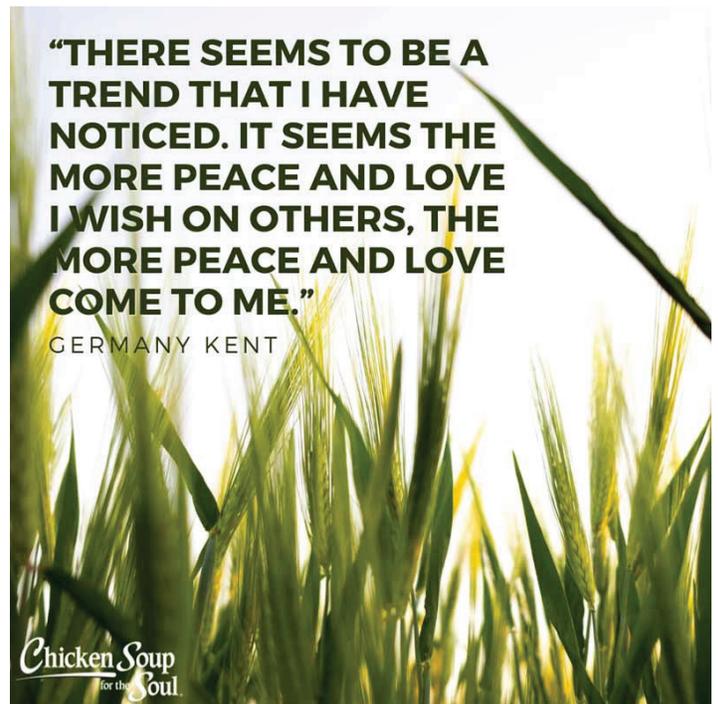


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July 5
5 p.m.: Jr. Legion hosts Watertown, DH
5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Hannigan, 1 game
5 p.m.: U10 vs. Flash at Foundation Fields, Watertown, DH (B/W)
6 p.m.: U12 SB hosts Webster, DH
6 p.m.: U10 SB at Britton, DH
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Britton, DH

July 6
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners at Redfield, DH
7:30 p.m.: U12 at Claremont, 1 game
7:30 p.m. U10 at Claremont, 1 game, (R/B)
5:30 p.m.: T-Ball Gold at Claremont

July 7
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Warner, DH
6 p.m.: U8 at Webster, DH (R/B)
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Mellette, 1 game
7 p.m.: U10 SB at Mellette, 1 game
8 p.m.: U12 SB at Mellette, DH

July 7-9
Legion at Clark Tourney

July 8
6 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage

July 8-11
Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

U12 State Tourney in Parker

July 11
5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Webster, DH (All Groups), Nelson Field
5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Doland, 1 game (All Groups), Falk Field
6:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Doland, 1 game (R/W)
6 p.m.: U12 SB at Webster, DH

July 12
6 p.m.: Legion at Milbank, 1 game
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Milbank, DH
6 p.m.: U12 SB at Britton, DH
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Clark, DH

July 13
5 p.m.: Legion at Mobridge, 1 game
6:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Mobridge, 1 game
5:30 p.m.: U10 vs. Renegades in Watertown, DH,

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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CITY OF GROTON

**ODD NUMBER HOUSES MAY
WATER ON ODD NUMBER DAYS
BETWEEN 5PM AND 10AM**

**EVEN NUMBER HOUSES MAY
WATER ON EVEN NUMBER DAYS
BETWEEN 5PM AND 10AM**

**ABSOLUTELY NO WATERING FROM
10AM-5PM!**



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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.

❧ JOSHUA 24:17 ❧



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BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

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

2. In Galatians 5:13: "Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through ... serve one another." Friendship, Honesty, Love, Hope

3. From 2 Corinthians 3:17: "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is ..." Hope, Freedom, Love, Liberty

4. In John 8:36: "If the ... therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Heart, Worship, Celebration, Son

5. From what book's 6:7 does it say, "For he that is dead is freed from sin"?

Isaiah, Daniel, Mark, Romans

6. How many times is the word "independence" mentioned in the Bible (KJV)? 0, 2, 11, 17

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Love; 3) Liberty; 4) Son, Romans, 0

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

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by Healthy Exchanges

Easy Strawberry Ice Cream

In days gone by, it was part of a small town's summer activities for churches or social organizations to host Ice Cream Socials. Several flavors of ice cream were offered along with other delectable goodies and various beverages. Well, we can't turn back the clock, but we still can enjoy this rite of summer, can't we?

2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
1/3 cup water
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Sugar substitute to equal 1/2 cup sugar
4 cups frozen unsweetened strawberries, slightly thawed

1. In a medium bowl, combine dry milk powder, water and lemon juice. Stir in sugar substitute. Cover and place in freezer for 15 minutes.

2. Spoon very cold milk mixture into a blender container. Cut slightly thawed strawberries into chunks. Add to milk mixture in blender. Cover and process on BLEND for 15 to 20 seconds or until mixture is smooth. Serve at once. Makes 4 (3/4 cup) servings. Freezes well.

* Each serving equals: 92 calories, 0g fat, 4g protein, 19g carbohydrate, 66mg sodium, 3g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Fruit, 1/2 Fat-Free Milk.

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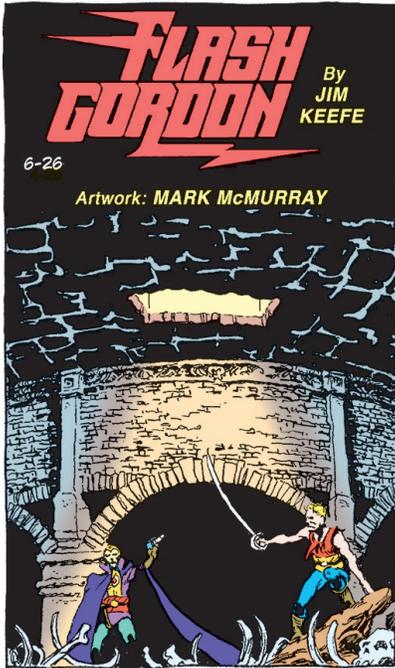
Artist Spotlight:
MARK McMURRAY



MARK McMURRAY HAS GUEST PENCILLED SUCH MAINSTREAM FARE AS FLASH GORDON AND SWAMP THING, BUT IT'S HIS SELF-PUBLISHED VENTURES THAT HAVE BROUGHT HIM THE MOST RECOGNITION.

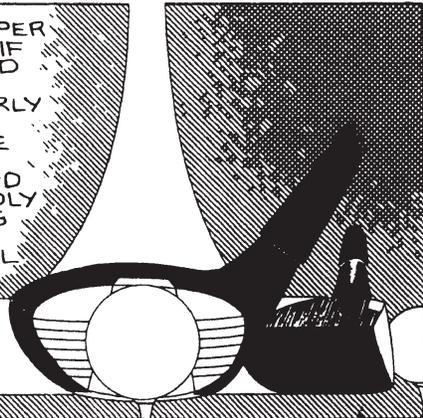
ONE OF HIS MOST CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED SELF-PUBLISHING VENTURES WAS *SKETCHES: NEW YORK CITY*, A SKETCHBOOK DIARY CHRONICLING A YEAR IN AN ARTIST'S LIFE. A YEAR OVERSHADOWED BY THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF 9/11.

MARK McMURRAY



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

YOU'D BE SUPER ACCURATE IF YOU COULD SWING PERPENDICULARLY — HAVE THE CLUB NEVER LEAVE THE TARGET LINE. CONVERSELY, YOU'D STRIKE SUPER SOLIDLY IF YOU COULD SWING HORIZONTALLY — CLUB AT BALL LEVEL ALL THE TIME.



OBVIOUSLY, BOTH ARE IMPOSSIBLE, SO HOW SHOULD YOU COMPROMISE? HISTORY SHOWS THAT THE HAPPY MEDIUM — A ROUGHLY 45-DEGREE SWING PLANE — PRODUCES THE BEST RESULTS.

USE THAT KNOWLEDGE WHEN WORKING ON YOUR SET-UP AND SWING MECHANICS.



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Cuff Location Matters for BP Reading



DEAR DR. ROACH: I have always read that when you are having your blood pressure taken, your arm should be elevated above your heart. When mine is taken this way, it is normal, around 120/70. When I go to the doctor, my blood pressure is taken with my arm hanging at my side. I often get a much higher reading taken this way, say, 140/90. Is there a correct way to take it, and does it affect the reading? My doctor said the position doesn't matter and wants to prescribe medication. -- U.P.

ANSWER: When taking the blood pressure, the goal is to approximate the blood pressure in the heart. That means that the blood pressure cuff should be at the level of the heart. If the blood pressure cuff is above the heart, then the blood pressure reading will be artificially low. If the blood pressure

cuff is dangling below the level of the heart, the reading will be high.

For every 10 cm (about 4 inches) above the heart, the blood pressure will be about 7 mm of mercury too low. If I stretch out my arm as high as I can above my heart, I can get it about 30 cm higher than my heart, which would be enough to explain the difference between the 140/90 and 120/70 you have observed. However, for most people when sitting up straight, a properly placed cuff on the arm will approximate the same level as the heart. Although you are right that the position matters, it sounds like the doctor's office is taking the reading correctly.

I should also note that the feet should be resting on the floor, not dangling, which can artificially raise the blood pressure. The arm should be supported while taking the blood pressure. I recommend taking the blood pressure three times and using the average.

Given how important blood pressure is, correct technique is essential in order to properly recommend who should get blood pressure treatment. Evidence is increasing that a 24-hour home blood pressure device is more accurate at determining who might need medication, especially in suspected white coat hypertension, where the readings are artificially high just because a person is in the office (even if they don't feel nervous).

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was receiving testosterone injections for a diagnosed low testosterone level (96, with the normal 300-720). I received testosterone injections for many years, as directed by my doctor at that time. Ultimately, I changed doctors, and the new one prohibited the testosterone injections as "too dangerous to continue." I objected then, and I am about to object again, since my symptoms in the past year continue to point to low testosterone, in my mind. I have low energy level, low libido and erectile dysfunction. -- M.J.

ANSWER: If a person with normal testosterone takes a large amount of extra testosterone, such as athletes looking for a performance boost, there are significant risks. Scientists used to worry that a similar issue would be the case if a person with low testosterone took a replacement dose to get him into the normal range, but the fears of testosterone replacement therapy have been proven largely unjustified.

Given your symptoms and your definite low level, experts would agree that you are a good candidate for long-term testosterone replacement therapy. The risks and benefits are not known with certainty, but the evidence so far suggests no serious risks and some potential benefits on heart health, even beyond improvement in symptoms. I would suggest a consultation with an expert on testosterone replacement, such as a urologist.

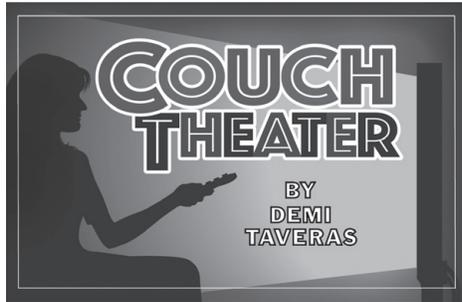
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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"The Desperate Hour" (PG-13) -- A thriller filmed in 2021, "The Desperate Hour" stars Naomi Watts in the lead role of Amy, a widowed mother. Still coping with her husband's death, Amy and her son face yet another traumatic event in their lives when a shooting takes place at his school. Amy's on a jog in the woods 5 miles from her home when she receives a notification on her phone about the active shooter. Learning that her son and four other people have barricaded themselves inside the school, Amy attempts to find the quickest way out of the woods and to the school so she can help get her son out of harm's way. Watts' portrayal of a parent's panic in this unimaginable moment really carries the film. (Hulu)

Chris Hemsworth as Abnesti in "Spiderhead."

Photo Netflix

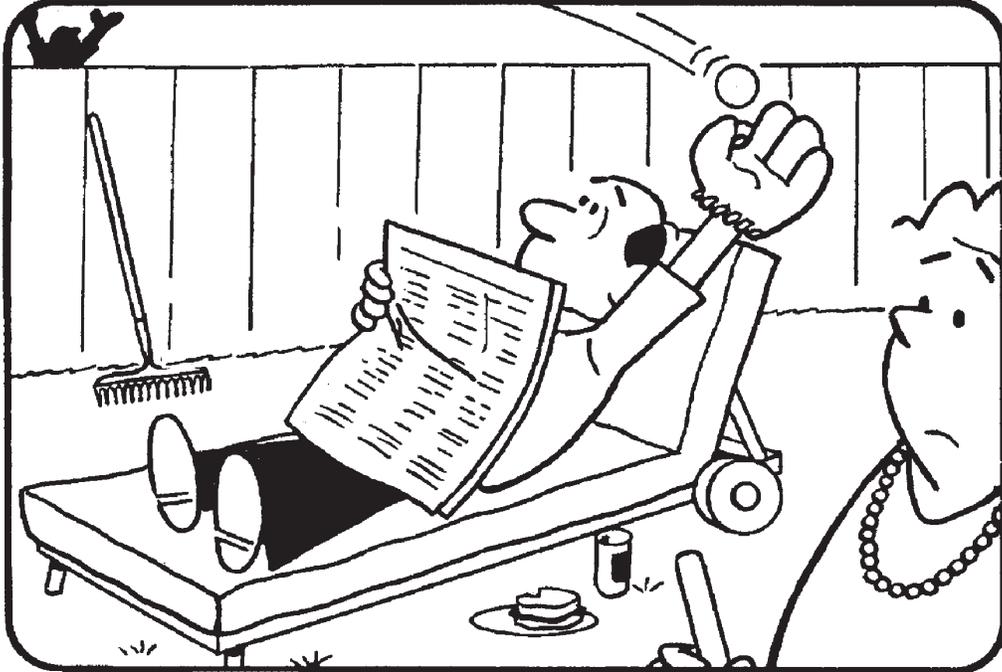
"Spiderhead" (R) -- Taking place sometime in the future, a penitentiary deemed "Spiderhead" holds convicts who have agreed to undergo experimental drug tests in order to shorten their prison sentence. Some of the drugs include a love drug (N-40), Darkenfloxx (a drug that generates great pain) and a laughing drug. The prisoners learn that the effects of these drugs shouldn't be underestimated, and neither should the sociopathic man in charge -- as our main character, an inmate named Jeff, gets to the bottom of. For those who are fans of "Black Mirror" or other dystopian stories, this new film starring Chris Hemsworth ("Thor") and "Top Gun's" Miles Teller might be the perfect watch for you. (Netflix)

"Chloe" (TV-16+) -- Becky (Erin Doherty from "The Crown") is a young woman who works a temp job and still lives at home with her mother. Like most 20-somethings, Becky is obsessed with social media, living her life vicariously through it, specifically through an influencer on Instagram named Chloe. When Chloe suddenly passes away, Becky is anxious to find out more. Unable to kill her curiosity, Becky slowly begins infiltrating herself into Chloe's old life by using any clues she can gather through Instagram about Chloe and her friends. It's only a matter of time before Becky realizes she's in way too deep. This six-part series hailing from the BBC is out on streaming now. (Prime Video)

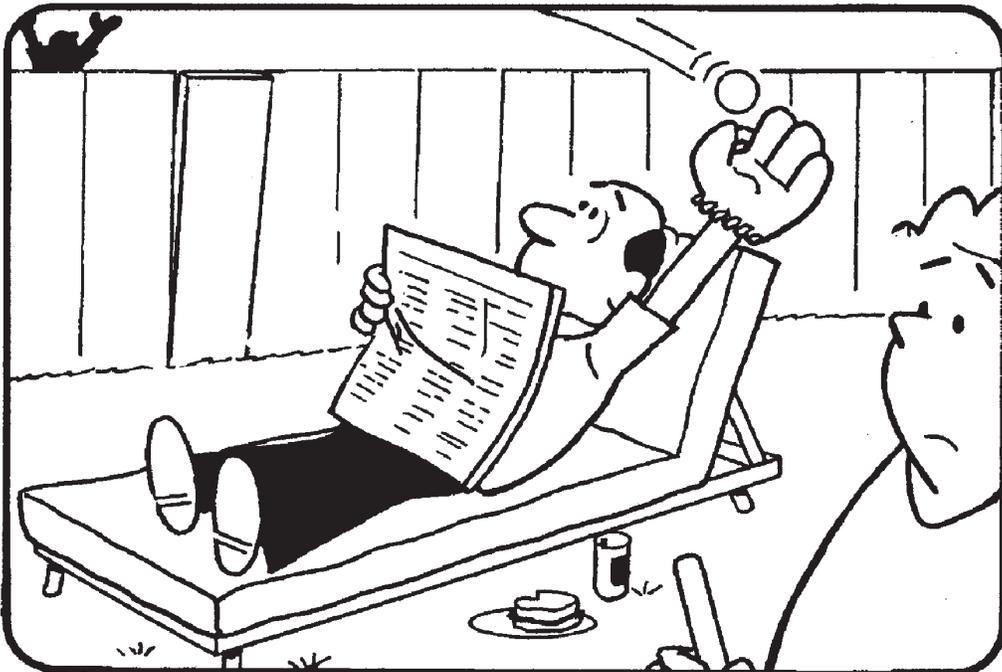
"America the Beautiful" (TV-PG) -- Right on time for Independence Day, National Geographic launches a new series based on the lovely land whose birthday we're celebrating this week. Narrated by Michael B. Jordan, each episode has a different theme focusing on regions throughout the country, with the very first episode focusing on the Golden Coast. Throughout the series, viewers get to follow the majestic creatures who inhabit each area and how the rough climate has forced these creatures to adapt over time. For the finale of the show, the producers worked alongside indigenous tribes to give insight on the fight against climate change. (Disney+)

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Rake is missing. 2. Board is missing. 3. Newspaper is smaller. 4. Sleeve is shorter. 5. Wheel is missing. 6. Beads are missing.

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* If you like taking baths, you can invest in a second rubber bathmat to drape over the side of the tub. The edge will be nonslip, so you can hold on for support, and your hands will not slide.

* Before frosting a cake, brush both layers with apricot nectar. This will secure any crumbs and provide a smooth surface. -- L.H. in Illinois

* For drains slowed by grease, sprinkle a half-cup each of salt and baking soda down the drain, and follow it with an entire kettle or pot of boiling water.

* If the smell in your cedar chest has faded, bring it back easily with extra-fine sandpaper. A very light sanding is all it takes in most cases.

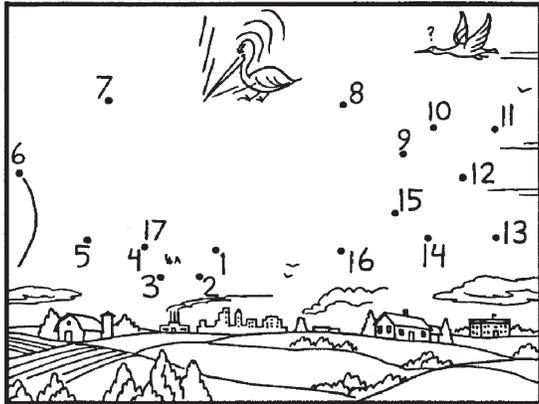
* For delicious baked potatoes, boil a pot of salted water, add whole potatoes with skin, remove from heat and let stand for 15 minutes. Finish in oven for a sturdier skin. Start checking for doneness after 15 minutes in the oven. Baking time can be cut in half! -- J.L. in Florida

* Remove that musty smell from stored clothes by adding either vinegar or ammonia to the wash water. Be sure to check for smell removal BEFORE drying, as the dryer can bake the smell into clothes, making it more difficult to remove.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.
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SHIP AHOY! What's coming in for a landing? Add lines dot to dot. What can you draw to complete the picture?

Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman

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1 ATE 

2 _ATE

3 __ATE

4 ___ATE

5 ____ATE

6 _____ATE

ATE SPATE POSER TO PONDER

OBSERVE that the word ATE appears progressively as a key element of five words at left. See if you can find these words in accord with the following definitions:

1. "It must have been some thing I ____." (ATE, in place).
2. Utility bill cost factor.
3. Collective group running for office.
4. Contribute to a cause or charity.
5. Promote.
6. Fire up into motion.

How quickly can you fill in the answers?

1. Ate. 2. Rate. 3. Slate. 4. Donate. 5. Elevate. 6. Activate.

WINGING IT! Two of these creatures are wingless, two have two wings and two have four wings: Flea, gnat, deer tick, dragonfly, housefly, butterfly. Which are which?

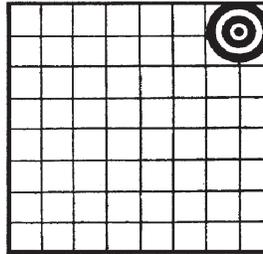
No wings: flea, deer tick; two wings: gnat, housefly; four wings: dragonfly, butterfly.

PAIR GAME! You are invited to take aim with a pencil at this 64-square target.

Object is to fire off 16 shots in such a manner that there are two hits in each of the rows across, down, and in corner-to-corner diagonals. (No two shots are to strike the same square.)

Let's see how quickly you can achieve the desired result.

P.S.: Target design at top right is for embellishment purposes only.



Top row, across: 4th and 6th squares; succeeding rows: 3,5; 5,7; 2,4; 1,7; 2,3; 6,8; 1,8. Other answers may be possible.

WHERE TO? Joe's at the show. Paul's at the mall. Gail's at the sale. Nellie's at the deli. Can you think of some?

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 River blocker
- 4 Locate
- 8 Cherry type
- 12 Hearty quaff
- 13 Notion
- 14 Manual reader
- 15 Asian holiday
- 16 Brando role
- 18 Glorify
- 20 Make lace
- 21 Formerly, once
- 24 Ballpark winner
- 28 Child star's parent, maybe
- 32 Zilch
- 33 Hosp. sections
- 34 Continental cash

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

- 36 Caustic solution
- 61 Links org.
- 11 Dog's warning
- 38 Overflowed
- 37 Bulb measure
- 17 Foot rub response
- 40 "Spring ahead" hrs.
- 39 Pop's pop
- 19 Race segment
- 42 — Paulo, Brazil
- 41 Covert agents
- 22 Overconfident
- 45 Western tribe
- 43 Summers in Paris
- 23 Baseball's Joe
- 47 Rope fiber
- 44 Vichy water
- 25 Aspic form
- 48 Scrambled wd.
- 46 Patriot Allen
- 26 "May It Be" singer
- 49 Asta's mistress
- 50 Cub Scout leader
- 27 Oboe insert
- 50 Pooch
- 55 Rock's Brian
- 28 Gives a darn?
- 51 Swelled head
- 56 Curved molding
- 29 Snare
- 52 Opposite of paleo-
- 57 Roof overhang
- 30 Wine region
- 53 Taunting laugh
- 58 Scratch the surface
- 31 Castle defense
- 54 Actress Mendes
- 59 Suitable
- 35 Showed scorn
- 60 Roe provider
- 10 Born abroad?

DOWN

- 1 Social appointment
- 2 "Roots" author Haley
- 3 Transcending (Pref.)
- 4 Greek orchard planting
- 5 Wedding words
- 6 Homer's neighbor
- 7 Loony
- 8 Frosty's nose
- 9 Somewhat (Suff.)
- 10 Born abroad?

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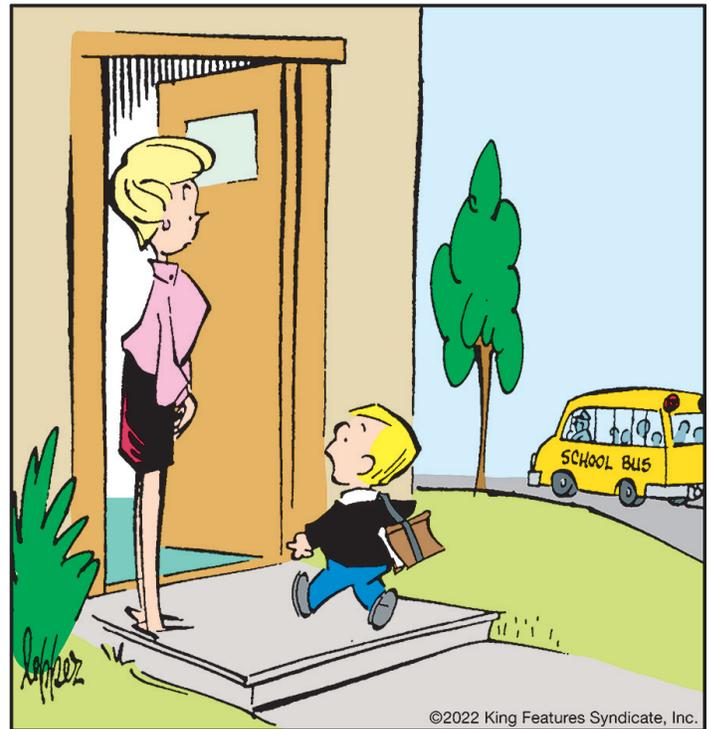
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

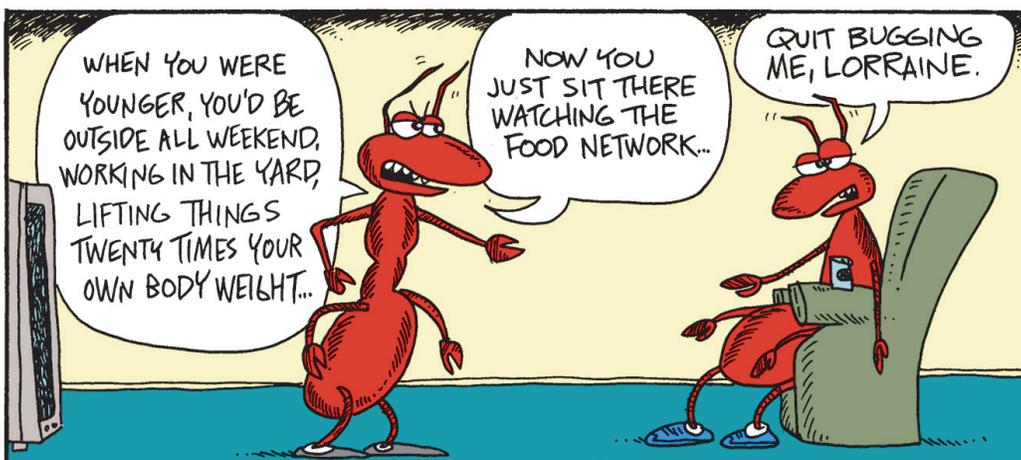
D	A	M		F	I	N	D		B	I	N	G	
A	L	E		I	D	E	A		U	S	E	R	
T	E	T		G	O	D	F	A	T	H	E	R	
E	X	A	L	T				T	A	T			
				E	R	S	T		H	O	M	E	R
S	T	A	G	E	M	O	M		N	O	N	E	
E	R	S		E	U	R	O	S		L	Y	E	
W	A	T	T		G	R	A	N	D	D	A	D	
S	P	I	E	S		E	T	E	S				
				E	A	U			E	T	H	A	N
D	E	N	M	O	T	H	E	R		E	N	O	
O	G	E	E		E	A	V	E		M	A	R	
G	O	O	D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

LAFF - A - DAY



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 "What did I learn today? I learned if you sit in the front of the bus, you get pelted with raisins!"

Out on a Limb



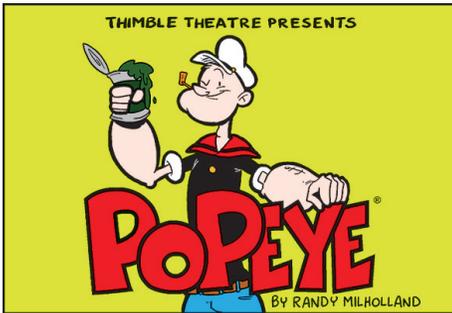
by Gary Kopervas

MIDDLE-AGED
ANT

KOPERVAS

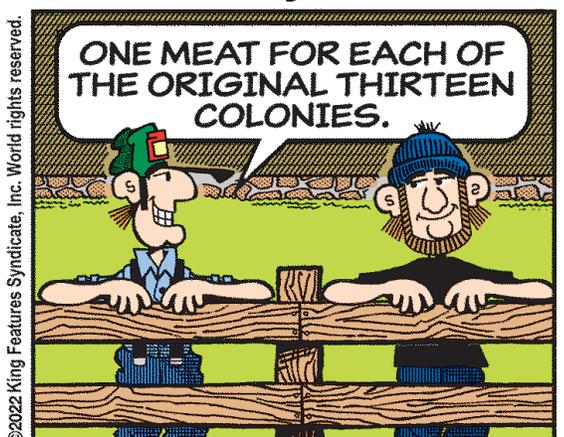
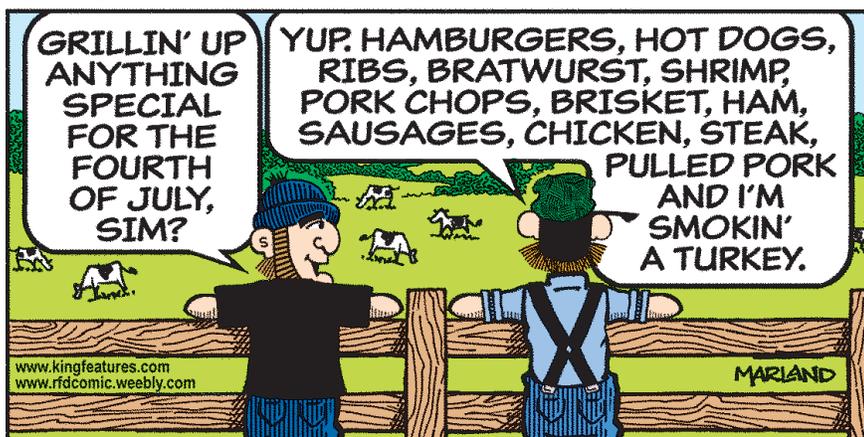
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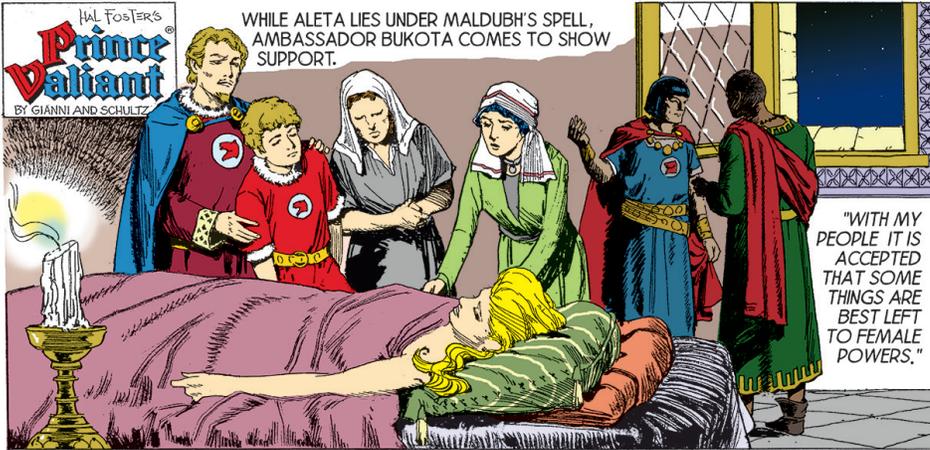
R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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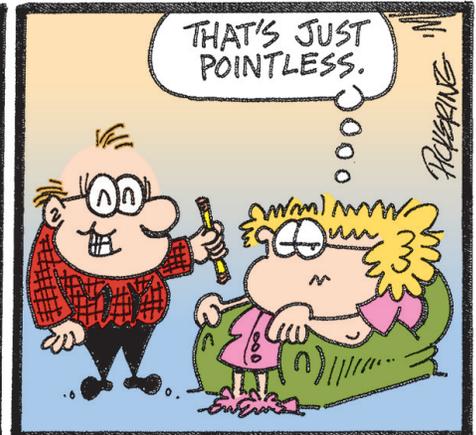
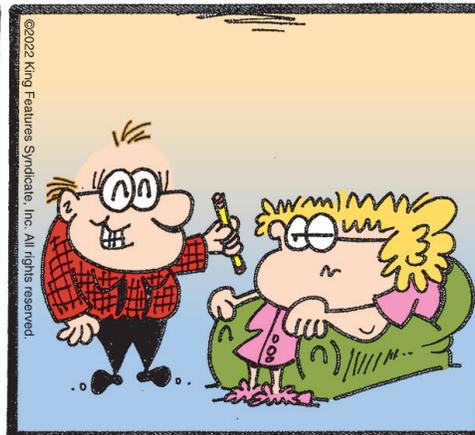
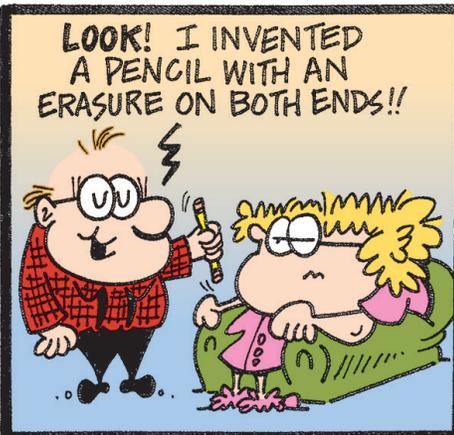


VAL NODS. "IT'S BEEN DIFFICULT FOR ME TO ACCEPT, BUT NOW I THINK I UNDERSTAND THE GAME. I AM ADJUSTING TO THIS WAR OF WITHCRAFT." AND, AS IF ON CUE...



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Study: the Second Half of Our Lives

Sometimes the results of research and studies are suspect if we don't trust the sources, but AARP and National Geographic recently published a joint study on the realities of the second half of life, and it doesn't get any better than that.

Their study covered the big topics as we age: health, relationships, financial security, housing, independent living, end of life, retirement and more.

Here are some highlights:

We care most about our brain health, our independence and our relationships, in that order, as we move into our 70s. By the time we reach our 80s, it's relationships that spike to the top of our list of concerns.

Guess what plunges by the time we reach our 70s? Work, and it's no surprise. We've been there and done that, and the idea of climbing the ladder of success at work no longer appeals to us.

Health is a curious category, but it makes sense once you think about it. It seems that those who are the healthiest are the ones who are most concerned about their health, likely because they'd like to stay that way and remain active. They're into walking and exercising and taking flu shots, whereas the ones who have a serious medical condition are less concerned, perhaps having accepted the reality of less-than-stellar health.

But age plays a part in that: We're most concerned about health in our 60s, much less concerned in our 70s, and very concerned again in our 80s, mostly about stamina, strength and flexibility. There's something to be said for picking a form of exercise and sticking with it, especially if it helps with those three concerns.

At the end of the day, the older we get, the more we care about meaningful relationships. As AARP noted, "Friends, family and community are the hallmarks of finding happiness."

To review the whole study, see www.aarp.org/research/topics/life/info-2022/second-half-life-desires-concerns.

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1. Name the South African golfer who beat Tiger Woods by three strokes to win the 2008 Masters Tournament.

2. What 1988 comedy film had cameos by Curt Gowdy, Jim Palmer, Tim McCarver, Mel Allen, Dick Enberg, Dick Vitale and Dr. Joyce Brothers in a baseball broadcast booth?

3. Before Marcus Ericsson won the 2022 Indianapolis 500, who was the only Swedish driver to win the race?

4. Name the National Soccer Hall of Famer who started 159 games as goalkeeper for the U.S. Women's National Team from 1994 to 2008.

5. France's Tony Estanguet, Slovakia's Michal Martikan and the Czech Republic's Stepanka Hilgertova are all Olympic gold medalists in what water sport?

6. Starting pitcher Dennis Ray Boyd, who played in Major League Baseball from 1982 to 1991, was better known by what nickname?

7. Before she married NBA star Dwyane Wade in 2014, actress Gabrielle Union was married to what former NFL running back?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Trevor Immelman.
2. "The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!"
3. Kenny Brack, in 1999.
4. Briana Scurry.
5. Canoeing.
6. Oil Can.
7. Chris Howard.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





High temperatures and kittens don't mix

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I live in hot, humid Florida and have the opportunity to adopt two kittens. My home has no air conditioning -- only ceiling and floor fans. When I return home during the summer, the indoor temperature can reach 95 degrees with high humidity. Can a kitten handle such high indoor temperatures and high humidity for nine hours a day? If there is any possibility of harm, I will not obtain the kittens. -- Ann T., via email

DEAR ANN: If there's doubt in your mind, you already know the answer. I commend you for thinking of the welfare of the kittens first.

Now, I'll tell you a similar story. During my first years out of college, I rented a small apartment in sunny, humid Orlando that had no air conditioning either. However, the first thing I purchased was a window unit air conditioner. Not for me, but for my cat. It was a significant expense, and it boosted my electric bill dramatically, but I didn't think twice about it.

Pets rely on us to keep them safe, fed and comfortable. An indoor cat doesn't have control over the temperature and humidity in the home. As the temperature rises, they have few options to cool off -- no breezy, shady spots to lounge in, not much fresh air. At 95 degrees, even with a full bowl of water nearby, pets can suffer a heat injury. Kittens are even more vulnerable.

If you'd like to adopt the kittens, first work out a way to keep your home's temperature below 80 degrees. Pets are an investment in happiness. Their comfort and safety are part of that investment. Thank you again for thinking of the kittens' safety.

Send your questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* In 1992, the president of Sri Lanka changed the spelling of the first English syllable of his country's name from iSrii to iShrii in the belief that it would improve the nation's fortunes. Unfortunately, he failed to reap any possible benefit, as he was assassinated the following year (and the spelling was reverted).

* Possums don't actually play dead. They merely pass out from fear of their predators.

* The name icoconuti comes from 16th-century Portuguese sailors. It is believed that the three holes on the fruit resembled a face, so it was honored with the word icoco, i meaning igrini or igrinning face. The inuti part was added later.

* Ketchup leaves the bottle at a rate of 25 miles per year.

* When a U.K. autoshop mechanic saw the Google Street View car heading in his direction, he thought it would be fun to stage a murder scene. Police paid his shop a visit a year later after the image finally appeared on Street View.

* The Argentine Football Association published a cultural manual ahead of the 2018 World Cup that included a section on how to seduce Russian women.

* As a child, Mark Twain nearly drowned nine times before he learned to swim.

* Looking to speed up your decision-making capacity? Try an action video game! Players tend to develop a heightened sensitivity to their surroundings, which in turn aids them with multitasking and activities such as driving, navigating around town and even keeping track of friends in a crowd.

* In Tokyo, you can buy a toupee for your dog.

* Charmin once hosted a contest for toilet paper wedding dresses. The winner received a cash prize of \$2,000.

Thought for the day: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." -- Benjamin Franklin

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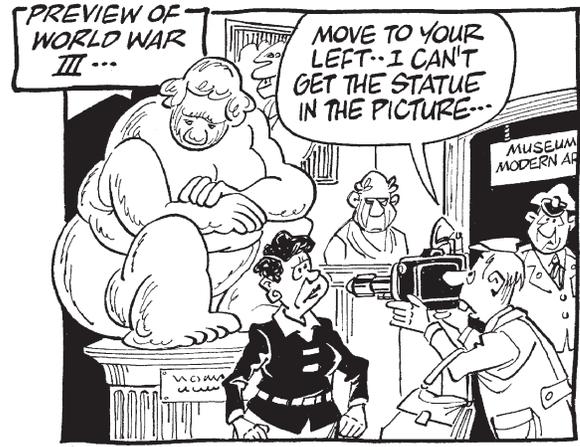
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



Thank to BABS & JIM CAG, CENTRAL ISLIP, N.Y.

BY AL SCADUTO



Thank to SYD LOPEZ, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

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8-12



Thank to LARRY SCOLES, MARYSVILLE, WA.



Bush beans

As the heat of mid-summer wearies your garden plants, it's not too late to try for another bean crop for fall. Bush beans tend to mature in 45 days, which means planting them in late July will have them ready for picking right before the first frost. Fall-grown beans can be more tender and flavorful than beans grown in the heat of the summer. Make sure to wet your soil thoroughly before planting to help speed up germination.

- Brenda Weaver

Sources: veranda.com, thespruce.com, gardenerspath.com



by Freddy Groves

New Covid Rules at VA Medical Facilities

The Department of Veterans Affairs has just instituted a three-tier safety program to keep veterans, visitors and staff safe from COVID at medical facilities.

Starting in May the Veterans Health Administration COVID-19 Health Protection Levels program, aligning with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's health care setting data, will determine on a weekly basis just what needs to be done before you can access care at a VA medical facility.

At mine, for example, it's at Level High. That means the full menu of options comes into play: masks, social distancing (stay 6 feet from others), probable screening at the door, approved visitors only and video

options encouraged for appointments instead of needing to go in.

At a Level Medium, it means masks, your care partner can come in but no other visitors, self-screen for COVID symptoms before you go and social distancing not required.

At a Level Low, visitors are probably fine (staff approved) if you're hospitalized, self-screen for COVID symptoms before you go and social distancing not required.

And yet there were other facilities I checked across the country where there were no health protection levels whatsoever, typically at VA in-network community partners like civilian optometrists. You'll need to call them individually to find out their protection levels. Oddly enough, in some locations across the country, facilities within mere miles of each other can range from low to medium to high.

Each week on Mondays the CDC rules will be updated on the facility listing with any changes and signs posted at doors. They'll also update on website and social media and telephone voicemails.

The new guidance covers not just coming in the door, but waiting rooms, group therapy, staffing, visitors ... everything.

If you're about to head out to a VA health facility, check to see their level so you'll know what to expect, even if you can guess based on the COVID cases in your home area: www.va.gov/coronavirus-veteran-frequently-asked-questions.

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Wishing Well®

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

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. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a female fox called?
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many stars were in the first American flag?
3. HISTORY: About how many slaves in the United States were free by the end of the Civil War?
4. TELEVISION: What was the name of the planet that Mork called home on "Mork & Mindy"?
5. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president was born on July 4?
6. U.S. STATES: How many major islands make up the state of Hawaii?
7. MOVIES: Which is the first non-English movie to win Best Picture at the Oscars?
8. GEOGRAPHY: Which is the largest continent in size?
9. LITERATURE: Which 19th-century novel's subtitle is "The Modern Prometheus"?
10. FOOD & DRINK: What is nori?

Answers

1. Vixen
2. 13, one for each colony
3. 4 million
4. Ork
5. Calvin Coolidge
6. Eight major islands and many small islets
7. "Parasite," 2020
8. Asia
9. "Frankenstein"
10. Dried, edible seaweed

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Land of the Free Because of the Brave

The patriotism South Dakotans display on the Fourth of July has deep roots in our state's history. In fact, we waved the Stars and Stripes before we even became a state! The Dakota Territory in the 1880s stood out for its love for civic virtue, and historians recount how few holidays rated higher than Independence Day to the settlers. Those same historians note that this ingrained love for America explains why so many South Dakotans served in the World Wars, and why we as a state revere our veterans.

As we pause to observe the nation's birthday this week, I am concentrating especially on our veterans. Why? Because the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. have thrown in the towel on their poorly thought-out plan to close down several VA hospitals across the nation, which included Fort Meade and Hot Springs, and to stop emergency services at the Sioux Falls VA, as well as close the clinic in Wagner.

When Biden Administration officials initially announced earlier this year their intent to take such drastic action, I immediately raised my voice in opposition. As I explained in my mid-March letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, those closures would have severely and negatively impacted the care of veterans in South Dakota and surrounding states. I noted that America should offer its veterans more health care, not less, and that this plan's intent to "centralize" services would force our veterans to travel hundreds of miles for medical care they desperately need.

In short, I made clear that these recommendations to dramatically change veterans' health care represented a betrayal of our veterans who offered to sacrifice life and limb to protect us and our freedoms. Thankfully, many other South Dakotans agreed with me and also raised their voices in protest of this terrible plan. I'm thankful the members of our congressional delegation—Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, and Congressman Dusty Johnson—were likewise united in opposition.

So often, when we observe the federal government initiate a plan that is so obviously wrong, it seems like nothing can be done to stop it. But here, we made a difference. By speaking up in a measured, thoughtful, and powerful way, we drummed up more opposition, culminating in a bipartisan group of Senators who took action this past week to force the bureaucrats to back down. By honoring the First Amendment and protesting a terrible federal government plan, we vindicated our veterans, those who have willingly offered their lives to protect our freedoms. Standing up for their right to quality health care barely scratches the surface of all we owe our heroes—but thank goodness we did.

President Calvin Coolidge, the only President of the United States born on the Fourth of July, once said, "The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten." This Independence Day let's all pause and remember our defenders—our veterans. We are the land of the free because of the brave—and we who live in freedom owe them a debt that we must continuously make good on: especially on Independence Day.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Proud to Be an American

The Fourth of July means many things to many people. It's an opportunity for communities to come together for picnics and parades. It's a time for friends and families to gather and create new memories. And while we celebrate all of the blessings and opportunities we have as Americans at parades, barbecues, and fireworks shows, we must not overlook the true meaning of the holiday – we should honor our freedoms that have been paid for by the sacrifices of so many Americans past and present.

On Independence Day, I'm reminded of our Founding Fathers who put together the greatest statement of self-government the world has ever seen: the Declaration of Independence. They proclaimed that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

America is the greatest country the world has ever known, not only because of what we have achieved, but because we're humble enough to know that we always have room to listen, learn, and grow as we continually strive to live up to the founding principles of the Declaration of Independence. The rights that the founders described in that document aren't determined by one's social status, where an individual is born or raised, or even any standard set by government itself. That's what makes them so unique. They're granted to us by God. They are unalienable. And the governments born from these free people are created and maintained with their consent. That's pretty remarkable when you think about it.

As we celebrate the stars and stripes, we also honor those who served and continue to serve our great nation, paying tribute to them by upholding the values for which they continue to fight. I think about my father, Harold, a fighter pilot who flew Hellcats off of the U.S.S. Intrepid in the Pacific theater during World War II. Through him, I learned about the Greatest Generation – their humility, their quiet service, and their dedication to the cause of freedom. The stories my dad would tell us about the men he served with will stay with me forever – these men were driven by an unwavering love for our country, full of pride and patriotism. The world had never met, nor will it meet again, a group of individuals so dedicated to the pursuit of freedom and democracy around the world.

Our nation continues to have the blessings of liberty and freedom our forefathers sought for future generations of Americans. The Founding Fathers dedicated their lives to creating our great nation, and the brave men and women who have answered the call to serve continue that fight today. We are forever grateful for their bravery in defending freedom, liberty, and the American dream.

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CONGRESSMAN

DUSTY JOHNSON

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



From Farm to Roundtable

This week, South Dakota's agriculture communities got to show off. I hosted the Republican leader on the House Agriculture Committee, Congressman "GT" Thompson from Pennsylvania, and introduce him to the wonderful people of South Dakota. We closed off June Dairy Month with a celebration at Valley Queen and at the Holstein Association USA's National Convention.

We're diving into Farm Bill discussions on the Ag Committee – no better way than meeting with boots on the ground to do so. Ranking Member Thompson and I had a busy day. From checking out a quarter scale tractor at SDSU that won the International Quarter Scale Tractor Student Design Competition to bottle feeding calves – South Dakotans gave him a warm welcome.

Once Ranking Member Thompson arrived, our first stop was meeting with SDSU President Barry Dunn at the university's Raven Precision Agriculture Center. As a land grant university, SDSU depends on state and federal funding to be a competitive research university. Research from land grant universities spurs innovation in agriculture, creating new and improved technologies and practices for agriculturalists and beyond.

Our next stop was a farm in Bridgewater to hear from agriculture member organizations like S.D. Corn and S.D. Cattlemen's Association. We discussed their priorities and the roadmap for crafting the next Farm Bill that will be completed next year. Farm Bill discussions in the Ag Committee have already started, and hearing from the folks on the ground that will be impacted by our decisions is critical to ensure the Farm Bill addresses the needs of our agriculturalists.

Our final visit was the Holstein Association USA's national convention. Ranking Member Thompson and I spoke with dairy farmers about the next Farm Bill, the dairy industry's efforts in carbon capture technology, and school nutrition policies, including milk in schools. Their thoughts echoed discussions that we have had over and over again in the House Agriculture Committee—our farmers are committed to reducing their environmental impact and produce products that are safe and healthy for the consumer.

I had a great time showing off South Dakota to Ranking Member Thompson. We are looking forward to continue working together to craft a Farm Bill that addresses the needs of our producers.

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An Apple Fritter on My Mind

The last few weeks have been rather hectic, and I've struggled to keep up with everything. If it weren't for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I probably would not have gotten where I am today.

I don't know anybody who can plan out a day, week, or month better than her. She has everything planned down to the smallest detail.

On the other hand, I am not very good when it comes to these detailed plannings. I'm the kind of in-the-you moment person. Therefore, I really get things screwed up as far as scheduling.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage can think of a dozen things at the same time. I can only think of one thing at a time. This gets me into trouble because sometimes, what I'm thinking about isn't what I should be doing at that time.

I think what it's called is multitasking. This is something that I cannot do even though I have tried for a long time. I can only keep one task and focus at a time. Usually, it's the wrong task I'm thinking of at that particular time.

Women are famous for multitasking. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is certainly the Queen of multitasking. No matter how much she has in her hand, she is always has room for one more task.

I've never been able to do that, and I don't have a good reason. Usually, at the end of the week, I go over my list of tasks and discover several things I forgot about. That usually is the very frustrating part of my week. I started out with good intentions, but then something else came into view, and I forgot what I was supposed to do.

It is quite frustrating because Monday morning, my wife will make out her list of tasks for the week several pages of them. On Friday afternoon, she celebrates the fact that everything on her list is checked off and has been duly completed.

How she does it is above my pay grade. I'm glad she can do it, and I'm jealous of that talent.

The other week I had a pile of tasks needed to have done. Every one of them was necessary to complete. I hate it when something has a due date attached to it, but all were crucial in fulfilling.

I started Monday quite cheerful about my list of tasks. Friday afternoon, I was frustrated because not one of those tasks had been fulfilled. I don't know what happened, but I do know that nothing happened.

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I just felt jittery all day long. Since my heart attack last year, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage convinced me to drawback on my Apple Fritters. There was a time in my life when I had an Apple fritter a day and sometimes more than that.

Looking over my list of unfulfilled tasks, I could only think about an Apple Fritter at the time. Nothing would really calm down my nerves but one of those Apple Fritters.

Through the years, I have tried to convince my wife that an Apple Fritter is a fruit. I can't convince her even though I have tried every con I know.

It's been a long time since I was this jittery about my schedule. I knew the only thing that would calm me down a little was sneaking out of the house and getting an Apple Fritter. The more I thought about it, the more I thought about it.

I looked at my list of tasks for the week and put at the bottom of it the letters "A F". I knew what it meant, and I was hoping the other person in our residence did not know what it meant.

I laid my list on the table, not thinking too much about it, and then my wife picked it up. She looked at it, then looked at me and asked what "A F" meant?

At first, I didn't know what she was talking about, and then it dawned on me that I had put those letters on my task list. I did not know how to respond to her, but in a few moments, I said, "That simply means Article Finishing." Then I smiled one of my gregarious smiles.

She looked at me and wasn't smiling but giving me one of her "stares." I suspected I was in trouble.

"Are you sure," she asked, "that it does not mean Apple Fritter?"

It was such a frustrating week; it was hard for me to bounce back with a credible answer.

"You do know," she said very seriously, "that you are not to have Apple Fritters because of your health?"

Trying to come up with an answer, I simply said, "I was just thinking that maybe if I thought a little bit about an Apple Fritter, it would make me feel a little bit better about my week."

Looking at me, she said, "I think that finishing your tasks during the week, is what will make you feel better."

Later I was reminded of what the Bible says. "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

I don't have to do everything, just a few things that I can handle for the glory of God.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: I hear Emperor penguins are on the brink of extinction... How did they get there and what can we do to save this species?

—J.W., Westport, CT

Two words explain the decline of Emperor penguins: climate change. Like many wildlife species across the globe, Emperor penguin populations have been declining for years due to the repercussions of a warming planet, such as melting sea ice and rising oceans. According to a 2021 population survey and assessment in *Global Change Biology*, "If Sea ice declines at the rate projected by climate models under current energy system trends and policies ... almost all [Emperor penguin] colonies would become quasi-extinct by 2100."

"Antarctica is not escaping climate change at all. It's warming, it's melting, it's contributing to sea-level rise," Tim Naish of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) tells Newshub.

Scientists from the British Antarctic Survey and the non-profit Oceanites estimate that approximately 238,000 breeding pairs of Emperors, or 595,000 adult birds, live in Antarctica. Although these numbers have held relatively steady over the past several decades, new studies warn that the penguins' future is tied directly to that of the sea ice on which they depend; as the ice melts, so too do the penguins' chances of survival.

Emperor penguins are not the only Antarctic species with uncertain futures. As a sentinel species of the Southern Ocean—the proverbial canary in the coalmine—declines in Emperor populations indicate larger ecosystem disruptions that affect other wildlife, as well. Krill, a small shrimplike animal that floods the Southern Ocean, serves as a major food source for baleen whales, seals and fish, as well as penguins. But krill populations have been declining in recent decades and may decline by as much as 30 percent by the year 2100.

One way to save Emperor penguins is to study how they adapt to their changing habitats. "In contrast to what people think, the Emperor penguin is a species very poorly studied," Céline Le Bohec from the Hubert Curien Pluridisciplinary Institute in Strasbourg, France tells *Popular Science*. "...any data, especially from the sea, is exciting and precious."

Scientific research recently got a boost in the form of a yellow data-gathering robot that roams among the Emperor colony. ECHO's data will allow researchers to "define and map marine biological 'hotspots' and Marine Protected Areas," Le Bohec said. Such information may prove invaluable to informing where and how to implement conservation efforts.

Additionally, any actions that reduce climate change will eventually help the Emperors and all Antarctic wildlife. Reducing our carbon footprint and plastic waste present two immediate opportunities. Eating less fish and cutting down on krill oil may also help. Many fish farms use krill scooped from Antarctica for fish food. Krill fishing not only reduces the penguins' food source, but can also catch hungry whales, seals and penguins in the fishing nets. Finally, non-profit organizations that protect penguins and their habitats are always in search of additional funding—a small donation can't hurt!



Emperor penguins in Antarctica have been declining for two decades as climate change melts the sea ice they depend on for survival. Credit: Pexels.com.

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South Dakota COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

1254

Active Cases

3,101
+321

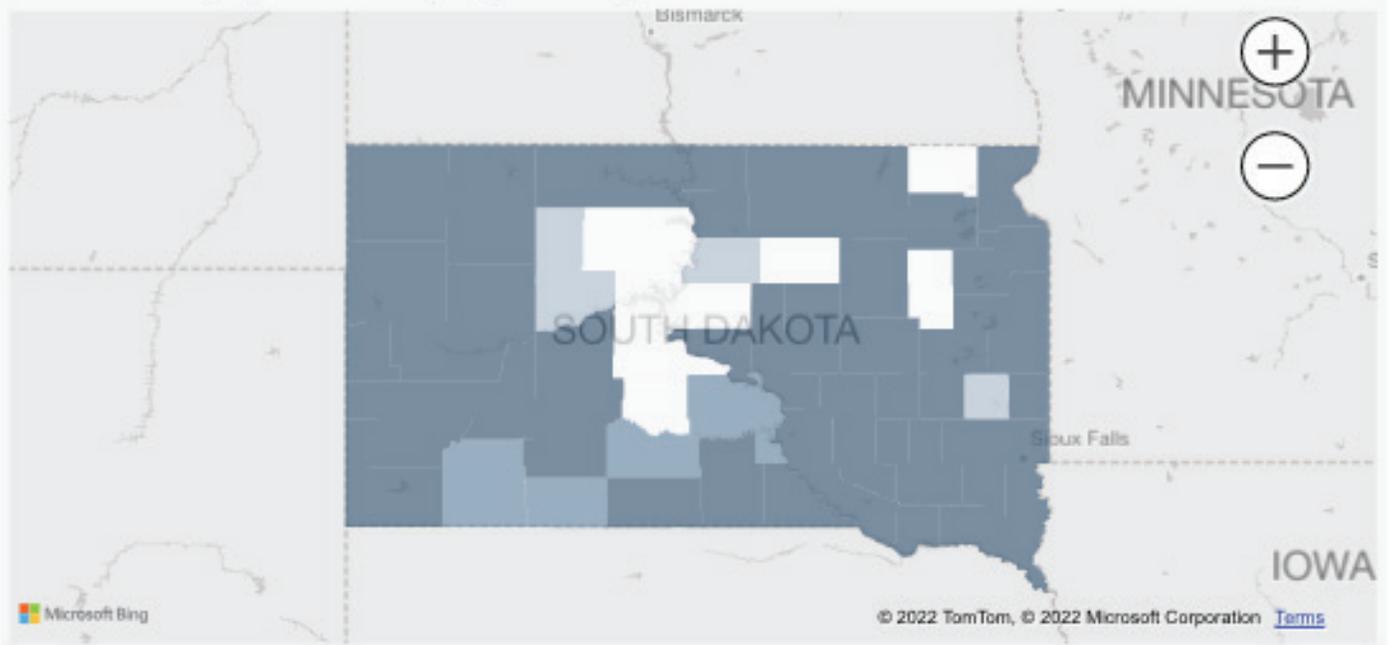
Recovered Cases

238,484

Currently Hospitalized

53

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

244,523

Total Tests

2,227,642

Deaths Among Cases

2,938

Ever Hospitalized

11,029

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

74%

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Brown County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

44

Active Cases

99
+22

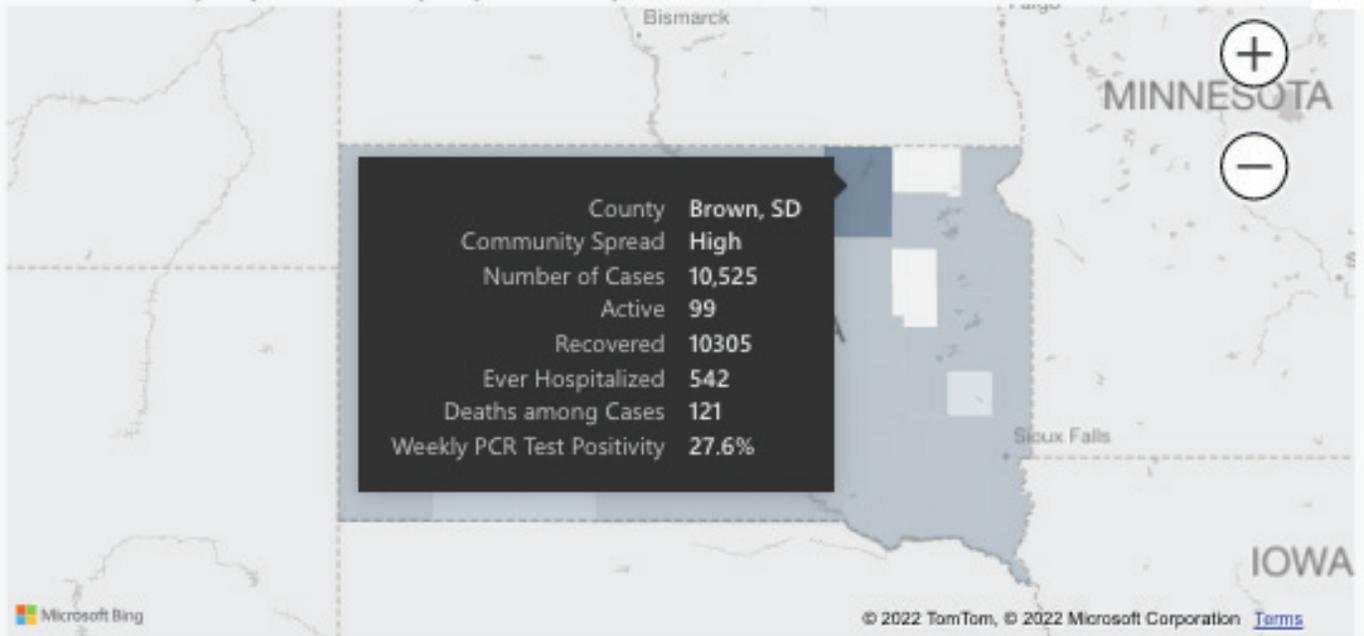
Recovered Cases

10,305

Currently Hospitalized

53

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

10,525

Total Tests

106,363

Deaths Among Cases

121

Ever Hospitalized

542

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

74%

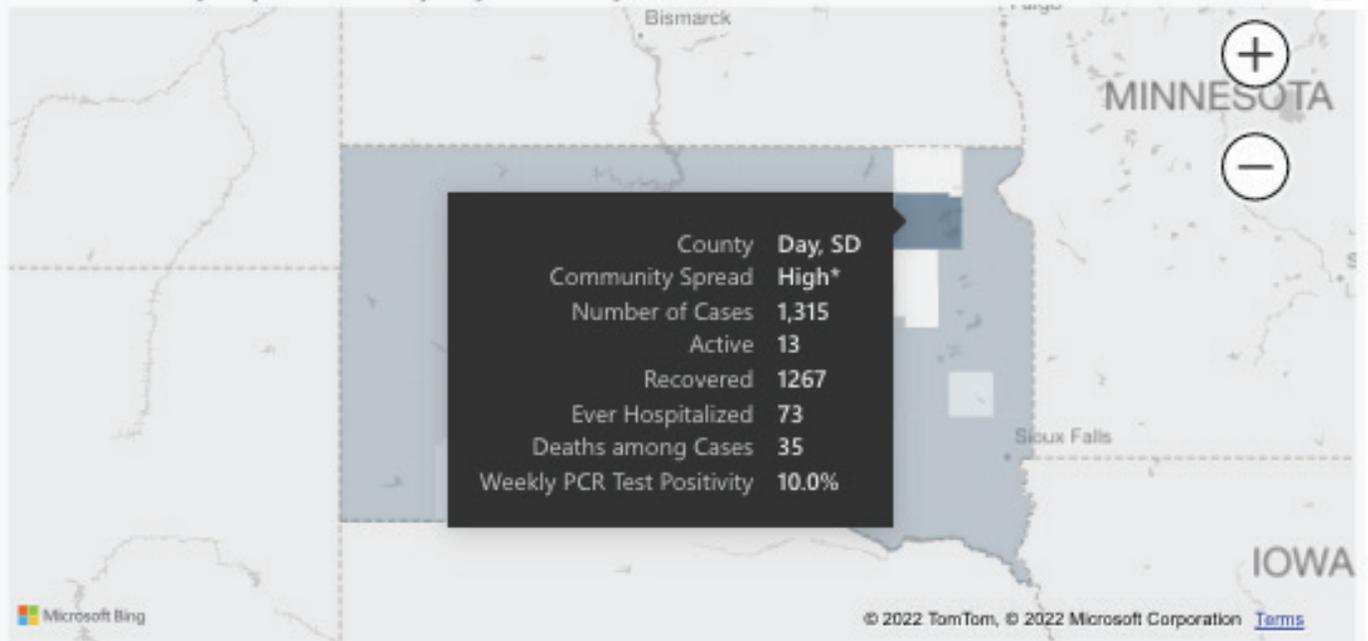
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Day County COVID-19 Report



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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

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>



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Ever Hospitalized

11,029

03/07/2020 - 06/27/2022

Currently Hospitalized

53
-12

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)	1,168	19
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176	3
Omicron (BA.2)	108	105
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	114,958	5,738	1,604
Female	129,565	5,291	1,334

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	16,372	153	3
10-19 years	29,207	173	2
20-29 years	42,664	592	14
30-39 years	41,274	825	52
40-49 years	34,094	968	88
50-59 years	31,396	1,489	226
60-69 years	26,222	2,239	476
70-79 years	14,038	2,343	689
80+ years	9,256	2,247	1,388

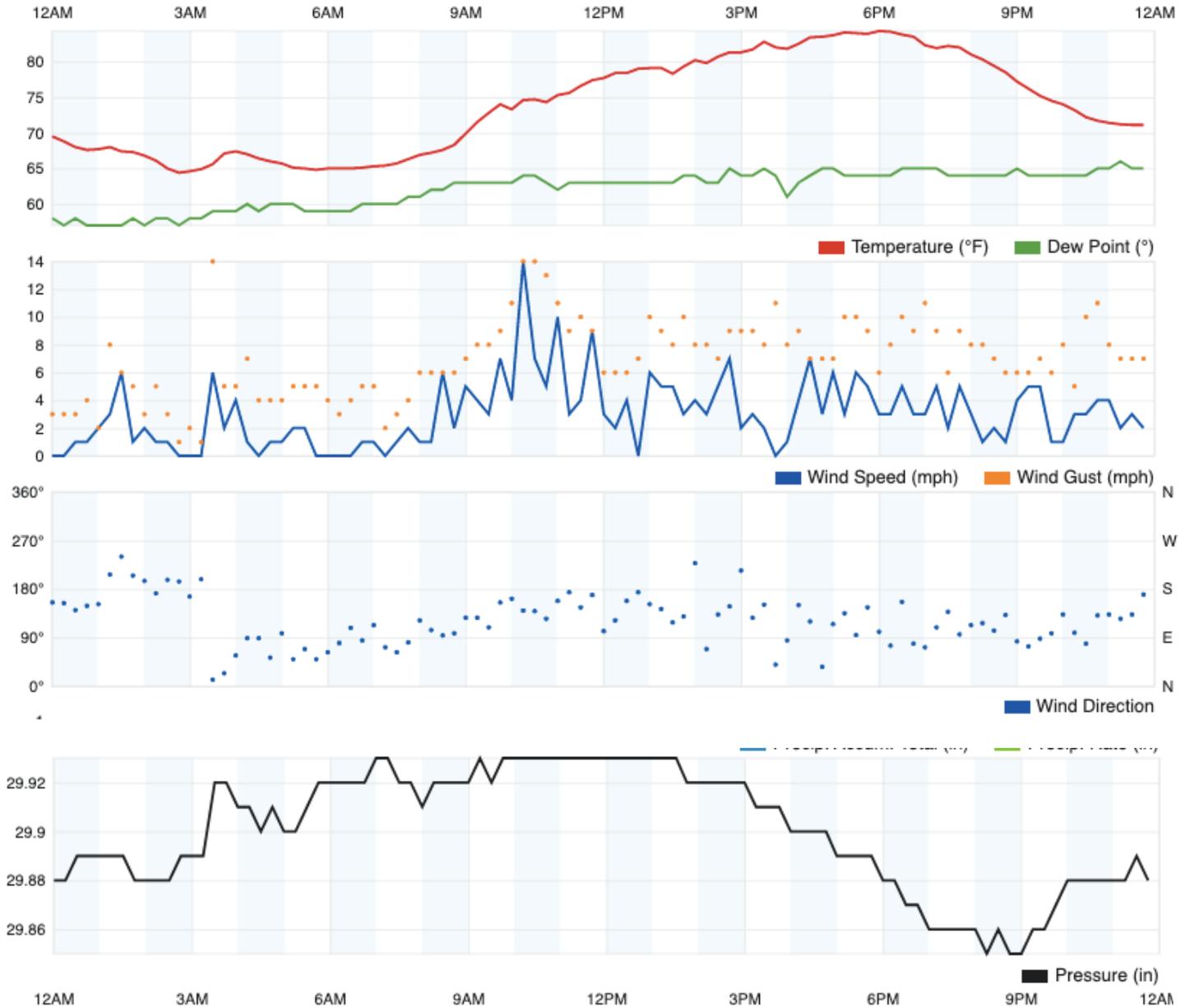
RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths
Asian / Pacific Islander	3,386	109	20
Black	6,006	208	22
Hispanic	10,477	353	39
Native American	30,845	1,917	444
Other	2,039	59	13
Unknown	4,818	70	18
White	186,952	8,313	2,382

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Sunday



Chance
T-storms

High: 88 °F

Sunday
Night



T-storms
Likely

Low: 69 °F

Independence
Day



Slight Chance
T-storms

High: 87 °F

Monday
Night



Chance
T-storms

Low: 68 °F

Tuesday



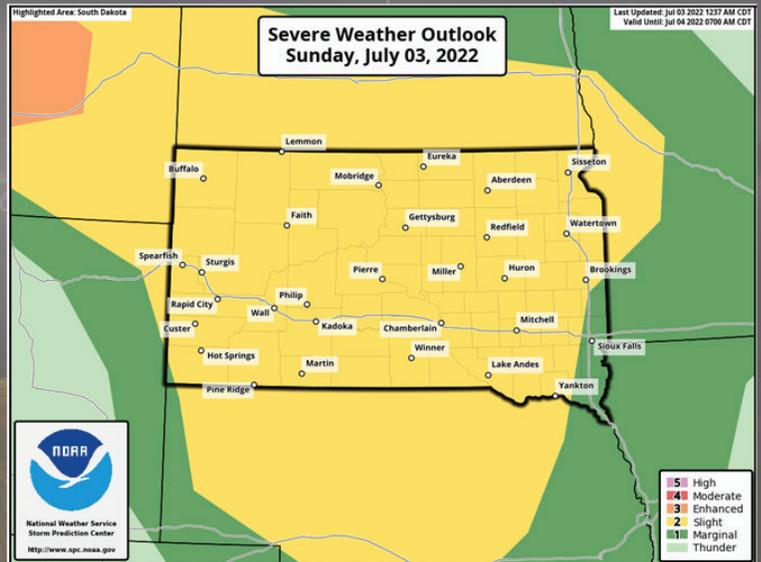
Slight Chance
T-storms

High: 84 °F

Thunderstorms Late This Afternoon/Evening

Slight risk for severe storms
- Main threats:
large hail and gusty winds

Chances for strong to
severe storms will persist
through mid week



Chances for showers and thunderstorms will persist into mid week. Another round of strong to severe storms is expected to develop late this afternoon into this evening across the forecast area. Be weather aware as the active pattern continues!

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Today in Weather History

July 3, 1959: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast after destroying a farm building at the western edge of Java, Walworth County. Elsewhere in the area, high straight line winds caused property damage while hail damaged crops. The largest hailstone was 2.75 inches in diameter and was observed 9 miles NNW of Timber Lake.

July 3, 2003: A supercell thunderstorm moved southeastward across western Jackson County and Bennett County. The storm dropped up to golf ball sized hail and produced an F2 tornado north of Tuthill in Bennett County. The tornado touched down about a mile north of the junction of highways 18 and 73, where it destroyed a garage. The tornado moved south-southeast and destroyed a mobile home just to the southeast of the highway intersection and then dissipated just north of Tuthill. No one was injured.

Also on this day, a line of severe thunderstorms with hail up to the size of golf balls and winds over 80 mph at times brought widespread property and crop damage to far northeast Brown, across Marshall and Roberts counties. The wind and hail caused the most damage to crops in a 20 mile to a 70-mile long area from north of Britton over to Sisseton and into west central Minnesota. Much of the plants were shredded to the ground. In fact, approximately 30 percent (70,000 acres) of Marshall County's 227,000 acres of crops were damaged or destroyed. Cities receiving the most damage from the line of storms were, Hecla, Andover, Britton, Kidder, Veblen, Roslyn, Langford, Lake City, Claire City, Sisseton, Waubay, Rosholt, and Wilmot. Storm damage mostly included trees and branches down, power lines and poles down, roof and siding damage from hail and fallen trees, some farm outbuildings damaged or destroyed, and many windows broke out of homes and vehicles. Also, many boats, docks, and campers received some damage in the path of the storms. An aerial crop spraying plane at the Sisseton airport was picked up and thrown 450 feet and landed upside down. In Claire City, a 55,000-bushel grain bin was blown off of its foundation and flattened. On a farm five miles north of Amherst, three large grain bins were blown over and damaged.

July 3, 2010: Severe thunderstorms brought damaging winds to parts of central South Dakota, especially to Lyman County. Eighty mph winds moved a building off the foundation at the Presho Municipal Airport. Eighty mph winds also destroyed or damaged many grain bins and caused damage to several other buildings in and around Presho. A large sign, twenty power poles, along with many trees were downed in Presho. There were also several broken houses and car windows from hail and high winds. Seventy mph winds tore a garage door loose, bent a flagpole over, and downed many large tree branches in Kennebec. The winds also caused some damage to homes, sheds, and grain bins in Kennebec.

1873: A tornado in Hancock County, in far west central Illinois, destroyed several farms. From a distance, witnesses initially thought the tornado was smoke from a fire. A child was killed after being carried 500 yards; 10 other people were injured.

1975: Up to 3 inches of rain caused flash flooding throughout Las Vegas, NV. The main damage occurred to vehicles at Caesars Palace with approximately 700 damaged or destroyed with several cars found miles away. North Las Vegas was hardest hit with \$3.5 million in damage. Two people drowned in the flood waters.

2000: There is a certain irony about one of the driest places getting the greatest rainfall, and yet that is what happened at usually rain-sparse Vanguard, Saskatchewan on July 3 when a carwash-like down-pour flooded the community of 200 people, some 65 km southeast of Swift Current. As much as 375 mm (14.76") of rain fell in eight hours, the greatest storm for that duration on the Canadian Prairies and one of the most substantial rainfall intensities ever recorded in Canada.

The spectacular thunderstorm produced more cloud-to-ground lightning strikes than that part of southern Saskatchewan would expect in two years. A year's amount of rain left crops in the field drowning and rotting, and roads and rail lines under water. The force of the water crushed cars and farm implements swept away grain bins and soaked large bales. Stranded residents had to be rescued by boat, which rapidly became the carrier of choice on the main street in Vanguard. The flash flood also carried away herds of cattle and drowned dozens of deer and antelope. Some further irony, when millions of liters of contaminated water submerged the water-treatment plant and backed up into homes and businesses, officials had to ship in bottled water from Swift Current.

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How To Recognize A Fool

No one that I know wants to be called a "fool." But, this term is used fifty times in Proverbs. Obviously, God must want us to know who qualifies for this title, and how those who are "fools" can develop a new identity.

To begin with, the word used here for "fool" has nothing to do with one's mental capacity. It would not be God-like to call someone a "fool" if they had no control over their thoughts and behavior. Instead, it has to do with a person's chosen outlook on life. This person's view is set, and nothing or no one will ever be able to change it.

This "fool" is one who has no desire to invest any time in searching for wisdom. It's thought to be a product that can be purchased online or in a bookstore. Solomon clarified this when he wrote, "Why does a fool offer the sage a fee, when he has no mind to learn." We can't buy wisdom!

Since this is true, only reliable and dependable wisdom comes from God. Therefore, it must then be spiritual and not mental. A fool has no reverence or respect for truth. Unfortunately, the "fool" is very comfortable with things as they are. This person refuses to "fear the Lord" and rejects His counsel. The "fool" is satisfied to live life without God.

Whatever we know of God, think of God, understand about God, and believe about God, comes to us from God as He reveals Himself to us. Atheists deny God, and agnostics say they are searching for proof of God. Until a person is willing and open to see God as He has revealed Himself in His world, His Word, and His Son, he will remain a fool.

Prayer: Lord, open the eyes of those who refuse to see, and the ears of those who refuse to hear Your Wisdom. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

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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
-6/20/2022 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
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/07/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

01-04-13-31-34

(one, four, thirteen, thirty-one, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$95,000

Lotto America

09-19-43-44-50, Star Ball: 8, ASB: 4

(nine, nineteen, forty-three, forty-four, fifty; Star Ball: eight; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$16,340,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 370,000,000

Powerball

09-10-37-59-62, Powerball: 26, Power Play: 3

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

Estimated jackpot: \$26,000,000

Texas clinics halt abortions after state high court ruling

By ACACIA CORONADO and ED WHITE Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Clinics were shutting down abortion services in the nation's second-largest state Saturday after the Texas Supreme Court blocked an order briefly allowing the procedure to resume in some cases, the latest in legal scrambles taking place across the U.S. following the reversal of Roe v. Wade.

The Friday night ruling stopped a three-day-old order by a Houston judge who said clinics could resume abortions up to six weeks into pregnancy. The following day, the American Civil Liberties Union said it doubted that any abortions were now being provided in a state of nearly 30 million people.

Amy Hagstrom Miller, president of Whole Woman's Health, said the ruling forced an end to abortions in its four Texas clinics, and workers there were winding down abortion operations and having "heartbreaking conversations" with women whose appointments were canceled.

"I ache for us and for the people we have dedicated our lives to serve with the fabulous abortion care we provide, many who will be denied that right in the months and possibly years to come," Hagstrom Miller said in a statement.

Planned Parenthood's multiple affiliates in Texas had not resumed abortion services even after the restraining order was put in place Tuesday.

At issue was a long-dormant 1925 criminal law that targets individuals who perform abortions. Clinics had argued that it was invalid after abortion became a constitutional right across the U.S. in 1973. The U.S. Supreme Court, however, struck down the landmark Roe decision June 24, leaving abortion policy to states.

"Pro-life victory! ... Litigation continues, but I'll keep winning for Texas's unborn babies," said Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, who had asked the state Supreme Court to intervene.

Separately, Texas has a 2021 law that was designed to ban abortion in the event that Roe were overturned. It takes effect in the weeks ahead.

"Extremist politicians are on a crusade to force Texans into pregnancy and childbirth against their will, no matter how devastating the consequences," said Julia Kaye of the ACLU.

Providers and patients across the country have been struggling to navigate the evolving legal landscape around abortion laws and access.

In Florida, a law banning abortions after 15 weeks went into effect Friday, the day after a judge called

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it a violation of the state constitution and said he would sign an order temporarily blocking it next week. The ban could have broader implications in the South, as Florida currently allows greater access to the procedure than neighboring states.

Even when women travel outside states with abortion bans, they may have fewer options to end their pregnancies as the prospect of prosecution follows them.

Planned Parenthood of Montana this week stopped providing medication abortions to patients who live in states with bans.

Planned Parenthood North Central States, which offers the procedure in Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska, is telling patients they must take both pills in the regimen while in a state that allows abortion.

The use of pills has been the most common method to end a pregnancy since 2000, when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved mifepristone, the main drug used in medication abortions. Taken with misoprostol, a drug that causes cramping that empties the womb, it constitutes the abortion pill.

Also Friday, Google, the company behind the internet's dominant search engine and the Android software that powers most smartphones, said it would automatically purge information about users who visit abortion clinics or other places that could trigger potential legal problems.

In addition to abortion clinics, Google cited counseling centers, fertility centers, addiction treatment facilities, weight loss clinics and cosmetic surgery clinics as destinations that will be erased from location histories. Users have always had the option to edit their location histories on their own, but now Google will do it for them as an added level of protection.

"We're committed to delivering robust privacy protections for people who use our products, and we will continue to look for new ways to strengthen and improve these protections," Jen Fitzpatrick, a Google senior vice president, wrote in a blog post.

Russia claims capture of pivotal city in eastern Ukraine

By MARIA GRAZIA MURRU and FRANCESCA EBEL Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia's defense minister said Russian forces took control Sunday of the last major Ukrainian-held city in Ukraine's Luhansk province, bringing Moscow closer to its stated goal of seizing all of Ukraine's Donbas region.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu told President Vladimir Putin that Russia's troops together with members of a local separatist militia "have established full control over the city of Lysychansk," Russian news agencies reported.

Ukrainian fighters spent weeks trying to defend Lysychansk and to keep it from falling to Russia, as neighboring Sievierodonetsk did a week ago. A presidential adviser predicted late Saturday that the city's could be determined within days.

Ukrainian officials did not immediately provide an update on its status.

Earlier Sunday, Luhansk's governor said Russian forces were strengthening their positions in a grueling fight to capture the last stronghold of resistance in the province.

"The occupiers threw all their forces on Lysychansk. They attacked the city with incomprehensibly cruel tactics," Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai said on the Telegram messaging app. "They suffer significant losses, but stubbornly advance. They are gaining a foothold in the city."

A river separates Lysychansk from Sievierodonetsk. Oleksiy Arestovych, an adviser to the Ukrainian president, said during an online interview late Saturday that Russian forces had managed for the first time to cross the river from the north, creating a "threatening" situation.

Arestovych said they had not reached the center of the city but that the course of the fighting indicated the battle for Lysychansk would be decided by Monday.

Luhansk and neighboring Donetsk are the two provinces that make up the Donbas, where Russia has focused its offensive since pulling back from northern Ukraine and the capital, Kyiv, in the spring.

Pro-Russia separatists have held portions of both eastern provinces since 2014, and Moscow recognizes all of Luhansk and Donetsk as sovereign republics. Syria's government said Wednesday that it would also

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recognize the “independence and sovereignty” of the two areas.

Taking Lysychansk would open the way for the Russians to move west into Donetsk province, where the sizable Ukrainian-held city of Slovyansk has come under rocket attacks several times since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Elsewhere in the war, the exiled mayor of the Russia-occupied city of Melitopol said Sunday that Ukrainian rockets destroyed one of four Russian military bases in the city.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Ukraine also launched missile and drone attacks in western Russia, on the cities of Kursk and Belgorod, but that the aerial weapons were shot down. Kursk regional governor Roman Starovoit said the town of Tetkino, on the Ukraine border, came under mortar fire.

The leader of neighboring Belarus, a Russian ally, claimed Saturday that Ukraine fired missiles at military targets on Belarusian territory several days ago but all were intercepted by an air defense system. President Alexander Lukashenko described the alleged strike as a provocation and noted that no Belarusian soldiers were fighting in Ukraine.

There was no immediate response from the Ukrainian military.

Belarus hosts Russian military units and was used as a staging ground for Russia’s invasion. Last week, just hours before Lukashenko was to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russian long-range bombers fired missiles on Ukraine from Belarusian airspace for the first time.

Lukashenko has so far resisted efforts to draw his army into the war. But during their meeting, Putin announced that Russia planned to supply Belarus with the Iskander-M missile system and reminded Lukashenko that his government depends on economic support from Russia.

The long, ongoing debate over ‘All men are created equal’

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Kevin Jennings is CEO of the Lambda Legal organization, a prominent advocate for LGBTQ rights. He sees his mission in part as fulfilling that hallowed American principle: “All men are created equal.”

“Those words say to me, ‘Do better, America.’ And what I mean by that is we have never been a country where people were truly equal,” Jennings says. “It’s an aspiration to continue to work towards, and we’re not there yet.”

Ryan T. Anderson is president of the conservative Ethics and Public Policy Center. He, too, believes that “all men are created equal.” For him, the words mean we all have “the same dignity, we all count equally, no one is disposable, no one a second-class citizen.” At the same time, he says, not everyone has an equal right to marry — what he and other conservatives regard as the legal union of a man and woman.

“I don’t think human equality requires redefining what marriage is,” he says.

Few words in American history are invoked as often as those from the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, published nearly 250 years ago. And few are more difficult to define. The music, and the economy, of “all men are created equal” make it both universal and elusive, adaptable to viewpoints — social, racial, economic — otherwise with little or no common ground. How we use them often depends less on how we came into this world than on what kind world we want to live in.

It’s as if “All men are created equal” leads us to ask: “And then what?”

“We say ‘All men are created equal’ but does that mean we need to make everyone entirely equal at all times, or does it mean everyone gets a fair shot?” says Michael Waldman, president of the Brennan Center for Justice, which promotes expanded voting rights, public financing of political campaigns and other progressive causes. “Individualism is baked into that phrase, but also a broader, more egalitarian vision. There’s a lot there.”

Thomas Jefferson helped immortalize the expression, but he didn’t invent it. The words in some form date back centuries before the Declaration and were even preceded in 1776 by Virginia’s Declaration of Rights, which stated that “all men are by nature equally free and independent.” Peter Onuf, a professor emeritus at the University of Virginia whose books include “The Mind of Thomas Jefferson,” notes that

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Jefferson himself did not claim to have said something radically new and wrote in 1825 that the Declaration lacked "originality of principle or sentiment."

The Declaration was an indictment of the British monarchy, but not a statement of justice for all. For the slave owning Jefferson "and most of his fellow patriots, enslaved people were property and therefore not included in these new polities, leaving their status unchanged," Onuf says. He added that "did not mean he did not recognize his enslaved people to be people, just that they could only enjoy those universal, natural rights elsewhere, in a country of their own: emancipation and expatriation."

Hannah Spahn, a professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute in Berlin and author of the upcoming "Black Reason, White Feeling: The Jeffersonian Enlightenment in the African American Tradition," says that a draft version of the Declaration made clear that Jefferson meant "all humans" were created equal but not necessarily that all humans were equal under the law. Spahn, like such leading Revolutionary War scholars as Jack Rakove, believes that "all men are created equal" originally referred less to individual equality than to the rights of a people as a whole to self-government.

Once the Declaration had been issued, perceptions began to change. Black Americans were among the first to change them, notably the New England-based clergyman Lemuel Haynes. Soon after July 4, Haynes wrote "Liberty Further Extended: Or Free Thoughts on the Illegality of Slave-Keeping," an essay not published until 1983 but seen as reflecting the feelings of many in the Black community, with its call to "affirm, that Even an affrican, has Equally as good a right to his Liberty in common with Englishmen."

Spahn finds Haynes' response "philosophically innovative," because he isolated the passage containing the famous phrase from the rest of the Declaration and made it express "timeless, universally binding norms."

"He deliberately downplayed Jefferson's original emphasis on problems of collective assent and consent," she says.

The words have since been endlessly adapted and reinterpreted. By feminists at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 who stated "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal." By civil rights leaders from Frederick Douglass to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who in his "I Have a Dream" speech held up the phrase as a sacred promise to Black Americans. By Abraham Lincoln, who invoked them in the Gettysburg Address and elsewhere, but with a narrower scope than what King imagined a century later.

In Lincoln's time, according to historian Eric Foner, "they made a careful distinction between natural, civil, political and social rights. One could enjoy equality in one but not another."

"Lincoln spoke of equality in natural rights — life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," says Foner, whose books include the Pulitzer Prize winning "The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery." "That's why slavery is wrong and why people have an equal right to the fruits of their labor. Political rights were determined by the majority and could be limited by them."

The words have been denied entirely. John C. Calhoun, the South Carolina senator and vehement defender of slavery, found "not a word of truth" in them as he attacked the phrase during a speech in 1848. Vice President Alexander H. Stephens of the Confederate States contended in 1861 that "the great truth" is "the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition."

The overturning of Roe v. Wade and other recent Supreme Court decisions has led some activists to wonder if "All men are created equal" still has any meaning. Robin Marty, author of "Handbook for a Post-Roe America," calls the phrase a "bromide" for those "who ignore how unequal our lives truly are."

Marty added that the upending of abortion rights has given the unborn "greater protection than most," a contention echoed in part by Roe opponents who have said that "All men are created equal" includes the unborn.

Among contemporary politicians and other public figures, the words are applied to very different ends.

— President Donald Trump cited them in October 2020 ("The divine truth our Founders enshrined in the fabric of our Nation: that all people are created equal") in a statement forbidding federal agencies from teaching "Critical Race Theory." President Joe Biden echoed the language of Seneca Falls ("We hold

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these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal") while praising labor unions last month as he addressed an AFL-CIO gathering in Philadelphia.

— Morse Tan, dean of Liberty University, the evangelical school co-founded by the Rev. Jerry Falwell Sr., says the words uphold a "classic, longstanding" Judeo-Christian notion: "The irreducible worth and value that all human beings have because they (are) created in the image of God." Secular humanists note Jefferson's own religious skepticism and fit his words and worldview within 18th century Enlightenment thinking, emphasizing human reason over faith.

— Conservative organizations from the Claremont Institute to the Heritage Foundation regard "all men are created equal" as proof that affirmative action and other government programs addressing racism are unnecessary and contrary to the ideal of a "color-blind" system.

Ibram X. Kendi, the award-winning author and director of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University, says the words can serve what he calls both "antiracist" and "assimilationist" perspectives.

"The anti-racist idea suggests that all racial groups are biologically, inherently equal. The assimilationist idea is that all racial groups are created equal, but it leaves open the idea some racial groups become inferior by nurture, meaning some racial groups are inferior culturally or behaviorally," says Kendi, whose books include "Stamped from the Beginning" and "How to Be an Antiracist."

"To be an anti-racist is to recognize that it's not just that we are created equal, or biologically equal. It's that all racial groups are equals. And if there are disparities between those equal racial groups, then it is the result of racist policy or structural racism and not the inferiority or superiority of a racial group."

Ruling could dampen government efforts to rein in Big Tech

By MATT O'BRIEN Associated Press

The Supreme Court's latest climate change ruling could dampen efforts by federal agencies to rein in the tech industry, which went largely unregulated for decades as the government tried to catch up to changes wrought by the internet.

In the 6-3 decision that was narrowly tailored to the Environmental Protection Agency, the court ruled Thursday that the EPA does not have broad authority to reduce power plant emissions that contribute to global warming. The precedent is widely expected to invite challenges of other rules set by government agencies.

"Every agency is going to face new hurdles in the wake of this confusing decision," said Alexandra Givens, the president and CEO of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a Washington-based digital rights nonprofit. "But hopefully the agencies will continue doing their jobs and push forward."

The Federal Trade Commission, in particular, has been pursuing an aggressive agenda in consumer protection, data privacy and tech industry competition under a leader appointed last year by President Joe Biden.

Biden's picks for the five-member Federal Communications Commission have also been pursuing stronger "net neutrality" protections banning internet providers from slowing down or blocking access to websites and applications that don't pay for premium service.

A former chief technologist at the FTC during President Donald Trump's administration said the ruling is likely to instill some fear in lawyers at the FTC and other federal agencies about how far they can go in making new rules affecting businesses.

The court "basically said when it comes to major policy changes that can transform entire sectors of the economy, Congress has to make those choices, not agencies," said Neil Chilson, who is now a fellow at libertarian-leaning Stand Together, founded by the billionaire industrialist Charles Koch.

Givens disagreed, arguing that many agencies, especially the FTC, have clear authority and should be able to withstand lawsuits inspired by the EPA decision. She noted that Chief Justice John Roberts, who wrote the opinion, repeatedly described it as an "extraordinary" situation.

Givens is among the tech advocates calling for Congress to act with urgency to make laws protecting digital privacy and other tech matters. But she said laws typically stay on the books for decades, and it's unrealistic to expect Congress to weigh in on every new technical development that questions an agency's

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mandate.

"We need a democratic system where Congress can give expert agencies the power to address issues when they arise, even when those issues are unforeseen," she said. "The government literally can't work with Congress legislating every twist and turn."

Empowered by Congress in the 1970s to tackle "unfair or deceptive" business practices, the FTC has been in the vanguard of Biden's government-wide mandate to promote competition in some industries, including Big Tech, health care and agriculture. A panoply of targets include hearing aid prices, airline baggage fees and "product of USA" labels on food.

Under Chair Lina Khan, the FTC also has widened the door to more actively writing new regulations in what critics say is a broader interpretation of the agency's legal authority. That initiative could run into stiff legal challenges in the wake of the high court decision. The ruling could call into question the agency's regulatory agenda — leading it to either tread more cautiously or face tougher and more expensive legal challenges.

Khan "hasn't really been someone who pursues soft measures, so it may be a damn-the-torpedoes approach," Chilson said.

University of Massachusetts internet policy expert Ethan Zuckerman said it would be hard to gauge any potential impact of the court's ruling on existing tech regulation. That's partly because "there's just not that much tech regulation to undo," he said.

He said one target could be the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, "a bête noire for many conservatives." Big companies such as Facebook parent Meta could also potentially appeal tough enforcement actions on the idea that federal agencies weren't explicitly authorized to regulate social media.

"We're in uncharted territory, with a court that's taking a wrecking ball to precedent and seems hell-bent on implementing as many right-wing priorities as possible in the shortest possible time," Zuckerman said.

The ruling could dampen the appetite for agencies like the FTC to act to limit harm from artificial intelligence and other new technologies. It could have less effect on new rules that are more clearly in the realm of the agency imposing them.

Michael Brooks, chief counsel for the nonprofit Center for Auto Safety, said the ruling isn't likely to change the government's ability to regulate auto safety or self-driving vehicles, although it does open the door to court challenges.

For instance, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has clear authority to regulate auto safety from a 1966 motor vehicle safety law, Brooks said.

"As long as the rules they are issuing pertain to the safety of the vehicle and not anything that's outside of their authority, as long as it's related to safety, I don't see how a court could do an end run around the safety act," he said.

Unlike the EPA, an agency with authority granted by multiple, complex laws, NHTSA's "authority is just so crystal clear," Brooks said.

NHTSA could have problems if it strayed too far from regulating safety. For example, if it enacted regulations aimed to shift buyers away from SUVs to more fuel-efficient cars, that might be struck down, he said. But the agency has historically stuck to its mission of regulating auto safety with some authority on fuel economy, he said.

However, it's possible that a company such as Tesla, which has tested the limits of NHTSA's powers, could sue and win due to an unpredictable Supreme Court, Brooks said.

Splintered Ukrainian city braces for new battle with Russia

By FRANCESCA EBEL Associated Press

SLOVYANSK, Ukraine (AP) — A group of young off-duty Ukrainian soldiers gathered at a military distribution center to enjoy a rare respite from the fighting that has again engulfed their fractured home in eastern Ukraine.

As they shared jokes and a pizza, artillery explosions could be heard a few kilometers away — a reminder

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of the looming battle that threatens to unfold here in the city of Slovyansk, which was occupied by Russian proxy fighters in 2014.

"Everyone knows that there will be a huge battle in Slovyansk," said one of the soldiers, who could not be named for security reasons.

Now, eight years after their city was last occupied, the war has returned. Slovyansk could become the next major target in Russia's campaign to take the Donbas region, Ukraine's predominantly Russian-speaking industrial heartland, if Moscow captures Lysychansk — the last remaining Ukrainian stronghold in Luhansk province, 70 kilometers (43 miles) to the east.

Another soldier, a 23-year-old accountant who joined up when the invasion began, said Ukrainian forces simply do not have the weapons to fight off the superior arsenal of the approaching Russian army.

"We know what's coming" he said with a sad smile.

These soldiers were still teenagers when pro-Russian separatists captured and held the town for three months. The brief occupation in 2014 terrorized Slovyansk, where dozens of officials and journalists were taken hostage, and several killings took place.

Fierce fighting and shelling broke out when the Ukrainian army laid siege to the city to recapture it.

"Actually, the war never left Slovyansk. It didn't leave people's heads" said Tetiana Khimion, a 43-year-old dance choreographer who converted a fishing store into a hub for local military units.

"On the one hand, it is easier for us because we know what it's like. On the other hand, it is more difficult for us since we've been living like this for eight years in a suspended condition."

Slovyansk is a city of splintered loyalties. With a large retired population, it is not uncommon to hear older residents express sympathy towards Russia or nostalgia for their Soviet past. There is also distrust of the Ukrainian army and government.

After a recent shelling of his apartment block, one resident named Sergei said he believed that the strike was launched by Ukraine.

"I'm not pro-Russian, I'm not pro-Ukrainian. I am somewhere in between" he said. "Both Russians and Ukrainians kill civilians — everyone should understand that."

On Thursday, a group of elderly residents couldn't hide their frustration after a bomb blast slashed open their roofs and shattered their windows.

Ukraine "says they are protecting us, but what kind of protection is this?" asked one man, who did not provide his name.

"They kneel to that Biden — may he die!" exclaimed his neighbor, Tatyana, referring to U.S. President Joe Biden.

After 2014, Khimion said, it became easier to know "who is who" in Slovyansk. "Now you can easily see: These people are for Ukraine, and these people are for Russia."

She said not enough was done after 2014 to punish people who collaborated with Russian proxies to prevent a repeat of the situation.

"That is why we cannot negotiate, we need to win. Otherwise it will be a never-ending process. It will keep repeating" she said.

The mayor of Slovyansk, Vadim Lyakh, reflects the city's new trajectory. Taking his cues from Ukraine's wartime leader, President Volodymyr Zelensky, the mayor has decorated his office with Ukrainian flags, anti-Russian symbols, portraits of national poets — even a biography of Winston Churchill.

But before 2014, he was part of a political party that sought closer ties with Russia. Lyakh said that while pro-Moscow sentiment in the city has faded in past years — in part because of the horrors witnessed in 2014 — there are still "people who are waiting for the return of the Russian troops."

As the front line creeps ever closer, attacks on the city intensify. Three-quarters of Slovyansk's pre-war population has fled, but the mayor said there are still too many people here, including many children. He encourages them to evacuate. He spends his days coordinating humanitarian aid and strengthening the city's defenses.

More and more, he is among the first responders at the scene of bombardments. The Associated Press

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followed Lyakh and recently witnessed what authorities described as a cluster bomb attack on a residential area. One person was killed and several others wounded.

The mayor says that shelling now occurs at least four or five times a day, and the use of cluster munitions has increased in the last week. Although he remains optimistic that Ukrainian forces can keep the enemy at bay, he is also clear-sighted about his options.

"Nobody wants to be captured. When there is an imminent danger of the enemy troops entering the city, I will have to go" he said.

Lyakh said he cannot allow himself to relax, even for a few minutes.

"It is emotionally difficult. You see how people are dying and being harmed. But nevertheless, I understand that this is my job and that nobody but myself and the people around me can do" it.

One morning last week, Lyakh paid a visit to an apartment block that had been shelled overnight. Most of the windows in the building were blown out, doors were broken wide open and a power line severed.

The same building was bombed in 2014, when the shell left a gaping hole on the sixth floor, and many residents suffered broken bones.

Andrey, a 37-year-old factory worker who has lived in the building for 20 years, recalls the bombing and occupation. He said separatist forces "did and took what they liked."

People in his circle have different opinions about Russia.

"Those who have suffered understand what this 'Russia world' means: It means broken houses, stolen cars and violence" he explains. "There are those who miss the Soviet Union, who think we are all one people, and they do not accept what they see with their own eyes."

In the eight years since the separatists retreated, he said, life has markedly improved in Slovyansk.

The statue of Vladimir Lenin that once stood in the central square has been removed. Water and power supplies were renovated. New parks, squares and medical facilities were built.

"Civilization was returned to us" Andrey said.

At the military distribution hub, the young soldiers talk wistfully about their lives before the invasion.

"I had a great car, a good job. I was able to travel abroad three times a year," said the former accountant, who plans to stay in Slovyansk with the others to defend the city. "How can we let someone just come and take our lives away from us?"

Khimion's husband is on the front lines, and she put her teenage daughter on a train to Switzerland as soon as the invasion began.

"I have been deprived of everything — a home, husband, child — what should I do now?" she asks. "We are doing everything we can to stop (the offensive), to keep it to a minimum ... But to be afraid is to abandon this place."

At the entrance to the city, a monument bearing Slovyansk's name is riddled with bullet holes from 2014. It has been painted over several times. It now bears the national colors of Ukraine, and a local artist has painted red flowers around each perforation.

Residents of Slovyansk wonder — some with hope, many in fear — if the sign will soon be painted yet again, in the red, white and blue of the Russia flag.

Hope and despair: Kathy Gannon on 35 years in Afghanistan

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Afghan policeman opened fire on us with his AK-47, emptying 26 bullets into the back of the car. Seven slammed into me, and at least as many into my colleague, Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhaus. She died at my side.

Anja weighed heavy against my shoulder. I tried to look at her but I couldn't move. I looked down; all I could see was what looked like a stump where my left hand had been. I could barely whisper, "Please help us."

Our driver raced us to a small local hospital in Khost, siren on. I tried to stay calm, thinking over and over: "Don't be afraid. Don't die afraid. Just breathe."

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At the hospital, Dr. Abdul Majid Mangal said he would have to operate and tried to reassure me. His words are forever etched in my heart: "Please know your life is as important to me as it is to you."

Much later, as I recovered in New York during a process that would turn out to eventually require 18 operations, an Afghan friend called from Kabul. He wanted to apologize for the shooting on behalf of all Afghans.

I said the shooter didn't represent a nation, a people. My mind returned to Dr. Mangal – for me, it was him who represented Afghanistan and Afghans.

I have reported on Afghanistan for the AP for the past 35 years, during an extraordinary series of events and regime changes that have rocked the world. Through it all, the kindness and resilience of ordinary Afghans has shone through – which is also what has made it so painful to watch the slow erosion of their hope.

I have always been amazed at how Afghans stubbornly hung on to hope against all odds, greeting each of several new regimes with optimism. But by 2018, a Gallup poll showed that the fraction of people in Afghanistan with hope in the future was the lowest ever recorded anywhere.

It didn't have to be this way.

I arrived in Afghanistan in 1986, in the middle of the Cold War. It seems a lifetime ago. It is.

Then, the enemy attacking Afghanistan was the communist former Soviet Union, dubbed godless by United States President Ronald Reagan. The defenders were the U.S.-backed religious mujahedeen, defined as those who engage in holy war, championed by Reagan as freedom fighters.

Reagan even welcomed some mujahedeen leaders to the White House. Among his guests was Jalaluddin Haqqani, the father of the current leader of the Haqqani network, who in today's world is a declared terrorist.

At that time, the God versus communism message was strong. The University of Nebraska even crafted an anti-communist curriculum to teach English to the millions of Afghan refugees living in camps in neighboring Pakistan. The university made the alphabet simple: J was for Jihad or holy war against the communists; K was for the Kalashnikov guns used in jihad, and I was for Infidel, which described the communists themselves.

There was even a math program. The questions went something like: If there were 10 communists and you killed five, how many would you have left?

When I covered the mujahedeen, I spent a lot of time and effort on being stronger, walking longer, climbing harder and faster. At one point, I ran out of a dirty mud hut with them and hid under a nearby cluster of trees. Just minutes later, Russian helicopter gunships flew low, strafed the trees and all but destroyed the hut.

The Russians withdrew in 1989 without a win. In 1992, the mujahedeen took power.

Ordinary Afghans hoped fervently that the victory of the mujahedeen would mean the end of war. They also to some degree welcomed a religious ideology that was more in line with their largely conservative country than communism.

But it wasn't long before the mujahedeen turned their guns on each other.

The fighting was brutal, with the mujahedeen pounding the capital, Kabul, from the hills. Thrice the AP lost its equipment to thieving warlords, only to be returned after negotiations with the top warlord. One day I counted as many as 200 incoming and outgoing rockets inside of minutes.

The bloodletting of the mujahedeen-cum government ministers-cum warlords killed upward of 50,000 people. I saw a 5-year-old girl killed by a rocket as she stepped out of her house. Children by the scores lost limbs to booby traps placed by mujahedeen as they departed neighborhoods.

I stayed on the front line with a woman and her two small children in the Macroyan housing complex during the heaviest rocketing. Her husband, a former communist government employee, had fled, and she lived by making and selling bread each day with her children.

She opened her home to me even though she had so little. All night we stayed in the one room without

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windows. She asked me if I would take her son to Pakistan the next day, but in the end could not bear to see him go.

Only months after my visit, they were killed by warlords who wanted their apartment.

Despite the chaos of the time, Afghans still had hope.

In the waning days of the warring mujahedeen's rule, I attended a wedding in Kabul where both the wedding party and guests were coiffed and downright glamorous. When asked how she managed to look so good with so little amid the relentless rocketing, one young woman replied brightly, "We're not dead yet!"

The wedding was delayed twice because of rockets.

The Taliban had by then emerged. They were former mujahedeen and often Islamic clerics who had returned to their villages and their religious schools after 1992. They came together in response to the relentless killing and thieving of their former comrades-in-arms.

By mid-1996, the Taliban were on Kabul's doorstep, with their promise of burqas for women and beards for men. Yet Afghans welcomed them. They hoped the Taliban would at least bring peace.

When asked about the repressive restrictions of the Taliban, one woman who had worked for an international charity said: "If I know there is peace and my child will be alive, I will wear the burqa."

Peace did indeed come to Afghanistan, at least of sorts. Afghans could leave their doors unlocked without fear of being robbed. The country was disarmed, and travel anywhere in Afghanistan at any time of the day or night was safe.

But Afghans soon began to see their peace as a prison. The Taliban's rule was repressive. Public punishments such as chopping off hands and rules that denied girls school and women work brought global sanctions and isolation. Afghans got poorer.

The Taliban leader at the time was the reclusive Mullah Mohammad Omar, rumored to have removed his own eye after being wounded in a battle against invading Soviet soldiers. As international sanctions crippled Afghanistan, Omar got closer to al-Qaida, until eventually the terrorist group became the Taliban's only source of income.

By 2001, al-Qaida's influence was complete. Despite a pledge from Omar to safeguard them, Afghanistan's ancient statues of Buddha were destroyed, in an order reportedly from Osama bin Laden himself.

Then came the seismic shock of 9/11.

Many Afghans mourned the American deaths so far away. Few even knew who bin Laden was. But the country was now squarely a target in the eyes of the United States. Amir Shah, AP's longtime correspondent, summed up what most Afghans were thinking at the time: "America will set Afghanistan on fire."

And it did.

After 9/11, the Taliban threw all foreigners out of Afghanistan, including me. The U.S.-led coalition assault began on Oct. 7, 2001.

By Oct. 23, I was back in Kabul, the only Western journalist to see the last weeks of Taliban rule. The powerful B-52 bombers of the U.S. pounded the hills and even landed in the city.

On Nov. 12 that year, a 2,000-pound bomb landed on a house near the AP office. It threw me across the room and blew out window and door frames. Glass shattered and sprayed everywhere.

By sunrise the next day, the Taliban were gone from Kabul.

Afghanistan's next set of rulers marched into the city, brought by the powerful military might of the U.S.-led coalition.

The mujahedeen were back.

The U.S. and U.N. returned them to power even though some among them had brought bin Laden from Sudan to Afghanistan in 1996, promising him a safe haven. The hope of Afghans went through the roof, because they believed the powerful U.S. would help them keep the mujahedeen in check.

With more than 40 countries involved in their homeland, they believed peace and prosperity this time was most certainly theirs. Foreigners were welcome everywhere.

Some Afghans worried about the returning mujahedeen, remembering the corruption and fighting when

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they last were in power. But America's representative at the time, Zalmay Khalilzad, told me that the mujahedeen had been warned against returning to their old ways.

Yet worrying signs began to emerge. The revenge killings began, and the U.S.-led coalition sometimes participated without knowing the details. The mujahedeen would falsely identify enemies – even those who had worked with the U.S. before – as belonging to al-Qaida or to the Taliban.

One such mistake happened early in December 2001 when a convoy was on its way to meet the new President Hamid Karzai. The U.S.-led coalition bombed it because they were told the convoy bore fighters from the Taliban and al-Qaida. They turned out to be tribal elders.

Secret prisons emerged. Hundreds of Afghan men disappeared. Families became desperate.

Resentment soared especially among the ethnic Pashtuns, who had been the backbone of the Taliban. One former Taliban member proudly displayed his new Afghan identity card and wanted to start a water project in his village. But corrupt government officials extorted him for his money, and he returned to the Taliban.

A deputy police chief in southern Zabul province told me of 2,000 young Pashtun men, some former Taliban, who wanted to join the new government's Afghan National Army. But they were mocked for their ethnicity, and eventually all but four went to the mountains and joined the Taliban.

In the meantime, corruption seemed to reach epic proportions, with suitcases of money, often from the CIA, handed off to Washington's Afghan allies. Yet schools were built, roads were reconstructed and a new generation of Afghans, at least in the cities, grew up with freedoms their parents had not known and in many cases looked on with suspicion.

Then came the shooting in 2014 that would change my life.

It began as most days do in Afghanistan: Up before 6 a.m. This day we were waiting for a convoy of Afghan police and military to leave the eastern city of Khost for a remote region to distribute the last of the ballot boxes for Afghanistan's 2014 presidential elections.

After 30 minutes navigating past blown-out bridges and craters that pockmarked the road, we arrived at a large police compound. For more than an hour, Anja and I talked with and photographed about a dozen police officials.

We finished our work just as a light drizzle began. We got into the car and waited to leave for a nearby village. That's when the shooting happened.

It was two years before I was able to return to work and to Afghanistan.

By that point, the disappointment and disenchantment with America's longest war had already set in. Despite the U.S. spending over \$148 billion on development alone over 20 years, the percentage of Afghans barely surviving at the poverty level was increasing yearly.

In 2019, Pakistan began accepting visa applications at its consulate in eastern Afghanistan. People were so desperate to leave that nine died in a stampede.

In 2020, the U.S. and the Taliban signed a deal for troops to withdraw within 18 months. The U.S. and NATO began to evacuate their staff, closing down embassies and offering those who worked for them asylum.

The mass closure of embassies was baffling to me because the Taliban had made no threats, and it sparked panic in Kabul. It was the sudden and secret departure of President Ashraf Ghani that finally brought the Taliban back into the city on Aug. 15, 2021.

Their swift entry came as a surprise, along with the thorough collapse of the neglected Afghan army, beset by deep corruption. The Taliban's rapid march toward Kabul fed a rush toward the airport.

For many in the Afghan capital, the only hope left lay in getting out.

Fida Mohammad, a 24-year-old dentist, was desperate to leave for the U.S. so he could earn enough money to repay his father's debt of \$13,000 for his elaborate marriage. He clung to the wheels of the departing US C-17 aircraft on Aug. 16 and died.

Zaki Anwari, a 17-year-old footballer, ran to get on the plane. He dreamed only of football, and believed

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his dream could not come true in Afghanistan. He was run over by the C-17.

Now the future in Afghanistan is even more uncertain. Scores of people line up outside the banks to try to get their money out. Hospitals are short of medicine. The Taliban hardliners seem to have the upper hand, at least in the short term.

Afghans are left to face the fact that the entire world came to their country in 2001 and spent billions, and still couldn't bring them prosperity or even the beginnings of prosperity. That alone has deeply eroded hope for the future.

I leave Afghanistan with mixed feelings, sad to see how its hope has been destroyed but still deeply moved by its 38 million people. The Afghans I met sincerely loved their country, even if it is now led by elderly men driven by tribal traditions offensive to a world that I am not sure ever really understood Afghanistan.

Most certainly, though, I will be back.

High court marshal seeks enforcement of anti-picketing laws

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The marshal of the U.S. Supreme Court has asked Maryland and Virginia officials to enforce laws she says prohibit picketing outside the homes of the justices who live in the two states.

"For weeks on end, large groups of protesters chanting slogans, using bullhorns, and banging drums have picketed Justices' homes," Marshal Gail Curley wrote in the Friday letters to Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin and two local elected officials.

Curley wrote that Virginia and Maryland laws and a Montgomery County, Maryland, ordinance prohibit picketing at justices' homes, and she asked the officials to direct police to enforce those provisions.

Justices' homes have been the target of abortion rights protests since May, when a leaked draft opinion suggested the court was poised to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide.

The protests and threatening activities have "increased since May," Curley wrote in a letter, and have continued since the court's ruling overturning Roe v. Wade was issued last week.

"Earlier this week, for example, 75 protesters loudly picketed at one Justice's home in Montgomery County for 20-30 minutes in the evening, then proceeded to picket at another Justice's home for 30 minutes, where the crowd grew to 100, and finally returned to the first Justice's home to picket for another 20 minutes," Curley wrote in her letter to Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. "This is exactly the kind of conduct that the Maryland and Montgomery County laws prohibit."

In her letter to Jeffrey McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, she said one recent protest outside an unspecified justice's home involved dozens of people chanting, "no privacy for us, no peace for you!"

The letters from Curley were dated Friday and shared with reporters by a spokesperson for the Supreme Court on Saturday.

Curley's request came about a month after a California man was found with a gun, knife and pepper spray near the Maryland home of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh after telling police he was planning to kill the justice. The man, Nicholas John Roske, 26, of Simi Valley, Calif., has been charged with attempting to murder a justice of the United States and has pleaded not guilty.

Youngkin and Hogan, both Republicans, have both previously expressed concerns about the protests. In May, they sent a joint letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland asking for federal law enforcement resources to keep the justices safe and enforce a federal law they said prohibits picketing with the intent to influence a judge.

The direct request by the court puts it at odds with the Justice Department, which, while providing U.S. marshals, has not taken steps to limit the protests as long as they are peaceful.

Hogan spokesman Michael Ricci said in a statement Saturday that the governor had directed state police to "further review enforcement options that respect the First Amendment and the Constitution." He also said that "had the marshal taken time to explore the matter," she would have learned that the constitu-

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tionality of the Maryland statute she cited has been questioned by the state Attorney General's Office.

Elrich said he had no recording of having received the letter addressed to him and questioned why it was released to the press. He said he would review it and was willing to discuss it with Curley, but defended the job Montgomery County Police have done so far.

"In Montgomery County we are following the law that provides security and respects the First Amendment rights of protestors. That is what we do, regardless of the subject of the protests," he said.

Youngkin spokesman Christian Martinez said the Virginia governor welcomed the marshal's request and said Youngkin had made the same request of McKay in recent weeks.

"The Governor remains in regular contact with the justices themselves and holds their safety as an utmost priority. He is in contact with state and local officials on the Marshal's request for assistance and will continue to engage on the issue of the Justice's safety," Martinez said.

Youngkin in May pushed for a security perimeter around the homes of justices living in Fairfax County, but McKay rebuffed that request, saying it would infringe on First Amendment protest rights.

McKay said Saturday that the county's position on the issue was "unchanged."

"The law cited in the letter is a likely violation of the First Amendment, and a previous court case refused to enforce it. As long as individuals are assembling on public property and not blocking access to private residences, they are permitted to be there," he said.

Uvalde schools' police chief resigns from City Council

By ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press

The Uvalde school district's police chief has stepped down from his position in the City Council just weeks after being sworn in following allegations that he erred in his response to the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School that left 19 students and two teachers dead.

Chief Pete Arredondo said in a letter dated Friday that he has decided to step down for the good of the city and "to minimize further distractions." He was elected to the council on May 7 and was sworn in on May 31, just a week after the massacre, in a closed-door ceremony.

"The mayor, the city council, and the city staff must continue to move forward to unite our community once again," Arredondo said in his resignation, first reported by the Uvalde Leader-News.

Arredondo, who has been on administrative leave from his school district position since June 22, has declined repeated requests for comment from The Associated Press. His attorney, George Hyde, did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment Saturday.

On June 21, the City Council voted unanimously to deny Arredondo a leave of absence from appearing at public meetings. Relatives of the shooting victims had pleaded with city leaders to fire him.

The Uvalde City Council released Arredondo's resignation letter Saturday, after city officials received notification of his intent to step down via email, but did not comment further.

Representatives of Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin have not responded to AP's requests for comment.

Col. Steven McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, told a state Senate hearing last month that Arredondo — the on-site commander — made "terrible decisions" as the massacre unfolded on May 24, and that the police response was an "abject failure."

Three minutes after 18-year-old Salvador Ramos entered the school, sufficient armed law enforcement were on scene to stop the gunman, McCraw testified. Yet police officers armed with rifles stood and waited in a school hallway for more than an hour while the gunman carried out the massacre. The classroom door could not be locked from the inside, but there is no indication officers tried to open the door while the gunman was inside, McCraw said.

McCraw has said parents begged police outside the school to move in and students inside the classroom repeatedly pleaded with 911 operators for help while more than a dozen officers waited in a hallway. Officers from other agencies urged Arredondo to let them move in because children were in danger.

"The only thing stopping a hallway of dedicated officers from entering room 111 and 112 was the on-scene commander who decided to place the lives of officers before the lives of children," McCraw said.

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Arredondo has tried to defend his actions, telling the Texas Tribune that he didn't consider himself the commander in charge of operations and that he assumed someone else had taken control of the law enforcement response. He said he didn't have his police and campus radios but that he used his cellphone to call for tactical gear, a sniper and the classroom keys.

It's still not clear why it took so long for police to enter the classroom, how they communicated with each other during the attack, and what their body cameras show.

Officials have declined to release more details, citing the investigation.

Arredondo, 50, grew up in Uvalde and has spent much of his nearly 30-year career in law enforcement in the city.

Bodies of 3 missing kids, woman found in Minnesota lake

VADNAIS HEIGHTS, Minn. (AP) — The bodies of three young children and a woman believed to be their mother have been recovered from a Minnesota lake, and authorities say the deaths are being investigated as a triple murder-suicide.

Meanwhile, the body of the children's father was found at a different location hours earlier. Names had not been released as of Saturday afternoon. The children, all under the age of 5, were two boys and a girl.

The chain of events began Friday morning when the man's body was found at a mobile home park in the town of Maplewood, near Minneapolis. Police determined that the woman had left with the children, and a search began.

Maplewood Police Lt. Joe Steiner said the woman's car was found near Vadnais Lake around 4 p.m. Friday. The shoes of the children were found on the shore.

The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office said the body of the first child was recovered from the lake around 7:30 p.m. Friday. The second child's body was found just after midnight. The woman's body was found around 10:40 a.m. Saturday, and the body of the third child was found around 11 a.m.

The bodies were taken to a medical examiner.

"The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office is currently investigating this incident as a possible triple murder-suicide," a news release said.

"There's nothing more tragic than the loss of young children," Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher said at a news conference on Friday.

Palestinians give bullet that killed journalist to US team

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Palestinian Authority on Saturday said it has given the bullet that killed Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh to American forensic experts, taking a step toward resolving a standoff with Israel over the investigation into her death.

The announcement came just over a week before President Joe Biden is to visit Israel and the occupied West Bank for meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. It signaled that both sides may be working to find a solution to the deadlock.

Abu Akleh, a veteran correspondent who was well known throughout the Arab world, was fatally shot while covering an Israeli military raid on May 11 in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank.

The Palestinians, along with Abu Akleh's colleagues who were with her at the time, say she was killed by Israeli fire. The Israeli army says that she was caught in the crossfire of a battle with Palestinian gunmen, and that it is impossible to determine which side killed her without analyzing the bullet.

Israel says it has identified the rifle that may have shot her, but that it cannot draw any conclusions unless it is compared to the bullet. The Palestinians have refused to turn over the bullet, saying they don't trust Israel. Rights groups say Israel has a poor record investigating shootings of Palestinians by its troops, with probes languishing for months or years before they are quietly closed.

The Palestinian attorney general, Akram al-Khateeb, said the bullet was given to U.S. experts "for technical work."

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He reiterated the Palestinian refusal to share the bullet with the Israelis but said the Palestinians welcome the participation of any international bodies to "help us confirm the truth."

"We are confident and certain of our investigations and the results we have reached," he said.

It was not immediately clear what the American experts could discover without also studying the Israeli weapon. It also was not clear whether Israel would turn over the rifle to the Americans. The Israeli military declined comment, and U.S. Embassy's Office of Palestinian Affairs said it had "no new information to offer."

A Palestinian official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was discussing a diplomatic matter, said the issue was raised in a phone call between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Secretary of State Antony Blinken and that both sides hope to resolve the issue before Biden's arrival on July 13.

An AP reconstruction of events has lent support to eyewitnesses who say she was shot by Israeli troops. But a weapons expert interviewed by the AP as part of the reconstruction said that it was impossible to reach a conclusive finding without further forensic analysis. Israeli leaders have repeatedly said that soldiers did not intentionally target her.

Abu Akleh, who was 51, was a widely known and respected on-air correspondent who rose to fame two decades ago during the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, against Israeli rule. She documented the harsh realities of life under Israeli military rule — now well into its sixth decade with no end in sight — for viewers across the Arab world.

Israeli police drew widespread criticism from around the world when they beat mourners and pallbearers at her funeral in Jerusalem on May 14. An Israeli newspaper last month reported that a police investigation found wrongdoing by some of its officers, but said those who supervised the event will not be seriously punished.

Jenin has long been a bastion of Palestinian militants, and several recent attacks inside Israel have been carried out by young men from in and around the town. Israel frequently carries out military raids in Jenin, which it says are aimed at arresting militants and preventing more attacks.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war and has built settlements where nearly 500,000 Israelis live alongside nearly 3 million Palestinians. The Palestinians want the territory to form the main part of a future state. Peace talks broke down more than a decade ago, and with Israel now in a new election campaign, they are unlikely to resume anytime soon. The caretaker prime minister, Yair Lapid, supports a two-state solution with the Palestinians, but right-wing parties that oppose Palestinian statehood appear positioned to dominate the election.

Popular Pakistani restaurant stands test of time in Dubai

By MALAK HARB Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — In a city boasting champagne brunches with views of the sea, Michelin star restaurants, and endless high-end Asian food options, a small hole-in-the-wall restaurant with plastic chairs and metal tables is one of Dubai's go-to spots.

Ravi restaurant, a small, family-owned Pakistani place, is rooted in the community of South Asian workers who helped build Dubai. Yet over the decades, it has become a staple of the food culture in a city that usually gravitates to everything glitzy and over-the-top.

The restaurant opened its doors in the United Arab Emirates in 1978 in the Dubai neighborhood of Satwa, at a time when it was a sandy area full of big lorries and small construction shops. The emirate was mostly a desert land in the 1970s with a meager, low-built skyline overlooking the Gulf.

Ravi served home-style dishes, mainly to South Asian construction workers.

Its founder, Chaudary Abdul Hameed, wanted to "find a way to serve better food to the working class," said his son Waseem Abdul Hameed, who is also the restaurant's operations manager. That meant keeping prices affordable, with meals costing an average of \$7.

Over the years as Dubai boomed, it became a hit among Emiratis and the Western and Asian expats who flooded the emirate.

Famed food critic Anthony Bourdain helped put Ravi on the map when he visited it for one of his TV

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series in 2010. A few years later, rapper Snoop Dogg dropped in as well, and Ravi was elevated to a must-see attraction.

Besides its portions, prices and flavors, it's ironically Ravi's lack of pretentiousness that gives it cache.

Customers wearing everything from business suits to traditional saris or sneakers crowd the restaurant for big meals or late-night snacks. It's common to see lines of people at the door, or people taking their food and eating it at the curb.

Inside, customers sit at tables with plastic covers underneath flickering neon lights. Chatter downs out the sound of ceiling fans. Chicken biryani, chicken tikka, daal and naan are slung out of the kitchen over the service counter, and as waiters rush the plates to the table, the smell of curry and grilled meat wafts through the air.

Last week, the low-key eatery was scene to a very Dubai-style splash: A gathering of social media influencers to promote the launch of shoemaker Adidas' brand collaboration with Ravi.

Adidas produced a specially designed limited-edition Superstar Ravi sneaker — green and white, emblazoned with the restaurant's name and the year it opened, and a list of the six most famous dishes from its menu on the inside of the shoe's tongue.

Both Ravi and Adidas declined to disclose the terms of the deal to The Associated Press, or to answer questions about whether the restaurant will be making any money from the sale of the shoes.

Waseem Abdul Hameed said it reflects how the restaurant is part of Dubai's cultural fabric. "You have to go to Ravi restaurant for a meal, so that's why they chose us."

It's a stark contrast with other recent lines released by Adidas, like one with Gucci that includes sneakers selling for \$899 in Dubai and other cities. But the collaboration speaks to how brands like Adidas are looking for new ways to connect to consumers searching for uniqueness.

On a recent hot summer day after the shoe launch, customers lined up outside Ravi.

"It's authentic, that's what it is, that's why I like it," said 32-year-old Dubai resident Dana, who's been coming to Ravi for years with her friends.

Google to erase more location info as abortion bans expand

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. (AP) — Google will automatically purge information about users who visit abortion clinics or other places that could trigger legal problems now that the U.S. Supreme Court has opened the door for states to ban the termination of pregnancies.

The company behind the internet's dominant internet search engine and the Android software that powers most of the world's smartphones outlined the new privacy protections in a Friday blog post.

Besides automatically deleting visits to abortion clinics, Google also cited counseling centers, fertility centers, addiction treatment facilities, weight loss clinics, and cosmetic surgery clinics as other destinations that will be erased from users' location histories. Users have always had the option edit their location histories on their own, but Google will proactively do it for them as an added level of protection.

"We're committed to delivering robust privacy protections for people who use our products, and we will continue to look for new ways to strengthen and improve these protections," Jen Fitzpatrick, a Google senior vice president, wrote in the blog post.

The pledge comes amid escalating pressure on Google and other Big Tech companies to do more to shield the troves of sensitive personal information through their digital services and products from government authorities and other outsiders.

The calls for more stringent privacy controls were triggered by the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision overturning the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion. That reversal could make abortion illegal in more than a dozen states, raising the specter that records about people's location, texts, searches and emails could be used in prosecutions against abortion procedures or even for medical care sought in a miscarriage.

Like other technology companies, Google each year receives thousands of government demands for users' digital records as part of misconduct investigations. Google says it pushes back against search warrants

and other demands that are overly broad or appear to be baseless.

Tesla's 2Q sales drop amid supply chain, pandemic problems

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Tesla's sales from April through June fell to their lowest quarterly level since last fall as supply chain issues and pandemic restrictions in China hobbled production of its electric vehicles.

The company on Saturday disclosed it sold more than 254,000 cars and SUVs from April through June, an 18% drop from the first three months of this year and also well below the pace in last year's final quarter.

The last time Tesla sold fewer vehicles globally was in the third quarter of 2021 when it delivered 241,000.

On Friday, the rest of the industry reported a 21% drop in sales during the second quarter as the average price for vehicles skyrocketed to a record of \$45,844 amid soaring inflation, according to J.D. Power.

Tesla's sales drop may be a harbinger of weaker second-quarter earnings for the Austin, Texas, company, which is the world's top-seller of battery-powered vehicles and has posted net profits for nearly three years. Tesla plans to release its full results for the April-June period on July 20.

Like many other stocks, Tesla shares have been hard hit this year. But the 35% decline in Tesla's stock price hasn't been entirely tied to the company's see-sawing fortunes.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk also has made a \$44 billion bid for Twitter, which he placed on hold after complaining that it has too many spam bot users who aren't humans. Much of the erosion in Tesla's value has occurred since Musk became Twitter's largest shareholder and then launched a takeover bid that has raised concerns he has too much on his already crowded plate.

Musk has used his own Twitter account, which now has more than 100 million followers, to discuss the pandemic restrictions that forced the Shanghai factory to temporarily close during the quarter. Wedbush analyst Dan Ives estimates that more than 40% of Tesla's sales come from China, and that the Shanghai factory produced about 70,000 fewer vehicles due to the shutdowns.

But Tesla signaled things are getting better Saturday, saying it produced more vehicles during June than in any other month in its history. The company didn't disclose the number of vehicles manufactured during June.

As of early Saturday afternoon, Musk hadn't tweeted about Tesla's second-quarter sales. But he created a bit of a stir late Friday with ending an uncharacteristically long nine-day silence on Twitter. His Friday tweets included one with him and four his children meeting with Pope Francis.

Tesla's latest delivery numbers came out a week after the release of an interview with Musk in which he described new factories in Austin and Berlin as "money furnaces" that were losing billions of dollars because supply chain breakdowns were limiting the number of cars they can produce.

In a May 30 interview with a Tesla owners' club that was just released last week, Musk said that getting the Berlin and Austin plants functional "are overwhelmingly our concerns. Everything else is a very small thing," Musk said, but added that "it's all gonna get fixed real fast."

Musk also has discussed making salaried workers return to offices and a possible 10% cut in Tesla's work force due to a possible recession.

Supply chain breakdowns since the onset of COVID-19 two years ago have been especially debilitating for automakers, who get parts from all corners of the globe. A lack of computer chips needed to run cars' computers compounded automakers' problems and sent prices for used and new cars skyrocketing.

As the pandemic erupted in the U.S. in 2020, automakers had to shut factories for eight weeks to help stop the virus from spreading. Some parts companies canceled orders for semiconductors. At the same time, demand for laptops, tablets and gaming consoles skyrocketed as people stuck at home upgraded their devices.

By the time auto production resumed, chip makers had shifted production to consumer goods, creating a shortage of weather-resistant automotive-grade chips. Although Tesla has fared better than other automakers, the industry still can't get enough chips.

US testing new fire retardant, critics push other methods

By KEITH RIDLER Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — U.S. officials are testing a new wildfire retardant after two decades of buying millions of gallons annually from one supplier, but watchdogs say the expensive strategy is overly fixated on aerial attacks at the expense of hiring more fire-line digging ground crews.

The Forest Service used more than 50 million gallons (190 million liters) of retardant for the first time in 2020 as increasingly destructive wildfires plague the West. It exceeded 50 million gallons again last year to fight some of the largest and longest-duration wildfires in history in California and other states. The fire retardant cost those two years reached nearly \$200 million.

Over the previous 10 years, the agency used 30 million gallons (115 million liters) annually.

"No two wildfires are the same, and thus it's critical for fire managers to have different tools available to them for different circumstances a fire may present," the Forest Service said in an email. "Fire retardant is simply one of those tools."

The Forest Service said tests started last summer are continuing this summer with a magnesium-chloride-based retardant from Fortress.

Fortress contends its retardants are effective and better for the environment than products offered by Perimeter Solutions. That company says its ammonium-phosphate-based retardants are superior.

Fortress started in 2014 with mainly former wildland firefighters who aimed to create a more effective fire retardant that's better for the environment. It has facilities in California, Montana and Wyoming, and describes itself as the only alternative to fertilizer-based fire retardants.

The company is headed by Chief Executive Officer Bob Burnham, who started his career as a hotshot crew member fighting wildfires and ultimately rose to become a Type 1 incident commander, directing hundreds of firefighters against some of the nation's largest wildfires. He often called in aircraft to disperse plumes of red fire retardant, a decision he said he wonders about now after learning more about fertilizer-based retardants and developing a new retardant.

"This new fire retardant is better," he said. "It's going to be a lot less damaging to our sensitive planet resources, and it's going to be a lot better fire retardant on the ground."

The main ingredient in Fortress products, magnesium chloride, is extracted from the Great Salt Lake in Utah, a method and process the company says is more environmentally friendly and less greenhouse-gas producing than mining and processing phosphate. The Forest Service last summer tested the company's FR-100, and this summer said it will test a version called FR-200.

Perimeter Solutions, which has facilities and equipment throughout the West, has had a number of name and ownership changes over the years but has dominated the market for more than two decades. The company's Phos-Chek LC-95A is the world's most used fire retardant. The company is transitioning to a new retardant called Phos-Chek LCE20-Fx, which the company said is made out of food-grade ingredients, making it a cleaner product.

"We're certain that the products that we make are the safest, most effective, most environmentally friendly products available," said Chief Executive Officer Edward Goldberg. "We've spent decades in partnership with the (Forest Service)."

Phosphate is mined in multiple places. Goldberg said they get phosphate both domestically, including from Idaho, and internationally. He declined to go into detail, but said the company hasn't relied on China or Ukraine, and has substituted other suppliers for Russia and Belarus.

The Forest Service said that tests this summer with FR-200 will be limited to single-engine airtankers flying out of an airtanker base in Ronan, Montana. That appears to be to prevent mixing the companies' retardants.

Two Forest Service watchdog groups contend both types of retardant harm the environment, and that the agency should be spending less on retardant and more on firefighters.

Andy Stahl, executive director of the Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, and Timothy Ingalsbee, executive director of Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology, both said that the

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ammonium-phosphates-based retardant is essentially a fertilizer that can boost invasive plants and is potentially responsible for some algae blooms in lakes or reservoirs when it washes downstream. They said the magnesium-chloride-based retardant is essentially a salt that will inhibit plant growth where it falls, possibly harming threatened species.

Both are concerned about direct hits to waterways with either retardant and potential harm to aquatic species. Aircraft are typically limited to giving streams a 300-foot (90-meter) buffer from retardant, but the Forest Service allows drops within the buffer under some conditions, and they sometimes happen accidentally.

"Their theory is that it's a war, and when you're in a war you're going to have collateral damage," Stahl said. "It's the fire-industrial complex, the nexus between corporate and government agencies combined, with really no interest in ending making warfare on wildfires. It's ever-increasing."

Currently, much of the West is in drought. The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, is reporting that so far this year there have been more than 31,000 wildfires that have burned about 5,000 square miles (13,000 square kilometers). That's well above the 10-year average for the same period of about 24,000 wildfires and 2,000 square miles (5,000 square kilometers) burned.

Wildfire seasons have become increasingly longer as climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years, and scientists have long warned that the weather will get wilder as the world warms.

From AM to PM, the fickle force of government is with you

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When you groggily roll out of bed and make breakfast, the government edges up to your kitchen table, too. Unlike you, it's perky.

It's an unseen force in your morning. The government makes sure you can see the nutrients in your cereal. It fusses over your toast, insisting that the flour it comes from has no more than 75 insect fragments and one rodent hair per 50 grams.

The government also tends to your coffee, mandating that no more than 10% of your beans be moldy. Its satellites inform the weather forecast on your phone for the day ahead. The government weighs in on the water consumption in your bathroom and controls the fluoride in your toothpaste.

That's all before you leave home. The government is going to be hanging with you on and off, mostly on, until you turn off the lamp last thing at night — no new incandescent bulbs, please, under a new rule.

The world of federal regulation seems both boundless and microscopic. It touches what you touch. It lends a helping hand at every turn or sticks its clumsy fingers in everything, depending on your viewpoint.

But a Supreme Court ruling this past week, limiting federal authority to control carbon emissions from power plants, was just the latest blow to what critics call the regulatory state and potentially a major blow to the fight against global warming.

In its farthest reach, regulation has become the go-to way for presidents to make policy when they can't get Congress to pass a law, as on climate change. Barack Obama and Donald Trump did it for varied policies; Joe Biden does it. The court's conservative majority said not so fast to Biden.

The decision imperils Biden's goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by half by the end of the decade even as the damage from global warming mounts. Beyond that, it may hinder regulation across a range of public policy, in education, transportation, LGBTQ rights and more.

Congress, the court said, must speak with specificity when it wants to give an agency authority to regulate on an issue of national import.

Browse the Code of Federal Regulations and you will see just how specific rule-making can be. The voluminous code's favorite words are "shall" and "must."

Take sea otters, for example. If you've ever wondered how to measure a sea otter, the code has the answer.

The pool of water for sea otters in captivity, it stipulates, "shall be at least three times the average adult

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length of the sea otter contained therein (measured in a horizontal line from the tip of its nose to the tip of its tail) and the pool shall be not less than .91 meters (3.0 feet) deep.”

Even as they've expanded government with landmark laws and the explosion of regulations that arise from them, U.S. presidents have tried since the start to simplify government. As vice president, Al Gore took a run at “reinventing” it. Such efforts generally haven't gone well.

Thomas Jefferson sought freedom from bureaucracy as well as the achievement of American liberty when he wrote of the British king, “He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.”

What followed were several centuries of new offices and swarm upon swarm of bureaucrats come hither.

Associated Press writer Saul Pett took stock of the government in 1981 when President Ronald Reagan was trying to rein it in. Pett won a Pulitzer Prize for getting his hands around the behemoth. He described the government as:

“A big, bumbling, generous, naive, inquisitive, acquisitive, intrusive, meddlesome giant with a heart of gold and holes in his pockets, an incredible hulk, a ‘10-ton marshmallow’ lumbering along an uncertain road of good intentions somewhere between capitalism and socialism, an implausible giant who fights wars, sends men to the moon, explores the ends of the universe, feeds the hungry, heals the sick, helps the helpless, a thumping complex of guilt trying mightily to make up for past sins to the satisfaction of nobody, a split personality who most of his life thought God helps those who help themselves and only recently concluded God needed help, a malleable, vulnerable colossus pulled every which way by everybody who wants a piece of him, which is everybody.”

At the time, the U.S. government owned 413,042 buildings, excluding military facilities abroad, and employed 2.8 million civilians and 2.1 million military personnel. The expansion of federal programs especially swelled ranks in state and local government.

In 2021, a year of pandemic-dampened employment, the civilian federal civil service was about the same size as in 1981 while 600,000 or so fewer were in uniform.

For all of that, citizen encounters with the federal government often play out in the background, unacknowledged. The days are long gone when anyone could stroll at will through the front doors of Washington's grand government buildings and do business.

It shapes their lives, nonetheless. That smartphone GPS came from the government. So did the internet.

People stroll on sidewalks built to requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Text messages and apps run off nearby cellphone towers that the Federal Communications Commission registers and licenses.

But it's more visible when the government takes instead of gives. Motorists steer 18.4 cents to Washington for each gallon of gas they buy and 24.4 cents for each gallon of diesel. Most states grab an even bigger take per gallon.

Much of that money goes to make the roads you drive on better. A sliver of it per gallon goes to LUST — the fund to fix leaking underground storage tanks. And there are federal auto rules galore.

The rules dictate how far you should be able to go on a gallon of gas — about 28 miles or 45 kilometers this year. The feds have standards on air bags and child car seats. Rules in the works would let you know if people in the back seat haven't buckled up and remind you to look in the back seat when you turn off the car to make sure you haven't left a child there.

At work, federal rules stand ready to step in if you are a victim of unlawful discrimination or hazardous working conditions. After work, food at the dinner table made it there through a regimen of meat, factory and farm inspection and truth-in-labelling rules.

That pizza sauce? Relax and enjoy. It can only have 30 fly eggs in each cup, by federal mandate. Except when a maggot is present; then only 15 fly eggs are permitted.

When you tuck your children in, the feds are there for the nighty-night, too.

If the young ones are old enough to get around and in trouble — nine months — they go off to sleep in the only bedtime garments that can be sold for them — body-hugging nightwear or flame-retardant pajamas.

Says a government order: That must and shall be so.

Texas' border mission grows, but crossings still high

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Following the horror of a human-smuggling attempt that left 53 people dead, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott ordered state troopers to inspect more trucks — again expanding a border security mission that has cost billions, given the National Guard arrest powers and bused migrants to Washington, D.C.

What Abbott's get-tough plans haven't done in the year since he began rolling them out is curb the number of people crossing the border.

Along the border in Texas, where officials say Monday's fatal tractor-trailer journey began, U.S. authorities stopped migrants from crossing illegally 523,000 times between January and May, up from 417,000 over the same span a year ago. It reflects how, across the nation's entire southern border, crossings are at or near the highest in about two decades.

The deadliest smuggling attempt in U.S. history illustrated the limitations of Abbott's massive border apparatus as the two-term governor, who is up for reelection in November, points the finger at President Joe Biden. Immigration advocates have disagreed with Abbott's criticism and said Biden is focused on enforcement.

"Texas is going to take action to do our part to try to reduce the illegal immigration coming into our country," Abbott said Wednesday while on the border in the town of Eagle Pass.

He said that state troopers would begin inspecting more tractor-trailers in wake of the tragedy. He did not provide details about the extent or location of the inspections. But unlike an inspection effort three months ago that gridlocked the state's 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) border for a week, troopers are not checking every tractor-trailer as it comes into Texas.

The Texas Department of Public Safety did not respond to questions Friday about how many trucks have been inspected since the governor's order or whether any migrants have been found.

Critics have questioned the transparency and metrics of what is now a \$3 billion mission since Operation Lone Star was launched in the spring of 2021. Some arrests, including for low-level amounts of marijuana during traffic stops, appear to have little to do with border security. After a rushed deployment of the Texas National Guard, some members complained of low morale, late paychecks and having little to do.

Since April, Abbott has offered bus rides to Washington, D.C., to migrants who cross the border, saying he was taking the immigration issue to Congress' doorstep. So far, about 3,000 migrants have taken the trip at a cost of more than \$5 million.

"Greg Abbott, all he wants to do is gotcha phrases and gotcha stunts without any real solutions," said state Sen. Roland Gutierrez, a Democrat whose district includes the back road in San Antonio where the truck was found abandoned. "He's spent over \$10 billion supposedly securing the border and hasn't done one damn thing to fix this."

U.S. border authorities are stopping migrants more often on the southern border than at any time in at least two decades. Migrants were stopped nearly 240,000 times in May, up by one-third from a year ago.

Comparisons to pre-pandemic levels are complicated because migrants expelled under a public health authority known as Title 42 face no legal consequences, encouraging repeat attempts. Authorities say 25% of encounters in May were with people who had been stopped at least once in the previous year.

Abbott's earlier truck inspection effort drew wide backlash and caused deep economic losses, and troopers found no migrants or drugs.

Abbott stopped the checks after signing agreements with governors in Mexico's four neighboring states, but warned he might reimpose them if he didn't see improvement. The number of migrants crossing in May was higher than in April.

Asked about it Wednesday, Abbott said "accountability may come soon." He also blamed Mexico's federal government, saying it needs to do more.

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He says the operation overall has been successful, pointing to more than 4,000 migrants arrested on state criminal trespassing charges, 14,000 felony arrests and drug seizures. He also said Texas has turned back more than 22,000 migrants over the last year — a fraction of the attempted border crossings across the southern border in a single month.

Before Monday's tragedy, the deadliest attempted smuggling in Texas was in 2003 when the bodies of 19 people were found dead in a sweltering trailer about 100 miles (160 kilometers) southwest of San Antonio. Jeff Vaden, a former U.S. attorney who helped prosecute that case, said sentences for smuggling migrants are not high enough.

"It's not a deterrent for people taking that risk," he said.

One of the first to visit some of the migrants pulled from the truck and hospitalized in San Antonio was Antonio Fernandez, president and CEO of Catholic Charities, which provides migrants and their families with housing and assistance.

Fernandez said summer is usually a slower time, but not this year. A hotel used by Catholic Charities that typically shelters 50 people has lately been filled with 100 every night, and he now has eight members of staff who help families with immigration, up from just one.

"My conversations with a lot of these people, clearly, they have nothing in their countries," Fernandez said. "They don't have a life and they don't feel safe. They're hungry. For them, America is not a choice. It's the only option they have."

Parkland jurors must manage trial stress on their own

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The jurors chosen this past week to decide whether Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz is executed will visit a bloodstained crime scene, view graphic photos and videos and listen to intense emotional testimony — an experience that they will have to manage entirely on their own.

Throughout what is expected to be a monthslong penalty trial, Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer will order jurors not to talk to anyone about what they have seen, heard or thought. Not their spouse. Not their best friend. Not their clergy or therapist. Not even each other until deliberations begin. The order is not unusual; it is issued at all trials to ensure jurors' opinions aren't influenced by outsiders.

Once the trial ends, the 12 jurors and 10 alternates can unload to others — but they won't receive any assistance from the judicial system. As is the case in most of the United States, neither Florida nor Broward County courts provide juries with post-trial counseling.

The only state to do so is Massachusetts, which has only offered the service since December. Since 2005, federal courts have offered assistance after about 20 trials annually, usually those involving the death penalty, child pornography and child abuse cases, said federal court system spokesman Charles Hall.

"Judges and jurors alike appreciate" the program, Hall said, "viewing it as an acknowledgment of the extraordinary stresses that jury service in certain types of trials can entail."

"That said, the program is not well-used," Hall added.

The Cruz jurors will tour the now-abandoned three-story building at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland where Cruz, 23, fatally shot 14 students and three staff members and wounded 17. Its bullet-pocked halls remain unchanged since shortly after the Feb. 14, 2018, massacre, with Valentine's Day gifts still strewn about.

They will view graphic security video of terrified teens and teachers being shot point-blank or running for their lives, examine autopsy and crime scene photos and hear heartrending testimony from wounded survivors and family members of the murder victims. When it is over, the jurors will grapple with the weighty decision of whether a young adult — even someone responsible for one of the worst slaughters in the nation's history — should live or die.

"It's going to be horrible," Cruz's lead attorney, Melisa McNeill, recently warned one potential juror in court.

Jim Wolfcale was foreman of the Virginia jury that convicted Lee Boyd Malvo for his role in one of the multiple deaths that resulted in 2002 from a series of sniper shootings in Washington, D.C.

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Wolfcale said he sometimes found it difficult not to talk to other jurors, particularly after Malvo appeared "disrespectful or arrogant" during testimony.

"I would be like, 'You've got to be kidding me,' so it would be hard not to talk about. I would wonder, 'Am I thinking right? Are the other guys and girls on the jury thinking what I am thinking?'" said Wolfcale, a minister. But outside court, his wife and friends never asked about the case, knowing he couldn't talk. "My friends would just say, 'We're praying for you.'"

Malvo, in his teens like Cruz, admitted in court to killing 17 people. Unlike Cruz, he committed the slayings over nine months in multiple states.

Cruz pleaded guilty in October to 17 counts of first-degree murder, but is challenging his death penalty trial. For him to receive a death sentence, all jurors must agree. Otherwise, the former Stoneman Douglas student will receive life without parole.

For all or most of Cruz's jurors, this will undoubtedly be their first exposure to graphic gun violence and they will be dealing with the deadliest mass shooting that has ever gone to trial in the U.S. Nine other people in the U.S. who fatally shot at least 17 people died during or immediately after their attacks. The suspect in the 2019 massacre of 23 at an El Paso, Texas, Walmart is awaiting trial.

Wolfcale said that during the Malvo trial, other jurors sometimes broke down in the jury room after seeing graphic evidence or hearing emotional testimony. They would hug, and divert themselves by talking about the upcoming Christmas holidays. Malvo ultimately received a life sentence instead of the death penalty because the jury was split, partly because of the defendant's young age.

Wolfcale — who voted to execute Malvo — said he didn't feel stress until late on the trial's final day. Then, he said, "It hit me" — and stayed with him for months.

"Even today, 20 years later, when your adrenaline is high, you can recall a lot, but that first six months it was on my mind constantly," he said.

Responding to a survey conducted by the Center for Jury Studies, 70% of questioned jurors said they experienced stress during routine trials, according to center director Paula Hannaford-Agor. She said 10% reported severe stress, though that usually abated quickly.

In contrast, about 10% of jurors who served on high-profile, graphic trials reported long-term stress, Hannaford-Agor said. They displayed post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms similar to those exhibited by some police officers, firefighters and emergency room doctors, she said. The difference is that the first-responders can talk to colleagues, friends and counselors in real time, while the stress is building.

"Jurors, of course, are told they are not allowed to talk about any of it" until the trial is over, Hannaford-Agor said.

Studies also show many jurors who imposed a death sentence question themselves long after the trial.

"None of those said this was something that had completely derailed their lives, but ... years later they were still thinking about it and wondering if they made the right decision, and remember how difficult that decision was," Hannaford-Agor said.

On their own, jurors 65 and older can get mental health services through Medicare. Younger jurors may have coverage through jobs or private insurance, but that sometimes requires co-pays and deductibles running into thousands of dollars. That could deter many.

In addition to the cost factor, courts don't offer programs because judges and other officials have experience processing graphic evidence and can talk to others during the trial, Hannaford-Agor said. They might not fully appreciate jurors' stress levels.

Judges "aren't feeling it quite as intensely," she said. ____

Associated Press researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York contributed to this report.

Medication abortion is common; here's how it works

By LINDSEY TANNER and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

Medication abortions became the preferred method for ending pregnancy in the U.S. even before the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. These involve taking two prescription medicines days apart — at

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home or in a clinic.

Abortion procedures are an invasive medical technique that empties the womb. They are sometimes called surgical abortions, although they don't involve surgery.

Abortion by pills involves the drugs mifepristone and misoprostol. As more states seek abortion limits, demand for the pills is expected to grow.

HOW THE DRUGS WORK

Mifepristone is taken first, swallowed by mouth. The drug dilates the cervix and blocks the effects of the hormone progesterone, which is needed to sustain a pregnancy.

Misoprostol, a drug also used to treat stomach ulcers, is taken 24 to 48 hours later. The pill is designed to dissolve when placed between the gums and teeth or in the vagina. It causes the uterus to cramp and contract, causing bleeding and expelling pregnancy tissue.

HOW THE DRUGS ARE USED

Abortion medication is approved for use up to the 10th week of pregnancy.

The pills may be taken in a doctor's office or clinic, where patients sometimes have an ultrasound or lab tests beforehand. Some providers also offer the pills through telehealth visits and then send patients the medication by mail.

Use of the pills has been increasing in recent years. As of 2020, they accounted for 54% of all U.S. abortions, according to preliminary data from the Guttmacher Institute. The group's final estimate is due later this year.

SIDE EFFECTS

Studies and real-use evidence show that when taken together, the pills are safe and up to 99% effective. Side effects may include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Bleeding is normal. Very heavy bleeding — soaking more than two pads an hour for more than two hours — is uncommon but requires medical attention.

Dr. Stephanie Rand, a New York ob-gyn and abortion specialist with the advocacy group Physicians for Reproductive Health, says pregnancy tests should not be used right away to determine if a medication abortion was successful because the pregnancy hormone may linger in the body for several weeks. Bleeding, with blood clots that include lighter colored tissue, are signs of success, she said.

Serious complications are very rare. The Food and Drug Administration says more than 3.7 million U.S. women have used mifepristone since it was approved more than 20 years ago. The agency has received 26 reports of deaths in women using the medication, including two involving ectopic pregnancies, which grow outside the womb.

The medications are not recommended for certain patients, including those with suspected ectopic pregnancies or with implanted IUD birth control devices.

COSTS

Costs vary by location but are similar to abortion procedures and may total more than \$500. Health insurance coverage varies, with some plans making the pills free or low cost and others not covering them at all.

Mifepristone is sold under the brand name Mifeprex and misoprostol under the brand name Cytotec, but both pills are available as generics.

FEDERAL RULES

The FDA approved mifepristone to terminate pregnancy in 2000, when used with misoprostol. At the time, it imposed several limits on how the drug could be prescribed and dispensed.

In December, the agency dropped the biggest restriction: a requirement that patients pick up the medication in person. The FDA said a scientific review of the drug's use — including during the COVID-19 pandemic — showed that women could safely receive the pills through the mail after an online consultation, without any increase in side effects or complications.

The decision allowed mail delivery of the pills nationwide, a change long-sought by medical professional groups and abortion-rights supporters.

Still, millions of women will have trouble accessing the pills due to a patchwork of state laws targeting abortion broadly and the pills specifically. About half of U.S. states are expected to ban or greatly restrict

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abortion.

LEGAL CONFLICTS

Legal experts foresee years of court battles over access to the pills, as abortion-rights proponents bring test cases to challenge state restrictions.

There are strong arguments and precedents on both sides, experts note, though little certainty about which side might prevail.

The Biden administration's Justice Department has already signaled plans to challenge state restrictions on medication abortion. And federal lawyers are likely to be joined by outside parties, including abortion rights groups like Planned Parenthood and even the companies that make the pills.

The chief argument against pill restrictions is likely to be the longstanding principle that federal laws, including FDA decisions, preempts state laws. Indeed, few states have ever tried to fully ban an FDA-approved drug because of past rulings in the agency's favor.

Still, states with blanket abortion bans are likely to interpret them as barring abortion pills. Many of the laws don't distinguish between abortion procedures and medication abortion.

"In the short term, those states that ban abortion are going to assume that their bans also include medication abortion and that will be prohibited," said Greer Donley, a professor specializing in reproductive health care at the University of Pittsburgh Law School.

STATE LAWS ON THE PILLS

Even if blanket bans are successfully challenged, more than 30 states have laws specifically restricting access to abortion pills. For example, 19 states require that clinicians be physically present when the drug is administered.

Those laws could withstand court challenges. States have long had authority over how physicians, pharmacists and other providers practice medicine.

States also set the rules for telemedicine consultations used to prescribe medications. Generally that means health providers in states with restrictions on abortion pills could face penalties, such as fines or license suspension, for trying to send pills through the mail.

Women have already been traveling across state lines to places where abortion pill access is easier. That trend is expected to increase.

Meanwhile, some women will still get the medication via online pharmacies in Canada and overseas, often with telehealth consultations from foreign doctors. The practice is technically illegal but essentially unenforced, and advocates believe women will increasingly choose this method as more states move to ban abortions.

"Anti-abortion states are going to do everything they can to restrict medication abortion, but practically speaking people have been and will continue to access it through the mail from international pharmacies," Donley said.

YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY

Donley expects lawsuits based on various legal theories to play out for a few years before any clear decisions emerge.

One key question is how the nation's top court might rule if and when it takes up those court cases. While the Supreme Court has rejected a constitutional right to abortion, conservative justices have also generally deferred to FDA's primacy over drug decisions.

Today in History: July 3, Union wins at Gettysburg

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, July 3, the 184th day of 2022. There are 181 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 3, 1976, Israel launched its daring mission to rescue 106 passengers and Air France crew members being held at Entebbe (en-TEH'-bee) Airport in Uganda (yoo-GAHN'-dah) by pro-Palestinian hijackers; the commandos succeeded in rescuing all but four of the hostages.

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On this date:

In 1775, Gen. George Washington took command of the Continental Army at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In 1863, the three-day Civil War Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania ended in a major victory for the North as Confederate troops failed to breach Union positions during an assault known as Pickett's Charge.

In 1944, during World War II, Soviet forces recaptured Minsk from the Germans.

In 1950, the first carrier strikes of the Korean War took place as the USS Valley Forge and the HMS Triumph sent fighter planes against North Korean targets.

In 1971, singer Jim Morrison of The Doors died in Paris at age 27.

In 1979, Dan White, convicted of voluntary manslaughter in the shooting deaths of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone (mahs-KOH'-nee) and Supervisor Harvey Milk, was sentenced to seven years and eight months in prison. (He ended up serving five years.)

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan presided over a gala ceremony in New York Harbor that saw the re-lighting of the renovated Statue of Liberty.

In 1988, the USS Vincennes shot down an Iran Air jetliner over the Persian Gulf, killing all 290 people aboard.

In 1996, Russians went to the polls to re-elect Boris Yeltsin president over his Communist challenger, Gennady Zyuganov (geh-NAH'-dee zhoo-GAH'-nahf), in a runoff.

In 2011, Novak Djokovic (NOH'-vak JOH'-kuh-vich) won his first Wimbledon, beating defending champion Rafael Nadal 6-4, 6-1, 1-6, 6-3.

In 2013, Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi, was overthrown by the military after just one year by the same kind of Arab Spring uprising that had brought the Islamist leader to power.

In 2020, speaking at the foot of Mount Rushmore on the eve of Independence Day, President Donald Trump asserted that protesters pushing for racial justice were engaging in a "merciless campaign to wipe out our history."

Ten years ago: Andy Griffith, 86, who made homespun American Southern wisdom his trademark as the wise sheriff in "The Andy Griffith Show," died at his North Carolina home.

Five years ago: A federal appeals court ruled that Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt overstepped his authority in trying to delay implementation of an Obama administration rule requiring oil and gas companies to monitor and reduce methane leaks.

One year ago: Crews suspended the search for the living and the dead in the rubble of a collapsed South Florida condo building so that workers could start preparing the unstable remainder of the building for demolition ahead of a tropical storm.

Today's Birthdays: Playwright Tom Stoppard is 85. Writer-producer Jay Tarses is 83. Actor Michael Cole (TV: "The Mod Squad") is 82. Attorney Gloria Allred is 81. Folk singer Judith Durham (The Seekers) is 79. Actor Kurtwood Smith is 79. Country singer Johnny Lee is 76. Humorist Dave Barry is 75. Actor Betty Buckley is 75. Actor Jan Smithers is 73. Actor Bruce Altman is 67. Talk show host Montel Williams is 66. Country singer Aaron Tippin is 64. Rock musician Vince Clarke (Erasure) is 62. Actor Tom Cruise is 60. Actor Thomas Gibson is 60. Actor Hunter Tylo is 60. Actor Connie Nielsen is 58. Actor Yeadley Smith is 58. TV chef Sandra Lee is 56. Singer Ishmael Butler is 53. Rock musician Kevin Hearn (Barenaked Ladies) is 53. Actor-singer Shawnee Smith is 53. Actor-singer Audra McDonald is 52. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is 51. Actor Patrick Wilson is 49. Country singer Trent Tomlinson is 47. Actor Andrea Barber is 46. Singer Shane Lynch (Boyzone) is 46. Actor Ian Anthony Dale is 44. Actor/comedian Julie Klausner is 44. Actor Elizabeth Hendrickson is 43. Country singer-songwriter Sarah Buxton is 42. Actor Olivia Munn is 42. Actor Shoshannah Stern is 42. Rock singer-songwriter Elle King is 33. Actor Grant Rosenmeyer is 31.