each. Wrap securely.

3. Bake on grill or over campfire coals for 30 to 40 minutes, turning every 10 minutes to prevent burning. Or, arrange packets on a baking sheet and bake in an oven preheated to 350 F for 1 hour. Serves 4.

\* Each serving equals: 278 calories, 6g fat, 28g protein, 28g carb., 460mg sodium, 3g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 3 Meat, 2 Vegetable, 1 Starch.

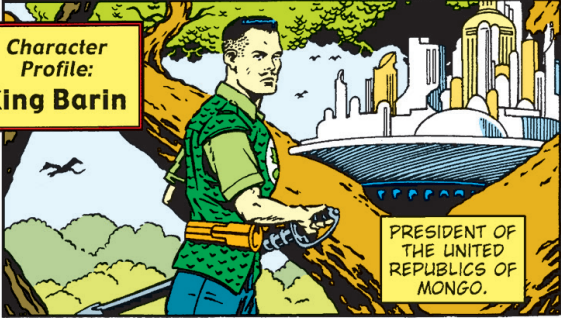
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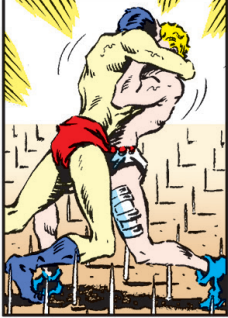
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**Character Profile:**  
**King Barin**

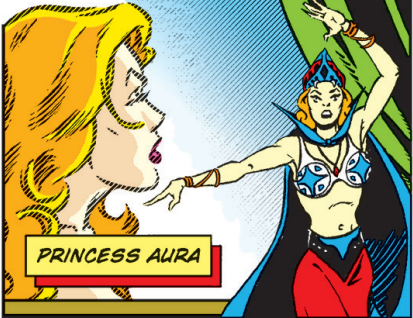


PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLICS OF MONGO.



IN DAYS PAST, HEAD OF A REBEL BAND SEEKING TO USURP THE EMPEROR'S THRONE.

ENTERING THE TOURNAMENTS OF MONGO, FORCED TO DO BATTLE WITH FLASH GORDON TO WIN THE HAND OF MING'S DAUGHTER...

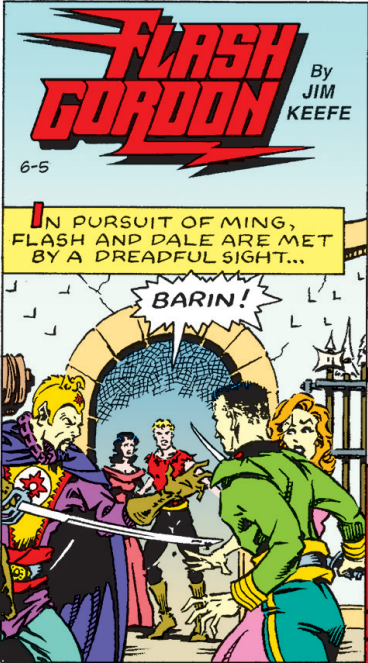


PRINCESS AURA


**FLASH GORDON**  
By JIM KEEFFE  
6-5

IN PURSUIT OF MING, FLASH AND DALE ARE MET BY A DREADFUL SIGHT...

**BARIN!**



NO, NOT BARIN...

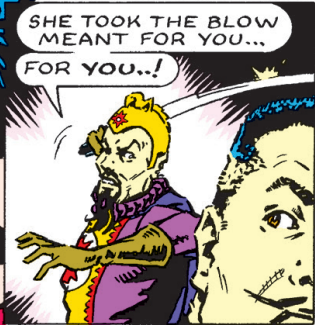


AURA...

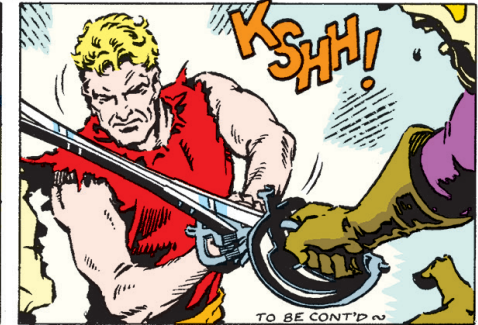
I BETRAYED YOU, MY BELOVED...  
GASP!  
THE SLATE IS CLEAN NOW...!

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SHE TOOK THE BLOW MEANT FOR YOU... FOR YOU..!



**KSHH!**



TO BE CONT'D ~

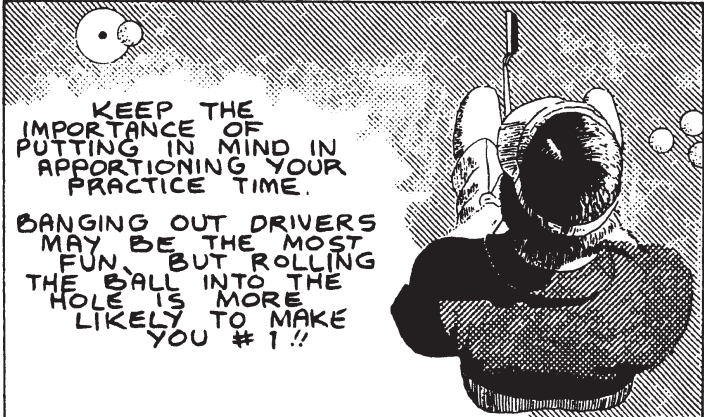
## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**E**VER WONDERED WHY THE TOUR PROS SPEND SO MUCH TIME PRACTICING PUTTING?? THE ANSWER IS THAT IT ACCOUNTS FOR MORE THAN 40 PERCENT OF THE SHOTS WE PLAY.



KEEP THE IMPORTANCE OF PUTTING IN MIND IN APPORTIONING YOUR PRACTICE TIME.

BANGING OUT DRIVERS MAY BE THE MOST FUN, BUT ROLLING THE BALL INTO THE HOLE IS MORE LIKELY TO MAKE YOU # 1!!



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## What Is the Optimal Blood Pressure?



---  
DEAR DR. ROACH: I read that high blood pressure is 140/90, but I thought 120/70 was optimal. Has the standard number increased? -- D.M.I.

ANSWER: The "pressure" in "blood pressure" is given in millimeters of mercury. It is a measurement of the pressure inside large blood vessels, first at its peak during the left ventricle squeezing (the systolic, or top number) and then at its lowest, right before the ventricle starts squeezing again (diastolic, or bottom number). Both of these numbers are important, and they provide important information about the physiology of the heart and blood vessels, as well as provide prognostic information about the risk of heart attack and stroke.

In general, for healthy people, the higher the numbers, the greater the risk. The optimum blood pressure for health is about 110/70, but there are some people with lower values who are also very healthy and who have very low risk for vascular disease.

Risk for heart disease starts to go up more significantly at about 140/90, but above a systolic number of 160, the risk goes up even more dramatically. The trend in blood pressure control over recent years has been toward making the blood pressure closer to the optimum, as long as treatment is well-tolerated. Having a slightly lower risk of heart attack may not be worth it to a person who has significant symptoms from blood pressure medicines.

Fortunately, blood pressure is much easier to control than it used to be with better medications and with non-drug treatments, such as stress reduction, healthy diet, regular moderate exercise and, for some people, salt restriction.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am an 89-year-old man who has been taking tamsulosin (Flomax), 0.4 mg, for many years. I take it after supper in the evening. I get up at night three or four times to urinate. Would it be better to take it after lunch? I would be happy if I could reduce the number of times I get up to maybe only once or twice. -- P.J.S.

ANSWER: Tamsulosin is in the class of alpha blockers, and they relax smooth muscle, a special type of muscle found in the prostate and in blood vessels (among other places). Relaxing the smooth muscle in the prostate makes the urethra, the tube that carries the urine from the bladder and through the prostate, larger. As a result, men can empty their bladders more easily.

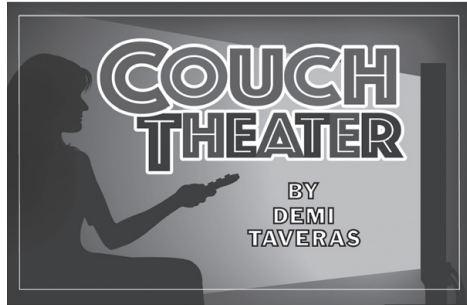
However, even though tamsulosin is better at relaxing smooth muscle in the prostate than in blood vessels, some men will get lightheaded upon standing when using it. This occurs especially on the first dose, and over time most men no longer have trouble. It is usually dosed at nighttime so that the lightheadedness on standing is minimized. You can take it at any time of the day (a half-hour after eating is recommended, at the same meal of the day), but I doubt it will work much better.

Many experts will use 0.8 mg in men who haven't had an ideal response and who do not have lightheadedness. I'd ask your doctor whether an increased dose might be better. Before considering another drug, be sure you avoid too many liquids at night, especially alcohol, and try voiding your bladder twice before bed to make sure it is as empty as possible.

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](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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**Promo scene from "The Bombardment"**

Photo Credit: Netflix

"Fresh" (R) -- Some of us know the horrors of modern dating all too well, like Noa, who gets increasingly frustrated with online dating after awful experiences. Noa (Daisy Edgar-Jones) then meets a doctor named Steve (Sebastian Stan) at a grocery store and agrees to go out with him. Steve seems funny and different, which Noa finds refreshing. Steve decides to surprise Noa with a getaway to Cottage Grove for a weekend, but when Steve picks Noa up, she realizes that a trip to Cottage Grove would be nowhere in sight for her as Steve's motives quickly turn sinister. "Fresh" can be described as a quirky romantic thriller; the two genres blend for an entertainingly unique experience. Bonus points for the cool title credits, which come in around the 30-minute timestamp. (Hulu)

"The Bombardment" (TV-MA) -- During World War II, a Danish boy named Henry wanders upon a taxi mistakenly targeted by a British fighter plane, a car containing four dead bodies. The sight scars Henry so deeply he becomes mute. To help Henry overcome his condition, he's sent to Copenhagen, where he meets Eva and Rigmor, two schoolgirls who help pull him out of his shell. The film's point of view then shifts to the relationship between Teresa, a nun at the school, and Frederik, a Gestapo officer who experiences inner conflict about morality. The rest of the film is spent in gut-wrenching action as a British bombing mission accidentally targets their school. This Danish film is not an easy watch, but brilliant in the way it showcases the effects of war. (Netflix)

"West Side Story" (PG-13) -- Most know the story of Tony and Maria, the Jets and the Sharks, a legendary story in musical theater/film. The first film adaptation, made in 1961, starred only one Latina actor, Rita Moreno, in a story specifically about Puerto Ricans, causing it to miss out on telling an authentic story. So, a new adaptation was put into works to tell the classic musical with a much more modern lens. While Steven Spielberg's colorful direction engages viewers from the start, the lead women in the cast truly make the film stand out: Breakout star Rachel Zegler, with vocal cords of gold, portrays the captivating Maria, while Ariana DeBose stuns in Moreno's previous role, Anita, for which DeBose won Best Supporting Actress at the Oscars. (Disney+)

"Call Me by Your Name" (R) -- Somewhere in Italy in the 1980s, Oliver, a research assistant, arrives to spend the summer working alongside Mr. Perlman, a professor of archaeology. Elio, the Perlman's son, at first feels friction living with Oliver, but as Elio (Timothée Chalamet) and Oliver (Armie Hammer) warm up to each other, they realize the reason behind their awkward beginning was their underlying attraction for each other. Elio and Oliver commence a heated love affair, all comprised of heartfelt moments inevitably counting down to Oliver's last day in Italy. Director Luca Guadagnino excels in using visual design, cinematography and sound to create a romantic European atmosphere. (Amazon Prime)



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1. Which group released "The Wizard"?
2. What is a Parrothead? Whose concerts do they attend?
3. Who penned and released "Sometimes When We Touch"?
4. What girl group released "Soldier Boy"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Born in the valley and raised in the trees of western Kentucky on wobbly knees."

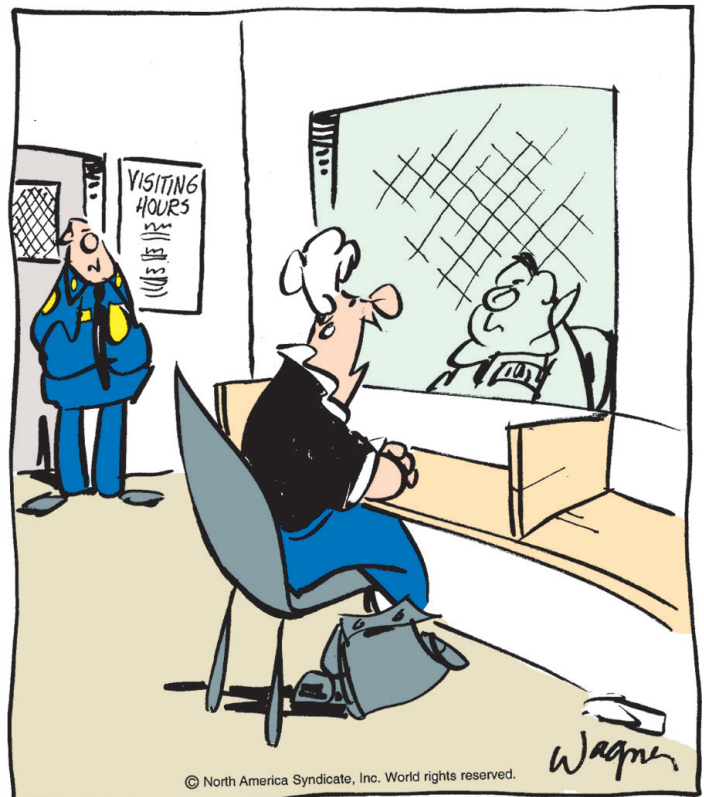
### Answers

1. Black Sabbath, in 1970. The song was on the b-side of the "Paranoid" single. The idea for the song came from the Gandalf character in "The Lord of the Rings" novel.
2. Parrotheads are Jimmy Buffet fans who go to his concerts wearing parrot hats, flipflops and Hawaiian shirts. Buffet has made his millions in multiple ways: music, books and a restaurant chain.
3. Dan Hill, in 1977. Hill said in an interview that the song was from a real-life experience: The girl loved someone else.
4. The Shirelles, in 1962.
5. "Run for the Roses," by Dan Fogelberg in 1980. The song is about a horse that might have a future in racing. The roses refer to the blanket of over 500 roses that is awarded to the winner of the Kentucky Derby.

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## GRIN and BEAR IT <sup>Wagner</sup>

### Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



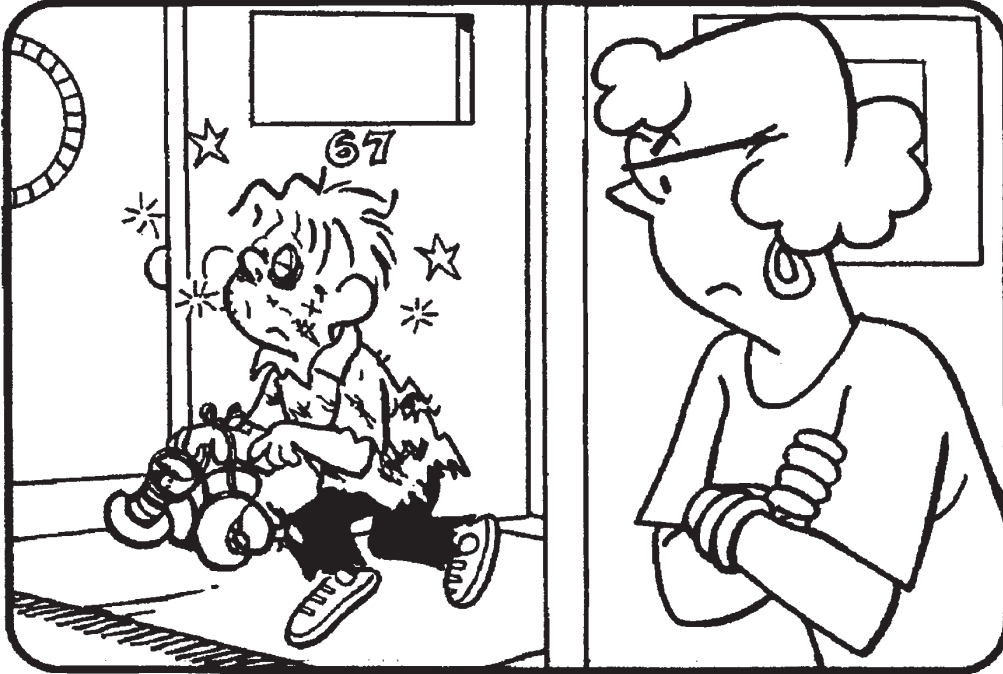
"You told me you were going to bust out for Mother's Day!"

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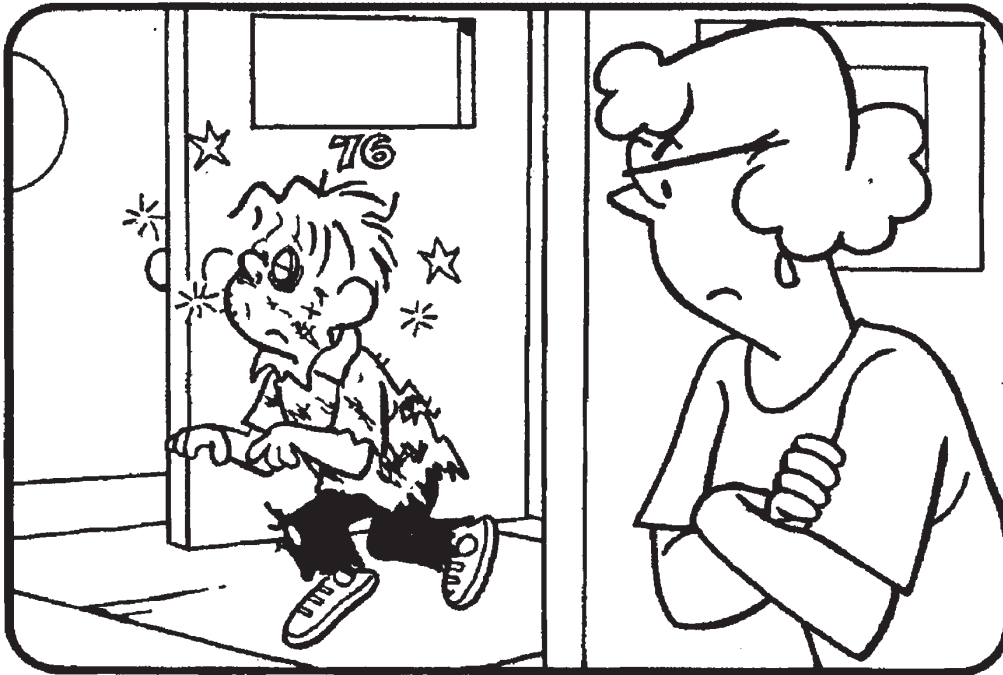
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Frame is missing. 2. Gloves are missing. 3. Fringe is missing. 4. Number is changed. 5. Earrings are different. 6. Bracelets are missing.

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\* Add a small bit of boiling water to a glass of iced tea to clear it up if it is cloudy. You can do this to a pitcher just before serving.

\* If you're traveling with pets, you know you'll need to bring something for them to drink out of. If you have ice in a container, they can lick the ice to stay hydrated, but it doesn't slosh around or spill easily.

\* "Cutting corn off the cob can be tricky business, but you only need to recruit the right equipment. The next time you're making corn for dinner, grab a Bundt pan. The corn cob gets set upright in the center, and when you cut down, the kernels fall right into the pan on all sides." -- A.S. in Texas

its claws, sneak up while it's asleep. You might get only a couple done before your cat catches on and wriggles away, but you'll get there." -- P.L. in Oklahoma (Slow and steady wins the race, P.L. Your tip works great for babies, too! -- JoAnn)

\* Skunk run-in? Try this mix before you buy pricey de-stink shampoos at the pet store. Mix a quart of 3% peroxide, a teaspoon or two of dish soap, 1/4 cup of baking soda and quart of room-temperature water. Apply to pet, and work deeply into the fur. Massage in for five minutes, and rinse thoroughly.

\* Boiling potatoes? Plants love starch. Let your cooking water cool, then use it to water the plants in your garden.

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

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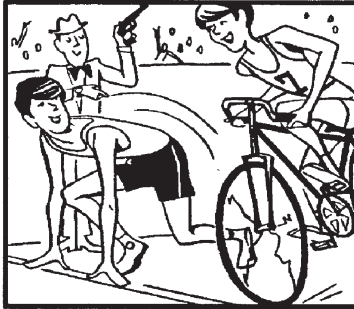
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**WHAT'S UP!** Strictly speaking, a catch is not always a catch on a fishing trip. Draw missing lines dot to dot.

## Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman



### STAY THE COURSE START-UP TIME

WHILE Jones prefers to get his exercise riding a bicycle, his friend Smith likes to run. When Jones bikes, he averages 10 miles per hour, which is three times Smith's average speed on foot.

Last week, both Jones and Smith left at the same time from the same place in Longville, agreeing to meet each other in Shortville, before returning home.

Jones's trip on a winding road totaled 10 miles, and Smith's trip via a cross-country shortcut totaled three and one-third miles. Both reached the same spot in Shortville at exactly 12 o'clock noon.

Question: At what time did they depart together from Longville? Answer in 30 seconds.

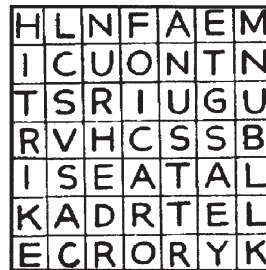
There's no catch: They departed at 11 o'clock.

**HALF RIGHT!** Old joke: Teacher: "Class, what's half of eight?" Student: "Which half?" Teacher: "What's the difference?" Student: "Top half is zero, side half is three."

**PLAY BALL!** There are at least 21 baseball terms to spell out in the letter maze at right. Start at any letter, move to an adjacent letter across, up, down or diagonally. Individual letters may be used in more than one word, but not repeated in the same word. Words to find:

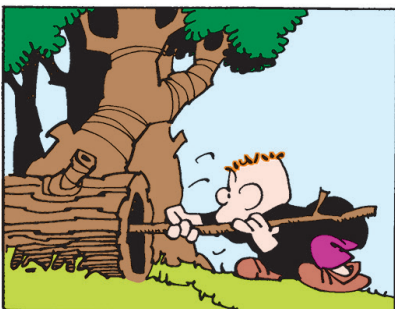
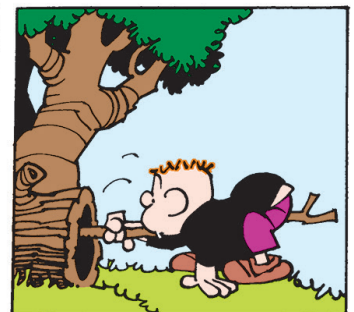
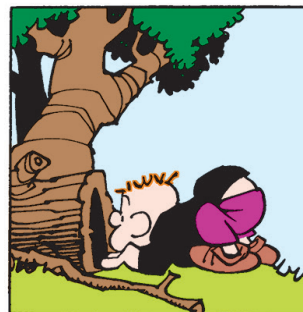
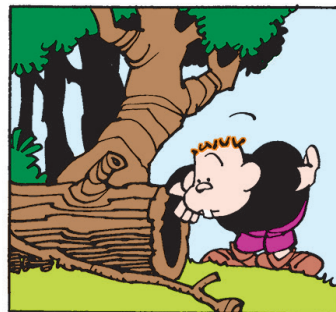
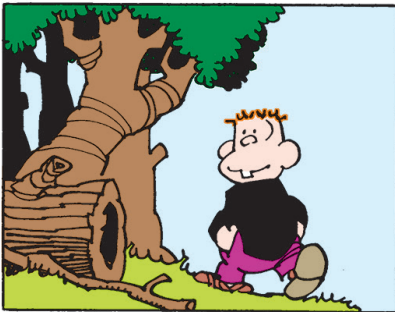
- |         |         |       |       |         |       |
|---------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Bat     | Ball    | Fan   | Force | Cushion |       |
| Sack    | Strike  | Out   | Error | Hit     | Steal |
| Battery | Run     | Curve | Trade | Balk    | Bunt  |
| Slab    | Starter | Foul  | Hero  |         |       |

See how quickly you can find them.



## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE



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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Embassy VIP
- 4 Apple tablet
- 8 Mexican money
- 12 Scratch
- 13 "It can't be!"
- 14 Eve's man
- 15 Finished
- 17 Latvia's capital
- 18 Gusto
- 19 Neptune's realm
- 20 Pale
- 22 "Of — and Men"
- 24 Kite flier's need
- 25 Affectionate sign-off
- 29 Flamenco cheer
- 30 Bedouins
- 31 Arthur of "Maude"
- 32 Tennis shut-out
- 34 Taxpayer IDs
- 35 Polite query
- 36 Scarlett's Butler
- 37 Bottom
- 40 "Love — Leave Me"
- 41 Awestruck
- 42 Play-ending arcade message
- 46 Thunder god
- 47 Actor

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		

- Jannings
- 8 Postal delivery
- 28 Right on the map
- 48 Tokyo, once
- 9 Ms. Falco
- 30 Petri dish gel
- 49 "Ditto"
- 10 Long story
- 33 New citizen, perhaps
- 50 Oahu souvenirs
- 11 Yemen neighbor
- 34 "Scram!"
- 51 Lemon
- 16 Clarinet insert
- 36 Film spools
- 19 Phil of folk music
- 37 D.C. baseball team
- 20 MP's quarry
- 38 Turkish title
- 21 Missile shelter
- 39 Unhappy destiny
- 22 Dolphins' home
- 40 Roman 2,002
- 23 "Let —" (Beatles hit)
- 42 Solidify
- 43 Soul, to Sartre
- 44 College URL ender
- 25 Fay of "King Kong"
- 45 Scepter
- 26 Saw
- 27 Air outlet

### DOWN

- 1 Latin 101 word
- 2 Dallas hooper, briefly
- 3 Soviet leader after Khrushchev
- 4 Hawkeye
- 5 Dr. McGraw
- 6 Picnic crasher
- 7 Homer's cry

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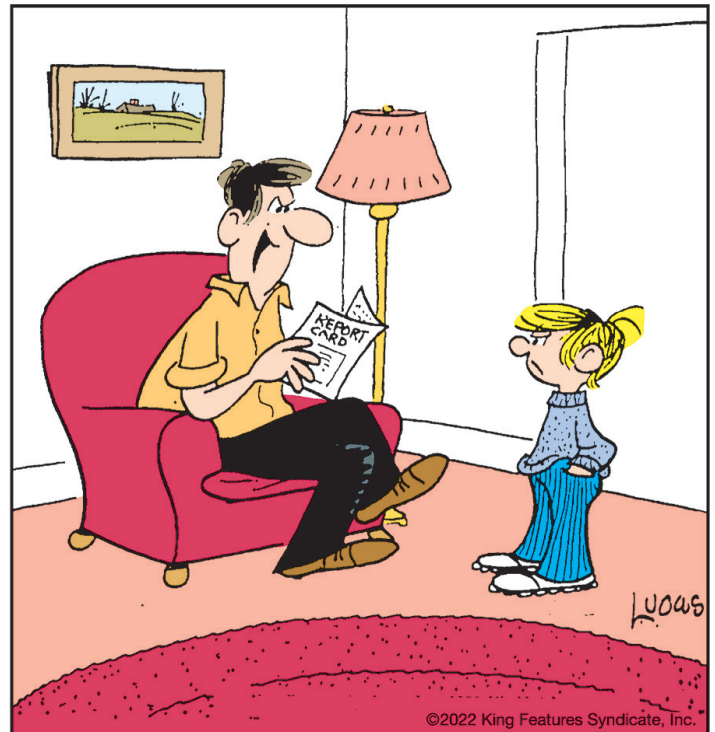
## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

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

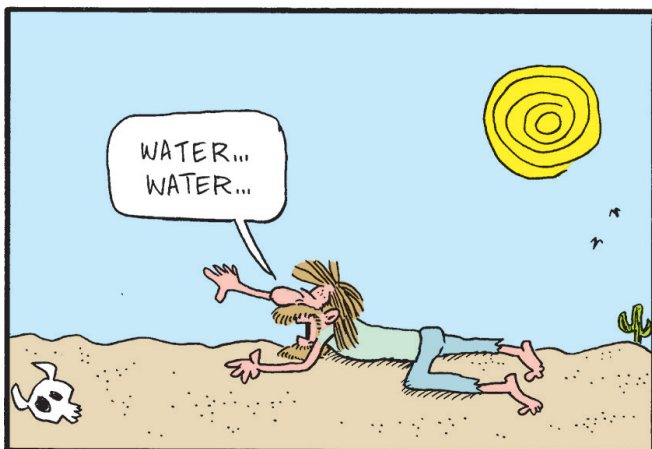
## LAFF - A - DAY



"I'm proud of you, son — it took a lot of guts to show anyone this."

## Out on a Limb

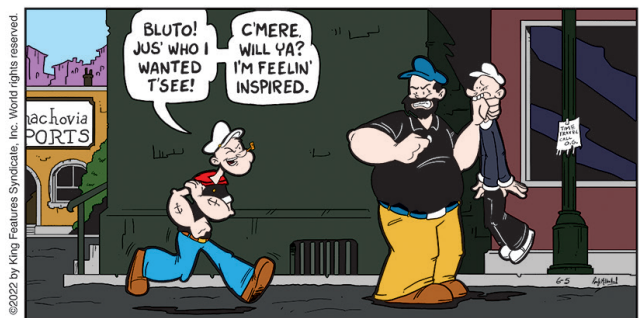
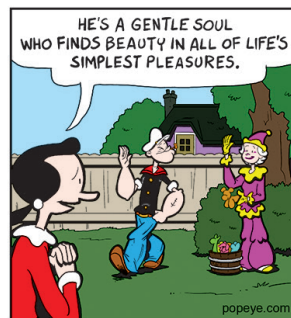
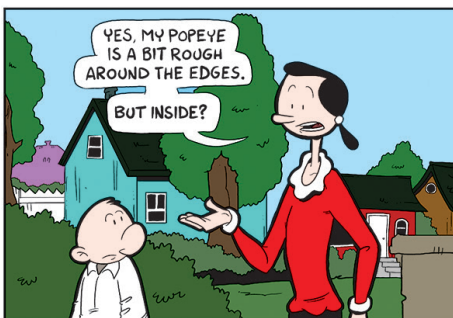
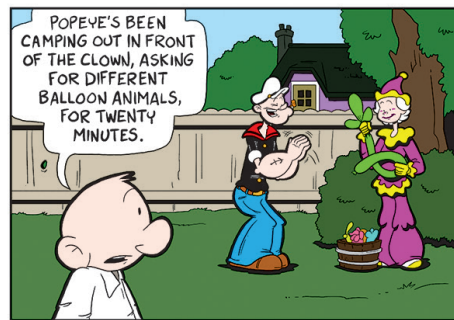
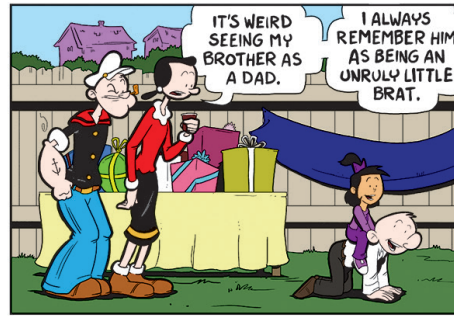
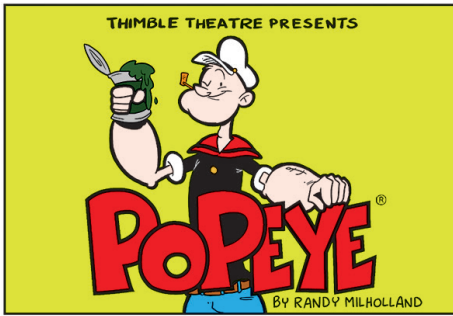
by Gary Kopervas





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## R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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# Groton Daily Independent

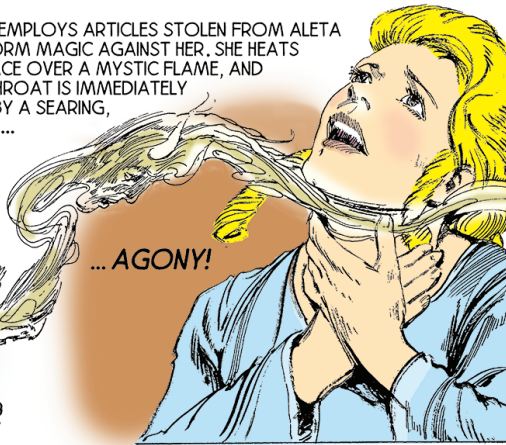
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Hal Foster's BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ  
**Prince Valiant**

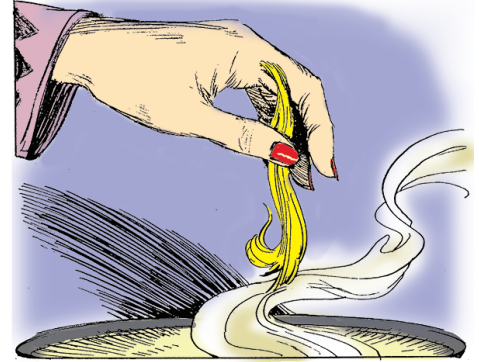
MALDUBH EMPLOYS ARTICLES STOLEN FROM ALETA TO PERFORM MAGIC AGAINST HER. SHE HEATS A NECKLACE OVER A MYSTIC FLAME, AND ALETA'S THROAT IS IMMEDIATELY CHOKED BY A SEARING, BURNING ...



... AGONY!



MALDUBH TAKES DELIGHT IN KNOWING THE TORTURE SHE BRINGS. THEN THE COUP DE GRACE. INTO THE FIRE SHE CASTS ALETA'S GOLDEN LOCKS...

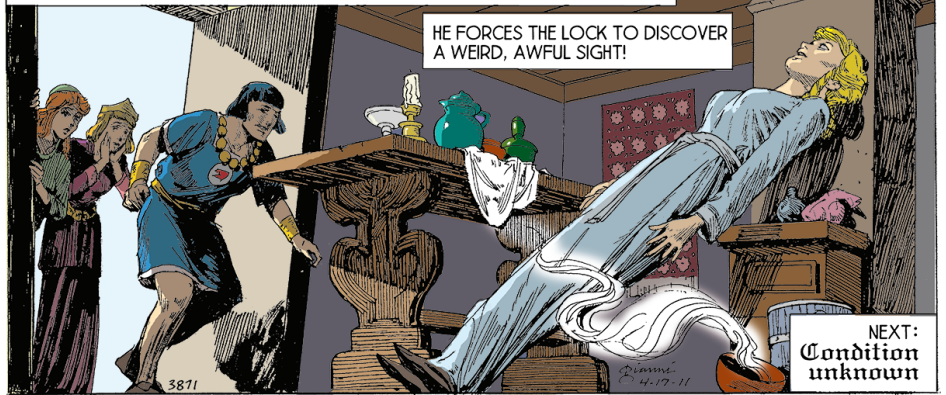


... AND, MILES AWAY, THE QUEEN SHUDDERS AS HER BODY PETRIFIES INTO A TERRIBLE STATE OF LIVING DEATH!



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IT IS HOURS BEFORE A HANDMAIDEN, CONCERNED BY THE LACK OF RESPONSE FROM ALETA'S LOCKED QUARTERS, SENDS FOR VAL.

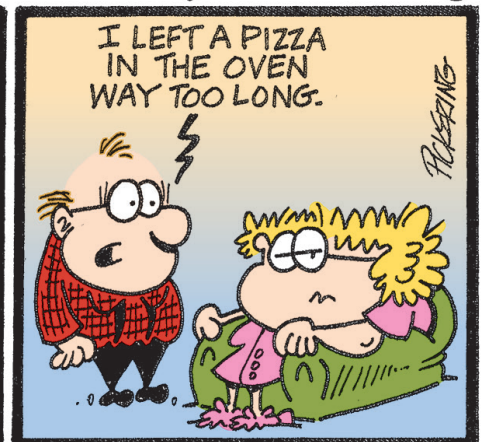


HE FORCES THE LOCK TO DISCOVER A WEIRD, AWFUL SIGHT!

NEXT:  
Condition unknown

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### The Local Food Bank Needs Your Help

---  
If you're on the other side of the fence -- able to donate to the food bank rather than visiting to use its services -- your local pantry can surely use your help. Running them is more complicated and expensive than it might seem!

The food bank in my town gets most of its food from the main supplier in the state, which gets its support from philanthropists, business partners, manufacturers, producers, farmers and donors of both food and money. It then distributes food and supplies to the local food banks.

The local food bank has to pay for what it receives, of course, with its own supply of cash donors and town support. In addition, there are local businesses that donate leftover breads and bakery items, farmers that bring in fresh produce and frozen meat, and folks in town who donate both cash and food.

What food banks typically need: canned vegetables, fruit, soup, stews and beans; pasta, peanut butter and jelly; tuna, cereals and personal-care items like toothpaste and soap. But there are specialty items they need as well, things that are hard for the food banks to get: pet food and lactose-free milk, for example, that are very important to those who need them. (I've made it my goal to try to provide some of these items to the food bank each month.)

If you're in a position to help, search online for your local food bank to see what it currently needs, or make a phone call. Ask if it posts on a website or Facebook page.

Your best bet, however, might be to donate money. Most food banks have more purchasing power at the store than we do; their dollar goes much further because they don't pay retail. And they can use those dollars to target the specific needs of their clientele. Ask!

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1. Name the actor and comedian who led the singing of "Back Home Again in Indiana" 36 times at the Indianapolis 500 from 1972-2014.

2. The "Red Line Rivalry" game is contested between what two Chicago universities' basketball teams?

3. What Wisconsin golf course was the site for the PGA Championship in 2004, '10 and '15, and hosted the Ryder Cup in 2021?

4. What rare defensive feat did Philadelphia Phillies second baseman Eric Bruntlett achieve in the 9th inning vs. the New York Mets on Aug. 23, 2009?

5. Name the arena, famous for its parquet basketball court, that opened in 1928 and was demolished in 1998.

6. What NHL Wales Conference division, formed in 1974, was the predecessor of the Northeast Division and the Atlantic Division?

7. Name the running back for the Pittsburgh Steelers (1987-93) and Chicago Bears (1994) who later became an analyst for ESPN.



by Ryan A. Berenz

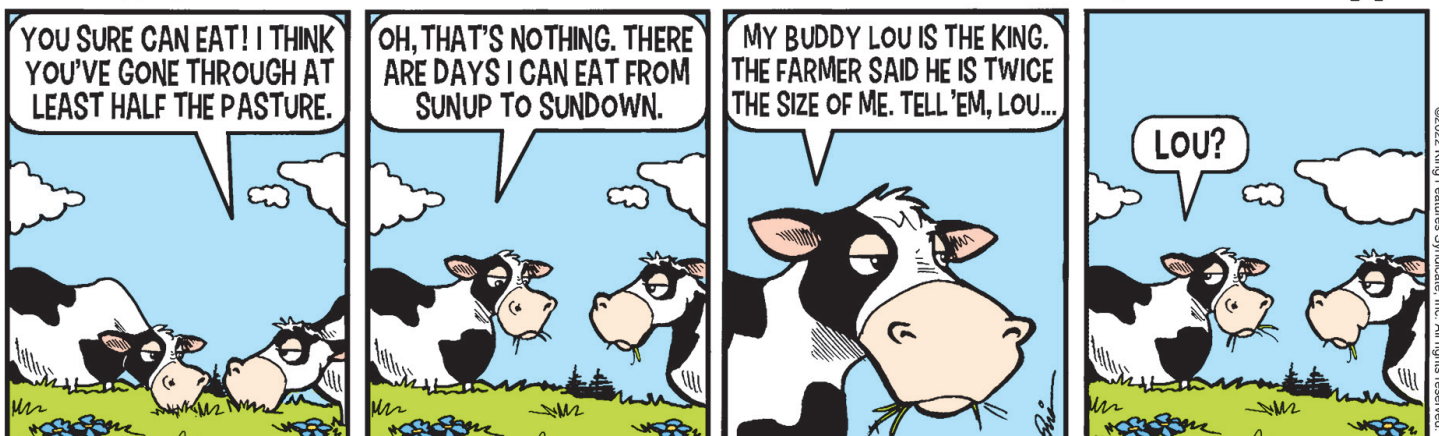
## Answers

1. Jim Nabors.
2. The DePaul Blue Demons and the Loyola Chicago Ramblers.
3. Whistling Straits.
4. An unassisted triple play.
5. Boston Garden.
6. The Adams Division.
7. Merrill Hoge.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## 'Hip Hold' Is No Way to Stretch Your Dog

---

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My wife likes to pick up our dog's hind legs to help him stretch; that is, she holds Cheerio by the hips so his hind legs are up off the ground while he stands on his front legs. I thought I read once that this is not good and strains the dog's joints or back or something. Your advice would be appreciated. -- Zina J.

DEAR ZINA: The "hip hold" is a safety grip to pull your dog away from a fight with another dog. It's not a hold that should be forced or held for long periods.

Stretching should be performed by owners when the dog's joints are not weighted -- meaning the dog should not be standing or leaning on the leg being

stretched. Holding Cheerio up by his hindquarters and forcing him to brace on his front legs puts him at greater risk for injury. It can cause great pain in older dogs with arthritis.

If your wife would truly like to keep Cheerio's joints healthy and improve his overall circulation and well-being, there are some great safe stretching methods, and safe massage techniques as well. Here's a YouTube video of safe dog stretching exercises by a veterinary therapist: [tinyurl.com/4ay7sfjc](https://tinyurl.com/4ay7sfjc). Notice that at no point does the therapist stretch a joint that the dog is standing on -- they are all unweighted stretches.

Dogs also stretch themselves frequently, especially when getting up after a long nap. Don't try to assist their natural stretching -- dogs stretch in a way that's comfortable for them. Therapeutic stretching and massage are designed to help facilitate a dog's natural movement without placing stress on the joints.

If you have more questions about your dog's mobility, talk with the vet at his next checkup.

Send your tips, questions or comments to [ask@pawscorner.com](mailto:ask@pawscorner.com).

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

in a hunting accident.

- \* One sunflower is actually 1,000-2,000 tiny flowers held together by a base.
- \* Have you ever dreamed of smelling like a hamburger? No? Well, you could have in 2015, thanks to Burger King Japan's release of a limited-edition cologne called Flame Grilled ... and yes, it smelled like a Whopper.
- \* On Jan. 1, 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt shook the hands of over 8,510 people, setting a record that lasted more than 70 years.
- \* Sodium citrate makes any cheese into a creamy nacho cheese sauce. Curiously, its chemical formula spells out Na<sub>3</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>O<sub>7</sub> (NaCHO).
- \* In England and Wales, it's legal to consume alcohol on private premises from the age of five.
- \* Gesundheit! Ever wonder why someone "blesses you" when you sneeze? The custom was introduced by Pope Gregory the Great in 590 A.D. Since sneezing could be a sign of the plague, it was considered proper to offer a potentially ill person a blessing.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Once I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalog: 'No good in a bed, but fine up against a wall.'" -- Eleanor Roosevelt

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\* The next time you cut your yard, you can thank Edwin Bearn Budding for inventing the lawnmower in 1830. But while most inventors take pride in their creations, Budding was so concerned about what his neighbors might think of his new contraption that he only tested his prototypes at night.

\* There are more than 12,000 species of ants.

\* Hall of Fame pitcher Lee Smith didn't play baseball until he was a high school junior and, even then, just tried out to win a \$10 bet. His turn to play came when his team's star pitcher was killed



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## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BIG MEN AT HOME DEPT-BACHELOR BARFO, WHO PUTS OFF DOING DISHES, ASKS A QUESTION...

WHERE THE @%\*!! DO ALL THE DISHES GO? THERE NEVER SEEMS TO BE ANY CLEAN ONES AROUND.....



Thank to T. GUARINO, BRONX, N.Y.

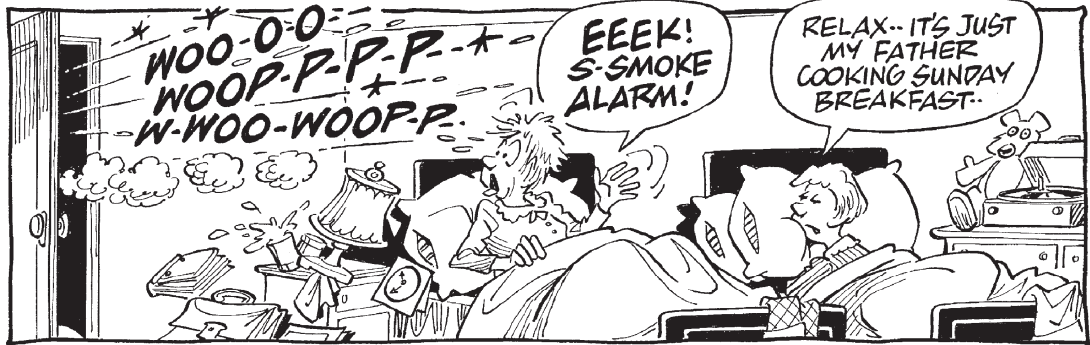
## BY AL SCADUTO

FAMOUS LAST WORDS- "WE'LL ONLY STAY A FEW MINUTES"



Thank to BERT SPARR, SARASOTA, FL.

SHOCK WAVES- PUTTING A SLEEPOVER GUEST AT EASE...



Thank to P. OREHEK, SAN FRANCISCO, CA.

### Your front door

Plants and garden decor can play a very important part in updating the entryway to your home, and in welcoming your guests. Keep healthy, in-season plantings as part of a balanced display with your front door, choosing them to accent (but not overpower) the door, trim, architectural details and the walkway. Take time to plan the cohesiveness of all these elements. - Brenda Weaver

Source: [www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com)



by Freddy Groves

## Homeless Vet Falls Through the Cracks

---

The Department of Veterans Affairs creates numerous programs to deal with homeless veteran populations -- and this is all well and good. But it's the individual homeless vet who can fall through the cracks.

The VA Office of Inspector General reports about a veteran (I'll assume here it was a guy) who had multiple physical conditions on top of severe cognitive impairment. Years ago, he was given housing assistance and an evaluation and made part of a program. Eventually, he was booted out of the housing and thus booted out of the help program.

In the space of seven months, he took himself to the emergency room at a VA hospital a dozen times for

various medical conditions, most a result of living outside or in a car. They admitted him for 33 days while he got evaluated for his cognitive functioning and had his medical conditions cared for. They discharged him and sent him off in a cab to a non-VA shelter.

For whatever reason, an hour later, he showed up at the ER again. They gave him a bus ticket to the shelter. The trip involved changes of buses, not an easy trick for someone with severe cognitive impairment. An hour later, he again showed up at the ER. Once more, they gave him a bus ticket and a printed list of instructions, telling him to go to the shelter.

The next day, a social worker discovered that he never made it to the shelter, and the following day, the family filed a missing person report.

Three days later, he was found at the shelter.

A reading of the OIG report shows one misstep after the other, with staffers putting a cognitively impaired veteran on a bus and not using one of the donated Uber gift cards and having him delivered right to the door of the shelter. Better yet, they could have told family members that he was being discharged.

To read the report: [www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-21-02209-147.pdf](http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-21-02209-147.pdf)

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## Wishing Well®

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A	V	E	S	I	B	P	L	F	S	O	H	U
3	5	6	8	7	6	3	5	6	3	5	4	7
V	I	A	N	O	Y	E	F	C	G	T	A	R
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H	D	E	G	T	I	O	I	C	T	V	K	E
2	5	8	7	3	6	8	5	8	4	7	6	8
N	H	A	A	A	G	N	I	T	S	N	R	W
4	8	4	6	4	8	2	7	6	5	2	4	3
Y	E	G	O	O	A	E	D	W	G	W	I	I
7	4	8	5	6	2	7	5	7	2	8	2	7
F	N	L	H	S	P	O	G	R	L	T	A	G
3	7	5	3	7	2	3	2	8	5	2	4	5
N	E	E	E	T	C	D	E	H	A	S	G	R

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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1. HISTORY: In what year did the Boston Tea Party take place?
2. MOVIES: Which 1990s animated movie has a character named Lumiere?
3. MUSIC: Who wrote the song "Make You Feel My Love," performed by Adele?
4. LANGUAGE: What is a zoonotic disease?
5. TELEVISION: Which TV sitcom was set at Greendale Community College?
6. ANATOMY: What blood type does a universal donor have?
7. GEOGRAPHY: Bantry Bay is an inlet in which European country?
8. FOOD & DRINK: What are sweetbreads?
9. LITERATURE: What kind of bird is titled in a John Keats' poem?
10. SCIENCE: What does an auxanometer measure?

### Answers

1. 1773, when colonists dumped a shipment of tea into the Boston Harbor to protest taxes.
2. "Beauty and the Beast"
3. Bob Dylan
4. A disease that can pass from one species to another, especially animals to humans.
5. "Community"
6. O negative
7. Ireland
8. Organ meat from the pancreas and thymus gland
9. "Ode to a Nightingale"
10. Plants' rate of growth

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



## Fifty Years Later – Rapid City Flood

June 9, 1972, started out as a typical rainy summer day in the Black Hills. While the rain was heavy that Friday evening, there was no cause for alarm as residents went about their normal routines. Fifty years later, we look back and remember the devastation that would soon follow.

Late that evening after 15 inches of rain fell in the area, Rapid Creek and other waterways began to overflow. The Canyon Lake dam burst after being clogged with debris. A wall of rushing water slammed into the residential areas in Rapid City. The cries of residents taking refuge in trees and roofs could be heard throughout the night. When the sun came up, the light revealed the devastation that had taken place. The flood took 238 lives and injured 3,057. Over 1,300 homes and 5,000 automobiles were swept away. The value of property damage was estimated to be over \$160 million—the same value as over \$1 billion today.

The days and months that followed were full of heartache and loss, but also determination. The National Guard was called in and served alongside the community. Together, they searched for bodies among the rubble and cleared out debris.

Fifty years later, residents still vividly recall the horror of that day. The cleanup took months, and the rebuilding took years. Departments, agencies, architects, construction workers, and engineers worked together to rebuild Rapid City. Today the city enjoys a vast greenway and park system throughout the city where rezoning has prohibited housing along the creek. Thankfully, the United States now employs an early flood warning system with the hopes of preventing disasters such as this.

The Rapid City Flood was a tragedy. The lives, homes, and businesses lost have created gaps in the Rapid City community that are still felt by many. But I know the teamwork and fortitude that came in the following days has made Rapid City a stronger community.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



**South Dakota:** *Under God, the People Rule*

## Old Glory, Eternal Glory

On June 14th each year, we celebrate the American Flag as an enduring symbol of freedom, equality, justice, and hope. Our flag is more than a symbol of our country's core values — it also represents the toil and sacrifice of so many who have worked to lift America to the top of the world stage.

Flag Day officially commemorates the Continental Congress' approval of the design on June 14, 1777. Some scholars believe the tradition of Flag Day began around 1889, the same year South Dakota became a state. In 1927, President Calvin Coolidge signed a proclamation honoring Flag Day. He noted, "when we look at our flag and behold it emblazoned with all our rights, we must remember that it is equally a symbol of our duties.

Every glory that we associate with it is the result of duty done."

Those American duties — the personal responsibility of our people — are wonderfully depicted in the colors of our flag. Red stands for hardiness and valor — the American people tamed a continent and have fought and died for generations to defend the freedoms that make our nation great. White stands for purity and innocence — our nation was the first in history to be founded on an ideal, "that all men are created equal," and we must remain pure to that ideal in everything that we do. And Blue symbolizes justice for all — our nation stands for equal rights, equal treatment under the law, and limited government that doesn't pick winners and losers.

We recently honored Memorial Day, and it was a tremendous reminder of the values depicted by our flag. Standing with rain-soaked patriots at the Black Hills National Cemetery,

I watched as veteran after veteran, family after family, presented wreaths in honor of the more than 3,000 South Dakotans who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

As I watched a wheelchair-bound veteran endure the rain to participate in a flag presentation to a World War II veteran, the symbol of the red, white, and blue became more powerful. They call the flag "Old Glory." She's 245 years old, but her glory is eternal — the result of generations continuing to fulfill their duty to serve.

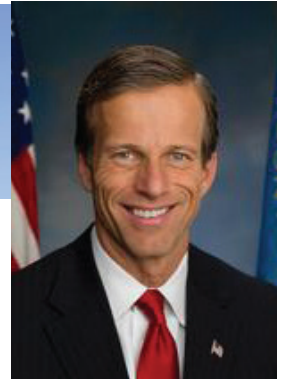
We must keep America strong so the flag can remain a symbol of hope for those yearning for freedom. President George Washington once said, "We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country (Great Britain), separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing Liberty." That Liberty has remained a beacon for so many around the world, and we must keep it that way.

For too long, there has been a radical push to redefine what the American Flag represents. We must reject that movement, but we must also recognize that our nation is always finding ways to improve and learn from mistakes. When our nation mourns, we lower the flag; we do not tear it down completely. It's our history. It's our heroes. It's our legacy as the first nation to break through tyranny to self-govern under the rights given to us by our Creator.

Our Founding Fathers took 13 colonies and built

One Nation Under God. It is our responsibility to continue that legacy and protect the flag as a symbol of freedom and democracy around the world.

**John Thune**  
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



## Inflated Prices Lead to Deflated Family Budgets

President Biden recently penned an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal entitled “My Plan for Fighting Inflation” in which he denies responsibility for his failed policies that helped create record-high inflation and out-of-control fuel costs. In his op-ed, President Biden spends multiple paragraphs attempting to convince Americans that the economy is thriving – which I have to think feels pretty meaningless to the millions of Americans struggling with massive increases in the cost of gas, groceries, and other everyday goods.

Unsurprisingly, a recent poll found that just 27 percent of Americans believe they have a good chance of improving their standard of living. Here’s the deal: The president can talk about his supposed economic achievements all he wants, but that means little to South Dakotans who have seen their disposable income eaten up by price hikes or whose pay raise failed to even keep pace with the increase in the cost of living.

When President Biden took office, inflation was at 1.4 percent – well within the Federal Reserve’s target inflation rate of 2 percent. Currently, it is at 8.6 percent – a 40-year high – largely thanks to the Democrats’ massive, partisan spending spree that flooded the economy with unnecessary government money. The definition of inflation is too many dollars chasing too few goods and services. And that’s exactly the situation Democrats helped create with their American Rescue Plan. They sent too many federal dollars into the economy – and the economy overheated as a result.

I recently questioned U.S. Department of the Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen at a Senate Finance Committee hearing, and she admitted that she was wrong about inflation after she and other administration officials told the American people this was just a temporary problem. Anyone who relies on gas to fill up their car or buys groceries to feed their family knows the rise in prices hasn’t been temporary – inflation has gotten worse, and it has been eating away at family budgets for months. Instead of talking about ways to address high energy prices by unleashing American energy production, the Biden administration continues to tout its release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve – a highly temporary Band-Aid that did next to nothing to address the cause of high gas prices, except for briefly pausing their rise to record highs.

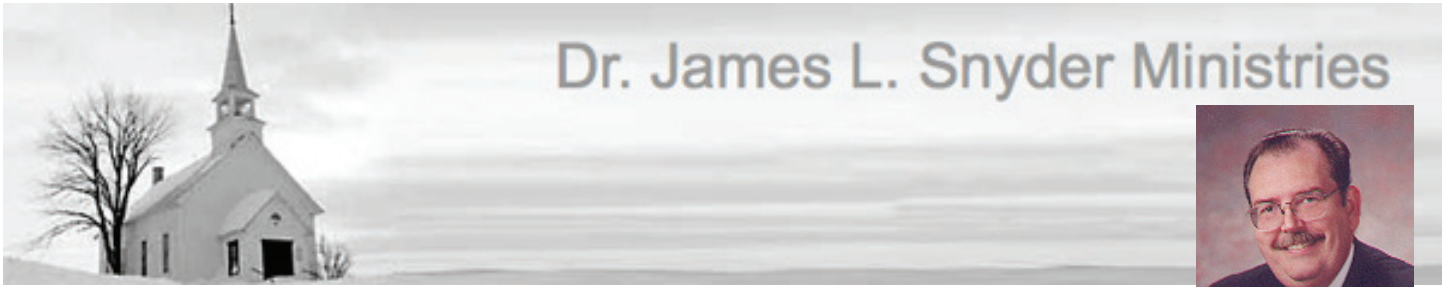
If Democrats really wanted to reduce gas prices and boost the productive capacity of our economy over time, they would embrace American energy production – including conventional energy production. Instead, the president is doing the opposite: He continues to discourage domestic production of the conventional energy sources that Americans rely on, and the result is likely to be continued high energy prices well into the future.

I am calling on President Biden and Washington Democrats to get serious about addressing the inflation crisis that is hurting families across the country. Inflation is creating an additional tax on hardworking South Dakotans, and it’s forcing them to dig even deeper into their pocketbooks in order to make ends meet. I will do my part to hold Democrats accountable for their reckless spending and radical agenda that is fueling the inflation crisis, and I will continue to advocate for pro-growth policies that would reverse this dangerous trend.



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## A Trip Around the Whirlwind

Recently, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were able to take a well-earned vacation. One of our grandsons graduated from high school in Ohio, and we decided to go and celebrate with him. It is amazing what you learn when you go on a vacation.

I learned some things about the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. You would think by this time I would have discovered everything there is about her. But I was to be delightfully surprised. Up to this point, she is known as the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage as well as the BOGO Queen. If that isn't enough I was to learn a lot more about her. As soon as we started our vacation, I realized she had a new identity. She is the Travel Princess, and she sits on her throne behind the wheel of her Sissy Van.

This new identity caught me off guard, but the longer on the road, the more I understood this new identity.

As we drove along, I could not help but smile as I thought about this. Before us was a 9 ½-hour drive to our destination. We planned to cut it in half and spend the night at some motel along the way.

Our second day was rather interesting. I think there were at least ten trucks on the highway for every car. I have never seen so many trucks in all my life. Despite all the trucks, the Travel Princess was able to maneuver around them, and I was rather impressed.

Then a certain situation developed. There was a truck in front of us, a truck behind us, a truck on the right side and a truck on the left side of us. We were blocked in by four different trucks.

I noticed that the situation was getting a little stressful for the Travel Princess.

Then the situation took on a somewhat different attitude. The truck on the left side was in line with the Sissy Van, and someone was sitting on the passenger side looking out towards us and waving defiantly at the Travel Princess. I am sure he did not know what kind of mess he was getting involved in.

The Travel Princess looked at him with one of her looks that I'm sure he never saw before. Then I glanced at the guy sitting on the passenger side, and all of a sudden, his chin dropped down, his eyes bulged like he had seen a ghost, and I'm sure he had never been as scared before in all his life.

At that moment, the truck he was in slowed down and allowed us to change lanes, go around and get ahead of the trucks. Then, as we changed lanes and passed the truck in front of us, I could see her face was still carrying that defiant attitude and look that she gave the guy driving the truck next to us.

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Passing the truck in front of us, the driver looked at us with one of those looks hard to explain but the kind of look that you know he had been surprised. When encountering the Travel Princess, none of those truck drivers realized whom they were dealing with. I certainly would not want to have been one of those truck drivers at that time. Believe me; I've been in their shoes.

I was so glad to be riding with the Travel Princess at the time, knowing I was in good hands.

A week later, we drove through some rather bumpy roads when we were coming back. I am not sure how we got into that situation, but I was very comfortable knowing that the Travel Princess was in charge, and I had nothing to worry about. That is until something changed.

As we were bumping along, I heard the Travel Princess sigh deeply and then heard her say something very alarming.

"Something needs to be done with these roads. Somebody needs to fix it."

What I heard made me drop my jaw, and my eyes bulged. I said to myself, "Did I hear what she said?" I knew that when she saw something that needed to be fixed, she would do everything within her power to stop and fix everything. So now, I thought she wanted to fix the road.

Very carefully, I explained to her, "To fix this road, you have to have a state contractor's license and then permits from the county to do it. And those things will take an awful lot of time, which we don't have."

Without even looking in my direction, she slowly said, "Well, I think you're right, and I really don't have time to stop and fix this road."

I cannot tell you how relieved I was to dodge that bullet, which does not happen to me very often. But I sighed very deeply and could not wait until we got off this kind of road.

As we were finishing our drive home, I could not help but think one of my favorite verses of Scripture. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:4-6).

Like many other people, I sometimes get all caught up in the weeping stage and forget about the joy stage. No matter how bad the weeping might be, there is down the road for me joy and that is great anticipation of my life.

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Why is the U.S. lagging behind Europe and China on the production and sales of electric cars?

-- James V., Miami, FL

The U.S. lags as a distant third among electric vehicle (EV) sales and production. According to Bloomberg, China claims a whopping 46 percent of global EV sales. Europe comes in second at 34 percent, while North America accounts for only 15 percent. The U.S. EV fleet continues to expand, growing 28 percent annually from 2015-2020, writes The Guardian. But that same period saw the European fleet increase 41 percent while China's fleet grew 51 percent.

Production rates show similar trends. The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) establishes China as the market leader, accounting for 44 percent of EV production as of 2020. Europe again claims second place, with 25 percent market share. And the U.S.?: 18 percent of global production, a decrease from 20 percent in 2017.

Policy is the primary hold-up behind the U.S. lag. Both China and the European Union boast supply and demand policies to stimulate EV markets, such as greenhouse gas reductions, quota systems for new vehicle sales, and consumer incentives to reduce purchase price. "Electric vehicle manufacturing growth happens where there are strong national policies designed to spur the market forward," says Nic Lutsey of ICCT. "Hundreds of billions of dollars are on the table, and the United States hasn't even bothered to pull up a chair." During the Trump administration, the U.S. rolled EV policies back. The Environmental Protection Agency under President Biden released new greenhouse gas vehicle standards in December 2021, but some argue the revisions merely reinstated Obama-era policies rather than advance the field.

Charging infrastructure is another missing link; electric charging stations are still scarce on the American landscape. In daily spins around the city, this dearth may not present a problem, but for long-distance trips, "range anxiety" can be enough to slow sales. As Alyssa Altman of Publicis Sapient told Wired, "Historically there simply haven't been enough charge points. Potential EV customers are concerned with keeping their vehicle juiced up for long trips, and for some journeys in the U.S., the lack of charging stations makes this impossible." Statista counts 113,600 charging outlets in the U.S., compared to China's 800,000, with 36 percent in California, thanks to its profusion of EVs and supporting state policies.

Some bright spots are emerging for the U.S. EV market. President Biden is aiming for 50 percent of new car sales to be electric by 2030, although 20 percent may be more realistic. Congress passed a bill for 500,000 new charge outlets nationwide, but the death of the Build Back Better bill interrupted plans for expanding consumer incentives. Also, car manufactures are beginning to step up. GM, Volvo and Audi have announced intentions to go fully electric in 10-15 years. And, although the number of EV-ready manufacturing plants still lags behind traditional plants, that number is rising, says ICCT, with seven of 44 manufacturing plants scheduled to be all-electric by 2025. U.S. Department of Energy research shows that, even with higher price tags, less maintenance on EVs decreases lifetime costs compared to traditional cars. The more consumers consider electric, the more the U.S. market grows.



**Can the U.S. come back from its position as a laggard on production of electric vehicles as Chinese and European automakers blaze ahead?** Credit: Pexels.com.



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## South Dakota COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

970

Active Cases

2,173  
+495

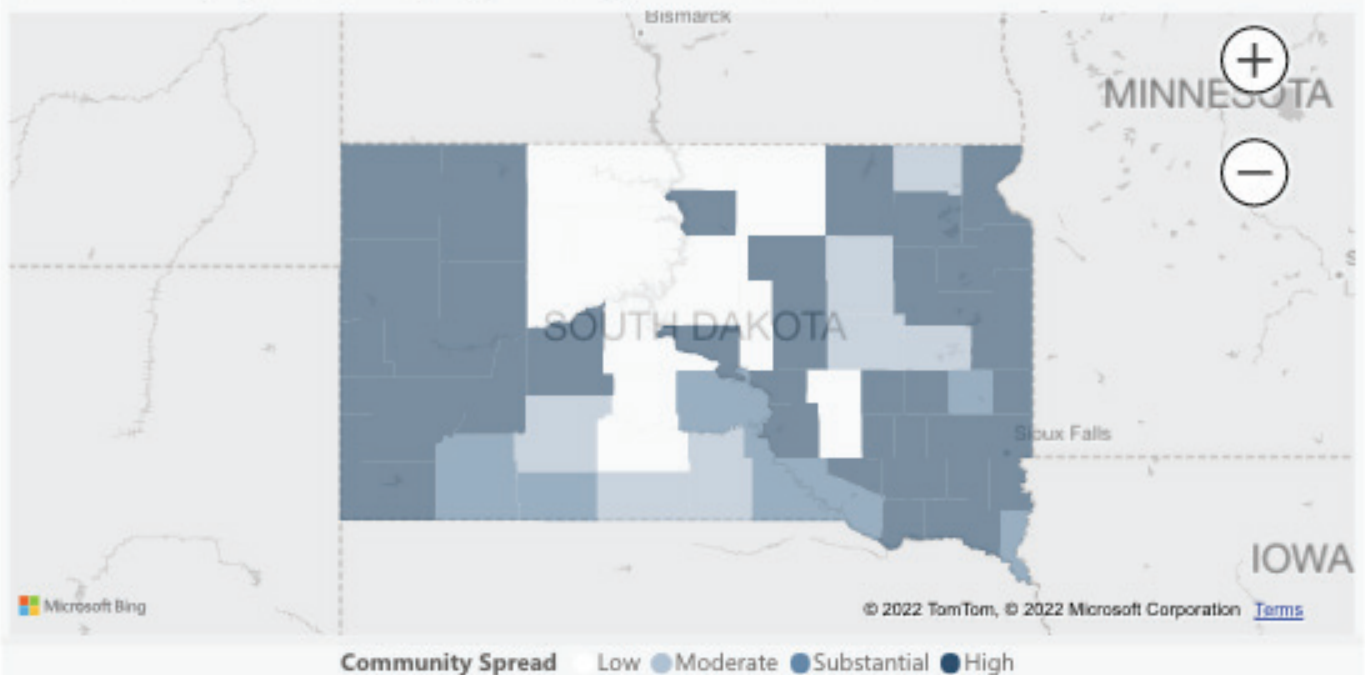
Recovered Cases

236,225

Currently Hospitalized

49

### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

More information on U.S COVID-19 Community levels can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

241,326

Total Tests

2,204,658

Deaths Among Cases

2,928

Ever Hospitalized

10,899

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose\*\*

73%

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## Brown County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

25

Active Cases

63  
+9

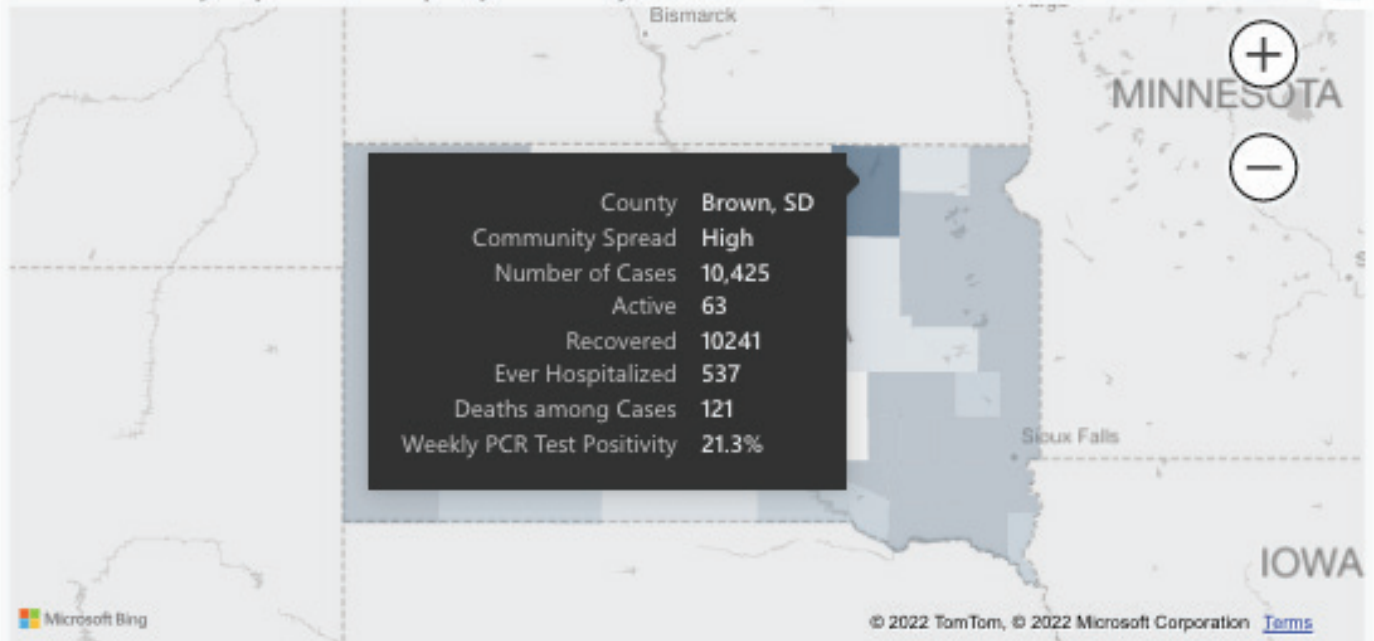
Recovered Cases

10,241

Currently Hospitalized

49

### 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.

More information on U.S COVID-19 Community levels can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

10,425

Total Tests

105,472

Deaths Among Cases

121

Ever Hospitalized

537

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose\*\*

73%

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## Day County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

2

Active Cases

5  
+/- 0

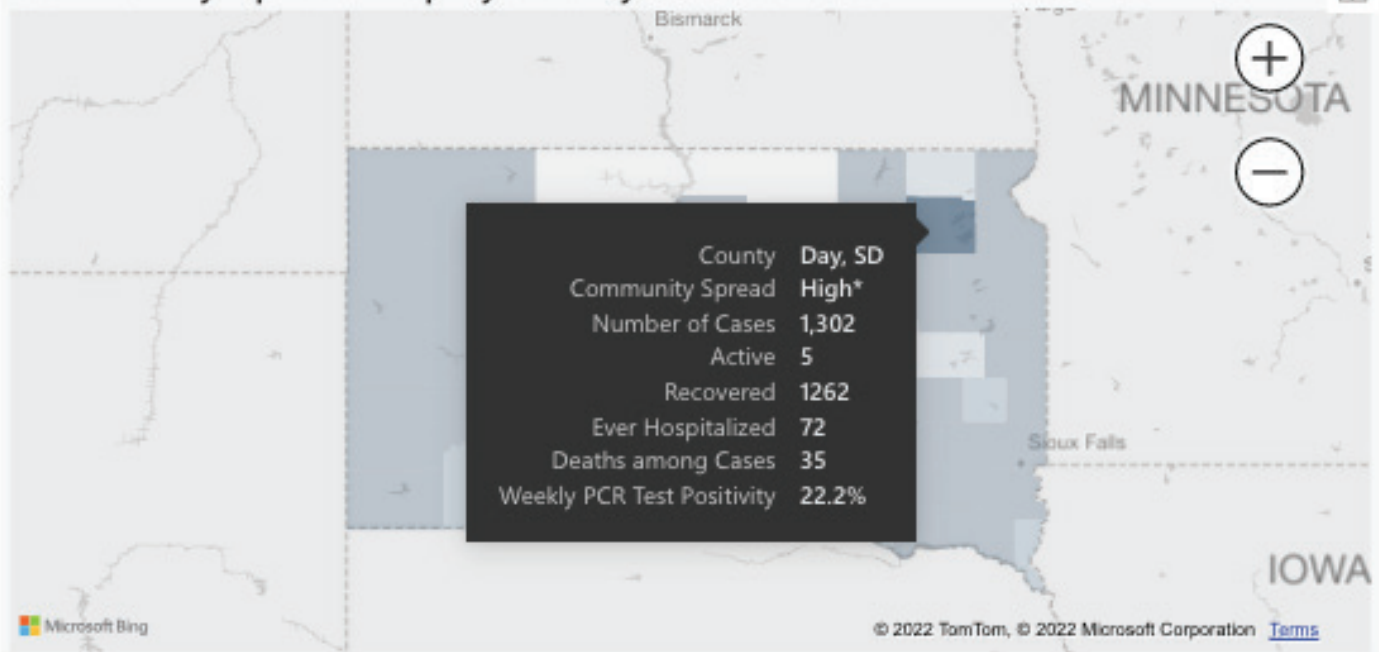
Recovered Cases

1,262

Currently Hospitalized

49

### 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.

More information on U.S COVID-19 Community levels can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

1,302

Total Tests

17,198

Deaths Among Cases

35

Ever Hospitalized

72

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose\*\*

73%



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Ever Hospitalized

10,899

03/07/2020 - 06/06/2022

Currently Hospitalized

49  
-3

## VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases	# of Cases - Last 3 Months
Delta (B.1.617.2 & AY lineages)	1,720	151
Omicron (B.1.1.529 & BA lineages)	1,166	232
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176	3
Omicron (BA.2)	34	33
Gamma (P.1)	4	1
Beta (B.1.351)	2	2

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths Among Cases
Male	113,576	5,668	1,596
Female	127,748	5,231	1,332

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	16,172	144	3
10-19 years	29,047	172	2
20-29 years	42,221	585	14
30-39 years	40,871	817	52
40-49 years	33,726	960	88
50-59 years	30,968	1,476	226
60-69 years	25,736	2,223	476
70-79 years	13,654	2,308	684
80+ years	8,931	2,214	1,383

## RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths
Asian / Pacific Islander	3,337	108	20
Black	5,929	202	22
Hispanic	10,348	350	39
Native American	30,599	1,903	444
Other	2,012	59	13
Unknown	4,623	70	18
White	184,478	8,207	2,372

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

I think things might be slowing down somewhat; I'm seeing a turnaround in both nationwide and state-by-state numbers, although there are still more than half of our tracked states and territories showing increases in new cases. At midday today, we have a seven-day new-case average of 98,867, well off our peak which was around 110,000. Thing is, this is still a whole lot of new cases. The pandemic total is up to 84,815,307 reported. Hospitalizations have not yet peaked; today we are at 29,229. And deaths have leveled out just under 300. Today the seven-day average is at 266. The total of lost lives in this pandemic so far is 1,005,473.

At a recent White House coronavirus briefing, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the CDC, told reporters that currently over 32 percent of us live in an area with medium or high community levels of virus. That is eight percent more than a week earlier, and it means that even if new cases have peaked, the risks are not really receding, but instead are still growing. I urge you to take precautions: getting boosted if you are eligible, avoiding crowds, masking in high-risk public indoor settings, and testing if you have an exposure or symptoms. We're not going to slow this thing down if we continue to operate as though the pandemic was over. It is not over, doesn't show signs of approaching "over," may have many more chapters in its story. I don't want your long-term disability, your hospitalization, or your funeral to be in one of those chapters.

The next surge in cases appears likely to involve the newer subvariants of Omicron, BA.4 and BA.5, which appear to have first emerged in South Africa and made their first appearance in the US a couple of months ago. They now represent six to seven percent of new cases here compared with 0.02 percent a month ago. This increase is evident particularly in the central part of the country. There is some evidence that they have pushed along the overall trend toward escaping the protection induced by vaccines and prior infection. This means they will cause more breakthrough infections in people who have had Covid-19 before and in the vaccinated.

A team led by Dr. David Ho, professor of microbiology and immunology at Columbia University in New York City, conducted a study that involved running lab tests on antibodies induced by vaccination and prior infection against these subvariants, and found a four-fold drop in potency of these antibodies against infection with BA.4 and BA.5. I'll note that the results of this work are posted in preprint, so they have not yet been peer-reviewed. If South Africa's experience with these two subvariants holds here—and there isn't a lot of reason to think it won't—the expected increase in cases will not result in disproportionately more hospitalizations and deaths. There is some probability these new subvariants will successfully take over here; a technical report from the UK Health Security Agency shows BA.4 and BA.5 have a doubling time about one day less than for BA.2.12.1, something that does indicate faster transmission and the ability to compete successfully, at least in the UK.

According to Ho's research team, BA.4 and BA.5 have a beneficial (to the virus) mutation called F486V which helps them avoid our immune responses. In prior iterations of the virus, this particular mutation has also made the virus less able to bind to those ACE2 receptors on our cells that are the point of entry for the virus; because of this problem, the mutation set the virus back more than it helped and the variants with the mutation died out without giving us trouble. The difference in these newer subvariants is that they also have an additional mutation called R493Q which restores the binding ability F486V causes them to lose. So now we have subvariants with enhanced immune escape ability and just as strong a binding property as prior variants. This combination of mutations is what appears to be responsible for these subvariants' success in causing infection. Since they've never gone head-to-head with B.2.12.2, we're not sure they can outcompete this currently dominant subvariant; but we're probably going to find out. The indications so far are not great.

The downward trend in new cases is a good one to be sure, but a study available in preprint (so not yet peer-reviewed) from City University of New York of new cases in New York through April and May of this year found that "The true magnitude of NYCs [sic] BA.2/BA.2.12.1 surge was vastly underestimated by routine SARS-CoV-2 surveillance." Their estimate based on survey data from a representative sample of New Yorkers was that 22.1 percent of adult residents had SARS-CoV-2 infection during the study period. That comes out to 1.5 million infections, "about 31-fold higher than the 49,253 cases in the official NYC

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case counts and suggests a vast underestimate of the magnitude of this surge.” They also noted that the gap between official counts and actual burden of infection is widening with time. All those folks warning we were not getting a true reflection of the magnitude of this surge are looking pretty smart these days.

We should also note here that people in New York have better access to testing than those in much of the country, so it’s quite likely undercounting is even more pronounced elsewhere. A significant issue appears to be the rise of home testing, results of which are generally not reported, and a reluctance to test at all, given the need to isolate if you are diagnosed. What this boils down to is confirmation that our official numbers are laughably off the reality. Considering we are being asked to make decisions about managing our risk, the lack of reliable information about just how high that risk is seems to me to be a major obstacle to managing it well.

Something about which I’ve been getting questions for months now is whether/how well vaccination protects us against long-Covid if we do have a breakthrough infection. Finally, some work’s been done on that. I read a paper in Nature Medicine from a research team from VA St. Louis and Washington University in St. Louis published a couple of weeks ago. You will recall that long-Covid is that condition characterized by the persistence of symptoms months or years after an acute SARS-CoV-2 infection. This work looks at almost 34,000 vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals who were diagnosed with infection against groups of around five million uninfected controls.

Findings from this comparative study were that risks of death and post-acute sequelae (those persistent symptoms) are reduced by around 15 percent in vaccinated individuals with breakthrough infection as compared with unvaccinated individuals with infection. This risk scales with the acuity of care needed, so the “risk reduction was progressively more evident as care acuity of the acute phase of the disease increased from non-hospitalized to hospitalized and admitted to ICU and was consistently most pronounced for coagulation and pulmonary disorders.” The risk was higher in those with Covid-19 than in those with seasonal influenza. This means vaccination helps to mitigate the risks for long-Covid, but not enough that reliance on vaccination alone to prevent the condition is not a great plan. The best plan is to avoid infection entirely, something else the vaccines help with.

There is a third round of at-home tests available at no cost from the federal government. This time, eight tests per household will be shipped. I encourage you to order these to have on hand before there is a need in your household; testing is an important tool to slow the transmission of this virus. These are available at the same website as the first two rounds: <https://www.covid.gov/tests>. It takes about a minute to order yours.

At the same White House briefing where the additional tests were announced, Dr. Ashish Jha, White House COVID Response Coordinator, told reporters use of Paxlovid, a highly effective antiviral, has increased four-fold in just a month; presently around 20,000 prescriptions are being given daily. This has the potential to reduce hospitalizations and deaths further, which is very good news. And Dr. Walensky also indicated at that briefing the CDC is in conversation with the FDA now about extending eligibility for a second booster to people under 50. That doesn’t mean it will happen, but it’s a hopeful sign. So if you’re under 50 and interested in a second booster, stay tuned; we may have news on that relatively soon.

I complained about this next issue in my last update, and I guess the universe heard me because we finally have information about how well Paxlovid protects vaccinated people against hospitalization and death. As we discussed last time out, the clinical trials of this drug were conducted only in unvaccinated people; so we did not have data on whether it was equally effective for the vaccinated. Given the effectiveness in the trials was 89 percent against hospitalization and death, this is an important question. There is work from Israel being reported now that was done since the Omicron variant turned up—another important point. This work is posted in preprint, so not yet peer-reviewed, and I’ve been unable to find it; so I am operating from a summary here. The researchers looked at 110,000 subjects between mid-January and mid-March, so at the height of the Omicron wave. Findings are that Paxlovid does reduce hospitalization and death rates in vaccinated patients 65 years and older by about two-thirds so that hospitalization rates among 65 and older people treated with the drug was at a rate of 0.6 percent of recipients. The mortality risk reduction was 81 percent—very high indeed. The antiviral does not appear to offer any benefit



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for those who are younger, whose risk of death is already very low; this is probably a good reason for a younger person to pass on the antiviral.

The FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) met today to consider the Novavax candidate application for emergency use authorization (EUA). This is an adjuvanted (Matrix-M) protein subunit vaccine, similar to vaccines now in use against hepatitis B and pertussis (whooping cough); the protein subunit in question is a piece of the spike (S) protein and is produced in moth larval cells. It has the advantage that it stores at normal refrigeration temperatures; there is no need for the freezing temperatures mRNA vaccines require. The Committee looked at data which show 90.4 percent efficacy (78.6 percent in those 65 and older) against mild, moderate, or severe disease for two and a half months after the two-dose primary series (three-week interval between) is completed. No participants developed moderate or severe infection, so efficacy in this regard was 100 percent. This is based on work done before the Delta and Omicron variants had emerged; so we don't have data on those for this vaccine. Immune response increased after a third dose six months after the primary series. The vaccine looks pretty safe with the only serious side-effect a rare (six cases among 40,000 volunteers) occurrence of myocarditis or pericarditis—inflammation of the heart muscle or of the membranes surrounding the heart—for which a causal relationship has not been established because the rates for these events are similar in vaccinated and placebo groups. This occurred almost exclusively in males, and all have recovered. Out of 774,000 doses given in high-income nations so far, there have been one report of likely myocarditis and eight of likely pericarditis. The vaccine is currently authorized in Indonesia, the EU, the UK, Canada, South Korea, South Africa, Australia, India, Thailand, the Philippines, and New Zealand, as well as other countries; and the WHO has also approved it. The company also plans to seek EUA for use of this vaccine as a booster, but I don't believe that was under consideration today.

The Advisory Committee did vote to recommend EUA, 21-0 with one abstention. This recommendation goes to the FDA director who will accept or reject the recommendation. If it is accepted at this phase, then the CDC must approve labeling and immunization guidelines before doses can ship. Because we have more vaccine than we're using at the moment, I'm going to guess this one won't be fast-tracked from here as the earlier vaccines were. Right now, the FDA is still waiting for manufacturing data because the vaccine which would initially be available in the US will not be made in the plant that produced the doses used in the clinical trials. (I think this is because demand for Novavax's product is low enough that they do not have all of their manufacturing capacity operating at present.) The government has agreed to buy 110 million doses, part of the pledged support from when the vaccine was developed under Operation Warp Speed early in the pandemic. I'd doubt we'll purchase much more considering all the unused doses of other vaccines already in the pipeline. We can hope (although I don't know how realistic that hope would be) that there will be those among the hard-core refuseniks who will be more comfortable with an old, familiar, "proven" vaccine platform and choose to receive this vaccine once it's authorized.

The company is also in development for an Omicron-specific vaccine which is now in phase 3 trials and a bivalent vaccine combining wild-type virus and Omicron variant. The bivalent is being tested as a booster in folks who've received a primary mRNA series followed by one or two boosters; and the original and Omicron-specific versions are also being tested as boosters after a primary series of mRNA vaccine. Results of these trials will be available later this year. A VRBPAC meeting scheduled for later this month will deal with the broader question of what sorts of vaccines we should be using going forward to deal with emerging variants.

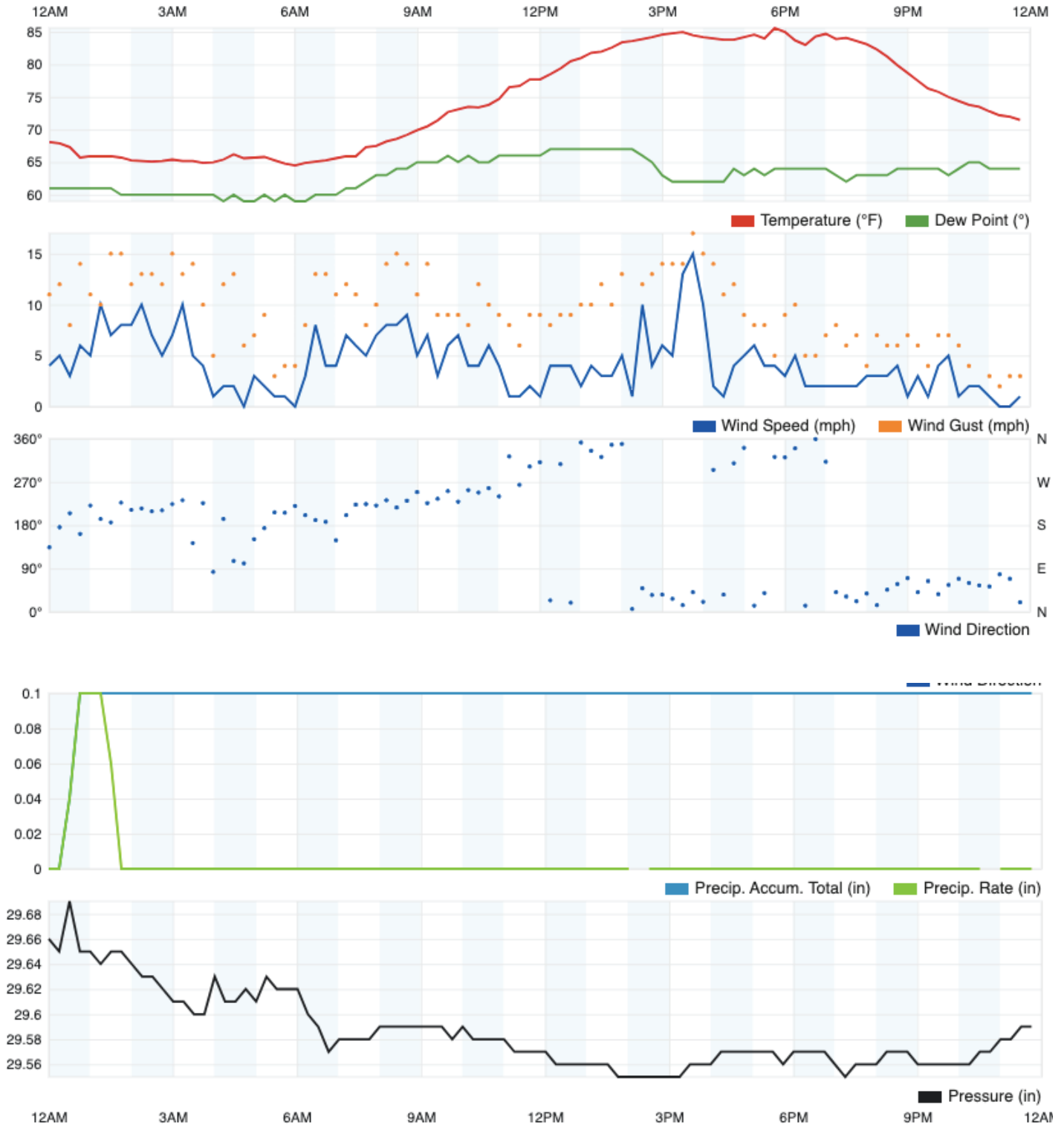
Parents of under-5s: Your long wait may be nearly over. Dr. Ashish Jha, said late last week that it looks like a vaccine for this age group will likely become available as soon as June 21. If the upcoming FDA's VRBPAC grants EUA after its scheduled meeting for the purpose, set for June 15, the plan is to ship pretty much right after the CDC moves on it, allowing for the federal holiday that will intervene on the 19th. It could be tough to get an appointment for your little one immediately; but the expectation is that it will be out there very soon.

And that's what I have for you today. The news has slowed considerably, so these reports have slowed as well. I'll try to pace them along with the flow of news as we go along. Take care, and keep yourself well. We'll talk again.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
 20%	 30% → 60%	 30%	 50%	 30%   30%
Slight Chance T-storms	Severe Thunderstorms	Severe Thunderstorms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Chance Showers
High: 84 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 79 °F



## Severe Threat This Evening/Overnight

June 12, 2022  
1:38 AM

### Timing



Mainly this evening & overnight

### Actions



Be weather aware and ready to act.  
Have multiple ways to receive warning information!

### Severe Threats



#### Few Tornadoes

Isolated western South Dakota



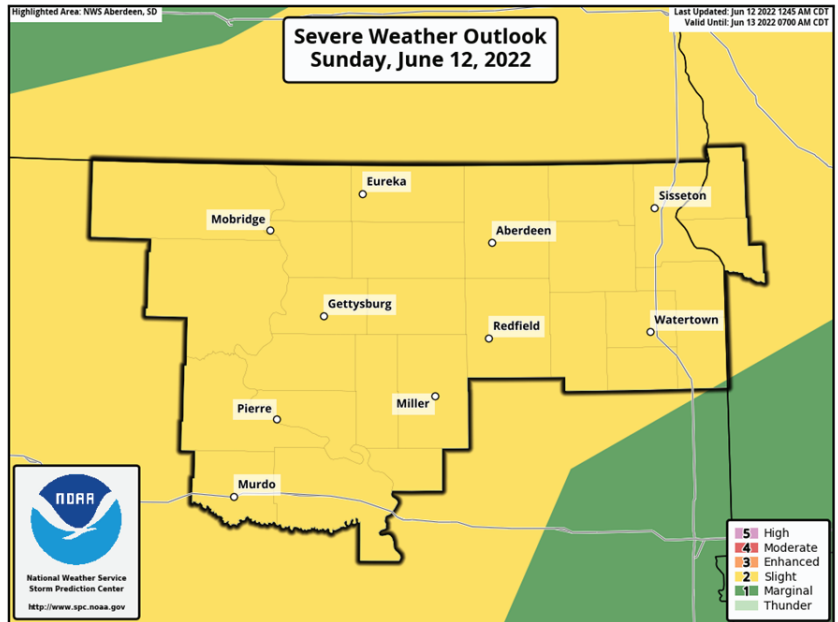
#### Large Hail

Up to golfball size



#### Damaging Wind

50-70 mph wind gusts possible



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Another round of showers and thunderstorms are expected this evening and overnight. Some of those storms will be severe with large hail and strong winds being the main threats. #sdwx #mnwx



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## Today in Weather History

June 5, 1925: A severe thunderstorm that probably produced multiple numbers of small tornadoes moved northwest from Presho, in Jones County. There were large gaps of about 15 miles at times between tornadoes. One of these tornadoes passed 10 miles north of Ree Heights and ended north of Miller. Half dozen barns were destroyed west and north of Ree Heights. The strongest of the tornadoes was estimated as having F2 strength. Also on this date, a tornado moved from the southern edge of Fargo, North Dakota and on into Moorhead Minnesota. There were no injuries reported from this storm.

June 5, 1996: Hail, between a golf ball and tennis ball size, broke many windshields and dented vehicles in Watertown. Some houses in Watertown had their windows broken out because of the large hail. Golf ball sized hail also covered most of the ground at the Watertown Airport.

June 5, 1999: Winds gusting to 74 mph knocked down several trees throughout Groton. One tree took out a major transmission line and ripped the electrical service line off of a house. Power was out for parts of Groton for several hours. The high winds shattered the windows at a store on Main Street and tore a standing board on a sign loose which damaged five new vehicles at a dealership in Groton. The high winds also destroyed a small service building and the surrounding fence at the main juncture of natural gas pipelines at Groton. Winds to 70 mph brought several trees and many large tree branches down in Henry. Winds gusting to 80 mph snapped off several trees, blew a garage down, and brought power lines down in Hazel. In Watertown winds gusted to over 70 mph, blowing a portion of a roof off a house and destroyed the attached garage on another house. Near Watertown, a pole barn was destroyed, a hay bale was blown into a basement window of a house, and part of their deck was torn away. Near Florence, winds up to 80 mph tipped over and damaged a small shed, destroyed another storage shed, and also completely demolished a three stall garage.

June 5, 2008: Very heavy rains of 3 to 7 inches caused extensive flooding throughout Dewey County. Many roads, bridges, dams, culverts, along with some buildings were damaged or destroyed by the flooding. One man, west of Promise, used a boat to get back and forth from his ranch. A federal disaster declaration was issued for Dewey County and the Cheyenne River Reservation.

1859 - Frost was reported from Iowa to New England. The temperature dipped to 25 degrees in New York State, and up to two inches of snow blanketed Ohio. The cold and snow damaged the wheat crop. (David Ludlum)

1908 - Helena MT was deluged with 3.67 inches of rain to establish their all-time 24 hour rainfall record. (4th-5th) (The Weather Channel)

1916 - A tornado struck the town of Warren AR killing 83 persons. There were 125 deaths that day in a tornado outbreak across Missouri and Arkansas. (David Ludlum)

1917 - Residents near Topeka KS reported disk-shaped hailstones six to ten inches in diameter, and two to three inches thick. The hailstorm was accompanied by a tornado. (The Weather Channel)

1976: When water began leaking from Idaho's new Teton Dam, there seemed to be no cause for alarm. On this date, warnings were frantic that the dam was about to break. As workers tried to shore up the crumbling dam, it crumbled shortly after 11 AM, sending 180 billion gallons of water pouring through Teton Canyon. 11 people lost their lives, but the toll would have been much higher if the dam had failed at night and residents had been asleep.

1987 - International Falls, MN, dipped to a record low reading of 34 degrees during the morning. Williston, ND, and Glasgow, MT, reported record warm afternoon highs of 94 degrees. Major flooding was reported along the Guadalupe River in South Texas, with the water level at Cuero reaching 18 feet above flood stage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Asheville NC with a reading of 40 degrees. Fifteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 108 degrees at Glasgow MT was a record for June. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southern Atlantic Coast during the day and into the night. Four tornadoes were reported, and there were 87 reports of large hail and damaging winds. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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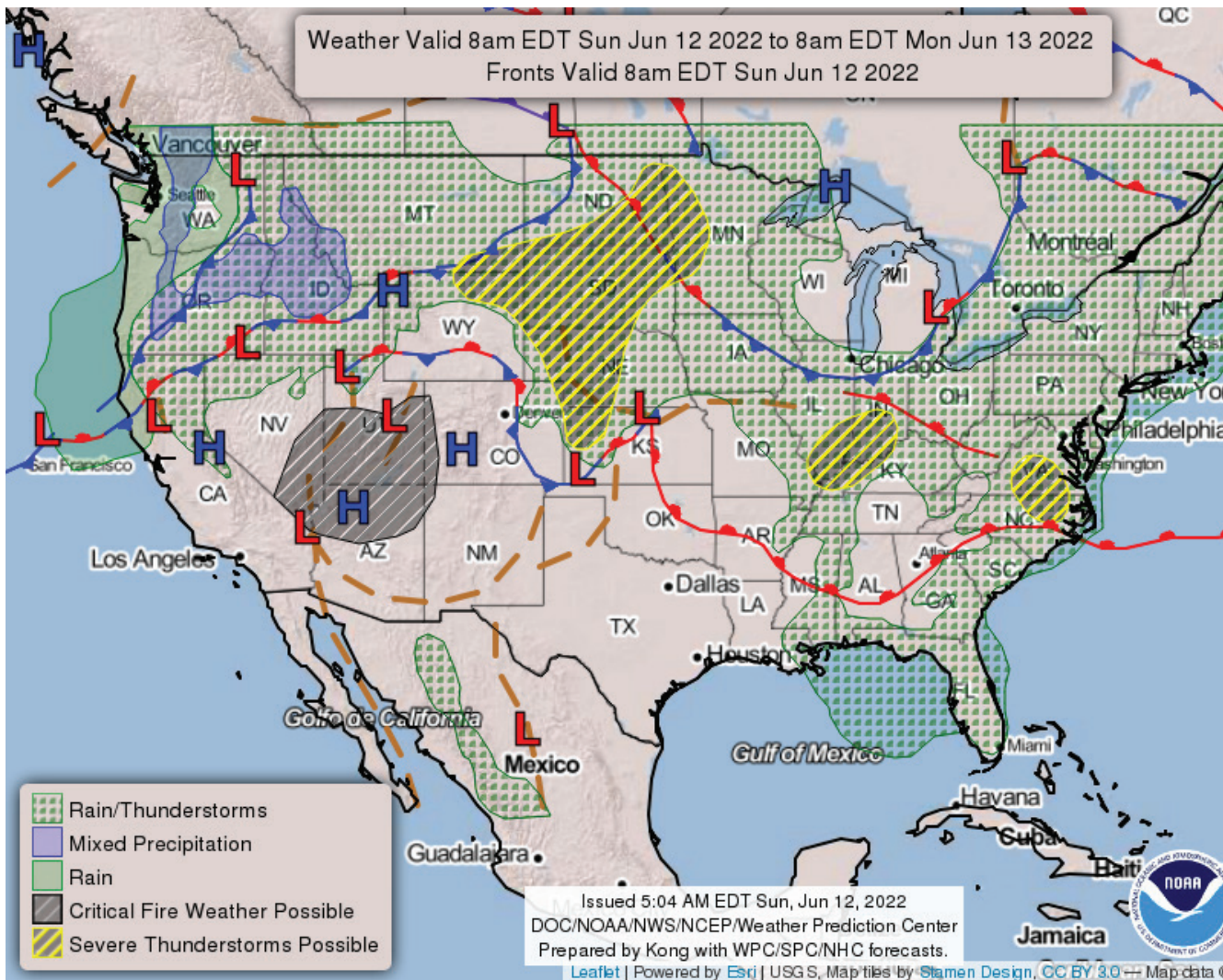
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 86 °F at 5:48 PM**  
**Low Temp: 64 °F at 6:00 AM**  
**Wind: 17 mph at 8:16 AM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 41 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1956  
Record Low: 37 in 2012  
Average High: 80°F  
Average Low: 54°F  
Average Precip in June.: 1.40  
Precip to date in June.: 0.02  
Average Precip to date: 8.65  
Precip Year to Date: 11.18  
Sunset Tonight: 9:23:04 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:29 AM



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## What's In A Name?

Names are, in fact, a commodity. They have "value" attached to them and can either be "traded" for a favor or used as a "warning." A name distinguishes one person from another and gives a certain distinctiveness or uniqueness to individuals. Some pay particular attention to their name to make certain that it implies integrity and truth, honesty and hard work, power and influence.

Most of us, from time to time, have been asked by others if they could "use our name" as a reference or as a way of introducing themselves. They assume that our names imply a degree of "significance" for one reason or another.

So, they reason, if they are associated with us in one way or another, it will make a difference in what they want to achieve.

But human names are all limited. They only have worth in certain areas and for a certain amount of time. If people do not know us or have never heard of us, we make no difference in the scheme of things.

There is an unusual statement made about a name in Psalm 148:13b - "His name alone is exalted."

There is a certain "exclusiveness" in this statement. Of all the names of all the people who have ever lived, only one name is to be exalted. And that is because of who He is and what He has done. All other names are flawed or contaminated for one reason or another. His name is above and beyond reproach, worthy of worship and praise because He is holy and without fault.

All of us "fall short of the glory of God" and need a "name" that we can "use" to save us. That name? Jesus!

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the power in Your name. It assures us of forgiveness and salvation and life eternal. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: His name alone is exalted. Psalm 148:13b



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## 2022 Community Events

- 01/30/2022 84th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)  
01/30/2022 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am – 1pm, Groton Community Center, 109 N 3rd St, Groton,  
04/07/2022 Groton CDE  
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)  
04/09/2022 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm  
04/23/2022 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/24/2022 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/07/2022 Lions Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
St John's Lutheran Church VBS 9-11am  
05/30/2022 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
Transit Fundraiser at the Community Center 4-7pm (Thursday Mid-June)  
06/17/2022 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm Start  
06/18/2022 Groton Triathlon  
Ladies Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Start  
07/04/2022 Firecracker Couples Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start  
(4th of July)  
07/10/2022 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm at the Groton Legion  
Baseball Tourney  
07/21/2022 Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start  
How can we... "Love Groton"? United Methodist Church 9:30am  
Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20  
Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm  
08/05/2022 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm  
08/12/2022 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament  
United Methodist Church VBS 5-8pm  
Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot  
09/10/2022 Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm  
09/11/2022 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm  
Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
10/14/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am (2nd Friday in October)  
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm  
10/31/2022 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)  
10/31/2022 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/12/2022 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course  
Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm  
01/29/2023 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)

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## News from the Associated Press

### **31 Patriot Front members arrested near Idaho pride event**

By MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

Authorities arrested 31 members of the white supremacist group Patriot Front near an Idaho pride event Saturday after they were found packed into the back of a U-Haul truck with riot gear.

The men were standing inside the truck wearing khakis, navy blue shirts and beige hats with white balaclavas covering their faces when Coeur d'Alene police stopped the U-Haul and began arresting them on the side of the road.

"They came to riot downtown," Coeur d'Alene Police Chief Lee White said at a news conference.

All 31 were charged with conspiracy to riot, a misdemeanor, White said. The men were going through the booking process Saturday afternoon and are scheduled to be arraigned on Monday, he said.

Based on evidence collected and documents, authorities found that the group was planning to riot in several areas of downtown, not just the park, White said.

Police found riot gear, one smoke grenade, shin guards and shields inside the van, White said. They wore arm patches and logos on their hats that identified them as members of Patriot Front, he said.

Police learned about the U-Haul from a tipster, who reported that "it looked like a little army was loading up into the vehicle" in the parking lot of a hotel, White said. Officials spotted the truck soon after and pulled it over, he said.

Videos of the arrest posted on social media show the men kneeling on the grass with their hands zip-tied behind their backs.

"Reclaim America" was written on the back of one shirt.

Police led the men, one by one, to the front of patrol cars, took off their masks and then brought them to a police van.

Those arrested came from at least 11 states, including Washington, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota, Illinois, Wyoming, Virginia, and Arkansas, White said.

Only one was from Idaho, he said.

The truck was stopped near where the North Idaho Pride Alliance was holding the Coeur d'Alene Pride in the Park event. Police had stepped up their presence in the area during the event.

"It appears these people did not come here to engage in peaceful events," Kootenai County Sheriff Bob Norris told a Coeur d'Alene Press reporter.

Patriot Front is described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as "a white nationalist hate group" that formed after the deadly "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017.

"Patriot Front focuses on theatrical rhetoric and activism that can be easily distributed as propaganda for its chapters across the country," the Southern Poverty Law Center said of the group.

The group's manifesto calls for the formation of a white ethnostate in the United States, the Southern Poverty Law Center said.

### **SD Lottery**

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

05-16-17-27-30

(five, sixteen, seventeen, twenty-seven, thirty)

Estimated jackpot: \$66,000

Lotto America

14-25-29-33-37, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 2

(fourteen, twenty-five, twenty-nine, thirty-three, thirty-seven; Star Ball: four; ASB: two)



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Estimated jackpot: \$15,270,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 247,000,000

Powerball

18-20-26-53-69, Powerball: 5, Power Play: 2

(eighteen, twenty, twenty-six, fifty-three, sixty-nine; Powerball: five; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$243,000,000

## China accuses US of trying to 'hijack' support in Asia

By SYAWALLUDIN ZAIN and DAVID RISING Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — China's defense minister accused the United States on Sunday of trying to "hijack" the support of countries in the Asia-Pacific region to turn them against Beijing, saying Washington is seeking to advance its own interests "under the guise of multilateralism."

Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe lashed out at U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, rejecting his "smearing accusation" the day before at the Shangri-La Dialogue that China was causing instability with its claim to the self-governing island of Taiwan and its increased military activity in the area.

Austin had stressed the need for multilateral partnerships with nations in the Indo-Pacific, which Wei suggested was an attempt to back China into a corner.

"No country should impose its will on others or bully others under the guise of multilateralism," he said. "The strategy is an attempt to build an exclusive small group in the name of a free and open Indo-Pacific to hijack countries in our region and target one specific country — it is a strategy to create conflict and confrontation to contain and encircle others."

China has been rapidly modernizing its military and seeking to expand its influence and ambitions in the region, recently signing a security agreement with the Solomon Islands that many fear could lead to a Chinese naval base in the Pacific, and breaking ground this past week on a naval port expansion project in Cambodia that could give Beijing a foothold in the Gulf of Thailand.

Last year U.S. officials accused China of testing a hypersonic missile, a weapon harder for missile defense systems to counter, but China insisted it had been a "routine test of a spacecraft."

Answering a question about the test on Sunday, Wei came the closest so far to acknowledging it was, indeed, a hypersonic missile, saying, "As for hypersonic weapons, many countries are developing weapons and I think there's no surprise that China is doing so."

"China will develop its military," he added. "I think it's natural."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken last month said China represented the "most serious long-term challenge to the international order" for the United States, with its claims to Taiwan and efforts to dominate the strategic South China Sea.

The U.S. and its allies have responded with so-called freedom of navigation patrols in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, sometimes encountering a pushback from China's military.

Wei accused the U.S. of "meddling in the affairs of our region" with the patrols, and "flexing the muscles by sending warships and warplanes on a rampage in the South China Sea."

China has squared off with the Philippines and Vietnam, among others, over maritime claims and Wei said it was up to the countries in the region to find their own solutions.

"China calls for turning the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation," he said. "This is the shared wish and responsibility of countries in the region."

Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory, and has not ruled out the use of military force to take it, while maintaining it is a domestic political issue.

Washington follows a "one-China" policy, which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei. It provides arms to Taiwan and follows a "strategic ambiguity" approach about how far it would be willing to go to defend Taiwan in the face of a Chinese invasion. At the same time, it does not support Taiwanese independence.

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President Joe Biden raised eyebrows and China's pique last month saying that the U.S. would intervene militarily if Taiwan were attacked, though the White House later said the comments did not reflect a policy shift.

Austin on Saturday accused China of threatening to change the status quo on Taiwan with a "steady increase in provocative and destabilizing military activity" near the island.

Wei fired back Sunday that the U.S. was not adhering to its "one-China" policy, saying "it keeps playing the Taiwan card against China."

He said China's "greatest wish" was "peaceful reunification" with Taiwan, but also made clear Beijing was willing to do whatever it took to realize its goals.

"China will definitely realize its reunification," he said. "China's reunification is a great cause of the Chinese nation, and it is a historical trend that no one and no force can stop."

He added that China would "resolutely crush any attempt to pursue Taiwan independence."

"We will not hesitate to fight, we will fight at all costs and we will fight to the very end," he said. "This is the only choice for China."

Wei and Austin met one-on-one on Saturday, and Taiwan featured prominently in their discussions, according to the U.S.

On Sunday, Wei met with Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles, which the Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported was the first high-level meeting between the two countries in more than two years.

Marles said it had been three years since Chinese and Australian defense ministers had met, and called the meeting a "critical first step."

"As Sec. Austin observed after his own meeting with Defense Minister Wei, it is really important in these times to have open lines of dialogue," he told reporters.

"Australia and China's relationship is complex and it's precisely because of this complexity that it is really important that we are engaging in dialogue right now."

## France holds parliamentary election in vital test for Macron

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French voters are choosing lawmakers in a parliamentary election Sunday as President Emmanuel Macron seeks to secure his majority while under growing threat from a leftist coalition.

More than 6,000 candidates, ranging in age from 18 to 92, are running for 577 seats in the National Assembly in the first round of the election. Those who receive the most votes will advance to the decisive second round on June 19.

While candidates have sought to address consumer concerns about inflation, which was a key campaign issue, voter enthusiasm has been generally low. That was reflected in Sunday's early turnout figures, which showed just 18% of France's 48.7 million voters had cast ballots by noon.

Hard-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who hopes the election may vault him to the prime minister's post, was among only a trickle of voters as he cast his ballot in a diverse neighborhood of Marseille, a southern port city.

On France's opposite coast, a small crowd gathered to watch Macron arrive to vote in the English Channel resort town of Le Touquet.

Following Macron's reelection in May, his centrist coalition is seeking an absolute majority that would enable it to implement his campaign promises, which include tax cuts and raising the retirement age from 62 to 65.

But the latest opinion polls suggest Macron and his allies may have trouble winning over half of the parliamentary seats. A government with a large, but not absolute majority would still be able to rule, but only by bargaining with legislators.

The main opposition force appears to be Mélenchon's newly-created coalition made up of leftists, greens and communists. The coalition's platform includes a significant minimum wage increase, lowering the retirement age to 60 and locking in energy prices.

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Mélenchon, an anti-globalization firebrand who has called for France to pull out of NATO and “disobey” EU rules, urged voters to give his coalition a majority and thereby force Macron to name him as prime minister, which would prompt a situation called “cohabitation.”

Though Mélenchon’s coalition could win more than 200 seats, current projections give the left little chance of winning a majority in the National Assembly. Macron and his allies are expected to win between 260 and 320 seats, according to the latest polls.

The National Assembly has final say over the Senate when it comes to voting in laws.

Outside a voting station in a working-class district of Paris, voters debated whether to support Macron’s party for the sake of smooth governance and keeping out extremist views, or to back his opponents to ensure more political perspectives are heard.

“When you have a parliament that’s not completely in line with the government, that enables more interesting conversations and discussions,” Dominique Debarre, retired scientist, said. “But on the other hand, cohabitation is always in some way the sign of a failure.”

The two-round voting system is complex and not proportionate to the nationwide support for a party. Lawmakers are elected by district.

The parliamentary election is traditionally a difficult race for the French far-right’s candidates. Rivals from other parties tend to coordinate or step aside to boost chances of the far-right candidates’ opponents in the second round.

The party led by Marine Le Pen, runnerup to Macron in the presidential election, the National Rally hopes to do better than five years ago, when it won eight seats. With at least 15 seats, the far right would be allowed to form a parliamentary group and gain greater powers at the assembly.

Le Pen herself is candidate for reelection in her stronghold of Henin-Beaumont, in northern France, where she cast her ballot with a beaming smile.

Voters are also casting ballots in France’s overseas territories. Final polling stations close at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT), with initial polling agency projections soon afterward.

## The AP Interview: Sri Lanka PM says he’s open to Russian oil

By KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka may be compelled to buy more oil from Russia as the island nation hunts desperately for fuel amid an unprecedented economic crisis, the newly appointed prime minister said.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he would first look to other sources, but would be open to buying more crude from Moscow. Western nations largely have cut off energy imports from Russia in line with sanctions over its war on Ukraine.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press on Saturday, Wickremesinghe also indicated he would be willing to accept more financial help from China, despite his country’s mounting debt. And while he acknowledged that Sri Lanka’s current predicament is of “its own making,” he said the war in Ukraine is making it even worse — and that dire food shortages could continue until 2024. He said Russia had also offered wheat to Sri Lanka.

Wickremesinghe, who is also Sri Lanka’s finance minister, spoke to the AP in his office in the capital, Colombo, one day shy of a month after he took over for a sixth time as prime minister. Appointed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resolve an economic crisis that has nearly emptied the country’s foreign exchange reserves, Wickremesinghe was sworn in after days of violent protests last month forced his predecessor, Rajapaksa’s brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, to step down and seek safety from angry crowds at a naval base.

Sri Lanka has amassed \$51 billion in foreign debt, but has suspended repayment of nearly \$7 billion due this year. The crushing debt has left the country with no money for basic imports, which means citizens are struggling to access basic necessities such as food, fuel, medicine — even toilet paper and matches. The shortages have spawned rolling power outages, and people have been forced to wait days for cooking gas and gasoline in lines that stretch for kilometers (miles).

Two weeks ago, the country bought a 90,000-metric-ton (99,000-ton) shipment of Russian crude to



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restart its only refinery, the energy minister told reporters.

Wickremesinghe did not comment directly on those reports, and said he did not know whether more orders were in the pipeline. But he said Sri Lanka desperately needs fuel, and is currently trying to get oil and coal from the country's traditional suppliers in the Middle East.

"If we can get from any other sources, we will get from there. Otherwise (we) may have to go to Russia again," he said.

Officials are negotiating with private suppliers, but Wickremesinghe said one issue they face is that "there is a lot of oil going around which can be sourced back informally to Iran or to Russia."

"Sometimes we may not know what oil we are buying," he said. "Certainly we are looking at the Gulf as our main supply."

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, global oil prices have skyrocketed. While Washington and its allies are trying to cut financial flows supporting Moscow's war effort, Russia is offering its crude at a steep discount, making it extremely enticing to a number of countries.

Like some other South Asian nations, Sri Lanka has remained neutral on the war in Europe.

Sri Lanka has received and continues to reach out to numerous countries for help — including the most controversial, China, currently the country's third-largest creditor. Opposition figures have accused the president and the former prime minister of taking on a slew of Chinese loans for splashy infrastructure projects that have since failed to generate profit, instead adding to the country's debt.

Critics have also pointed to a beleaguered port in the hometown of then-President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Hambantota, built along with a nearby airport as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative projects, saying they cost too much and do too little for the economy.

"We need to identify what are the projects that we need for economic recovery and take loans for those projects, whether it be from China or from others," Wickremesinghe said. "It's a question of where do we deploy the resources?"

The prime minister said his government has been talking with China about restructuring its debts. Beijing had earlier offered to lend the country more money but balked at cutting the debt, possibly out of concern that other borrowers would demand the same relief.

"China has agreed to come in with the other countries to give relief to Sri Lanka, which is a first step," Wickremesinghe said. "This means they all have to agree (on) how the cuts are to take place and in what manner they should take place."

Sri Lanka is also seeking financial assistance from the World Food Program, which may send a team to the country soon, and Wickremesinghe is banking on a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund. But even if approved, he doesn't expect to see money from the package until October onwards.

Wickremesinghe acknowledged that the crisis in Sri Lanka has been of its "own making." Many have blamed government mismanagement, deep tax cuts in 2019, policy blunders that devastated crops and a sharp plunge in tourism due to the coronavirus pandemic. But he also stressed that the war in Ukraine, which has thrown global supply chains into a tailspin and pushed fuel and food prices to unaffordable levels, has made things much worse.

"The Ukraine crisis has impacted our ... economic contraction," he said, adding that he thinks the economy will shrink even further before the country can begin to recoup and rebuild next year.

"I think by the end of the year, you could see the impact in other countries" as well, he said. "There is a global shortage of food. Countries are not exporting food."

In Sri Lanka, the price of vegetables has jumped threefold while the country's rice cultivation is down by about a third, the prime minister said.

The shortages have affected both the poor and the middle classes, triggering months of protests. Mothers are struggling to get milk to feed their babies, as fears of a looming hunger crisis grow.

Wickremesinghe said he felt terrible watching his nation suffer, "both as a citizen and a prime minister."

He said he hasn't ever seen anything like this in Sri Lanka — and didn't think he ever would. "I have generally been in governments where I ensured people had three meals and their income increased," he

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said. "We've had difficult times. ... But not like this. I have not seen ... people without fuel, without food."

## McDonald's successor opens in Moscow

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Three months after McDonald's suspended operations in Russia, hundreds of people streamed into its famous former outlet on Moscow's Pushkin Square as the restaurant reopened Sunday under a Russian owner and a new name.

In March, McDonald's halted operations of its company-run restaurants in Russia. Although some run by franchisees stayed open, the action by the multinational fast-food chain was among the most visible responses by foreign companies to Russia sending troops into Ukraine.

Two months later, McDonald's decided to leave Russia altogether and sold its 850 restaurants to Alexander Govor, who held licenses for 25 franchises in Siberia.

Govor is moving fast to reopen the shuttered outlets. It wasn't until a couple of hours before the Pushkin Square restaurant opened that the Russian chain's new name was announced: Vkusno-i Tochka (Tasty-period).

The logo is different, but still evokes the golden arches: a circle and two yellow oblongs — representing a beef patty and french fries — configured into a stylized M.

Fifteen of the former McDonald's were set to reopen in Moscow on Sunday. Oleg Paroev, the chain's general director, said he aims to have 200 open by the end of the month.

As part of the sales deal, whose monetary terms were not announced, the new operation agreed to retain all 62,000 people employed by McDonald's prior to its exit.

The crowd at the Pushkin Square outlet, however sizable and lively, was no match for the turnout for the McDonald's opening in 1990, when people waited in line for hours. At that time, McDonald's had psychological and political resonance beyond hamburgers.

The opening was the first taste most Muscovites had of Western consumerism and service efficiency, as well as a sign the Soviet Union was slowly dropping its guard and allowing foreign culture into the country.

On Sunday, that earlier symbolism echoed through Sunday's reopening with a note of nostalgia.

"This is a historic place — the flagship of McDonald's," Govor told reporters. "I'm sure it will be the flagship for us."

Inside, the restaurant resembled a fraternal twin of its former self. There were touchscreens for placing orders and counter workers wearing familiar polo-shirt uniforms.

"We're sure that our customers won't notice a difference between us," Paroev said. However, he said, the company will seek a new soft drinks supplier as it has limited stocks of Coca-Cola.

## Ukraine's leader says his troops keep defying predictions

By DAVID KEYTON and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said no one knows how long the war in his country will last but that Ukrainian forces are defying expectations by preventing Russian troops from overrunning eastern Ukraine, where the fighting has been fiercest for weeks.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said he was proud of the Ukrainian defenders managing to hold back the Russian advance in the Donbas region, which borders Russia and where Moscow-backed separatists have controlled much of the territory for eight years.

"Remember how in Russia, in the beginning of May, they hoped to seize all of the Donbas?" the president said late Saturday. "It's already the 108th day of the war, already June. Donbas is holding on."

After failing to capture Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, early in the war, Moscow focused on seizing the parts of the largely Russian-speaking Donbas still in Ukrainian hands, as well as the country's southern coast. But instead of securing a swift, decisive takeover, Russian forces were drawn into a long, laborious battle, thanks in part to the Ukrainian military's use of Western-supplied weapons.

Both Ukrainian and Russian authorities said Sievierodonetsk, an eastern city with a prewar population of

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100,000, remained contested. The city and neighboring Lysychansk are the last major areas of the Donbas' Luhansk province not under the control of the pro-Russia rebels.

Leonid Pasechnik, the head of the separatist-declared Luhansk People's Republic, said Ukrainian fighters remained in an industrial area of the city, including a chemical plant where civilians had taken shelter from days of Russian shelling.

"Sievierodonetsk is not completely 100% liberated," Pasechnik said Saturday, alleging that the Ukrainians were shelling the city from the Azot plant. "So it's impossible to call the situation calm in Sievierodonetsk, that it is completely ours."

Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai reported Saturday that a big fire broke out at the plant during hours of Russian shelling.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, a counteroffensive pushed Russians out of parts of the southern Kherson region they took early in the war, according to Zelenskyy. Moscow has installed local authorities in Kherson and other occupied coastal areas, offering residents Russian passports, airing Russian news broadcasts and taking steps to introduce a Russian school curriculum.

Zelenskyy said that while an end to the war was not in sight, Ukraine should do everything it can so the Russians "regret everything that they have done and that they answer for every killing and every strike on our beautiful state."

The Ukrainian leader asserted that Russia has suffered about three times as many military casualties as the number estimated for the Ukrainian side, adding: "For what? What did it get you, Russia?" There are no reliable independent estimates of the war's death toll so far.

Speaking at a defense conference in Singapore on Sunday, Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe said Beijing continues to support peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, and hopes the U.S. and its NATO allies have discussions with Russia "to create the conditions for an early ceasefire."

"China will continue to play a constructive role and contribute our share to easing tensions and realizing a political resolution of the crisis," Wei said.

He suggested that nations supplying weapons to Ukraine were hindering peace by "adding fuel to the fire" and stressed that China had not provided any material support to Russia during the war.

"The growth of China-Russia relations is a partnership, not an alliance," Wei said.

The Institute for the Study of War, a think tank based in Washington, said in its latest assessment that Ukrainian intelligence suggested the Russian military was planning "to fight a longer war."

The institute cited the deputy head of Ukraine's national security agency as saying that Moscow had extended its war timeline until October, with adjustments to be made depending on any successes in the Donbas.

The intelligence "likely indicates the Kremlin has, at a minimum, acknowledged it cannot achieve its objectives in Ukraine quickly and is further adjusting its military objectives in an attempt to correct the initial deficiencies in the invasion of Ukraine," the think tank said.

The Luhansk People's Republic's ambassador to Russia, Rodion Miroshnik, said Saturday that 300 to 400 Ukrainian troops remained blockaded inside the Sievierodonetsk chemical plant along with several hundred civilians.

The Russians established contact with the Ukrainian troops to arrange the evacuation of the civilians, but the the troops will be allowed to leave only if they lay down their arms and surrender, Miroshnik said.

Similar conditions existed for weeks at a steel mill in the southern Ukrainian city of Mariupol before a civilian evacuation was arranged and the defending troops were ordered by Ukrainian military commanders to stand down. The fighters who came out of the Mariupol plant were taken prisoner by the Russians.

Pasechnik, the separatist leader of the unrecognized Luhansk republic, said the Ukrainians making a stand in Sievierodonetsk should save themselves the trouble.

"If if I were them, I would already make a decision (to surrender)," he said. "We will achieve our goal in any case. We will liberate the industrial area in any case. We will liberate Sievierodonetsk in any case. Lysychansk will be ours in any case."



## Ukraine's teen drone hero "happy that we destroyed someone"

HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KOLONSCHYNA, Ukraine (AP) — As Russian tanks and trucks rumbled close to their village, a Ukrainian teenager and his father stealthily launched their small drone into the air.

Working as a team, they took bird's-eye photos of the armored column moving toward Kyiv and pinpointed its coordinates, swiftly messaging the precious information to the Ukrainian military.

Within minutes, artillery batteries rained shells down on the invading forces, with deadly effect.

Andriy Pokrasa, 15, and his dad, Stanislav, are being hailed in Ukraine for their volunteer aerial reconnaissance work in the early days of the invasion, when Russian troops barreling in from the north made an ultimately failed attempt to take the capital and bring the country to its knees.

For a full week after the Feb. 24 invasion, the pair made repeated sorties with their drone — risking capture or worse had Russian troops been aware of their snooping.

"These were some of the scariest moments of my life," Andriy recounted as he demonstrated his piloting skills for an Associated Press team of journalists.

"We provided the photos and the location to the armed forces," he said. "They narrowed down the coordinates more accurately and transmitted them by walkie-talkie, so as to adjust the artillery."

His father was happy to leave the piloting to the boy.

"I can operate the drone, but my son does it much better. We immediately decided he would do it," Stanislav Pokrasa, 41, said.

They aren't sure how many Russian targets were destroyed using information they provided. But they saw the devastation wrought on the Russian convoy when they later flew the drone back over the charred hulks of trucks and tanks near a town west of Kyiv and off a strategically important highway that leads to the capital.

"There were more than 20 Russian military vehicles destroyed, among them fuel trucks and tanks," the father said.

As Russian and Ukrainian forces battled furiously for control of Kyiv's outskirts, Ukrainian soldiers finally urged the Pokrasa family to leave their village, which Russian troops subsequently occupied.

With all adult men up to age 60 under government orders to stay in the country, the elder Pokrasa couldn't join his wife and son when they fled to neighboring Poland.

They came back a few weeks ago, when Andriy had finished his school year.

"I was happy that we destroyed someone," he said. "I was happy that I contributed, that I was able to do something. Not just sitting and waiting."

## Palin nabs early lead in Alaska US House special primary

By BECKY BOHRER Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin leads in early results from Saturday's special primary for the state's only U.S. House seat, as voters whittled down the list of 48 candidates running for the position that was held for 49 years by the late U.S. Rep. Don Young.

The early results showed Palin, endorsed by former President Donald Trump, with 29.8% of the votes counted so far; Republican Nick Begich had 19.3%; independent Al Gross had 12.5%; Democrat Mary Peltola with 7.5%; and Republican Tara Sweeney had 5.3%.

A candidate whose name is Santa Claus, a self-described "independent, progressive, democratic socialist," had 4.5%.

The initial results released by the state Division of Elections included 108,729 votes. It was not immediately clear how many ballots were outstanding. The division reported late Saturday that it had received about 139,000 ballots so far. Ballots had to be postmarked by Saturday.

The Associated Press has not called any winners in the special primary.

The top four vote-getters, regardless of party affiliation, will advance to an August special election in

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which ranked choice voting will be used. The winner of the special election will serve the remainder of Young's term, which ends in January. Young died in March at age 88.

This election was unlike any the state has seen, crammed with candidates and conducted primarily by mail. This was the first election, too, under a system approved by voters in 2020 that ends party primaries and uses ranked choice voting in general elections.

Saturday marked the first ballot count; state elections officials plan additional counts on Wednesday and Friday, and a final count on June 21. They have targeted June 25 to certify the race.

Palin, the 2008 Republican vice presidential nominee, released a statement expressing gratitude "to all of my wonderful supporters who voted to make Alaska great again!"

Earlier Saturday, the Alaska Supreme Court reversed and vacated a lower court order that had barred state election officials from certifying the results of the special primary until visually impaired voters were given a "full and fair" opportunity to participate.

Attorneys for the state had interpreted Friday's order from Superior Court Judge Una Gandbhir as preventing elections officials from concluding voting as scheduled on Saturday. They asked the supreme court to reverse the order.

The ruling came in a case filed days earlier by Robert Corbisier, executive director of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. Corbisier sued state elections officials on behalf of a person identified as B.L., a registered voter in Anchorage with a visual impairment.

The sheer number of candidates left some voters overwhelmed, and many of the candidates themselves faced challenges in setting up a campaign on the fly and trying to leave an impression on voters in a short period of time. The candidate filing deadline was April 1.

Relatively few candidates were running for the seat before Young's death. Begich was among the early entrants; he launched his campaign last fall and worked to win support among conservatives. The businessman, who hails from a family of prominent Democrats, was endorsed by the Alaska Republican party.

Peltola, a former state lawmaker from Bethel who has been involved in fisheries issues, said earlier this week that she entered the race with low name recognition but believes she's changed that and has momentum behind her candidacy.

Palin's run marks her first bid for elected office since resigning as governor partway through her term in 2009. She was endorsed in this campaign by some national political figures, including Trump, who participated in a "telerrally" for her and said Palin would "fight harder than anybody I can think of," particularly on energy issues.

Palin sought to assure voters that she is serious about her bid and committed to Alaska.

During the campaign, opponents poked at that. Gross, an orthopedic surgeon who made an unsuccessful run for U.S. Senate in 2020, said Palin "quit on Alaska." Begich and Sweeney made points of saying they are not quitters.

Gross, in an email to supporters during the campaign, said Palin and Begich are candidates who will be hard to beat but said he is "ready and able to take on this fight."

Sweeney was assistant secretary of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Interior Department under Trump and was endorsed by a group that represents leaders of the state's influential Alaska Native regional corporations. She said she understands the "pressure cooker" environment of Washington, D.C.

## Cyprus eyes rebound from loss of Russian, Ukrainian tourists

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS Associated Press

KYKKOS MONASTERY, Cyprus (AP) — Archimandrite Agathonikos bows before the silver-covered icon of the Virgin Mary to offer prayers for an end to the war between "peoples of the same religion" in Ukraine.

Until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds of Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox faithful visiting Cyprus would come daily to venerate the relic. Tradition dictates it was fashioned by Luke the Evangelist from beeswax and mastic and blessed by the Virgin herself as a true representation of her image.

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With the war and a European Union ban on Russian flights, the estimated 800,000 Russian and Ukrainian vacationers that head to Cyprus each year for its warm, azure waters and religious history stretching back to the dawn of Christianity are practically down to zero. In record-setting 2019, they made up a fifth of all tourists to the island nation in the Mediterranean Sea south of Turkey.

"We've had many worshippers from these two countries fighting today," Agathonikos said. "I wish and pray to our Virgin that these two peoples who fight today are shown the way to peace — the faithful in both countries should pray for that."

He is the abbot of Kykkos Monastery on the northeastern ridgeline of Cyprus' Troodos mountain range, which has been home to the icon for nearly a thousand years. It, the tomb of St. Lazarus in Larnaca and the monastery of Stavrovouni that houses a large piece of the Holy Cross are important Cyprus stops for Russians and Ukrainians on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Agathonikos said.

Their absence this year, coming on the back of a steep drop in tourism at the pandemic's outset, has cut into the revenue of a country whose tourism sector accounts for more than 10% of its economy. Other nations that rely on Russian and Ukrainian visitors like Turkey, Cuba and Egypt also braced for losses just as tourism began bouncing back.

Cyprus Deputy Minister for Tourism Savvas Perdios estimates the loss from Russian and Ukrainian visitors will total about 600 million euros (\$645 million) this year, with expectations before the war that the number of visitors would be approaching that of 2019.

Cyprus is one of the shortest flights from Russia to any Mediterranean holiday destination, but the EU flight ban negated that advantage.

Businesses are hurting, especially local travel agencies that work with big tour operators focusing on the Russian market. Some hotels on Cyprus' popular eastern coastline that catered to Russian vacationers are feeling the sting, too, said Haris Loizides, board president of the Cyprus Hotel Association.

An additional burden weighing on hotel owners is high inflation that has cranked up operating costs, he said.

Vassos Xidias, proprietor of a seafood tavern bearing his name overlooking the small Ayia Napa harbor, says his business has dropped by as much as 50% this year because of losing the Russian market.

"There's a huge problem in our work," Xidias said. "Now, we'll see how much this will be covered by the European market and others. It's the gamble that we're waiting to see over the next four months that remain" of the tourist season.

Despite the upheaval, officials say that thanks to foresight and planning to find new markets even before Russia invaded Ukraine, Cyprus is projected to make up a sizable chunk of the lost revenue.

More vacationers are expected this summer from European markets, including Scandinavian countries, France and Germany, who spend more per day on average than Russians.

"Now we are a point of comparison where, you know, a Russian person will be leaving in Cyprus around 60 euros per person per day, whereas other nationalities, around 90 euros," Perdios says.

While there were no direct flights from France to Cyprus two years ago, 20 flights will take off each week this year. Weekly flights from Germany and Scandinavian countries have increased to 50 and 30, respectively, this year — higher than in 2019.

Loizides says hotel owners may be reporting fewer bookings than 2019, but higher guest spending is expected to boost revenue.

Both Loizides and Perdios say this optimism is driven by the public's desire to get away after two years of pandemic lockdowns.

"Nothing is going to stop people from traveling this year," Perdios said.

Loizides said hotel owners haven't given up entirely on bringing Russian tourists this summer. He says they're looking into possibly getting Russians to Cyprus through countries not bound by the flight ban, like Serbia, Georgia and Israel.

Perdios says his ministry's revamped tourism strategy has gained traction in European markets as it highlights what Cyprus has to offer beyond sun and surf.

That includes vegan-friendly hotels and winery tours through mountainous villages to learn about wines



such as Commandaria, winner of the first international wine competition in 1224.

"We have done so much work in order to be able to stand before you today and say, 'Hey, you know what? It's going to be an OK season. It's going to be a decent season. It's not a disaster. And we're going to be all right,'" Perdios said.

## Stamkos scores twice, Lightning beat Rangers 2-1 in Game 6

By FRED GOODALL AP Sports Writer

TAMPA, Fla (AP) — The Tampa Bay Lightning's bid for a three-peat is alive and well.

With captain Steven Stamkos leading the way, the two-time defending champions beat the New York Rangers 2-1 in Game 6 of the Eastern Conference final Saturday night, securing a berth in the Stanley Cup Final for the third straight year.

"It's going to be tough to get out of the moment and look back and realize what a special group we have here because there's still some games to be played," Stamkos said. "You're still not at the end of our goal, but in saying that this group is pretty amazing and pretty special."

Stamkos scored two goals and Andrei Vasilevskiy had 20 saves for the Lightning, who won the series 4-2 — winning four straight games after losing the first two on the road — and will face the Colorado Avalanche in the Cup final.

Game 1 is Wednesday night in Denver.

"It's probably not the greatest word to use, but I'm damn impressed by this group," coach Jon Cooper said.

"It's impressive what they've done. ... I'm just utterly impressed by what they do to win a hockey game," the coach added. "And the fact that they they have every excuse in the world to not win because nobody would fault them by saying hey, you won one, you won two, and to come back and and go for a third. I'm impressed."

Stamkos put the Lightning ahead for good in the third period just 21 seconds after New York's Frank Vatrano scored on the power play with the Lightning captain in the penalty box for holding.

Nikita Kucherov and Ondrej Palat assisted on the winner with 6 1/2 minutes left, with the puck deflecting off Stamkos' knee into the net after Rangers goalie Igor Shesterkin stopped the initial shot.

Stamkos also scored on a wrist shot from the top of the right circle midway through the second period.

"I obviously was a little disappointed in myself for taking the penalty. ... It's easy to say now, but for some reason I wasn't as rattled as I usually am in those situations," Stamkos said. "I was just confident in our group that we would find a way, whether it was in regulation or was in overtime. We deserved to win the game. That was the feeling we had from puck drop."

The Lightning are the first team to make three consecutive appearances in the Cup final since Edmonton did it from 1983-85. They are trying to become the first to win three straight championships since the New York Islanders claimed four in a row from 1980-83.

The Rangers, down 3-2 in a series for the third straight round, were 5-0 in elimination games this post-season before Saturday night.

The only teams to win more elimination games in a single postseason were the 1975 New York Islanders (eight), 2014 Los Angeles Kings (seven) and 2003 Minnesota Wild (six).

"It's hard right now. But we played well, we battled hard, we had a chance to win all those games," Rangers coach Gerard Gallant said. "They found a way to get the big goal at the big time."

New York dropped three of the first four games before winning three straight elimination games to beat the Pittsburgh Penguins in the opening round. They lost the first two on the road at Carolina before rebounding to oust the Hurricanes in seven games to reach the East final.

It was a different story Saturday night, with the Lightning limiting New York's scoring opportunities while outshooting the Rangers 31-21.

Vasilevskiy went long stretches without being tested. He faced just seven shots in the opening period, six in the second and eight in the third.

Shesterkin, meanwhile, stopped 29 of 31 shots and made big save after big save to give New York a

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chance.

"I thought Igor was outstanding. He gave us a chance to win every night. We got outchanced in a lot of the games but he was outstanding. He was our best player all year long and again in this series," Galant said.

"Shesterkin was unbelievable. He made some unbelievable saves to keep them in it, but I think I just felt kind of a calming presence because of the group," Stamkos said. "It was just one of those nights where whether it was the next shift after, whether I scored or someone else scored, it was just a feeling that we were going to get it done."

NOTES: The Lightning played again without forward Brayden Point, who's missed 10 games since suffering a lower body injury during Tampa Bay's Game 7 victory over Toronto in the first round. He was the NHL's leading goal scorer the previous two postseasons. ... Lightning defenseman Victor Hedman exited in the second period after appearing to be elbowed in the head by New York's Alexis Lafreniere. He returned at the start of the third period.

## Tony Awards has stars — and those usually far from spotlight

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Darren Criss' favorite night of the year has arrived. It's the Tony Awards. "I'll never shut up about the Tonys. I love the Tonys," he says.

Criss will not only be watching the Tonys on Sunday, he'll also be working. He's co-host with Julianne Hough of a one-hour pre-Tony celebration at Radio City Music Hall, and he's even written an original song about the show that he'll perform, revealing "a bit of my nerdy proclivities."

Criss and Hough will be handing out creative arts Tonys on Paramount+ and then pass hosting duties to Ariana DeBose for the main three-hour telecast on CBS from the same stage, live coast to coast for the first time.

The season — with 34 new productions — represents a full return to theaters after nearly two years of a pandemic-mandated shutdown. At the last Tonys nine months ago, the winners were pulled from just 18 eligible plays and musicals, and many of the competitive categories were depleted.

DeBose, the Tony-nominated theater veteran and freshly minted Oscar winner for "West Side Story," said Broadway is due for a party.

"I feel like if there was ever the time, the time is now," she said. "I think it's a triumph to have simply made it to this point, to have made art and to have a show."

The telecast will have performances from this year's Tony Award-nominated musicals, including "A Strange Loop," "Company," "Girl from the North Country," "MJ," "Mr. Saturday Night," "Music Man," "Paradise Square" and "Six." The original cast members of the 2007 Tony-winning musical "Spring Awakening" will also reteam and perform.

"A Strange Loop," a theater meta-journey about a playwright writing a musical, goes into the show with a leading 11 Tony nominations. Right behind with 10 nominations each is "MJ," a bio musical of the King of Pop stuffed with his biggest hits, and "Paradise Square," a musical about Irish immigrants and Black Americans jostling to survive in New York City around the time of the Civil War.

The best actress in a musical frontrunners are Sharon D Clarke from the revival of "Caroline, or Change" and Joaquina Kalukango of "Paradise Square." The best actor in a musical may come down to Jaquel Spivey from "A Strange Loop" versus Myles Frost as the King of Pop in "MJ the Musical."

"The Lehman Trilogy," Stefano Massini's play spanning 150 years about what led to the collapse of financial giant Lehman Brothers, is the leading best new play contender, while David Morse in a revival of Paula Vogel's "How I Learned to Drive" is the leading contender as best actor in a play. His co-star, Mary-Louise Parker, could become the first actor to receive consecutive Tonys for best actress in a play.

Producers are once again expanding the show thanks to streaming partner Paramount+, adding an extra hour before the three-hour main awards telecast to celebrate the creative Tony nominees in such categories as sound design and lighting. Often in the past, those acceptances were recorded earlier and

shoe-horned into the telecast.

Criss and Hough — who each had roles this spring on Broadway — are hosting that first hour, which will be aired exclusively on the streaming network.

"I think they've recognized that a lot of the moments that have not made it to the public view were worth showing and worth presenting and worth giving the people who had these really amazing moments a bit of acknowledgment and recognition," said Criss, who stars in a revival of David Mamet's "American Buffalo."

Hough, who made her Broadway debut with a role in the woman-only ensemble of the political comedy "POTUS," has been impressed by the talent level of her peers.

"I always look at Broadway performers and creatives as like artistic athletes, because the ability and the tenacity and the discipline and the hard work and everything that's put into it — as well as the artistry — is just beyond," the "Dancing with the Stars" veteran said.

## The AP Interview: Sri Lanka PM says he's open to Russian oil

By KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka may be compelled to buy more oil from Russia as the island nation hunts desperately for fuel amid an unprecedented economic crisis, the newly appointed prime minister said.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he would first look to other sources, but would be open to buying more crude from Moscow. Western nations largely have cut off energy imports from Russia in line with sanctions over its war on Ukraine.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press on Saturday, Wickremesinghe also indicated he would be willing to accept more financial help from China, despite his country's mounting debt. And while he acknowledged that Sri Lanka's current predicament is of "its own making," he said the war in Ukraine is making it even worse — and that dire food shortages could continue until 2024. He said Russia had also offered wheat to Sri Lanka.

Wickremesinghe, who is also Sri Lanka's finance minister, spoke to the AP in his office in the capital, Colombo, one day shy of a month after he took over for a sixth time as prime minister. Appointed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resolve an economic crisis that has nearly emptied the country's foreign exchange reserves, Wickremesinghe was sworn in after days of violent protests last month forced his predecessor, Rajapaksa's brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, to step down and seek safety from angry crowds at a naval base.

Sri Lanka has amassed \$51 billion in foreign debt, but has suspended repayment of nearly \$7 billion due this year. The crushing debt has left the country with no money for basic imports, which means citizens are struggling to access basic necessities such as food, fuel, medicine — even toilet paper and matches. The shortages have spawned rolling power outages, and people have been forced to wait days for cooking gas and gasoline in lines that stretch for kilometers (miles).

Two weeks ago, the country bought a 90,000-metric-ton (99,000-ton) shipment of Russian crude to restart its only refinery, the energy minister told reporters.

Wickremesinghe did not comment directly on those reports, and said he did not know whether more orders were in the pipeline. But he said Sri Lanka desperately needs fuel, and is currently trying to get oil and coal from the country's traditional suppliers in the Middle East.

"If we can get from any other sources, we will get from there. Otherwise (we) may have to go to Russia again," he said.

Officials are negotiating with private suppliers, but Wickremesinghe said one issue they face is that "there is a lot of oil going around which can be sourced back informally to Iran or to Russia."

"Sometimes we may not know what oil we are buying," he said. "Certainly we are looking at the Gulf as our main supply."

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, global oil prices have skyrocketed. While Washington and its allies are trying to cut financial flows supporting Moscow's war effort, Russia is offering its crude at a steep discount, making it extremely enticing to a number of countries.



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Like some other South Asian nations, Sri Lanka has remained neutral on the war in Europe.

Sri Lanka has received and continues to reach out to numerous countries for help — including the most controversial, China, currently the country's third-largest creditor. Opposition figures have accused the president and the former prime minister of taking on a slew of Chinese loans for splashy infrastructure projects that have since failed to generate profit, instead adding to the country's debt.

Critics have also pointed to a beleaguered port in the hometown of then-President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Hambantota, built along with a nearby airport as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative projects, saying they cost too much and do too little for the economy.

"We need to identify what are the projects that we need for economic recovery and take loans for those projects, whether it be from China or from others," Wickremesinghe said. "It's a question of where do we deploy the resources?"

The prime minister said his government has been talking with China about restructuring its debts. Beijing had earlier offered to lend the country more money but balked at cutting the debt, possibly out of concern that other borrowers would demand the same relief.

"China has agreed to come in with the other countries to give relief to Sri Lanka, which is a first step," Wickremesinghe said. "This means they all have to agree (on) how the cuts are to take place and in what manner they should take place."

Sri Lanka is also seeking financial assistance from the World Food Programme, which may send a team to the country soon, and Wickremesinghe is banking on a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund. But even if approved, he doesn't expect to see money from the package until October onwards.

Wickremesinghe acknowledged that the crisis in Sri Lanka has been of its "own making." Many have blamed government mismanagement, deep tax cuts in 2019, policy blunders that devastated crops and a sharp plunge in tourism due to the coronavirus pandemic. But he also stressed that the war in Ukraine, which has thrown global supply chains into a tailspin and pushed fuel and food prices to unaffordable levels, has made things much worse.

"The Ukraine crisis has impacted our ... economic contraction," he said, adding that he thinks the economy will shrink even further before the country can begin to recoup and rebuild next year.

"I think by the end of the year, you could see the impact in other countries" as well, he said. "There is a global shortage of food. Countries are not exporting food."

In Sri Lanka, the price of vegetables has jumped threefold while the country's rice cultivation is down by about a third, the prime minister said.

The shortages have affected both the poor and the middle classes, triggering months of protests. Mothers are struggling to get milk to feed their babies, as fears of a looming hunger crisis grow.

Wickremesinghe said he felt terrible watching his nation suffer, "both as a citizen and a prime minister."

He said he hasn't ever seen anything like this in Sri Lanka — and didn't think he ever would. "I have generally been in governments where I ensured people had three meals and their income increased," he said. "We've had difficult times. ... But not like this. I have not seen ... people without fuel, without food."

## Conspiracies dominate GOP primary for Nevada elections post

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

RENO, Nevada (AP) — Jim Marchant has been traveling the country repeating the false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from former President Donald Trump and trying to make the case that electronic voting equipment should be tossed out in favor of ballots cast and counted by hand.

Now the businessman and former state lawmaker is on the primary ballot Tuesday in Nevada, a perennial presidential battleground state. His goal: become the state's top election official.

Marchant is one of several Republicans across the country running to oversee the next presidential election while denying the outcome of the last one.

There is no evidence of any widespread voter fraud or manipulation of voting machines in 2020. But the false claims have sowed doubt among Republican voters, triggered death threats to election officials and

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led to a host of new voting restrictions in GOP-controlled states, mostly related to mailed ballots.

Nevada's top election official, Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske, a Republican, has said repeatedly that she found no evidence of widespread voter fraud in the 2020 election. Term limits bar Cegavske from seeking re-election.

Of the seven Republicans hoping to replace her, Marchant stands out for his rhetoric. He claimed during a February candidates forum that elections have long been corrupted.

"Your vote hasn't counted for decades," Marchant told the crowd. "You haven't elected anybody. The people that are in office have been selected. You haven't had a choice."

Moments later, Sparks City Councilman Kristopher Dahir -- another of the GOP secretary of state candidates -- said he took offense to Marchant's claim "because I think I actually got elected for real."

Dahir told The Associated Press this week that he does not believe there was widespread fraud in 2020. "I believe that I am the only candidate that is willing to accept the results, but will work hard to make sure as a Nevadan there is not a reason to have questions surrounding this incredible right we have," he wrote in an email.

Nationally, there are nearly two dozen Republican candidates running to be their state's top election official who deny the result of the 2020 presidential election, according to States United Action, a nonpartisan advocacy organization tracking the candidates.

Among those who have advanced to the November election are Kristina Karamo in Michigan, Kim Crockett in Minnesota and Audrey Trujillo in New Mexico. Last month, Georgia's Jody Hice lost his bid to oust Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger in that state's GOP primary despite having Trump's endorsement. Raffensperger drew Trump's ire after he refused the former president's request, in a phone call, to "find" enough votes to overturn President Joe Biden's win in Georgia.

Nevada — a state Trump lost twice but where he remains popular among Republicans — is a top priority for the GOP this year as the party looks to win a majority in the U.S. Senate. Trump has endorsed his 2020 Nevada campaign chair, former state Attorney General Adam Laxalt, in his effort to unseat first-term Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto. He's also backed Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo for governor.

Laxalt has repeated Trump's lies about the 2020 election, but faced criticism at a recent debate from one of his primary opponents for not doing enough.

"When President Trump, Nevadans and Americans were relying on you to be the one to challenge any sort of issues in the 2020 election, the only thing you did was file a lawsuit, that by your own admission was late," said candidate Sam Brown, a former U.S. Army captain who earned a Purple Heart after being severely wounded in Afghanistan.

Laxalt said that as chairman of Trump's Nevada campaign he "sounded every alarm imaginable as the Democrats radically altered our election" and noted it was the secretary of state, not attorney general, who is responsible for investigating voter fraud in Nevada. For the 2020 election, mail ballots were sent to all registered voters — a temporary move that has since been made permanent.

Trump has yet to weigh in on the secretary of state's race, though he backed Marchant in his unsuccessful congressional bid in 2020. Trump also hasn't made an endorsement for state attorney general in the state's Republican primary, a race that features a pair of Las Vegas lawyers that has focused more on personal attacks than concerns of voter fraud.

In the secretary of state's contest, Marchant is not the only GOP candidate to question the integrity of elections and specifically the use of voting machines to cast and count votes.

At the February forum, candidate Socorro Keenan compared U.S. elections to other countries "where they know how to cheat," while candidate Richard Scotti said he agreed with calls to do away with voting machines because "the data that they record in the evening is never the same in the morning."

Another candidate, businessman and former state lawmaker Jesse Haw, has accused Democrats of changing voting rules to manipulate the system and called for voter ID requirements and new restrictions on mail ballots.

The election claims appear to be resonating with GOP primary voters.

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At a recent rally in northern Nevada for Brown, the Senate candidate, several Republicans said they remain convinced Trump won in 2020 and that election integrity is a top concern.

Ingrid Lentz, 70, of Reno, said she believes there were "forces that were unseen" behind the previous election.

"I do believe the election was stolen," added Ken Gray, chair of the rural Lyon County Board of Commissioners, who's running for a state legislative seat.

Charlie Fettig, a retired general contractor from Reno, said there were "a lot of illegal things done" in 2020, adding he doesn't have faith in drop boxes for mail ballots or voting by mail in general.

"It just opens it up for corruption," Fettig said.

To be clear, the federal government's leading security experts declared the 2020 presidential election "the most secure in American history," Trump's own attorney general had said there was no fraud that would have altered the results, and there has been no evidence to suggest Trump was cheated out of a second term.

Outside money has been funding ads in the GOP primary for secretary of state. Virginia-based Americans for Secure Elections PAC, which has received \$1.2 million from three groups that don't disclose their donors, has been airing ads in support of Haw, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, which is tracking fundraising in these races. The PAC recently launched ads attacking Marchant while another PAC has been airing ads in support of him, according to the Brennan Center.

On the Democratic side, lawyer and former chair of the Nevada Athletic Commission Cisco Aguilar is running unopposed in the primary. In an interview, he praised the current secretary of state for steps to ensure a safe and secure election and said he would build on the work done by the Legislature to expand voting access. He criticized the GOP field for spreading misinformation about the state's secure voting methods.

"Unfortunately, we have a group of candidates that are looking to scare voters into action," Aguilar said.

Election experts say candidates who repeat falsehoods and misinformation could pose a danger if they get into a position to oversee elections. They might be motivated to interfere in the administration of future elections or simply use their position to cast doubt on the results.

"That person could create an environment of instability and doubt that is based on lies, and that instability could lead to political violence," said David Becker, a former U.S. Justice Department attorney who leads the Center for Election Innovation and Research. "That is not a hypothetical, as we saw on Jan. 6."

## Mo Donegal finishes 1st at Belmont, another Pletcher win

By JAKE SEINER AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Triple Crown veteran Todd Pletcher had simple advice Saturday for jockey Irad Ortiz Jr. before the Belmont Stakes.

"Be patient," Pletcher said. "I think you have the best last quarter of any horse in the race."

Sometimes, less is Mo.

Mo Donegal pulled away down the home stretch and held off filly Nest to win the Belmont Stakes, giving Pletcher a 1-2 finish and his sixth Triple Crown victory, including four at this track on the outskirts of New York City.

"To be honest with you, we were a little confident going into the race today," Donegal Racing CEO and co-owner Jerry Crawford said. "When he turned for home, I was like, forget about it. I know Todd thought he could get a strong last quarter mile, and he surely did."

Rich Strike, a stunning Kentucky Derby winner at 80-to-1 odds, was sixth.

Mo Donegal rounded the 1 1/2-mile distance in 2 minutes, 28.28 seconds, three lengths ahead of Nest — ridden by Ortiz's brother, José. Pletcher, who lives on Long Island, adds another Belmont title following wins with Rags to Riches in 2007, Palace Malice in 2013 and Tapwrit in 2017.

Mo Donegal beat an eight-horse field without a clear favorite. We the People, a monster in the mud, opened at 2 to 1 amid a rainy forecast but reached 7 to 2 by race time as showers held off.

Mo Donegal entered the gate the betting favorite at 5 to 2. We the People led for much of the race, but

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Mo Donegal and Ortiz took charge coming out of the final turn.

The 3-year-old colt paid \$7.20, \$3.80 and \$3. Nest — who nearly became Pletcher's second filly to win Belmont after Rags to Riches — paid \$5.30 and \$4.10. Skippy Longstocking was third and returned \$5.60 to show. We the People finished fourth.

Rich Striker owner Rick Dawson and trainer Eric Reed held the Kentucky Derby winner out of the Preakness with an eye on Belmont, the first healthy horse to skip Pimlico after winning the Triple Crown's first even since 1985.

Reed said the team encouraged jockey Sonny Leon to try pushing Rich Strike from the outside, but the horse kept trying to get back inside — where he made a late charge past 19 horse to win at Churchill Downs. Rich Strike spent much of the race in last place and couldn't recover.

"I think we just made a tactical error," Reed said.

Just like Rich Strike, Mo Donegal was at the back of the pack at the Derby, but the colt didn't have enough kick at Churchill Downs. He found it Saturday, winning the 154th running of the \$1.5 million race.

Mo Donegal made a winner out of co-owner Mike Repole, a local entrepreneur known around the track as "Mike from Queens." Repole also co-owns Nest.

"This is New York's biggest race and to win it here, with my family and friends and 70 people here, this will be a big winner's circle," he said.

It's the fourth straight year the Triple Crown contests were won by three different horses, a first for the sport since 1926-29.

The race marked a return to form for Belmont itself after the 2020 Stakes were closed to the public due to the pandemic and the 2021 event was limited to 11,238 spectators by virus restrictions.

Capacity was capped again, this time at 50,000, because of congestion concerns stemming from the newly built arena next door for the NHL's New York Islanders. Still, fans crammed into cars on the Long Island Rail Road and breathed life into the 117-year-old track with floral headwear, pastel suits and the unmistakable musk of booze and cigars.

The reported attendance of 46,103 fell far short of the grounds record 120,139 set in 2004. Not much of a surprise, given the shaky weather forecast and the lack of a Triple Crown contender.

The field was sparse, too. No horse ran all three Triple Crown legs this year, heightening concern that three races in five weeks may be too tight a schedule to keep the horses healthy.

Preakness winner Early Voting was sidelined, likely to prepare for the \$1.25 million Travers Stakes at Saratoga Race Course on Aug. 27. Epicenter, the runner-up at the Kentucky Derby and Preakness, also skipped.

In the \$500,000 Acorn for 3-year-old fillies, Matareya romped to a 6 1/4-length victory. Favorite Echo Zulu scratched at the post on the advice of the track veterinarian.

Trained by Brad Cox and ridden by Flavien Prat, Matareya (\$2.60) ran the mile in 1:35.77, winning for the fifth time in eight career starts.

Heavily favored Flightline got off a step slow, overcame an early traffic issue and cruised to a six-length victory in the \$1 million Hill 'N' Dale Metropolitan Mile.

The victory kept the 4-year-old Tapit colt undefeated in four career starts. This was the first one he did not win by double-digit lengths. Flightline (\$2.90) was also ridden by Prat and trained by John Sadler.

## Biden ramps up federal help for New Mexico wildfire fight

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — President Joe Biden said Saturday he was escalating federal assistance for New Mexico as it faces its largest wildfire in recorded state history.

The fire began with prescribed burns that were set by the U.S. Forest Service, a standard practice that's intended to clear out combustible underbrush. However, the burns spread out of control, destroying hundreds of homes across 500 square miles (1,300 square kilometers) since early April, according to federal officials.



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"We need to be sure this doesn't happen again," Biden said during a visit to an emergency operations center in Santa Fe, where he met with local, state and federal officials. He was returning to Washington from Los Angeles, where he had attended the Summit of the Americas.

The president said the federal government would cover the full cost of the emergency response and debris removal, a responsibility that was previously shared with the state government.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham told Biden that "your administration has leaned in from the very beginning" and that "we need the federal government to keep accepting responsibility."

Biden said he also supports having Washington foot the bill for damages caused by the fire, but such a step would require congressional action.

Evidence of New Mexico's struggle with wildfire was visible from Air Force One as the president's plane approached. There were plumes of smoke in the distance, and rows of burned trees looked like blackened scars slashing through green forests.

Evacuations have displaced thousands of residents from rural villages with Spanish-colonial roots and high poverty rates, while causing untold environmental damage. Fear of flames is giving way to concern about erosion and mudslides in places where superheated fire penetrated soil and roots.

The blaze is the latest reminder of Biden's concern about wildfires, which are expected to worsen as climate change continues, and how they will strain resources needed to fight them.

"These fires are blinking 'code red' for our nation," Biden said last year after stops in Idaho and California. "They're gaining frequency and ferocity."

But the source of the current wildfire in New Mexico has also sparked outrage here.

A group of Mora County residents sued the U.S. Forest Service this past week in an effort to obtain more information about the government's role.

The Forest Service sets roughly 4,500 prescribed burns each year nationwide, and Biden said the practice has been put on hold during an investigation.

Ralph Arellanes of Las Vegas, New Mexico, said many ranchers of modest means appear unlikely to receive compensation for uninsured cabins, barns and sheds that were razed by the fire.

"They've got their day job and their ranch and farm life. It's not like they have a big old house or hacienda — it could be a very basic home, may or may not have running water," said Arellanes, a former wildland firefighter and chairman for a confederation of Hispanic community advocacy groups. "They use it to stay there to feed and water the cattle on the weekend. Or maybe they have a camper. But a lot of that got burned."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved at least 900 disaster relief claims worth more than \$3 million for individuals and households.

On Thursday, the Biden administration extended eligible financial relief to the repair of water facilities, irrigation ditches, bridges and roads. Proposed legislation from U.S. Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández, D-N.M., would offer full compensation for nearly all lost property and income linked to the wildfire.

Jennifer Carbajal says she evacuated twice from the impending wildfire at a shared family home at Pandaries in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The house survived while about 50 neighboring homes burned along with the tanks that feed the municipal water system, leaving no local supply of potable water without truck deliveries.

"There is no long-term plan right now for water infrastructure in northern New Mexico," Carbajal said.

She said matters are worse in many hardscrabble communities across fire-scarred Mora County, where the median household income is roughly \$28,000 — less than half the national average.

"They barter a lot and really have never had to rely on external resources," she said. "The whole idea of applying for a loan (from FEMA) is an immediate turnoff for the majority of that population."

Jaclyn Rothenberg, a spokeswoman for FEMA, said the agency had more than 400 personnel in the state to work with residents and help them seek federal assistance.

George Fernandez of Las Vegas, New Mexico, says his family is unlikely to be compensated for an uninsured, fire-gutted house in the remote Mineral Hills area, nor a companion cabin that was built by his grandparents nearly a century ago.

Fernandez said his brother had moved away from the house to a nursing home before the fire swept through — making direct federal compensation unlikely under current rules because the house was no longer a primary residence.

"I think they should make accommodations for everybody who lost whatever they lost at face value," Fernandez said. "It would take a lot of money to accomplish that, but it was something they started and I think they should."

## 'Enough is enough': Thousands demand new gun safety laws

By ASHRAF KHALIL and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of people rallied on the National Mall and across the United States on Saturday in a renewed push for gun control measures after recent deadly mass shootings from Uvalde, Texas, to Buffalo, New York, that activists say should compel Congress to act.

"Enough is enough," District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser told the second March for Our Lives rally in her city. "I speak as a mayor, a mom, and I speak for millions of Americans and America's mayors who are demanding that Congress do its job. And its job is to protect us, to protect our children from gun violence."

Speaker after speaker in Washington called on senators, who are seen as a major impediment to legislation, to act or face being voted out of office, especially given the shock to the nation's conscience after 19 children and two teachers were killed May 24 at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde.

"If our government can't do anything to stop 19 kids from being killed and slaughtered in their own school, and decapitated, it's time to change who is in government," said David Hogg, a survivor of the 2018 shooting that killed 17 students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

A co-founder of the March For Our Lives organization that was created after that shooting and held its first rally in Washington not long afterward, Hogg led the crowd in chants of "Vote them out."

Another Parkland survivor and group co-founder, X Gonzalez, delivered an impassioned, profanity-laced plea to Congress for change. "We are being murdered," they screamed and implored Congress to "act your age, not your shoe size."

Added Yolanda King, granddaughter of Martin Luther King Jr.: "This time is different because this isn't about politics. It's about morality. Not right and left, but right and wrong, and that doesn't just mean thoughts and prayers. That means courage and action."

Manuel Oliver, whose son, Joaquin, was killed in the Parkland shooting, called on students "to avoid going back to school until our elected leaders stop avoiding the crisis of gun violence in America and start acting to save our lives."

Hundreds gathered at an amphitheater in Parkland, where Debra Hixon, whose husband, high school athletic director Chris Hixon, died in the shooting, said it is "all too easy" for young men to walk into stores and buy weapons.

"Going home to an empty bed and an empty seat at the table is a constant reminder that he is gone," said Hixon, who now serves as a school board member. "We weren't done making memories, sharing dreams and living life together. Gun violence ripped that away from my family."

In San Antonio, about 85 miles east of Uvalde, marchers chanted "Hey, hey, ho, ho, the NRA has got to go." A man who said he helped to organize the rally, Frank Ruiz, called for gun reform laws similar to those enacted in Florida after the Parkland shooting that focused on raising the age for purchasing certain firearms and flagging those with mental health issues.

The U.S. House has passed bills to raise the age limit to buy semi-automatic weapons and establish federal "red flag" laws. A bipartisan group of senators had hoped to reach agreement this week on a framework for addressing the issue and held talks Friday, but no deal was announced.

President Joe Biden, who was in California when the Washington rally began, said his message to demonstrators was "keep marching" and added that he is "mildly optimistic" about legislative negotiations to address gun violence. Biden recently delivered an impassioned address to the nation in which he called for several steps, including raising the age limit for buying assault-style weapons.

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In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams, who campaigned on reining in violence in the nation's largest city, joined state Attorney General Letitia James, who is suing the National Rifle Association, in leading activists across the Brooklyn Bridge.

"Nothing happens in this country until young people stand up — not politicians," James said.

Joining the call for change were hundreds of people who rallied in a park outside the courthouse in Portland, Maine, before they marched through the Old Port and gathered outside of City Hall. At one point, they chanted, "Hey, hey, hey, NRA. How many kids did you kill today."

John Wuesthoff, a retired lawyer in Portland, said he was waving an American flag during the rally as a reminder that gun control is "not un-American."

"It's very American to have reasonable regulations to save the lives of our children," he said.

Hundreds of protesters in Milwaukee marched from the county courthouse to the city's Deer District, where last month 21 people were injured in shootings on the night of an NBA playoff game. Organizer Tatiana Washington, whose aunt was killed by gun violence in 2017, said this year's march is particularly significant to Milwaukee residents.

"A lot of us are still very heavily thinking about the mass shooting that occurred after the Bucks game," Washington said. "We shouldn't be scared to go watch our team in the playoffs and live in fear that we're going to be shot at."

The passion that the issue stirs was clear in Washington when a young man jumped the barricade and tried to rush the stage before being intercepted by security. The incident caused a brief panic as people began to scatter.

Organizers hoped the second March for Our Lives rally would draw as many as 50,000 people to the Washington Monument, though the crowd seemed closer to 30,000. The 2018 event attracted more than 200,000 people, but the focus this time was on smaller marches at an estimated 300 locations.

The youth-led movement created after the Parkland shooting successfully pressured the Republican-dominated Florida state government to enact sweeping gun control changes. The group did not match that at the national level, but has persisted in advocating for gun restrictions since then, as well as participating in voter registration drives.

Survivors of mass shootings and other incidents of gun violence have lobbied legislators and testified on Capitol Hill this week. Among them was Miah Cerrillo, an 11-year-old girl who survived the shooting at Robb Elementary. She described for lawmakers how she covered herself with a dead classmate's blood to avoid being shot.

## 'Enough is enough': Thousands demand new gun safety laws

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## **\$4.75M: Schwartzel wins richest golf event amid Saudi outcry**

By ROB HARRIS AP Sports Writer

ST. ALBANS, England (AP) — Former Masters champion Charl Schwartzel banked \$4.75 million on Saturday by winning the richest tournament in golf history, while the event's Saudi backers faced renewed backlash after a 9/11 victims' group called for American players to withdraw from the rebel series.

Schwartzel held on for a one-shot victory at the inaugural LIV Golf event outside London to secure the \$4 million prize for the individual victory — along with another \$750,000 from his share of the \$3 million purse earned by his four-man Stinger team for topping the team rankings.

Schwartzel collected more prize money from winning the three-day, 54-hole event than he had from the last four years combined. Not that it could match the sense of sporting achievement that he felt after his win at Augusta National in 2011.

"Money is one thing but there you're playing for prestige, history," he said. "Winning a major will always top anything you do."

This hefty pay check has come at a cost to Schwartzel's career status, having resigned his membership of the PGA Tour to play on the unsanctioned series without a waiver.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think we could play for that much money in golf," Schwartzel, who had not won a PGA or European tour event since 2016, told the crowd.

Pressed in the news conference, he dismissed criticism of the windfall coming from the Saudi sovereign wealth fund.

"Where the money comes from is not something ... that I've ever looked at playing in my 20 years career," the South African said. "I think if I start digging everywhere where we played, you could find fault in anything."

Fellow South African Hennie Du Plessis, who was selected for Stinger by team captain Louis Oosthuizen in the draft, earned \$2.875 million by finishing second at Centurion Club, located between Hemel Hempstead and St. Albans.

Schwartzel entered the final day with a three-shot lead and did just enough to hold off Du Plessis despite finishing with a 2-over 72 for a 7-under total of 203.

It is the first of eight events in the first year of LIV Golf, which began against the backdrop of the PGA Tour banning players who signed up. The European tour has yet to comment on any sanctions for players who jumped to the series without its approval.

Twenty players have now defected from the PGA Tour, with Patrick Reed the latest former Masters champion confirmed on Saturday as signing up to LIV Golf as the final round was being completed.

However, the lucrative rewards for joining the Public Investment Fund-backed series have not been enough to entice any players ranked in the world's top 10.

Reed, who has won almost \$37 million in a decade on the PGA Tour, is ranked 36th. The 31-year-old American's only major win was the 2018 Masters.

Having appeared at three Ryder Cups, where he has been one of the brash characters on the American team, Reed's decision could see him ineligible for selection in the future.

Reed said he would make his debut on the second stop of the LIV Golf series in Portland, Oregon, on June 30-July 2.

Pat Perez, the 46-year-old American who is ranked 168th in the world, also joined the breakaway on

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Saturday, saying he wants to travel less after 21 years on the PGA Tour.

Saudi Arabia's track record of human rights violations has sparked criticism from groups, including Amnesty International, that the country is "sportswashing" its image by investing in signing up sports stars.

LIV Golf CEO Greg Norman, who would not speak to the media at the event, called the series a "force for good" in a speech at the victory ceremony, without addressing criticism of the Saudi project.

LIV Golf plays up the financial largesse. Yasir Al-Rumayyan, governor of PIF, said on stage that there would be a prize of \$54 million for any player who could hit an implausible 54 at a LIV event.

For many in the United States, Saudi Arabia will forever be associated with the collapse of the World Trade Towers and the deaths of nearly 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001. All but four of the 19 hijackers on 9/11 were Saudi citizens, and the Saudi kingdom was the birthplace of Osama bin Laden, the head of al-Qaida and mastermind of the attack.

Terry Strada, the national chairperson of 9/11 Families United, has sent a letter to representatives of LIV Golf stars calling on them to reconsider their participation in the series. Her husband, Tom, died when a hijacked plane flew into the World Trade Center.

"Given Saudi Arabia's role in the death of our loved ones and those injured on 9/11 — your fellow Americans — we are angered that you are so willing to help the Saudis cover up this history in their request for 'respectability,'" Strada wrote, accusing the players of betraying U.S. interests.

Strada's letter was sent to agents for Reed as well as Phil Mickelson, Dustin Johnson, Bryson DeChambeau and Kevin Na.

"When you partner with the Saudis, you become complicit with their whitewash, and help give them the reputational cover they so desperately crave — and are willing to pay handsomely to manufacture," Strada wrote.

"The Saudis do not care about the deep-rooted sportsmanship of golf or its origins as a gentleman's game built upon core values of mutual respect and personal integrity. They care about using professional golf to whitewash their reputation, and they are paying you to help them do it."

Victims' families are trying to hold Saudi Arabia accountable in New York, despite its government's insistence that any allegation of complicity in the terrorist attacks is "categorically false."

## Alaska high court reverses ruling that roiled House election

By BECKY BOHRER Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — The special primary for Alaska's only U.S. House seat moved forward as planned Saturday following a tense legal fight over ballot access issues that had cast a shadow over the election.

The legal drama was the latest twist in what has already been an extraordinary election, packed with 48 candidates running for the seat left vacant by the death in March of U.S. Rep. Don Young. Young, a Republican, held the seat for 49 years.

The Alaska Supreme Court on Saturday reversed and vacated a lower court order that barred state elections officials from certifying the results of the special primary until visually impaired voters were given a "full and fair" opportunity to participate.

Attorneys for the state had interpreted Friday's order from Superior Court Judge Una Gandhir as preventing elections officials from concluding voting as scheduled on Saturday. They asked the supreme court to reverse the order.

The high court said an explanation of its reasoning would follow at a later time.

Gandhir on Friday ruled that Alaska elections officials could not certify the results of the by-mail special primary until visually impaired voters "are provided a full and fair opportunity to participate" in the election. She did not specify what that would entail.

The ruling came in a case filed earlier this week by Robert Corbisier, executive director of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. Corbisier sued state elections officials on behalf of a person identified as B.L., a registered voter in Anchorage with a visual impairment.

Attorneys for Corbisier said the election lacks options that would allow people with visual impairments

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to cast ballots "without invasive and unlawful assistance from a sighted person." Attorneys for the state said that adequate methods for secret voting were available.

An attorney for Corbisier did not respond to a request for comment.

This is the first election under a system approved by voters in 2020 that ends party primaries and uses ranked choice voting in general elections.

Prominent candidates include former Gov. Sarah Palin, Nick Begich, Tara Sweeney and Josh Revak, all Republicans; independent Al Gross; and Democrats Christopher Constant and Mary Peltola. A self-described "independent, progressive, democratic socialist" whose legal name is Santa Claus has gotten attention but has not been raising money.

Each voter picks one candidate in the special primary, which will whittle the list from 48 to four. The four candidates who win the most votes advance to a special election in which ranked choice voting will be used. The winner of the special election will serve the rest of Young's term, which ends in January.

The special election is set to coincide with the Aug. 16 regular primary. The regular primary and November general election will decide who serves a two-year term beginning in January.

The special primary is mainly being conducted by mail, which elections officials said they opted for given the tight timeline to hold an election after Young's death.

As of Friday afternoon, around 130,000 ballots had been returned to the Division of Elections. Ballots began going out in late April.

For some voters, trying to sort through 48 candidates was daunting. Candidates tried to distinguish themselves from their opponents and break through with their messages.

Peltola, a former state lawmaker from Bethel who has been involved in fisheries issues, said she entered the race with low name recognition but believed that had changed and that she has momentum behind her candidacy.

She and Constant, an Anchorage Assembly member, have run perhaps the most visible campaigns among the six Democrats in the race, which also includes 22 independents and 16 Republicans.

Most of those running have reported no fundraising to the Federal Election Commission. Of those who have, Palin reported the biggest haul between April 1 and May 22, more than \$630,000. Gross, an orthopedic surgeon who ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Senate in 2020, reported receiving about \$545,000 between March 23 and May 22.

Begich, who began running for the House seat last fall, had the most available cash as of May 22, about \$715,000. He has loaned his campaign \$650,000 so far.

Independent Jeff Lowenfels, a gardening expert with a legal background, reported bringing in about \$150,000 from April 1 to May 22, which includes \$100,000 he loaned his campaign.

Palin was endorsed by some national political figures, including former President Donald Trump, and took time to campaign in Georgia last month for David Perdue, who lost the Republican primary for governor in that state to incumbent Brian Kemp.

Trump participated in a "telerally" for Palin, saying she would "fight harder than anybody I can think of," particularly on energy issues.

Some Alaskans questioned Palin's commitment. She resigned partway through her term as governor in 2009, months after her unsuccessful run for U.S. vice president. In a radio ad, she seeks to assure voters: "I'm in this for the long haul. ... I'm going to see this thing through and earn your support."

During the campaign, opponents seized on that point. Gross said Palin "quit on Alaska." Begich and Sweeney made points of saying they are not quitters.

Begich, a Republican from a family of prominent Democrats, earned endorsements from conservatives in the state along with the Alaska Republican Party. Sweeney was assistant secretary of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Interior Department under Trump and has been endorsed by a group representing leaders of the state's influential Alaska Native regional corporations.

Gross, in an email to supporters, said Palin and Begich are candidates who will be hard to beat but said he is "ready and able to take on this fight."

He stood in the morning drizzle in Juneau on Saturday, waving signs with supporters and said he felt

good about his campaign.

## US judge dismisses Cristiano Ronaldo rape lawsuit in Vegas

By KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A Nevada woman has lost her bid in a U.S. court to force international soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo to pay millions of dollars more than the \$375,000 in hush money she received after claiming he raped her in Las Vegas in 2009.

U.S. District Judge Jennifer Dorsey in Las Vegas kicked the case out of court on Friday to punish the woman's attorney, Leslie Mark Stovall, for "bad-faith conduct" and the use of leaked and stolen documents detailing attorney-client discussions between Ronaldo and his lawyers. Dorsey said that tainted the case beyond redemption.

Dorsey said in her 42-page order that dismissing a case outright with no option to file it again is a severe sanction, but said Ronaldo had been harmed by Stovall's conduct.

"I find that the procurement and continued use of these documents was bad faith, and simply disqualifying Stovall will not cure the prejudice to Ronaldo because the misappropriated documents and their confidential contents have been woven into the very fabric of (plaintiff Kathryn) Mayorga's claims," the ruling said. "Harsh sanctions are merited."

Stovall did not immediately respond Saturday to telephone and email messages. Text messages to associate Larissa Drohobyczer were not answered. They could appeal the decision to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

In a statement referring to Mayorga only as "plaintiff," Ronaldo's attorney in Las Vegas, Peter Christiansen, said Cristiano's legal team welcomed the decision.

"We have maintained the action was brought in bad faith," the statement said. "The outright dismissal of plaintiff's case should give all who follow this matter renewed confidence in the judicial process in this country while dissuading those who seek to undermine it."

The Associated Press generally does not name people who say they are victims of sexual assault, but Mayorga gave consent through Stovall and Drohobyczer to make her name public.

Dorsey had signaled earlier this year that she was ready to end the case after Stovall failed to meet a procedural deadline in his bid for more than \$25 million in damages based on allegations that Ronaldo or his associates violated a 2010 confidentiality agreement by letting reports about it appear in European publications in 2017.

Mayorga's civil lawsuit — filed in 2018 in state court and moved in 2019 to federal court — alleged that Ronaldo or his associates violated the confidentiality agreement before the German news outlet Der Spiegel published an article titled "Cristiano Ronaldo's Secret" based on documents obtained from "whistleblower portal Football Leaks."

Ronaldo's legal team blamed the reports on electronic data leaks of documents hacked from law firms and other entities in Europe and put up for sale. Christiansen alleged also that information was altered or fabricated.

Christiansen and attorney Kendalee Works in Las Vegas successfully fought since the case emerged in 2018 to prevent the pact from disclosure.

Mayorga is a former model and teacher who lives in the Las Vegas area. Her lawsuit said she met Ronaldo at a nightclub and went with him and other people to his hotel suite, where she alleged he assaulted her in a bedroom. She was 25 at the time. He was 24.

Ronaldo's legal team does not dispute Ronaldo met Mayorga and they had sex in June 2009, but maintained it was consensual and not rape.

Mayorga went to Las Vegas police at the time, but the investigation was dropped because Mayorga neither identified her alleged attacker by name nor said where the incident took place, police and prosecutors said.

Ronaldo, now 37, is one of the most highly paid and recognizable sports stars in the world. He plays for the English Premier League club Manchester United and has captained the national team of his home country, Portugal. He spent several recent years playing in Italy for the Turin-based club Juventus.



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Las Vegas police reopened their rape investigation after Mayorga's lawsuit was filed, but Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson decided in 2019 not to pursue criminal charges.

Wolfson, the elected public prosecutor in Las Vegas, said too much time had passed and evidence failed to show that Mayorga's accusation could be proved to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt.

Stovall maintained that Mayorga didn't break the hush-money settlement. Her lawsuit sought to void it, accusing Ronaldo and reputation-protection "fixers" of conspiracy, defamation, breach of contract, coercion and fraud. In documents filed last year, Stovall tallied damages at \$25 million plus attorney fees.

The attorney argued that Mayorga had learning disabilities as a child and was so pressured by Ronaldo's attorneys and representatives that she was in no condition to consent to dropping her criminal complaint and accepting the \$375,000 in August 2010.

Dorsey followed recommendations from U.S. Magistrate Judge Daniel Albregts, who handled preliminary and procedural rulings in the case, that it be dismissed for bad faith, "inappropriate conduct" by Stovall and reliance on the leaked and stolen confidential documents.

"There is no possible way for this case to proceed where the court cannot tell what arguments and testimony are based on these privileged documents," Albregts said in an October 2021 report to Dorsey.

Stovall "acted in bad faith by asking for, receiving, and using the Football Leaks documents to prosecute Mayorga's case," Albregts wrote. He blamed Stovall for "audacious," "impertinent" and "abusive" attempts to make the confidentiality agreement public through legal maneuvers and the court record and recommended to Dorsey that she reject Stovall's claim that Mayorga lacked the mental capacity to sign the 2010 agreement.

The 9th Circuit ruled early this year that it would be up to Dorsey to decide that question.

It was not immediately clear in Dorsey's ruling whether the public might still get a look at the Las Vegas police report compiled about Ronaldo after Mayorga filed her lawsuit in 2018.

Albregts said in March that denying the New York Times access to what police collected "would almost certainly raise the specter of government censorship." He recommended that Dorsey transfer to a state court the newspaper's open-records request for documents.

A protective order that Dorsey imposed to prevent the release of the 2010 agreement doesn't apply to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Albregts found, and "does not bar LVMPD from disseminating its criminal investigative file."

Attorney Margaret McLetchie, representing the newspaper, did not immediately respond Saturday to a message about that case.

## Rudy Giuliani faces ethics charges over Trump election role

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rudy Giuliani, one of Donald Trump's primary lawyers during the then-president's failed efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, must now answer to professional ethics charges, the latest career slap after law license suspensions in New York and the District of Columbia.

The Office of Disciplinary Counsel, the disciplinary branch of the District of Columbia Bar, filed the charges against the former federal prosecutor and New York mayor alleging that he promoted unsubstantiated voter fraud claims in Pennsylvania. The action was filed June 6 and became public Friday.

At issue are claims Giuliani made in supporting a Trump campaign lawsuit seeking to overturn the election results in Pennsylvania. That suit, which sought to invalidate as many as 1.5 million mail-in ballots, was dismissed by courts.

The counsel's office said Giuliani's conduct violated Pennsylvania Rules of Professional Conduct "in that he brought a proceeding and asserted issues therein without a non-frivolous basis in law and fact for doing so" and "that he engaged in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice."

The counsel asked that the D.C. Court of Appeals Board on Professional Responsibility take up the matter. Giuliani has 20 days to respond, according to the filing. An attempt Saturday to reach a lawyer for Giuliani was unsuccessful.

The step is the latest against Giuliani for his role in Trump's debunked claims that the 2020 presidential

election was fraudulent.

Last June, an appeals court suspended him from practicing law in New York because he made false statements while trying to get courts to overturn Trump's loss. An attorney disciplinary committee had asked the court to suspend his license on the grounds that he had violated professional conduct rules as he promoted theories that the election was stolen through fraud.

The D.C. Bar temporarily suspended him last July although the practical implication of that action is questionable, given that Giuliani's law license in Washington has been inactive since 2002.

News of the counsel's action follows the first public hearing by the House committee investigating the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. Giuliani met for hours with the committee last month.

## Several factors are converging to push gas prices higher

By DAVID KOENIG AP Business Writer

DALLAS (AP) — There is little evidence that gasoline prices, which hit a record \$5 a gallon on Saturday, will drop anytime soon.

Rising prices at the pump are a key driver in the highest inflation that Americans have seen in 40 years. Everyone seems to have a favorite villain for the high cost of filling up.

Some blame President Joe Biden. Others say it's because Russian President Vladimir Putin recklessly invaded Ukraine. It's not hard to find people, including Democrats in Congress, who accuse the oil companies of price gouging.

As with many things in life, the answer is complicated.

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Gasoline prices have been surging since April 2020, when the initial shock of the pandemic drove prices under \$1.80 a gallon, according to government figures. They hit \$3 in May 2021 and cruised past \$4 this March.

On Saturday, the nationwide average for a gallon ticked just above \$5, a record, according to auto club AAA, which has tracked prices for years. The average price jumped 18 cents in the previous week, and was \$1.92 higher than this time last year.

State averages ranged from \$6.43 a gallon in California to \$4.52 in Mississippi.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Several factors are coming together to push gasoline prices higher.

Global oil prices have been rising — unevenly, but sharply overall — since December. The price of international crude has roughly doubled in that time, with the U.S. benchmark rising nearly as much, closing Friday at more than \$120 a barrel.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resulting sanctions by the United States and its allies have contributed to the rise. Russia is a leading oil producer.

The United States is the world's largest oil producer, but U.S. capacity to turn oil into gasoline is down 900,000 barrels of oil per day since the end of 2019, according to the Energy Department.

Tighter oil and gasoline supplies are hitting as energy consumption rises because of the economic recovery.

Finally, Americans typically drive more starting around Memorial Day, adding to the demand for gasoline.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO GET MORE OIL?

Analysts say there are no quick fixes; it's a matter of supply and demand, and supply can't be ramped up overnight.

If anything, the global oil supply will grow tighter as sanctions against Russia take hold. European Union leaders have vowed to ban most Russian oil by the end of this year.

The U.S. has already imposed a ban even as Biden acknowledged it would affect American consumers. He said the ban was necessary so that the U.S. does not subsidize Russia's war in Ukraine. "Defending freedom is going to cost," he declared.

The U.S. could ask Saudi Arabia, Venezuela or Iran to help pick up the slack for the expected drop in Russian oil production, but each of those options carries its own moral and political calculations.

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Republicans have called on Biden to help increase domestic oil production — for example, by allowing drilling on more federal lands and offshore, or reversing his decision to revoke a permit for a pipeline that could carry Canadian oil to Gulf Coast refineries.

However, many Democrats and environmentalists would howl if Biden took those steps, which they say would undercut efforts to limit climate change. Even if Biden ignored a big faction of his own party, it would be months or years before those measures could lead to more gasoline at U.S. service stations.

At the end of March, Biden announced another tapping of the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve to bring down gasoline prices. The average price per gallon has jumped 77 cents since then, which analysts say is partly because of a refining squeeze.

## WHY IS U.S. REFINING DOWN?

Some refineries that produce gasoline, jet fuel, diesel and other petroleum products shut down during the first year of the pandemic, when demand collapsed. While a few are expected to boost capacity in the next year or so, others are reluctant to invest in new facilities because the transition to electric vehicles will reduce demand for gasoline over the long run.

The owner of one of the nation's largest refineries, in Houston, announced in April that it will close the facility by the end of next year.

## WHO IS HURTING?

Higher energy prices hit lower-income families the hardest. Workers in retail and the fast-food industry can't work from home — they must commute by car or public transportation.

The National Energy Assistance Directors Association estimates that the 20% of families with the lowest income could be spending 38% of their income on energy including gasoline this year, up from 27% in 2020.

## WHEN WILL IT END?

It could be up to motorists themselves — by driving less, they would reduce demand and put downward pressure on prices.

"There has got to be some point where people start cutting back, I just don't know what the magic point is," said Patrick De Haan, an analyst for the gas-shopping app GasBuddy. "Is it going to be \$5? Is it going to be \$6, or \$7? That's the million-dollar question that nobody knows."

## HOW ARE DRIVERS COPING?

On Saturday morning at a BP station in Brooklyn, New York, computer worker Nick Schaffzin blamed Putin for the \$5.45 per gallon he was shelling out and said he will make sacrifices to pay the price.

"You just cut back on some other things — vacations, discretionary stuff, stuff that's nice to have but you don't need," he said. "Gas you need."

At the same station, George Chen said he will have to raise the prices he charges his customers for film production to cover the gas he burns driving around New York City. He acknowledged that others aren't so fortunate.

"It's going to be painful for people who don't get pay increases right away," he said. "I can only imagine the families who can't afford it."

## Most Hispanic US state weighs benefits of language programs

By CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press / Report for America

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Jacqueline Powell and her fourth grade classmates toiled over pencil and paper to write a letter in Spanish about what they did in class this year.

Powell explained the assignment in perfect Spanish before struggling to translate the words to end her sentence. The 10-year-old charter school student raised her forearms to her temples in a show of mental effort, making her large round glasses seesaw up and down.

That struggle, fought every week at the New Mexico International School in Albuquerque, has put her speaking ability far ahead of some of her high school peers. It has allowed her to speak in Spanish with her grandmother, who is from Chihuahua, Mexico, and she has fostered a secret language between her and her mom, whose husband and step children can't speak Spanish.

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While dual language programs are offered in thousands of schools across the U.S., New Mexico is the only state where the right to learn in Spanish is laid out in the constitution.

Dual language programs like the one at the New Mexico International School are championed by Hispanic parents who want their children to cultivate cultural roots. They are also seen by education experts as the best way for English learners to excel in K-12 schools.

The question for lawmakers in the nation's most heavily Hispanic state is why New Mexico's dual language programs aren't being used by the students who most need them.

Legislative analysts are expected in the coming weeks to release a report that will highlight challenges facing dual language and other multicultural programs. It will include a look at decades-old trends such as a lack of oversight by education officials, declining participation, and a reduction in the number of multicultural programs, said Legislative Finance Committee spokesman Jon Courtney.

The report also will acknowledge the lack of information about how well language programs are doing after two years without comprehensive academic testing due to the pandemic.

The number of dual language immersion programs has increased from 126 before the pandemic to 132 last year.

State officials are supposed to assess the programs every three years. But the New Mexico Public Education Department has done only one in-person visit and evaluated only one school over the past three years, said department spokeswoman Judy Robinson.

The department has started a series of forums for parents around the Hispanic Education Act, a state law that informs multicultural programs.

While there isn't a consensus among educators as to how to best teach young children languages, a New Mexico court found in 2018 that well-run dual language programs are the "gold standard" for English learners.

The alternative, more popular in Arizona, is to separate children out for remedial instruction.

In New Mexico, English learners make up a larger share of dual language program participants. They comprise 63% of participants in the current school year, up from 53% last year.

At the New Mexico International School in Albuquerque, around half of students are Hispanic, like Jacqueline, and reflective of the city's population.

"Many of their parents are trying to reclaim the language," school principal Todd Knouse said.

English-speaking parents say they have an easier time learning about the benefits of dual language programs and jumping through the hoops to get into charter schools. The schools are free but don't provide bussing.

"It's almost like a privilege type of experience to get your kid into these programs because it does take a lot of research. Tracking down the programs, the distance of how long you're willing to drive, the (admission) lottery," said Mary Baldwin, 34, whose daughter attends the Albuquerque school.

"And then there's so much shame that gets placed on the Spanish language or the culture itself," she said. "Some families might not be aware that being bilingual is a huge strength not just culturally but also professionally."

Baldwin immigrated to the U.S. from Honduras when she was 10. Her daughter is the same age now and is fluent enough to cook banana-leaf-wrapped tamales with her Spanish-speaking grandmother as a result of the dual language program.

Fans of New Mexico's programs say they elevate Spanish-speakers' skills and give them confidence in an environment where everyone is equal as they learn a new language. The programs also increase fluency and literacy in their home language.

"It's generally beneficial to have two languages," said Stephen Mandrgoc, a University of New Mexico historian who has studied bilingual programs in the southwest and oversees Spanish colonial heritage programs.

When it comes to languages spoken by New Mexico's Native American tribes and pueblos, there are some state laws that protect student rights. Still, only two dual language programs are offered in Native



American languages — both in Diné, the language of the Navajo people.

Some tribes like Jemez Pueblo face a more pressing existential threat to their language because of a small population and cultural taboos that limit the creation of language materials. Other tribes like Santa Clara Pueblo say underinvestment is a problem.

New Mexico officials have appropriated millions of dollars to support curriculum projects, but much of the funds go unspent. Advocates say one problem is the time in which grants must be spent, from less than a year to sometimes as short as a month before it reverts back to the state.

## **New York fund apologizes for role in Tuskegee syphilis study**

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — For almost 40 years starting in the 1930s, as government researchers purposely let hundreds of Black men die of syphilis in Alabama so they could study the disease, a foundation in New York covered funeral expenses for the deceased. The payments were vital to survivors of the victims in a time and place ravaged by poverty and racism.

Altruistic as they might sound, the checks — \$100 at most — were no simple act of charity: They were part of an almost unimaginable scheme. To get the money, widows or other loved ones had to consent to letting doctors slice open the bodies of the dead men for autopsies that would detail the ravages of a disease the victims were told was “bad blood.”

Fifty years after the infamous Tuskegee syphilis study was revealed to the public and halted, the organization that made those funeral payments, the Milbank Memorial Fund, publicly apologized Saturday to descendants of the study’s victims. The move is rooted in America’s racial reckoning after George Floyd’s murder by police in 2020.

“It was wrong. We are ashamed of our role. We are deeply sorry,” said the president of the fund, Christopher F. Koller.

The apology and an accompanying monetary donation to a descendants’ group, the Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation, were presented during a ceremony in Tuskegee at a gathering of children and other relatives of men who were part of the study.

Endowed in 1905 by Elizabeth Milbank Anderson, part of a wealthy and well-connected New York family, the fund was one of the nation’s first private foundations. The nonprofit philanthropy had some \$90 million in assets in 2019, according to tax records, and an office on Madison Avenue in Manhattan. With an early focus on child welfare and public health, today it concentrates on health policy at the state level.

Koller said there’s no easy way to explain how its leaders in the 1930s decided to make the payments, or to justify what happened. Generations later, some Black people in the United States still fear government health care because of what’s called the “Tuskegee effect.”

“The upshot of this was real harm,” Koller told The Associated Press in an interview before the apology ceremony. “It was one more example of ways that men in the study were deceived. And we are dealing as individuals, as a region, as a country, with the impact of that deceit.”

Lillie Tyson Head’s late father Freddie Lee Tyson was part of the study. She’s now president of the Voices group. She called the apology “a wonderful gesture and a wonderful thing” even if it comes 25 years after the U.S. government apologized for the study to its final survivors, who have all since died.

“It’s really something that could be used as an example of how apologies can be powerful in making reparations and restorative justice be real,” said Head.

Despite her leadership of the descendants group, Head said she didn’t even know about Milbank’s role in the study until Koller called her one day last fall. The payments have been discussed in academic studies and a couple books, but the descendants were unaware, she said.

“It really was something that caught me off guard,” she said. Head’s father left the study after becoming suspicious of the research, years before it ended, and didn’t receive any of the Milbank money, she said, but hundreds of others did.

Other prominent organizations, universities including Harvard and Georgetown and the state of California

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have acknowledged their ties to racism and slavery. Historian Susan M. Reverby, who wrote a book about the study, researched the Milbank Fund's participation at the fund's request. She said its apology could be an example for other groups with ties to systemic racism.

"It's really important because at a time when the nation is so divided, how we come to terms with our racism is so complicated," she said. "Confronting it is difficult, and they didn't have to do this. I think it's a really good example of history as restorative justice."

Starting in 1932, government medical workers in rural Alabama withheld treatment from unsuspecting Black men infected with syphilis so doctors could track the disease and dissect their bodies afterward. About 620 men were studied, and roughly 430 of them had syphilis. Reverby's study said Milbank recorded giving a total of \$20,150 for about 234 autopsies.

Revealed by The Associated Press in 1972, the study ended and the men sued, resulting in a \$9 million settlement from which descendants are still seeking the remaining funds, described in court records as "relatively small."

The Milbank Memorial Fund got involved in 1935 after the U.S. surgeon general at the time, Hugh Cumming, sought the money, which was crucial in persuading families to agree to the autopsies, Reverby found. The decision to approve the funding was made by a group of white men with close ties to federal health officials but little understanding of conditions in Alabama or the cultural norms of Black Southerners, to whom dignified burials were very important, Koller said.

"One of the lessons for us is you get bad decisions if ... your perspectives are not particularly diverse and you don't pay attention to conflicts of interest," Koller said.

The payments became less important as the Depression ended and more Black families could afford burial insurance, Reverby said. Initially named as a defendant, Milbank was dismissed as a target of the men's lawsuit and the organization put the episode behind it.

Years later, books including Reverby's "Examining Tuskegee, The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy," published in 2009, detailed the fund's involvement. But it wasn't until after Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police that discussions among the Milbank staff — which is now much more diverse — prompted the fund's leaders to reexamine its role, Koller said.

"Both staff and board felt like we had to face up to this in a way that we had not before," he said.

Besides delivering a public apology to a gathering of descendants, the fund decided to donate an undisclosed amount to the Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation, Koller said.

The money will make scholarships available to the descendants, Head said. The group also plans a memorial at Tuskegee University, which served as a conduit for the payments and was the location of a hospital where medical workers saw the men.

While times have changed since the burial payments were first approved nearly 100 years ago, Reverby also said there's no way to justify what happened.

"The records say very clearly, untreated syphilis," she said. "You don't need a Ph.D. to figure that out, and they just kept doing it year after year."

## Italy locates 7 bodies at scorched crash site of helicopter

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian rescuers on Saturday located the bodies of seven people, including four Turkish and two Lebanese businessmen, who died when their helicopter crashed in a heavily forested, mountainous area in north-central Italy during a storm, authorities said.

Col. Alfonso Cipriano, who heads an air force rescue coordination unit that led the search since Thursday, said rescuers were tipped off to the crash site after a mountain runner reported seeing what he thought was a part of the mangled chopper during an excursion on Mount Cusna on Saturday morning.

Air crews confirmed the site and ground crews initially located five bodies, and then the other two, Cipriano told The Associated Press. The location was in a hard-to-reach valley and the chopper remains were hidden to air rescuers from the lush tree cover, but some branches were broken and burned, he said.

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The helicopter disappeared from radar screens Thursday morning as it flew over the province of Modena in the Tuscan–Emilian Apennines. Electric storms had been reported in the area at the time, Cipriano said. The chopper was carrying seven people, including four Turkish citizens, two Lebanese and the Italian pilot, from Lucca to Treviso to visit a tissue paper production facility.

The two Lebanese were identified in Lebanon as Shadi Kreidi and Tarek Tayah, both executives at IN-DEVCO, an international manufacturing and industrial consultancy group. The two were said to be on a business trip.

Tayah's wife, Hala, was killed two years ago in the massive explosion at Beirut's port, which took the lives of more than 215 people and injured thousands. Their daughter, Tamara, who was 11 at the time, was one of the few victims who met French President Emmanuel Macron when he flew to Beirut following the blast, gifting him a pin shaped like the map of Lebanon made by her mother, a jeweler, and getting an emotional hug in return.

Tarek and Hala Tayeh had two other children besides Tamara.

The Turks on board worked for Turkish industrial group Eczacibasi, which said they were taking part in a trade fair.

Eczacibasi confirmed in a statement with "great pain and sadness" that its director of factories, director of hygienic papers at its Yalova province factory, director of investment projects and production director at its Manisa province factory had died in the crash and relayed their condolences.

The crash site was about 10 kilometers (six miles) from where rescuers initially began searching based on the last cellular pings from the passengers' phones. Cipriano said it might have taken hours more or even days to locate the site had it not been for the runner's tip, given the difficult, lush terrain.

## Ukraine: UK man's family 'devastated' by death sentence

LONDON (AP) — The family of a British man condemned to death for fighting for Ukraine said it is devastated by the outcome of what it termed a "show trial" and called Saturday for him to be released and accorded the treatment an international human rights convention guarantees prisoners of war.

A court in the separatist-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic of Ukraine convicted two British fighters and one Moroccan on Thursday of seeking the violent overthrow of power, an offense punishable by death in the eastern territory controlled by Moscow-backed rebels.

The men were also convicted of mercenary activities and terrorism.

"Our whole family is devastated and saddened at the outcome of the illegal show trial," the family of one of the British men, Shaun Pinner, said.

A statement issued by Britain's Foreign Office on behalf of Pinner's family said the 48-year-old had been a resident of Ukraine for four years.

"We sincerely hope that all parties will cooperate urgently to ensure the safe release or exchange of Shaun. Our family, including his son and Ukrainian wife, love and miss him so much and our hearts go out to all the families involved in this awful situation," the statement said.

The family also described Pinner as a proud "contracted serving marine in the 36th Brigade," a Ukrainian naval infantry division that helped defend the besieged southern port city of Mariupol before it was captured by Russian forces.

As a member of the brigade, Pinner "should be accorded all the rights of a prisoner of war according to the Geneva Convention and including full independent legal representation," the family said.

Ukraine and the West have denounced the proceedings in the unrecognized Donetsk republic as a sham and a violation of the rules of war.

The pro-Russia separatists said Saturday they were preparing to also try a South Korean citizen who had fought on the side of Ukraine, but that the man had escaped. They said they still wanted to have him tried in South Korea, but it was not clear how that could happen.

Ukraine has called on foreigners to join their resistance to Russia's invasion, and some have answered that call, though not all have been accepted in Ukraine's foreign legion.

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The Czech Republic's foreign minister, Jan Lipavsky, said Saturday that a Czech citizen died in the Donetsk region in Ukraine — the first reported Czech fatality among the foreign volunteers.

## **Biden juggles principles, pragmatism in stance on autocrats**

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As a candidate for president, Joe Biden was not shy about calling out dictators and authoritarian leaders as he anchored his foreign policy in the idea that the world is in a battle between democracy and autocracy.

But Biden's governing approach as president has been far less black and white as he tries to balance such high-minded principles with the tug toward pragmatism in a world scrambled by the economic fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, concerns about China's global ambitions, heightened tensions about Iran's advancing nuclear program and more.

Those crosscurrents were evident this past week when Biden played host at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles, where his decision to exclude leaders he considers dictators generated considerable drama and prompted a number of other world leaders to boycott the event.

"We don't always agree on everything, but because we're democracies, we work through our disagreements with mutual respect and dialogue," Biden told summit participants as he tried to smooth over the disputes.

Even as Biden was excluding a trio of leaders from the gathering, his national security team was making preparations for a possible visit to Saudi Arabia, an oil-rich kingdom that the president labeled a "pariah" state in the early days of his successful White House run.

After Biden took office, his administration made clear the president would avoid direct engagement with the country's de facto leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, after U.S. intelligence officials concluded that he likely approved the 2018 killing and dismemberment of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi. If the visit to Saudi Arabia goes forward as anticipated, Biden is expected to meet with Mohammed.

The tough talk by Biden during the campaign — and earlier in his presidency — toward the Saudis was part of a broader message he pitched to Americans: The days of blank checks for dictators and strongmen must end if the United States is to have credibility on the world stage.

Of late, though, such sharply principled rhetoric has given way to a greater nod to realpolitik.

At a time of skyrocketing prices at the gas pump, an increasingly fragile situation in the Middle East and perpetual concern that China is expanding its global footprint, Biden and his national security team have determined that freezing out the Saudis is simply not tenable, according to a person familiar with White House thinking on the yet-to-be-finalized Saudi visit who spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The blurred lines over with whom the U.S. will and will not engage have left the White House facing a difficult question: How can the president cite principle for spurning engagement with dictators in his own backyard even as he considers paying a call on Saudi officials who have used mass arrests and macabre violence to squelch dissent?

"President Biden committed to putting human rights and democracy at the heart of our foreign policy. It is," Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters at a summit closing news conference Friday. "That doesn't mean that it's the totality."

But Edward Frantz, a presidential historian at the University of Indianapolis, sees signs that Biden "has fallen into the same trap" as his predecessors when it comes to the Middle East.

President Jimmy Carter, who said human rights were central to his foreign policy, looked past the blood-thirsty reputation of the shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. President George H.W. Bush held off supporting an uprising against Saddam Hussein as his advisers warned Iraq would plunge into civil war without the strongman. U.S. administrations from Presidents Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama overlooked the Hosni Mubarak government's torture and arbitrary detention in Egypt for the sake of a reliable strategic partner in a difficult corner of the world.

"It's notable that Biden is being forced from his position on the Saudis in large part because he held a



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principled stance on Ukraine," Frantz said. "But it's hard not to see the same patterns here as have been established over the last 80 years."

Human rights advocacy groups and even some of the president's Democratic allies are warning Biden that a Saudi visit could be perilous.

Six House Democrats, including the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Adam Schiff of California, wrote to Biden this past week that if he decides to move forward with the visit, he must follow through on a pledge of "recalibrating that relationship to serve America's national interests" and press Saudi officials on oil production, human rights and reported ballistic missile sales by China to the kingdom.

"President Biden should recognize that any meeting with a foreign official provides them instant credibility on a global stage, whether intended or not," said Lama Fakhri, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "Meeting Mohammed bin Salman without human rights commitments would vindicate Saudi leaders who believe there are no consequences for egregious rights violations."

Even as Biden was warming to the Saudis, he was committing to keeping the Western Hemisphere's dictators out of the summit in his own backyard.

The decision was seen as heavy-handed by some allies. Mexico's president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and leaders of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Bolivia all opted to skip the summit over Biden's decision to exclude the leaders of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

Argentina's president, Alberto Fernández, and Belize's prime minister, John Briceño, were among those to show up but publicly criticize Biden's move.

"Geography, not politics, defines the Americas," Briceño said.

Before taking office, Biden did not hold back about what he saw as some of his fellow leaders' shortcomings, particularly those who had less than stellar records as champions of democracy but were in the good graces of President Donald Trump.

During the 2020 campaign, Biden argued that Brazil should face "significant economic consequences" if President Jair Bolsonaro continued deforesting the Amazon. Biden labeled Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, an "autocrat" and waited more than three months into his presidency to speak with the fellow NATO leader. Most notably, Biden said Saudi Arabia was a "pariah" that would "pay a price" for its human rights abuses, including the brutal killing of Khashoggi.

When Biden met with Bolsonaro on the sidelines of the Americas summit on Thursday, the engagement was decidedly civil. Biden made no mention of the Brazilian leader's baseless claims about his own country's voting systems and about unsupported claims of widespread fraud in the 2020 U.S. election.

During the two leaders' appearance before reporters, Biden even commended Brazil for making "real sacrifices" in protecting the Amazon. The White House said that in their private talks, they discussed working together on "sustainable development" to reduce deforestation.

Bolsonaro, the most prominent Latin American leader to attend the summit, had agreed to take part on the condition that Biden grant him a private meeting and refrain from confronting him over some of the most contentious issues between the two men, according to three of the Brazilian leader's Cabinet ministers who requested anonymity to discuss the issue. White House officials said no preconditions were set for the talks.

In recent weeks, top Biden advisers and NATO officials have been working to persuade Erdogan to back down from his threats to block historically neutral Sweden and Finland from joining NATO.

Last week, Biden and his administration were effusive as they praised Saudi Arabia for its role in nudging OPEC+ to increase oil production for July and August. Biden even called the kingdom "courageous" for agreeing to extend a cease fire in its seven-year war with Yemen.

Douglas London, a former CIA officer who spent 34 years in the Middle East, South and Central Asia and is a scholar at the Middle East Institute, said Biden's tone shift represents an uncomfortable reality: Prince Mohammed, widely known as MBS, is someone the U.S. will likely have to deal with for years to come.

"Yes, we're reminded how the president referred to MBS as the dictator of a pariah state who the U.S. was going to teach a lesson," London wrote in an analysis. "Timing in politics and foreign policy, as in life, has great bearing, and it's important to recall that the average price of oil when then candidate Biden

said that was \$41 per barrel.”

Now, it’s hovering around \$120 per barrel.

## War, guilt and last kisses: A deceptive, uneasy calm in Kyiv

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — In the outdoor gym on Venice Beach, the name given to an inviting stretch of sand on the majestic Dnieper River that courses through the capital of Ukraine, Serhiy Chorny is working on his summer body, up-down-up-downing a chunky hunk of iron.

The aim of his sweat and toil isn’t to impress the girls in their bright summer bikinis. Working out is part of his contribution to Ukraine’s all-hands-on-deck war effort: The National Guardsman expects to be sent eastward to the battlefields soon and doesn’t want to take his paunch with him for the fight against Russia’s invasion force.

“I’m here to get in shape. To be able to help my friends with whom I’ll be,” the 32-year-old said. “I feel that my place is there now. ... There is only one thing left: to defend. There is no other option, only one road.”

So goes Kyiv’s bitter summer of 2022, where the sun shines but sadness and grim determination reign, where canoodling couples cannot be sure that their kisses won’t be their last as more soldiers head to the fronts; where flitting swallows are nesting as people made homeless weep in blown-apart ruins, and where the peace is deceptive, because it’s shorn of peace of mind.

After Russia’s initial assault on Kyiv was repelled in the invasion’s opening month, leaving death and destruction, the capital found itself in the somewhat uncomfortable position of becoming largely a bystander in the war that continues to rage in the east and south, where Russian President Vladimir Putin has redirected his forces and military resources.

The burned-out hulks of Russian tanks are being hauled away from the capital’s outskirts, even as Western-supplied weapons turn more Russian armor into smoking junk on battlefronts. Cafes and restaurants are open again, the chatter and the chink of glasses from their outdoor tables providing a semblance of normalcy — until everyone scoots home for the 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew, less constraining than it used to be when Kyiv had seemed at risk of falling.

Sitting on a lawn and savoring wine with friends one evening this week, Andrii Bashtovyi remarked that it “looks like there’s no war but people are talking about their friends who are injured or who are mobilized.” He recently passed his military medical check, meaning he could soon be thrown into combat, too.

“If they call me, I need to go to the recruiting center. I’ll have 12 hours,” said the chief editor of The Village online magazine, which covers life, news and events in Kyiv and other unoccupied cities.

Air raid alarms still sound regularly, screeching shrilly on downloadable phone apps, but they’re so rarely followed by blasts — unlike in pounded front-line towns and cities — that few pay them much mind. Cruise missile strikes that wrecked a warehouse and a train repair workshop on June 5 were Kyiv’s first in five weeks. Dog walkers and parents pushing strollers ambled unperturbed nearby even before the flames had been extinguished.

Many, but by no means all, of the 2 million inhabitants who Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said had fled when Russian forces tried to encircle the city in March are now returning. But with soldiers falling by the hundreds to the east and south, the surreal calm of Kyiv is laced with nagging guilt.

“People are feeling grateful but asking themselves, ‘Am I doing enough?’” said Snezhana Vialko, as she and boyfriend Denys Koreiba bought plump strawberries from one of the summer-fruit vendors who have deployed across the city, in neighborhoods where just weeks ago jumpy troops manned checkpoints of sand bags and tank traps.

Now greatly reduced in numbers and vigilance, they generally wave through the restored buzz of car traffic, barely glancing up from pass-the-time scrolling on phones.

With the peace still so fragile and more treasured than ever, many are plowing their energies, time, money and muscle into supporting the soldiers fighting what has become a grinding war of attrition for

control of destroyed villages, towns and cities.

Trained as a chef and now working as a journalist, Volodymyr Denysenko brewed up 100 bottles of spicy sauce, using his home-grown hot peppers to enliven the troops' rations. He dropped them off with volunteers who drive in convoys from Kyiv to the fronts, laden with crowdfunded gun sights, night-vision goggles, drones, medical kits and other badly needed gear.

"All Ukrainian people must help the army, the soldiers," he said. "It's our country, our freedom."

## Slain Uvalde girl remembered as caring and opinionated

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — Alexandria Aniyah Rubio was opinionated like her mother, and she played basketball and softball like her father. When she got older, she wanted to go to college on a softball scholarship and to become an attorney.

Lexi, as she was known to family and friends, was among the 19 children and two teachers who were shot to death during the May 24 attack at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde. Her family asked mourners to wear bright colors to Lexi's funeral on Saturday at the First Baptist Church in Uvalde because Lexi loved them.

Lexi wanted to major in math one day at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, where her mother is a student, the family said in an obituary posted on a funeral home's website. They described her as "sarcastic, but caring, giving."

"When she knew she was right — she so often was — she stood her ground," her mother, Kimberly Mata-Rubio, said Wednesday during a congressional hearing on gun safety. "She was firm, direct, voice unwavering."

She also described her daughter as "intelligent, compassionate and athletic."

Mata-Rubio is a reporter at the local newspaper and Lexi's father is a Uvalde County sheriff's deputy. During the hearing in Washington, they urged Congress to pass tougher gun laws, including one that would raise the age to buy guns like the one used in the attack to 21.

"We stand for Lexi, and as her voice, we demand action," her mother said.

Lexi admired Democratic U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, of New York, her obituary said. Her parents told The New York Times that they turned down an invitation to meet with Texas' Republican governor, Greg Abbott.

"My first thought was, 'My Lexi doesn't even like him,'" Mata-Rubio told The Times. "She was really little, but we talked about this stuff at home."

## Report: Prince Charles blasts UK's Rwanda deportation plan

LONDON (AP) — A British newspaper says Prince Charles has criticized the government's plan to start deporting some asylum-seekers to Rwanda, calling it "appalling."

Citing unnamed sources, the Times newspaper reported late Friday that the heir to the British throne is privately opposed to U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's policy to send people to the East African country.

A court ruling has paved the way for the first flight under the controversial deal to leave Tuesday with more than 30 people. Britain plans to send some migrants who arrive in the U.K. as stowaways or in small boats to Rwanda, where their asylum claims will be processed. If successful, they will stay in the African country. Human rights groups have called the idea unworkable and inhumane.

The prince's office neither confirmed nor denied the report.

"We would not comment on supposed anonymous private conversations with the Prince of Wales, except to restate that he remains politically neutral," Clarence House said in a statement. "Matters of policy are decisions for government."

The new policy threatens to overshadow the upcoming visit by Charles and his wife Camilla to Rwanda later this month to attend a meeting of Commonwealth leaders.

The Times said a source had heard Charles express opposition to the policy several times in private, and that he was "more than disappointed" by it.

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Traditionally, British royals don't get involved in political matters.

As head of state, Charles's mother, Queen Elizabeth II, has to remain strictly neutral on political matters and doesn't vote or stand for election, according to the royal family's official website.

However, the 73-year-old prince, who is first in line to the throne, has been an outspoken supporter of various causes, such as campaigning against climate change and plastic pollution in oceans. He has also been accused of meddling in politics by speaking up about property developments he opposed and other issues.

## Today in History: June 12, Pulse nightclub shooting

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, June 12, the 163rd day of 2022. There are 202 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 12, 2016, a gunman opened fire at the Pulse nightclub, a gay establishment in Orlando, Florida, leaving 49 people dead and 53 wounded; Omar Mateen pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group during a three-hour standoff before being killed in a shootout with police.

On this date:

In 1630, Englishman John Winthrop, leading a fleet carrying Puritan refugees, arrived at the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where he became its governor.

In 1776, Virginia's colonial legislature adopted a Declaration of Rights.

In 1942, Anne Frank, a German-born Jewish girl living in Amsterdam, received a diary for her 13th birthday, less than a month before she and her family went into hiding from the Nazis.

In 1963, civil rights leader Medgar Evers, 37, was shot and killed outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. (In 1994, Byron De La Beckwith was convicted of murdering Evers and sentenced to life in prison; he died in 2001.)

In 1964, South African Black nationalist Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life in prison along with seven other people, including Walter Sisulu, for committing sabotage against the apartheid regime (all were eventually released, Mandela in 1990).

In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Loving v. Virginia*, unanimously struck down state laws prohibiting interracial marriages.

In 1978, David Berkowitz was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for each of the six "Son of Sam" .44-caliber killings that terrified New Yorkers.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan, during a visit to the divided German city of Berlin, exhorted Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev to "tear down this wall."

In 1991, Russians went to the polls to elect Boris N. Yeltsin president of their republic.

In 1994, Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were slashed to death outside her Los Angeles home. (O.J. Simpson was later acquitted of the killings in a criminal trial but was eventually held liable in a civil action.)

In 2004, former President Ronald Reagan's body was sealed inside a tomb at his presidential library in Simi Valley, California, following a week of mourning and remembrance by world leaders and regular Americans.

In 2020, Rayshard Brooks, a 27-year-old Black man, was shot and killed by one of the two white officers who responded after he was found asleep in his car in the drive-thru lane of a Wendy's restaurant in Atlanta; police body camera video showed Brooks struggling with the officers and grabbing a Taser from one of them, firing it as he fled. (An autopsy found that Brooks had been shot twice in the back. Officer Garrett Rolfe faces charges including murder.)

Ten years ago: Democrat Ron Barber, who almost lost his life in the Arizona shooting rampage that seriously wounded former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, won a special election to succeed her. Former mobster Henry Hill, the subject of the movie "Goodfellas," died in Los Angeles a day after his 69th birthday.

Five years ago: Tens of thousands of protesters held anti-corruption rallies across Russia; more than



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a thousand were arrested, including opposition leader and protest organizer Alexei Navalny. The Golden State Warriors brought home the NBA championship, defeating the Cleveland Cavaliers 129-120 in Game 5.

One year ago: A federal judge threw out a lawsuit filed by employees of a Houston hospital system over its requirement that all of its staff be vaccinated against COVID-19; the Houston Methodist Hospital system had suspended 178 employees without pay over their refusal to get vaccinated. (More than 150 employees who refused to get the vaccine would resign or be fired after the suit was dismissed.) Saudi Arabia announced that the next hajj pilgrimage would be limited to no more than 60,000 people, all of them from within the kingdom, due to the pandemic.

Today's Birthdays: Songwriter Richard M. Sherman is 94. Sportscaster Marv Albert is 81. Singer Roy Harper is 81. Actor Roger Aaron Brown is 73. Actor Sonia Manzano is 72. Rock musician Bun E. Carlos (Cheap Trick) is 71. Country singer-musician Junior Brown is 70. Singer-songwriter Rocky Burnette is 69. Actor Timothy Busfield is 65. Singer Meredith Brooks is 64. Actor Jenilee Harrison is 64. Rock musician John Linnell (They Might Be Giants) is 63. Actor John Enos is 60. Rapper Grandmaster Dee (Whodini) is 60. Actor Paul Schulze is 60. Actor Eamonn Walker is 60. Actor Paula Marshall is 58. Actor Frances O'Connor is 55. Actor Rick Hoffman is 52. Actor-comedian Finesse Mitchell is 50. Actor Mel Rodriguez is 49. Actor Jason Mewes is 48. Actor Michael Muhney is 47. Blues musician Kenny Wayne Shepherd is 45. Actor Timothy Simons is 44. Actor Wil Horneff is 43. Singer Robyn is 43. Rock singer-musician John Gourley (Portugal. The Man) is 41. Actor Dave Franco is 37. Country singer Chris Young is 37. Actor Luke Youngblood is 36. Actor Ryan Malgarini is 30.