

Groton Daily Independent

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"The quality of your life will be determined by the quality of your contribution. When you work to improve the lives of others, your life improves automatically."

KUREK ASHLEY



Help Wanted

Want a fun job with flexible hours? We're looking for 16 year olds and older with smiling faces! Free meals and we'll work around your schedule. Are you a mom wanting some hours while your kids are in school or a teenager wanting to earn some money or an adult looking for work? Daytime – evening – week-end hours are available and we'll make the hours work for you! Stop in for an application. Dairy Queen, 11 East Hwy 12 in Groton.

CLEANER WANTED

SATURDAY CLEANER NEEDED IN FERNEY, SD, 830 am to 130 pm. \$15 an hour. Must be dependable and be willing to work around customers coming into the family owned business. Please call Stephanie at 605-381-1758.

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

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

CARD OF THANKS

I WOULD LIKE to say a big thank you to everyone who called, sent cards, gave gifts or visited me for my 80th birthday. I would also like to thank my daughter, Deb, for putting on a wonderful supper for me. It was a very special time. Blessings to all of you!

Sharon Busch

SABER SHRED HELP WANTED

Now hiring full or part-time positions. Tire handler, responsible for assisting in unloading tires from semi trailers, feeding the tire shredder and general cleanup tasks. Must be able to lift 50 lbs. Starting pay \$16/hr. Contact Robert Wegner at 605-397-7579. Saber Shred Solutions (formerly New Deal Tire Groton, SD)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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Z & M Trucking lost four round bales Saturday evening on SD37 just south of US12 in Groton. Dwight Zerr from the city came to the rescue to clear off the road and salvage one of the bales, which were en route to Kansas. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



Groton Daily Independent

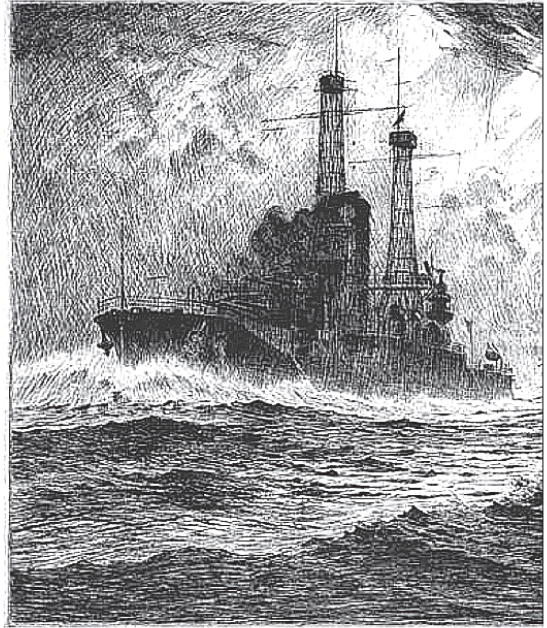
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

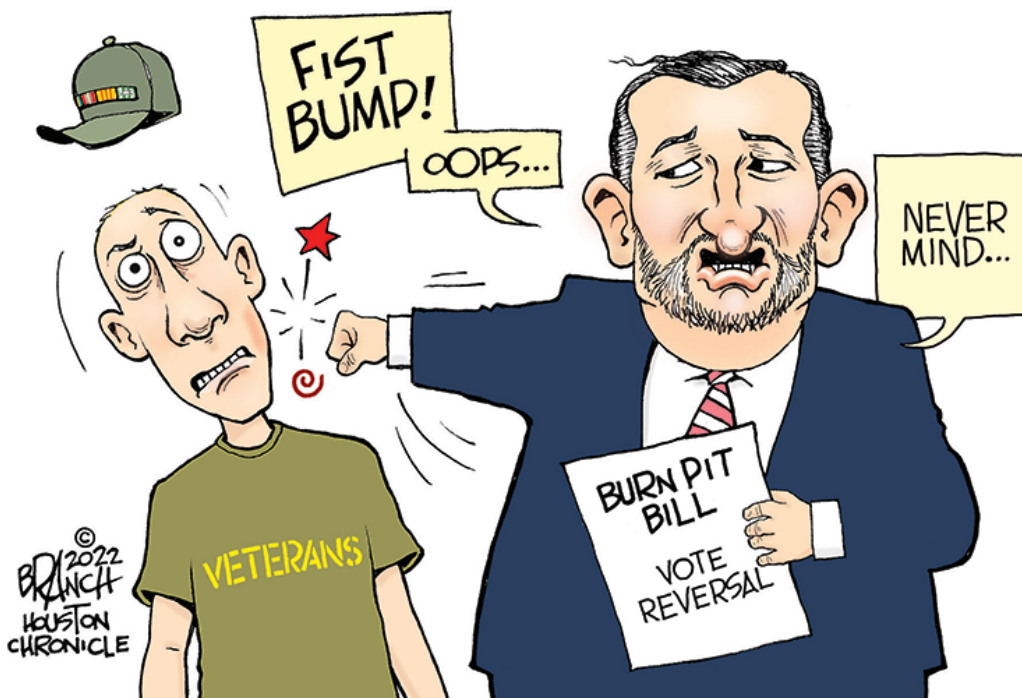
*Some went out on the sea in ships;
they were merchants on the mighty
waters. They saw the works of the
Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep.
For he spoke and stirred up a tempest
that lifted high the waves.*

PSALMS 107: 23-25



Detail of "American Battleship 1916" by Martin Lewis

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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Who sent word to Pontius Pilate to leave Jesus alone after having a dream about Him? *Servant, Soldier, Pilate's wife, Priest*

3. From Zechariah 1, what type of tree surrounded a man on a red horse? *Fig, Cedar, Sycamore, Myrtle*

4. According to Romans 11, whose loss meant riches for the Gentiles? *Caesar, Lucifer, Israel, Syria*

5. In Genesis 25, what was the name of Isaac's older half-brother? *Noah, Ishmael, Ezekiel, Micah*

6. Who had a miraculous well open up to him after battle? *Samson, David, Aaron, Uriah*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Pilate's wife, 3) Myrtle, 4) Israel, 5) Ishmael, 6) Samson

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

Comfort foods

Made fast and healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

Easy Summer Salad

When it's too hot to even think of turning on the stove, why not give this ultra-easy lettuce salad with bacon-ranch dressing a try? We think you'll be glad you did!

1/2 cup fat-free ranch dressing

2 tablespoons fat-free mayonnaise

2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes

2 tablespoons purchased real bacon bits

6 cups shredded lettuce or salad greens

2 cups chopped fresh tomatoes

1. In a small bowl, combine ranch dressing, mayonnaise and parsley flakes. Add bacon bits. Mix well to combine. Cover and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes.

2. For each serving, place 1 1/2 cups lettuce or greens on a plate, sprinkle 1/2 cup tomatoes over lettuce and drizzle a full 2 tablespoons dressing mixture over top. Serve at once. Makes 4 servings.

* Each serving equals: 83 calories, 1g fat, 2g protein, 16g carb., 36mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1/2 Starch, 2 Vegetables.

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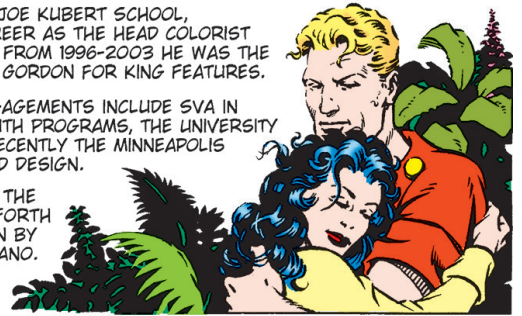
Artist Spotlight:
JIM KEEFE



A GRADUATE OF THE JOE KUBERT SCHOOL, JIM KEEFE STARTED HIS CAREER AS THE HEAD COLORIST AT KING FEATURES SYNDICATE. FROM 1996-2003 HE WAS THE WRITER AND ARTIST OF FLASH GORDON FOR KING FEATURES.

TEACHING AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS INCLUDE SVA IN MANHATTAN, HOFSTRA'S LICCE YOUTH PROGRAMS, THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA AND MOST RECENTLY THE MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN.

KEEFE CURRENTLY IS THE ARTIST OF THE SALLY FORTH COMIC STRIP, WRITTEN BY FRANCESCO MARCIULIANO.



FLASH GORDON

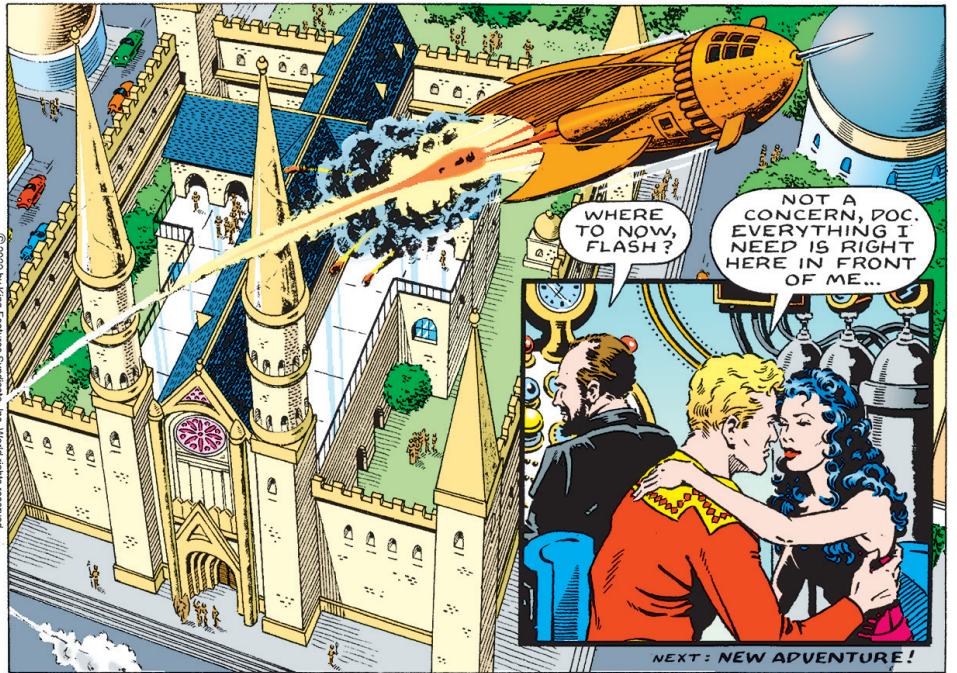
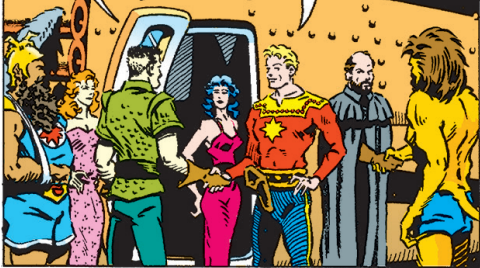
By
JIM KEEFE

8-7

HAVING DEFEATED MING, THE EARTHBORE ADVENTURERS BID ADIEU TO THEIR FRIENDS IN ALANIA.

IT'S NOT EVERY MAN WHO CAN SAY HE HAS SURVIVED MING'S TOURNAMENT OF DEATH TWICE!

I HAVE THE BRAVE MEN WHO FOUGHT BESIDE ME TO THANK FOR THAT.



WHERE TO NOW, FLASH?

NOT A CONCERN, DOC. EVERYTHING I NEED IS RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF ME...

NEXT: NEW ADVENTURE!

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

WORKING THE HANDS INDEPENDENTLY OF THE REST OF THE BODY IS A PRIMARY CAUSE OF SHORT AND CROOKED SHOTS AMONG HIGH-HANDICAP GOLFERS.

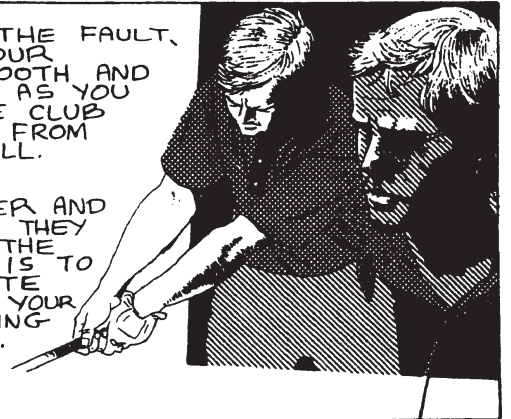
JM



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TO CURE THE FAULT, KEEP YOUR HANDS SMOOTH AND PASSIVE AS YOU START THE CLUB BACK FROM THE BALL.

THE FASTER AND JERKIER THEY GET, THE HARDER IT IS TO COORDINATE THEM WITH YOUR OTHER SWING MOTIONS.





Consuming Collagen Is Not Proven to Reduce Wrinkles

DEAR DR. ROACH: Several months ago, I started adding 25 grams of whey protein to an afternoon smoothie each day. I was worried about muscle loss after reading an article. I have seen the sagging muscles and skin in my arms and thighs. I am a 71-year-old woman, who plays tennis twice a week and goes to the gym about once a week.

I have friends my age who have started adding collagen powders to their smoothies to improve their skin and prevent further facial wrinkles. After researching collagen supplements, I learned that they contain collagen peptides and protein. The dosage and ingredients vary by vendor. What is the correct collagen dosage and ingredients I should be looking for? Is the protein in collagen the same as the protein in whey? -- R.K.

ANSWER: All proteins, such as whey and collagen, are long strands of amino acids. A "peptide" is two or more amino acids connected, while a "polypeptide" is 20 or more amino acids. A protein is a polypeptide that has a function in the organism. Proteins are broken down by acid and enzymes in your stomach, back into their component amino acids, to be used anywhere the body has need for them.

Part of the reason that skin wrinkles is loss of collagen, but it is not at all clear that consuming more collagen, or any protein, will increase the collagen in the skin and therefore reduce wrinkles. You can save a great deal of money by consuming collagen, if you decide you want to, from time-honored sources like chicken broth. Some collagen supplements are made from parts of animal carcasses that contain heavy metals and other toxins, so I would be wary of supplements.

Medicated creams like vitamin A derivatives (such as retinol or tretinoin) work by increasing collagen production in the skin. Vitamin C creams help prevent the breakdown of the existing collagen in the skin. Vitamin C breaks down quickly, so these creams need to be handled sparingly. Moisturizing the skin makes it appear fuller and helps prevent further damage, especially when a daily sunscreen is included.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have been diagnosed with acid reflux for 20 years, but have never been on any antacid medication until recently, when my doctor prescribed Prilosec. My concern is whether it's safe for long-term use. Is there an ingredient in Prilosec that causes cancer? -- A.M.

ANSWER: Omeprazole (Prilosec) has been safely used for decades by many people. Long-term risks include an increased propensity to bacterial pneumonia; gastrointestinal infections, such as C. diff; and poor absorption of vitamin B12 and calcium. When this class of medications was first introduced, there was concern about an increase in a type of tumor called gastric carcinoid, based on laboratory animal studies. This has not been shown to be of concern in humans. Many people who have been on omeprazole and similar anti-ulcer drugs for years or decades do just fine if they are slowly tapered off the drug. Some people need them to keep their symptoms under control. I try to taper them off, but if a person needs them, it's safe to continue them long-term.

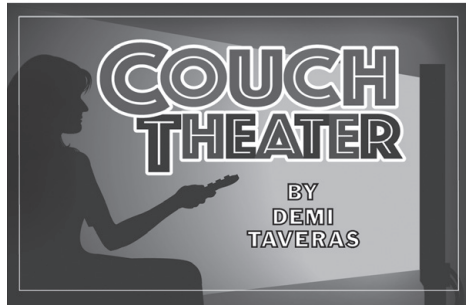
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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"Look Both Ways" (TV-14) -- The night of college graduation can leave fresh graduates feeling nervous about their future. It can be even more nerve-wracking for a young woman like Natalie (Lili Reinhart), who -- in the midst of celebrating -- takes a pregnancy test after getting an inkling that she might have a baby on the way. If the test is positive, Natalie would stay in her hometown and raise her child, but if negative, she would pursue acting in Los Angeles like she's always dreamed. In life, only one scenario can truly await her, but with a bit of creative storytelling and movie magic, viewers get to see both realities unfold for her simultaneously throughout the film. Premieres Aug. 17. (Netflix)



Jerrod Carmichael and Christopher Abbott star as Val and Kevin in "On the Count of Three." Courtesy of Hulu

"On the Count of Three" (R) -- In his directorial debut, stand-up comedian Jerrod Carmichael aimed quite high with this gritty comedy film, starring himself and Christopher Abbott as two friends, Val and Kevin, who make a suicide pact. Val and Kevin agree that it'll be the easiest answer to their difficult life problems and wish to spend their last day together to do whatever they want. However, the two assume they can do this without any consequences and end up wreaking havoc in the last 24 hours leading up to their final moments. Full of dark humor and raw human emotion, "On the Count of Three" is one of those movies that will make you laugh and make you cry, probably at the same time. Releases on Aug. 17. (Hulu)

"The Princess" (NR) -- Decades after her passing, Diana, Princess of Wales, still serves as an icon in media all around the world, with series like "The Crown" and films like "Spencer" giving their own interpretations of the well-beloved, tragedy-stricken princess. Now, in this newly released documentary, an emphasis is placed on how the media swarmed around Diana, thus spawning a (still-prevalent) unhealthy obsession with the royal family. This documentary uses many years of public footage of Diana leading up to her funeral and, like many of the pieces focusing on her story, goes to show how the institution meant to protect her instead miserably failed her. (HBO Max)

"She-Hulk: Attorney at Law" (TV-14) -- Another Marvel series premieres on Disney+ on Aug. 17! Jennifer Walters (Tatiana Maslany) was content with her life and work as a lawyer, until she got contaminated with her cousin Bruce Banner's blood. Now having the ability to transform into She-Hulk, Jennifer has to learn the way of the Hulk. Bruce quickly teaches Jennifer how to master control over her new powers, and with such a strong calling to her work, she just wants to suppress the person inside her and go back to her normal life. But with a 6-foot-tall green version of herself tucked away, she's forced to admit that she's no longer just an attorney -- she's a superhero. She's She-Hulk, and it's time for her to step up to the plate. (Disney+)

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FLASH BACK POP, ROCK & SOUL TRIVIA BY MICK HARPER

1. In which Bill Withers song does he hold a note near the end for 18 seconds?
2. Which artist released an album titled "Comic Book Heroes"?
3. Name the group that released "I'll Sail Away," "She Has Wings" and "City Ties."
4. Which group wrote and released "Whipping Post"?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "Who's gonna ride that chrome three wheeler, Who's gonna make that first mistake, Who wants to wear those gypsy leathers."

Answers

1. "Lovely Day," in 1977. That high-E note was the longest sustained note ever in a U.S. Top 40 song. Another singer (Freddy Curci) is said to have held a note for 20 seconds, but that's not confirmed.
2. Rick Springfield, in 1973. The album came out, was quickly pulled back due to legal problems, and was reissued later.
3. Red, White & Blue(grass), in 1977, all written by Ginger Boatwright, queen of bluegrass music.
4. The Allman Brothers Band, in 1969.
5. "Fire Lake," by Bob Seger and The Silver Bullet Band, in 1980. The song was partially written in 1971 but wasn't picked up again until 1979 when it was finally finished and used on their "Against the Wind" album.

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GRIN *and* BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



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"Here, this will lessen the pain of the bill."

Just Like Cats & Dogs

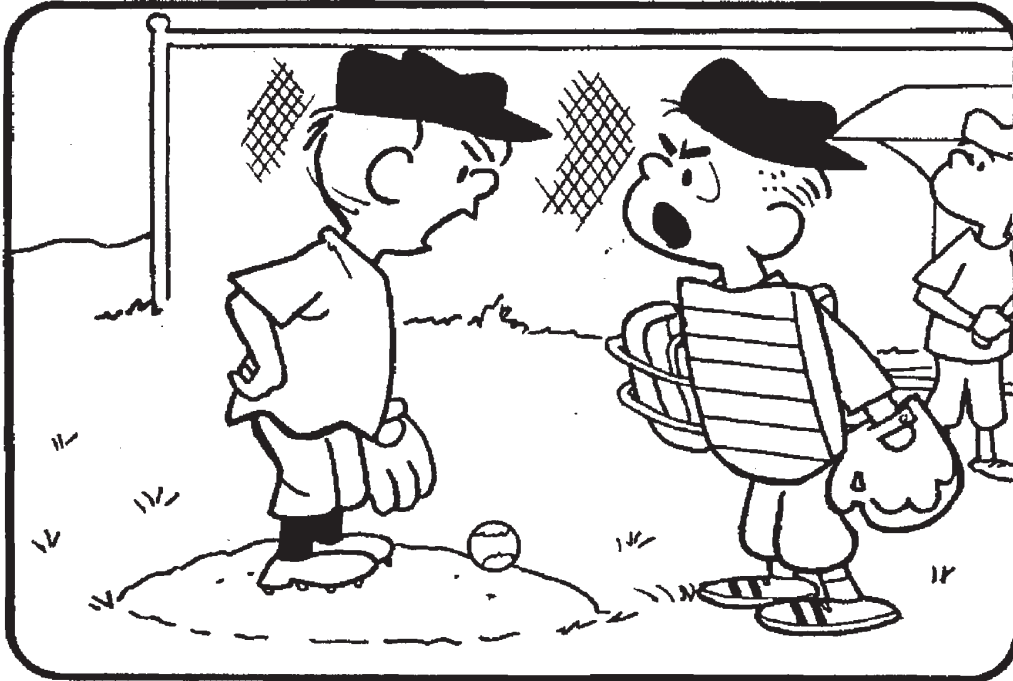
by Dave T. Phipps



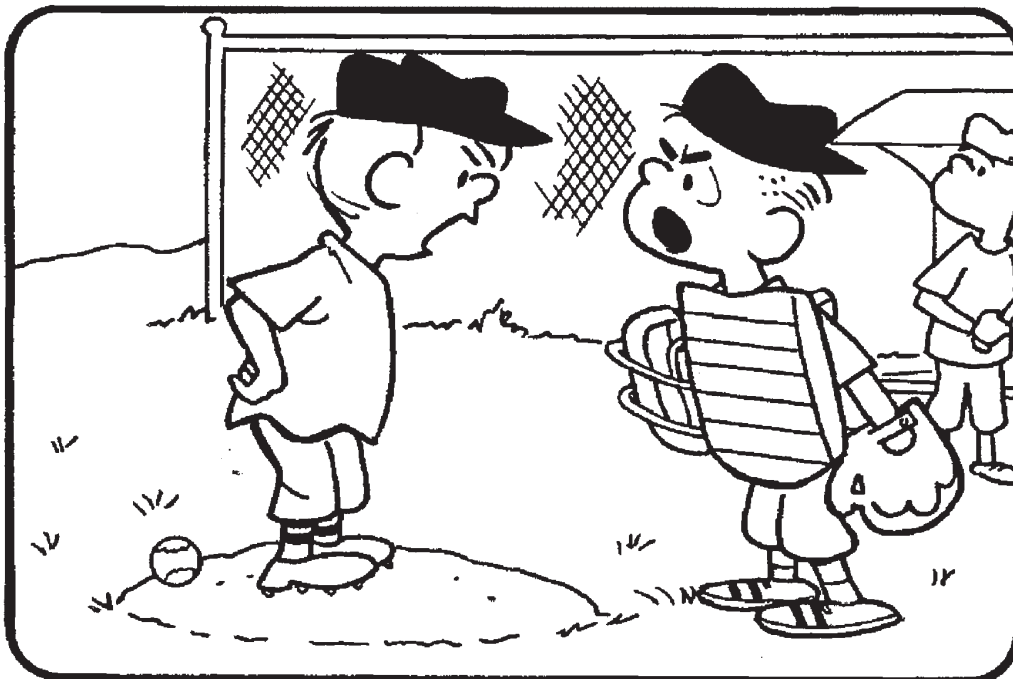
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Fence is shorter. 2. Socks are different. 3. Ball is moved. 4. Glove is missing. 5. Sleeve is shorter. 6. Pants are shorter.

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* To clean out the drawers of my husband's tool cabinet without disturbing the tools, I tucked a knee-high panty hose leg over my vacuum cleaner wand. Most things stayed put, but the one or two small pieces of hardware that got sucked up were easily retrieved. I also did this on his workbench. I picked up all the dust and shavings along with the stray pieces of hardware. I pulled them out of the hose leg, and they were in a tidy pile for him to put away. -- U.L. in Kansas

* Ripen a green tomato by wrapping it in a sheet of newspaper or placing it in a plain, small paper bag. Leave it on the counter and check it daily until ripe.

* You can keep ice cream from dripping out of the bottom of a cone. All you have to do is just place a small marshmallow or a piece of marshmallow in the bottom of the cone before you fill it with ice cream.

* Our family loves to make our own pizza, and we purchase dough from a pizzeria. On pizza nights, I pick up the dough first thing on the way home from work. I get it close to my work and let it sit in a bowl in the car while I pick up the kids and drive home. It takes about 45 minutes, so it's risen nicely while we've been on the go. -- E.F. in New York

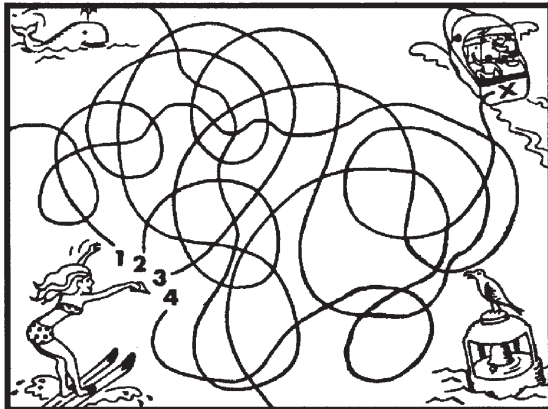
* If you've just purchased an expensive electronic item, take the packaging to a recycling center rather than advertise your purchase by putting the box at the curb. If you aren't able to take it somewhere, cut the box into uniform pieces and bind them together, nonprinted side facing out.

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

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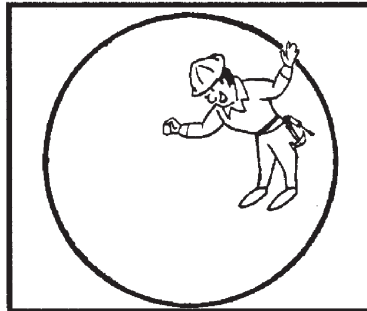
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Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman



MIDDLE KADIDDLE WITS TESTER

BEHOLD! Before your eyes, left, is a circle. You are asked to find its center.

You have a pencil and a ruler with which to work, and, other than this page itself, nothing more.

Now then, how can you go about finding the circle's center with reasonable accuracy?

How about this: Tear off a corner of the page. Place corner over circle with the point (90-degree angle) touching circle's rim. Mark points of intersection of paper segment sides (sides of angle) on rim. Draw a line between these points for circle's diameter.

Measure halfway along this line for center.

TOW HOLD! Grab that rope...preferably the one that leads to the towboat. Pick 1, 2, 3 or 4, and see if you guessed right.

HEADS UP! "It's over my head," said the cyclist, studying these scrambled letters: THEMEL. And there's something to remember about what he says. Can you puzzle it out?

Rearranged, the letters spell HELMET.

X-POSE! No, folks, this is not another variation of tick-tack-toe. It is a three-X word square. That is to say, three of four words reading the same both across and down, and defined below, have X's in place as clues to their identities. Definitions are as follows:

1. Company agents.
2. This way out.
3. Puckish one.
4. Hades' river.

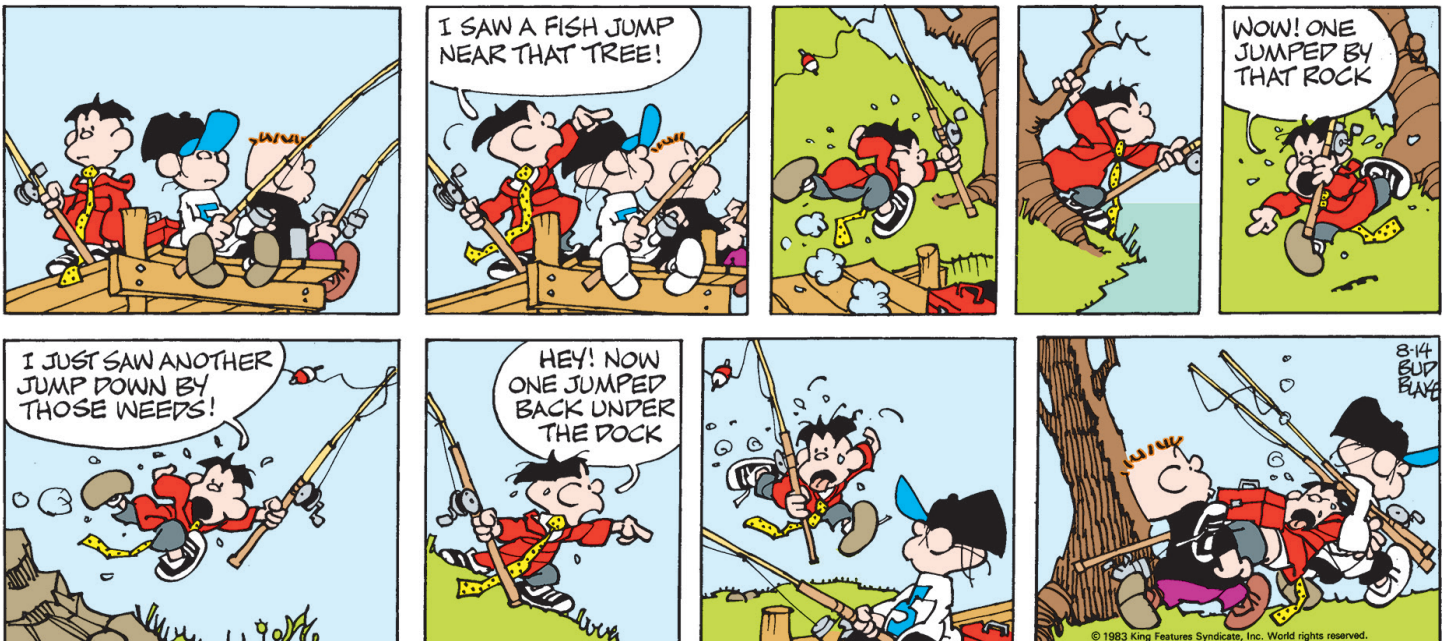
Remember, X's are clues and remain in place. Time limit for this exercise: 1 minute.

1. Repts. 2. Exit. 3. Pixy. 4. Styx.

	1	2	3	4
1				
2		X		
3			X	
4				X

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Felines
- 5 Discoverer's call
- 8 Brewer's kiln
- 12 Owl call
- 13 Massage
- 14 Leg joint
- 15 Not-so-noble protagonist
- 17 Rat- —
- 18 Green sauce
- 19 Realm
- 21 Penny
- 24 Help
- 25 Persian leader
- 28 Knitter's need
- 30 Assoc.
- 33 Bit of wit
- 34 Rehab process
- 35 — chi
- 36 Even so
- 37 Slanted type (Abbr.)
- 38 Darned
- 39 Hollywood's Lupino
- 41 Take five
- 43 Burning
- 46 Leslie of "Gigi"
- 50 Songs for one
- 51 Daughter of Oedipus
- 54 Mon. follower
- 55 Half of XIV
- 56 Send forth

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			

- 57 Teeny
- 58 Ecol. watchdog
- 59 Pixels
- DOWN**
- 1 Bloke
- 2 First-rate
- 3 Youngsters
- 4 Do needlework
- 5 Raw mineral
- 6 "Ben- —"
- 7 Slender woodwind
- 8 Giraffe's kin
- 9 Poison remedy
- 10 Char
- 11 Head, to Henri
- 16 Weeding tool
- 20 Tailless cat
- 22 Russian refusal
- 23 Early Mongolian
- 25 Covert agent
- 26 Coloration
- 27 Cuba, Jamaica, etc.
- 29 Actor's quest
- 31 Cold and damp
- 32 Tonic's mixer
- 34 Actress
- 10 Char
- 38 Put on, as a play
- 40 Dagwood's dog
- 42 High school subj.
- 43 Wine region
- 44 Boxing match
- 45 Roof overhang
- 47 Former Dallas QB Tony
- 48 Taking action
- 49 Tennis barriers
- 52 Wee bite
- 53 Spanish aunt

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

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

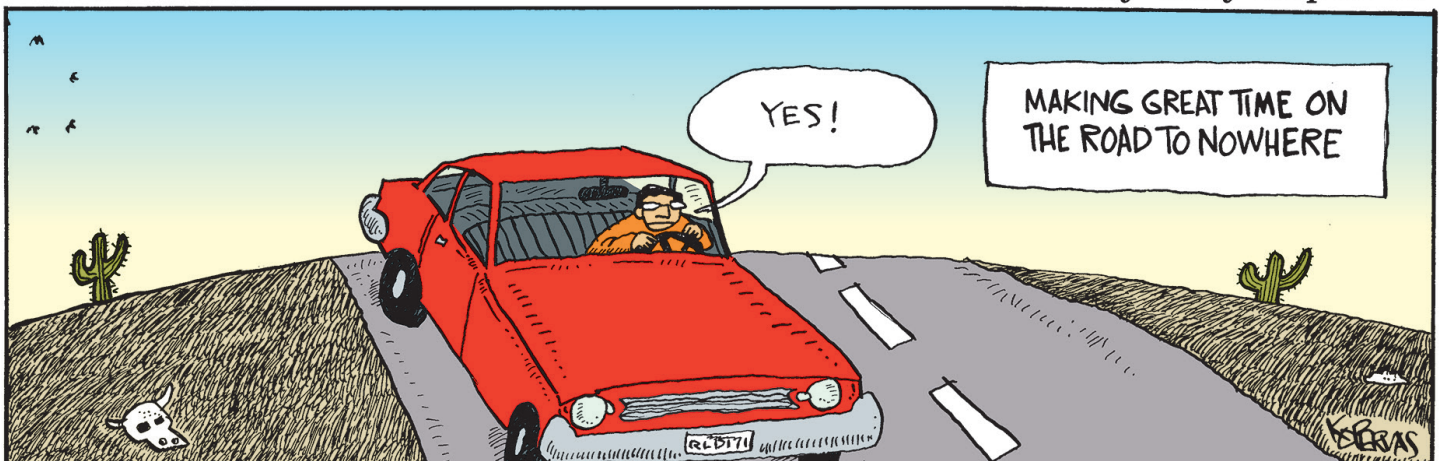
LAFF - A - DAY



"Of course I remember you!
You're what's-his-name!"

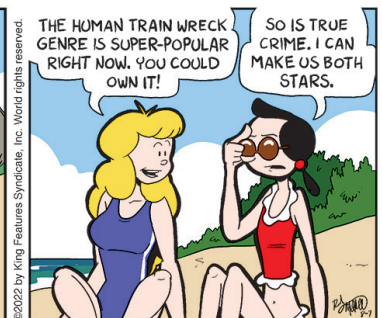
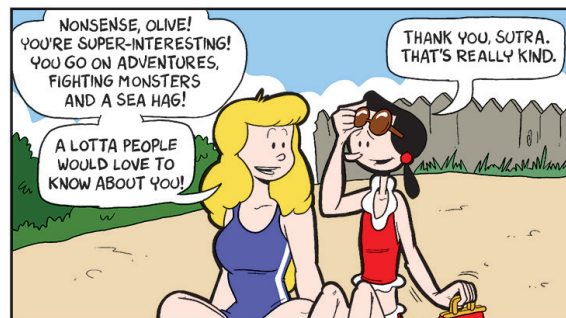
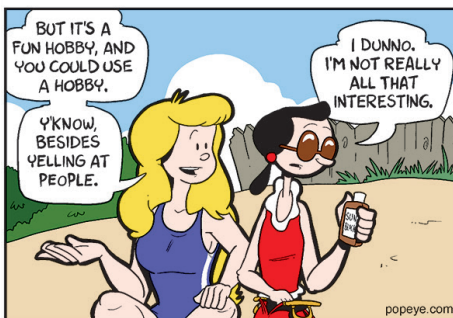
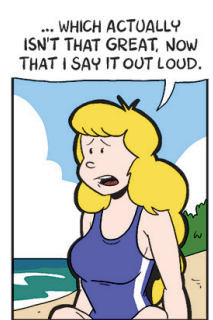
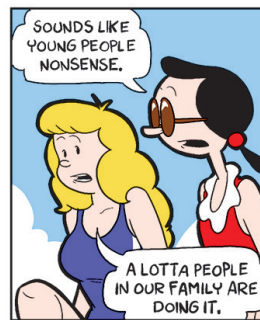
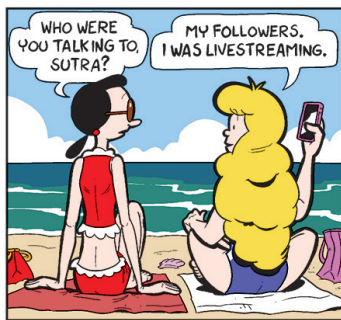
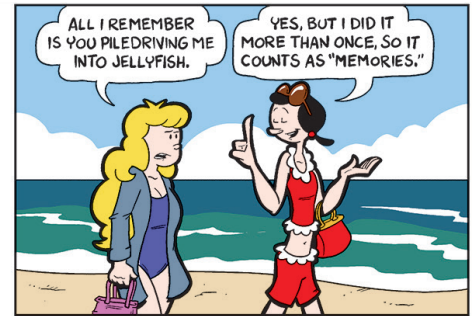
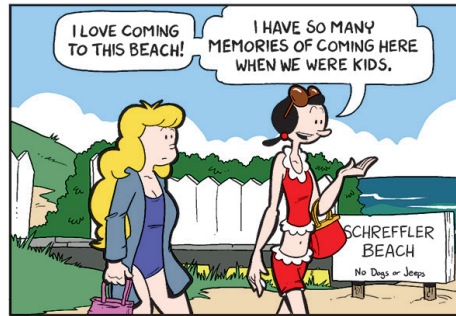
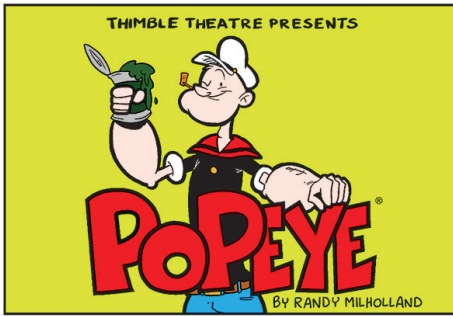
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland

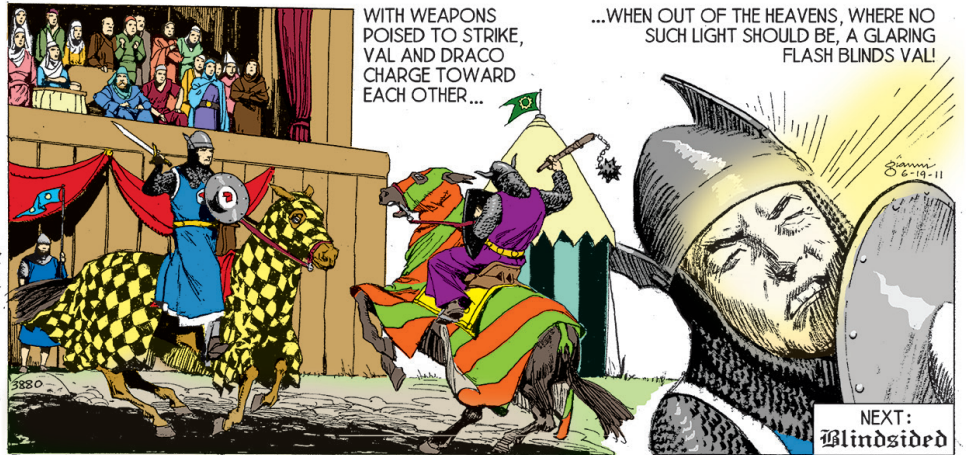
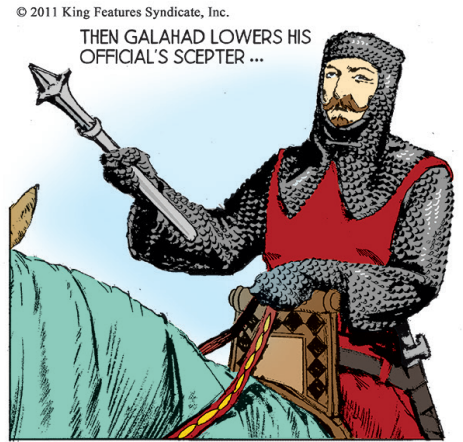
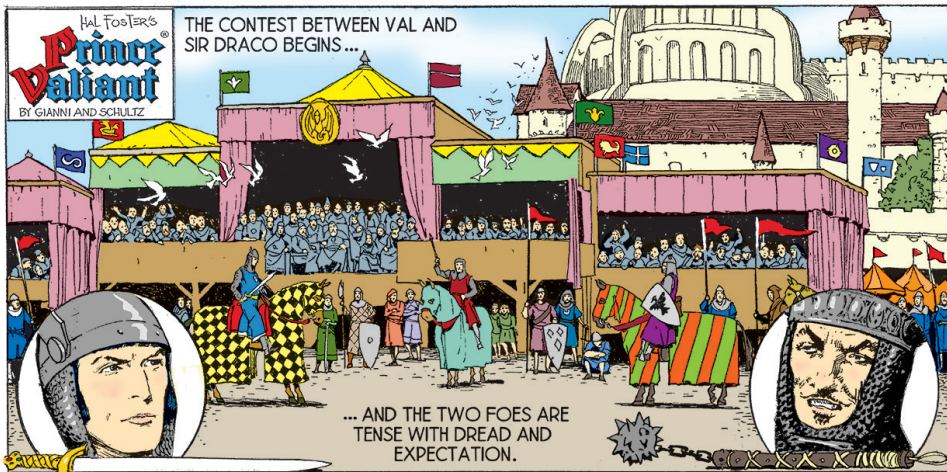


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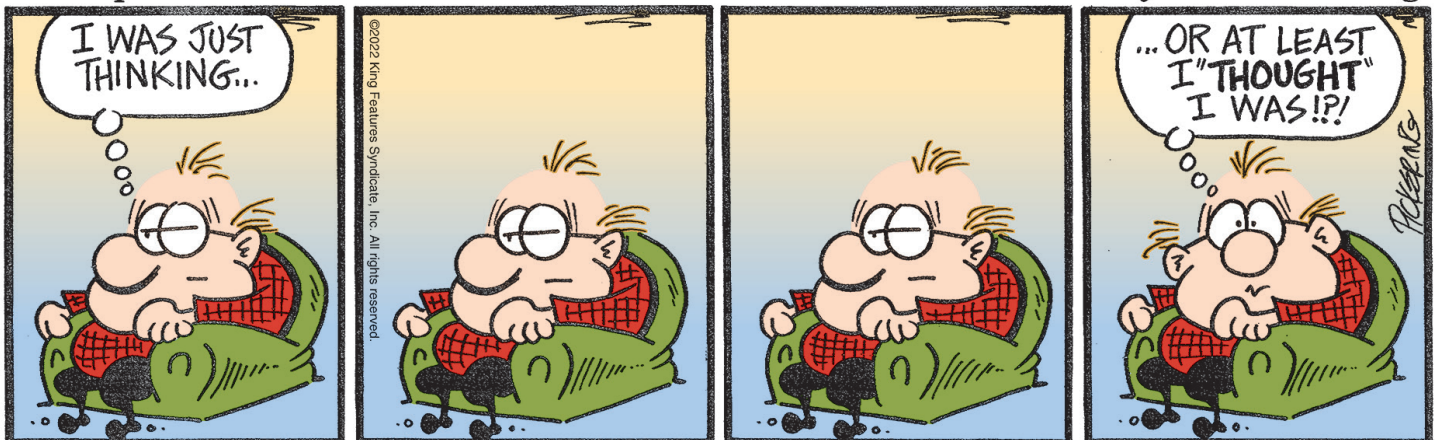
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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Getting Ready for Medicare Open Enrollment

Before we know it, that yearly event will be here -- when we have to decide what to do about our Medicare plans between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7 for coverage that will begin Jan. 1.

There are several things we have to consider, such as taking on a prescription drug plan or changing to a new one, or staying with original Medicare or going with an Advantage plan or changing Advantage plans or going back to original Medicare. All these take time to think about.

Thoughts to consider:

What will Social Security look like in 2023? We won't know the Social Security increase until it is announced in October. There have been guesses that we might receive as much as a 10.5% increase, which calculates to \$175 for the average beneficiary. The Part B premium will be deducted from that.

We're likely looking at an 8.5% increase in Medicare Advantage and Part D drug plans costs.

Check the costs of your prescriptions over the past three years, because for some of us, that's where the big-ticket expenses are. Chances are the drug costs have gone up, possibly even significantly. And chances are they're not coming down.

What to do, what to do ... Two options are worth looking at: GoodRx (www.goodrx.com) and Marc Cuban CostPlus Drug Company (costplusdrugs.com). Both offer discounted prices on prescription drugs. Investigate and see what you think.

A Kaiser study concluded that seven out of 10 people did not research the plans during open enrollment. Because of the rising costs of everything in our lives, this needs to be the year that we compare, compare, compare. When in doubt, look into SHIP, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, which is in every state, staffed by volunteers who can help you wade through the Medicare information. Call them at 877-839-2675 for the one near you.

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1. In 1903, what power hitter -- elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1945 -- was kicked off a train for being drunk and disorderly and was found dead at the bottom of Niagara Falls two weeks later?

2. Name the two former NBA players who teamed up as contestants on Season 30 of the CBS reality competition series "The Amazing Race."

3. What venue was home to both the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pittsburgh Pirates from 1970 to 2000?

4. Name the Ohio State Buckeyes running back who is the only player to win the Heisman Trophy twice.

5. What LPGA Tour player from Australia has seven career major championship titles and was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2005?

6. Name the member of the 1976-77 Detroit Pistons, nicknamed "Bad News," who responded to being benched by declaring, "News didn't come here to sit on no wood."

7. Who is the only player from the losing team to have been named Super Bowl MVP?



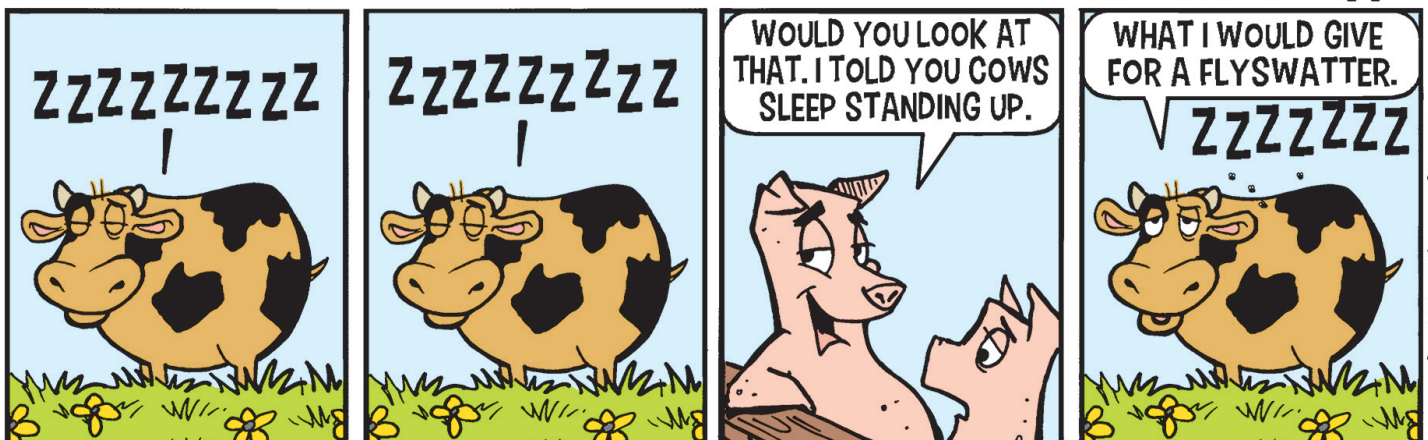
by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Ed Delahanty.
 2. Cedric Ceballos and Shawn Marion.
 3. Three Rivers Stadium.
 4. Archie Griffin (1974-75).
 5. Karrie Webb.
 6. Marvin Barnes.
 7. Dallas Cowboys linebacker Chuck Howley, Super Bowl V.
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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





A Bug-Out Bag for Pets

DEAR PAW'S corner: As the U.S. enters the most active period of the year for hurricanes, it's important to make sure we're prepared in case a storm strikes. My husband and I have prepared a backpack for each of us and a duffel bag with supplies for our dog and cat. We can grab these three bags on our way out the door if we have to evacuate to a safer area. Please share this tip with your readers: Preparing a bug-out bag for your pets is important no matter what part of the country you live in. -- Carl in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

DEAR CARL: That's fantastic advice, and thank you for sharing it. Keeping a bug-out bag ready for

yourself and your pets can spell the difference between comfort and disaster.

Find a comprehensive guide to preparing pets for disasters at ready.gov/pets. It offers additional recommendations like microchipping pets in case they get separated from you.

Prepare a bug-out bag for each pet. If you use a single large duffel like Carl and his husband, separate each pet's supplies with a piece of cardboard or in different packing cubes. Items should include:

- Food and treats. Include enough for three days.
- Sanitation supplies. A small bag of cat litter, waste pickup bags and pee pads.
- First aid kit and medications. Include a seven-day supply; accessing medicine may be much harder than finding more food for pets.
- Essential records. Make copies of records like vaccinations. Store them in a waterproof bag and include a photo of yourself and your pets.
- Extra collar, leash and ID tags.
- Toys and bedding. These provide comfort and familiarity for pets.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Only 2% of the world's population have green eyes, but they weren't born with them. The hue takes from six months to three years to show up in children.

* Donnie Dunagan, who as a child actor supplied the voice of Disney's Bambi, went on to become a highly decorated major in the U.S. Marines -- and kept his movie role a secret for his entire 25-year military career.

* An Australian ground bird known as the lyrebird can mimic just about anything, from a crying baby

to machinery.

* About 6,000 years ago, the barren Sahara Desert was actually a lush green forest.

* "Loganamnesia" is a word to describe an obsession with recalling a specific word that has been forgotten.

* Legend has it that Tate's Hell State Park, a 202,000-acre forest/swamp in Florida, got its curious name from a man who was lost in its wilderness and after finally emerging told a passerby, "My name is Cebe Tate, and I just came from hell" before collapsing.

* In 2016, the NFL returned more than \$700,000 of taxpayer money it had been paid by the U.S. Defense Department to honor the military at games.

* A Colombian man died after a parasitic worm that had invaded his gut developed cancer, which in turn spread through the man's body.

Thought for the Day: "No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars or sailed an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit." -- Helen Keller

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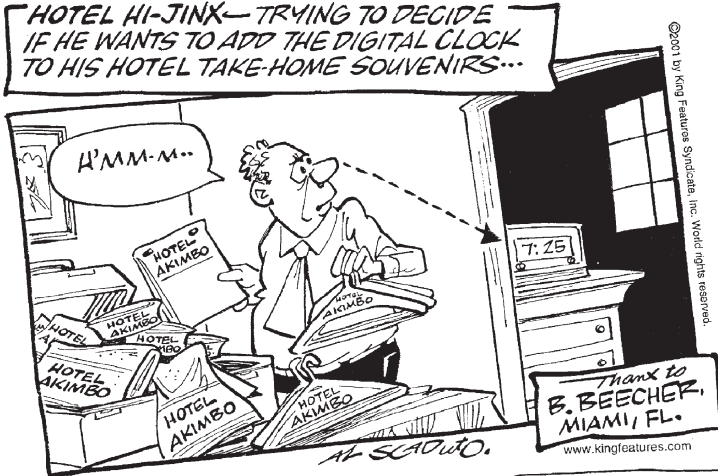
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO

HOTEL HI-JINK— TRYING TO DECIDE IF HE WANTS TO ADD THE DIGITAL CLOCK TO HIS HOTEL TAKE-HOME SOUVENIRS...

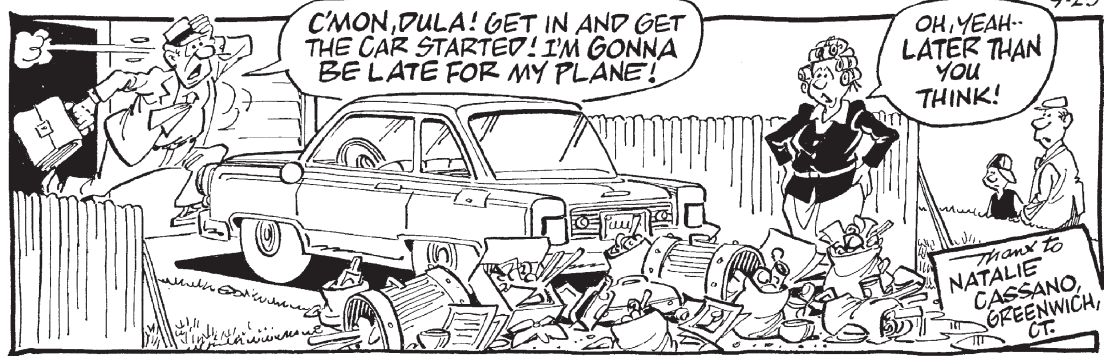


J'EVER NOTICE? PILL BOTTLES ARE GETTING BIGGER...
 QUES.: IS IT BECAUSE OF INCREASED MEDICATION?
 ANS.: NO. ITS BECAUSE OF THE HUGE WAD OF COTTON STUFFED IN THE BOTTLE...MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE GETTING MORE IF THE BOTTLE IS BIGGER....

Thank to ARNIE HAUGE,
 6602-172ND PL., S.W.,
 EDMONDS, WA.



BEFORE THE GARBAGE-MAN COMETH, DOGS, CATS, SQUIRRELS OR RACCOONS DOETH, BUT GOOD!

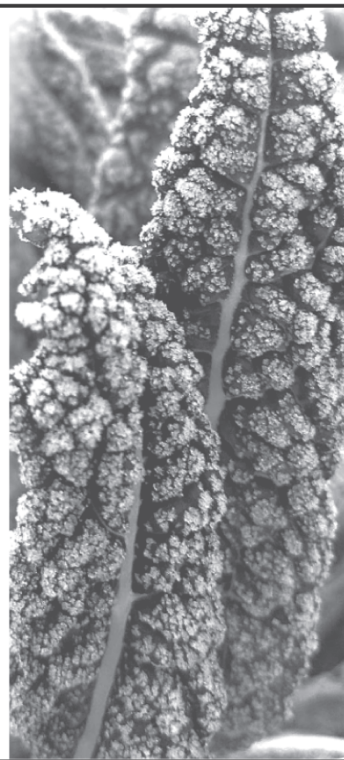


Frost dates

Knowing your local average frost dates helps you calculate when to plant your fall veggies, as each kind varies in their tolerance and will need time to mature to harvest before a freeze can damage them. Light freezes of 29° to 32°F can kill tender plants; temps of 25° to 28°F are destructive to most vegetation; 24°F or colder temps will likely inflict heavy damage to most garden plants. Go to www.almanac.com/gardening/frostdates to find frost dates near you.

Source: www.almanac.com

— Brenda Weaver



The OIG Never Stops



by Freddy Groves

The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General has saved us a potential \$1.8 billion. When it comes to nailing scammers who steal from the VA, they just never give up.

A nurse at the VA pleaded guilty to Covid vaccination card fraud and theft of government funds. Her scam involved stealing authentic vax record cards, right from the beginning when the vaccines first came out, and included snagging the lot numbers to make it appear legit. Then she went online to sell her wares, charging anywhere from \$150 to \$200 for each fake card.

The scammer wasn't too bright to peddle these cards that way. The Department of Justice has a whole department dedicated to disaster fraud, and you know that watching the internet was probably the first thing they did when Covid hit. When she was nabbed, the scammer was investigated by no less than three government agencies, plus the OIG.

Then there was the scammer, a habitual offender who, with two co-conspirators, defrauded the VA by creating aliases that made them appear to be heirs of veterans who had died.

By generating fake documents, they grabbed up survivor benefits and unclaimed property (to the tune of nearly a half million dollars). They have been charged with multiple offenses. It doesn't help that one scammer skipped out and didn't show for court, thus generating a bench warrant for her arrest.

Then there was the lowest of the low, a scammer who was in a position of responsibility as a fiduciary. His job was to receive payments on behalf of veterans, in his case, 10 disabled vets, and manage their money. The scammer, who ran his own fiduciary services company, stole more than \$300,000, including from the estate of a woman who'd died a few years ago.

When sentenced, he could get as many as 50 years in the federal pen. He deserves every day of that.

They all do.

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Wishing Well®

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

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. LITERATURE: What inanimate item does the crocodile swallow in the children's classic "Peter Pan"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Which modern countries make up the ancient land known as Thracia?
3. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the symbol used in the zodiac sign Libra?
4. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What kind of animal is in the scientific order chiroptera?
5. MEDICINE: What is the Latin notation for taking a medication twice a day?
6. MOVIES: What is the name of Will Smith's character in "Independence Day"?
7. FOOD & DRINK: Which flavor is predominant in the liqueur limoncello?
8. MEASUREMENTS: What is 10 milligrams equal to in centigrams?
9. TELEVISION: In which decade is "The Goldbergs" sitcom set?
10. MATH: What is the equivalent of the Roman numeral MCMLX?

Answers

1. A clock.
2. Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.
3. The scales.
4. Bats.
5. b.i.d. (bis in die).
6. Capt. Steven Hiller.
7. Lemon.
8. 1 centigram.
9. 1980s.
10. 1,960.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Fast Bikes, Fresh Air, & Freedom

For more than 80 years, late summer has brought thousands of motorcycles to the Black Hills of South Dakota. Bikers come from across the country – and around the world – to participate in the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. They bring with them their money, supporting our local businesses and helping our state revenues. And they enjoy the beauty and freedom that South Dakota has to offer.

This happens every year, so it should not have been remarkable that it happened two years ago in August 2020 – but it was. At that time, the rest of the nation remained shut down. South Dakota had already drawn headlines for our unique approach to the pandemic. But the media scrutiny reached another level when bikers did what they had always done and rode out to South Dakota to enjoy our freedom and fresh air. Liberals across the country predicted a “superspreader” event. Flawed studies were drummed up to back this breathless allegation. The criticism was repeated so often that everyone assumed it was true.

Of course, the allegation was false. Even the CDC’s data only tied fewer than 500 cases to the rally. But this false allegation was repeated so often because the media needed it to be true. If events like Sturgis could go on without a major pandemic fallout, then the media’s entire narrative about the pandemic must be false. If states like South Dakota could thrive without mandates and lockdowns, then why were schools and businesses still closed in big cities and liberal states?

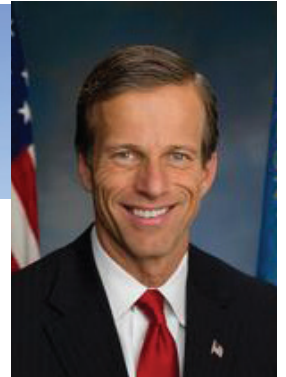
By repeating the lie again and again, the media unwittingly made Sturgis into something bigger – something more. They made it a banner of Freedom, and they made every rider at the Rally a carrier of that banner. The Rally already had that connotation. It was always about the biker’s mentality – individualism and love for the open road and fresh air. Most Rally attendees will quickly tell you that the government should not be telling you how to live your life. But it took on a far deeper meaning after the attacks by the liberal media.

As a result, the 2021 Rally was one of the biggest in history, and this year’s Rally has been above average, as well, despite the highest gas prices in American history. More American flags are waving at the event.

I attended this year’s Rally, participating in the Legends Ride and a charity auction to benefit causes like helping victims of human trafficking. Countless riders thanked me for providing an example that Freedom works – for giving them a place to come and be free.

I always knew that South Dakota could be an example for the nation. I didn’t necessarily expect that the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally would be part of setting that example, but today it certainly is. And I’m glad that it is. After all, I love what the Rally stands for: fast bikes, fresh air, and Freedom.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Delivering for South Dakotans

Serving South Dakota is my greatest honor, and throughout my time in Congress, I've sought out ways to give our state a strong voice in Washington. Democrats control the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives, and while there have been plenty of policies I've disagreed with, I'm proud of the work I've been able to accomplish on behalf of all South Dakotans.

With the Senate having just begun its traditional August state work period, I'm excited to have more opportunities to travel across the state to talk to folks about what is on their minds, what has been accomplished the last few months in Washington, and what else is in store for the rest of the year.

One of the most important bills Congress takes up every year is the National Defense Authorization Act. This year's bill will authorize critical funding to continue preparation for the B-21 mission at Ellsworth Air Force Base, and it will also include my proposal to authorize additional funding for school districts affected by growing missions. I am incredibly proud that South Dakota and Ellsworth were chosen to serve as the first operating base for the B-21. I am committed to ensuring that the base has everything it needs to continue serving as one of our nation's essential military assets for decades to come, including by ensuring local communities have the resources to help address school and housing capacity needs.

Turning from the air to the sea, at the beginning of the summer, my Ocean Shipping Reform Act received overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, and it is now the law of the land. This new law will help ease supply chain pressures by addressing unfair ocean carrier practices, speeding up the resolution of disputes over carrier fees, and improving the movement of goods at our nation's ports. This is especially important for South Dakota producers, who rely on efficient access to markets around the world for their products. It won't solve our nation's inflation crisis, but it should help make life easier for U.S. exporters, importers, and consumers alike.

After months of requests, I was pleased that the administration finally agreed to restore the summertime sale of E15 fuel for 2022, which went into effect on June 1. I have long advocated to make permanent the year-round sale of E15, plus higher blends of ethanol, as a way to offer American drivers more affordable and cleaner options at the gas pump and to offset foreign sources of energy. It's a step in the right direction, and I will continue to call on the Biden administration to leverage American agriculture to help drive down gas prices and support our state's economy.

As a longtime member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, ensuring that our rural communities have a seat at the table remains a top priority for me. Right now, the 2023 farm bill is a big focus of mine. I've already begun to hold a series of roundtables to hear from South Dakota farmers and ranchers about what they need from next year's bill, and I plan to continue introducing proposals that I hope to get included in it. Agriculture is the lifeblood of the South Dakota economy, and I will do everything I can to make sure that our farmers and ranchers have the resources they need to help feed our country.

As always, fighting for South Dakota is my number-one priority. I'm focused on the same principles and priorities that have always guided me: working hard, fighting for what matters, and listening to my top advisers – you, the people of South Dakota. I look forward to catching up with folks this month, and if we cross paths, please be sure to say hello. In the meantime, if you have questions about how I can help you, or if you have an idea or feedback about something I'm working on, please don't hesitate to write, call, or email – I'm all ears.

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CONGRESSMAN

DUSTY JOHNSON

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Spend, Spend, Spend No Matter What?

This week, the Speaker of the House interrupted the August Work Period in our districts and states, calling all Representatives to vote on the so-called "Inflation Reduction Act". The \$745 billion bill does little to actually reduce inflation – it may just make things even worse. July's 8.5% inflation report shows a slight cooling of inflationary pressure. Passing this bill could reverse the little bit of progress we have made.

I am voting no on this bill, bringing my opposition of record spending to a total of \$10 trillion since President Biden took office. We can't just keep spending more money, especially when monthly economic reports show continuing inflation and a recession possibly looming. I'm open to some policy ideas in this legislation – for example some of the drug pricing policies are interesting – but the overall price tag is too high, and it was rushed through in the last few weeks.

Fiscal policies should be thoughtful. There should be give and take from both sides, analysis done on the long-term spending impacts, and time to decipher whether or not taxes on the middle class would go up.

The Inflation Reduction Act:

Authorizes \$80 billion for the IRS

Spends over \$350 billion on environmental policies

Raises taxes on businesses who are already raising their prices—passing even higher prices onto consumers

Is estimated by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to only reduce inflation by 0.01% at best in 2023

Raises taxes on Americans in every income bracket

Will likely increase costs for prescription drugs and health care insurance premiums

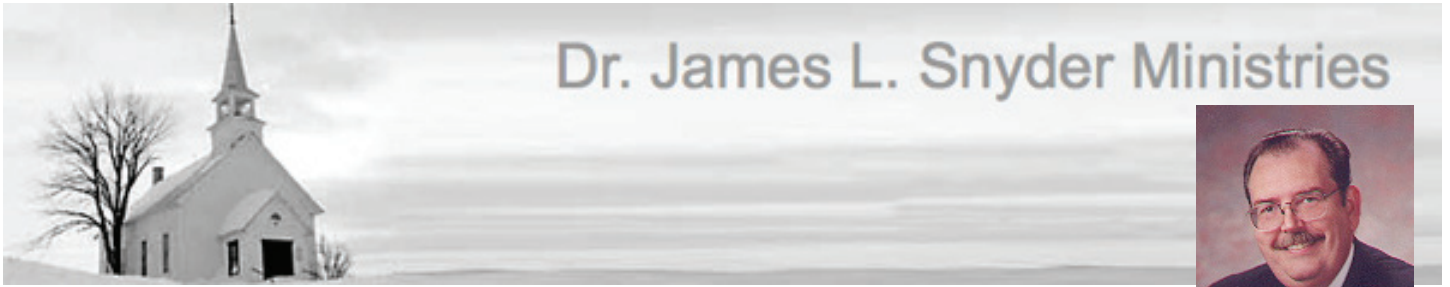
Increasing taxes and retail prices for hard-working Americans will only make it harder for families to make ends meet. 94% of South Dakotans are already experiencing inflation. In just about every meeting I take with South Dakotans, they mention how inflation is impacting them, their business, their family, or their community.

I have opposed spending package after spending package pushed by Speaker Pelosi and President Biden that have consistently driven up inflation, increased prices on goods, services, energy, and everything in between. Spending more money now will continue to kick the can down the road—causing almost everyone to deal with the impacts of inflation for much longer.

I am focused on solving our supply chain crisis, increasing our energy independence, and supporting our small businesses to mitigate the impact of inflation on American consumers and business owners. We need to pass commonsense, realistic solutions that will actually work. Policies that bring down high prices in the grocery store and at the gas pump, get Americans back to work, and strengthen our economy.

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My Oh My What a Nice Slice of Pie



Whenever things go better than you can imagine, it is always a red flag to pay attention because something is wrong. I don't always catch it, and I have paid the price.

One day this past week, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and our daughters and granddaughters planned a girl's day. I always enjoy that day because I am left on my own, which doesn't happen often.

As my wife left the building, she asked, "Are you okay with getting your own lunch today?"

It's questions like that that I love. So, I shouted back to her, "I'm okay with that. Have a fun day and a long day."

I was working on some projects in my office, but all I could think about was "lunch." I don't often take care of my lunch, but when it does happen, I enjoy it. I kept looking at my watch impatiently, waiting for lunchtime to come.

Finally, the hour arrived, and I went to the kitchen to make my own lunch. I was whistling as I left my office and headed for the kitchen. I got to the refrigerator, and just as I was about to open the door, something caught my eye.

Looking around at the table in the kitchen, I saw something there that was amazing. It was one of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's homemade raisin pie. It's been a long time since she made raisin pie, and as I looked at it it was truly with desire.

Looking at it, I promised myself that it would be my lunchtime dessert. Then, very quickly, I got some lunch together, consumed it, and went back to the raisin pie.

I looked at it, smelled it, and it was amazingly delicious aroma. So I got a knife out of the drawer, went to the pie, and cut a slice for my consumption. Yummy.

I took it into the living room and sat on my easy chair so I could maximize my enjoyment of that pie. I would take a bite and then a sip of coffee. My eyes rolled in great delight as I enjoyed this pie. I can't remember the last time I had any raisin pie. It was as delicious as I remembered.

Don't let this get back to my wife, but it was the most wonderful lunch I've had in a long time. That raisin pie did the trick. As I sat there sipping some coffee, I was thinking about that raisin pie. Then, an idea came into my mind that I hadn't thought about before.

What would this raisin pie be like if there was a scoop of ice cream on the top? I couldn't get that out

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of my mind.

I remember my father used to say that his favorite pie was the one he was eating at the time.

Reflecting about it the thought came to my mind that my favorite pie is the one I'm eating with a scoop of ice cream on the top.

Eventually, I came to the point where I had to surrender to this thought. So I went back into the kitchen, cut another slice of raisin pie, went to the freezer, got some ice cream, and put a lovely scoop of ice cream on top. Just looking at it was marvelous.

I took it to my easy chair and I very slowly and deliberately ate that raisin pie à la mode. I've never had anything as delicious. I couldn't wait for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage to come home and thank her for that marvelous pie she baked for me. What a lucky guy I am.

I returned to my office and picked up where I left off and worked for a couple of hours. Then, I heard the front door open, and suspected my wife was home.

There was a brief moment of silence, and then I heard, "Oh, no. What did you do?"

I froze in my seat. Because when she said, "What did you do?" I knew that was a reference to me. I had no idea what I had done or how she caught me.

She soon showed up at my door and looking at me, said, "You did not eat that raisin pie, did you?"

I smiled at her and said, "Yes, I did. That was the best raisin pie you have ever made. I loved it."

"Oh, no." She said in a very sad voice. "What am I going to do now?"

I was stunned because I had no idea what she was talking about.

Then she said, "Don't you know I made that raisin pie for our neighbor's birthday tomorrow? Now, what do I do?"

There just was no way I was going to assemble a bunch of words together in a logical format to respond to her question. No matter what I say, it will not solve the problem right before me.

I wanted to say, but I didn't, "You should not have tempted me with your fantastic raisin pie. You know I can't resist." But I would only have dug my hole deeper to the extent I would never get out of it.

This reminded me of a wonderful verse in the Bible. "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4).

My greatest delight is serving God in such a way that pleases him.

EARTHTALK ™



Making energy efficiency upgrades to your home now will lower monthly bills moving forward & increase resale value when it's time to sell. Credit: Pexels.com.

Dear EarthTalk: I know that upgrading the energy efficiency of my home will make it less expensive to heat or cool, but will it also raise its market value significantly? – J.B.M., St. Louis, MO

That depends on your definition of “significant!” According to a study published in the *Journal of Urban Economics*, with every 10 per cent increase in energy efficiency, a home’s market value increases by approximately 2.2 per cent. In another set of studies, the government-backed energy efficiency experts at Energy Star found that their certified homes in Maryland sold between 2012 to 2015 had a two to five per cent sales price increase, simply because they were deemed energy efficient.

This pattern has been observed across the U.S. A six percent increase was seen in the final price tags of Energy Star certified homes in Austin-Round Rock, Texas (sold 2009 to 2016), and an eight percent increase was found in select housing markets across Oregon, Idaho and Washington (2015).

Why is this happening? To put it simply, the average home buyer has become savvier in the world of sustainability. In a report by the National Association of Realtors (NAR), it was found that 51 percent of agents interacted with clients that were very interested, or at least somewhat interested, in sustainability. In a related report by Energy Star, the stats showed that 83 percent of home buyers desired more efficient windows, 81 percent wanted more efficient appliances, and 80 percent wanted more efficient lighting.

Undoubtedly, homeowners have come to understand that energy-efficient upgrades translate into lower energy costs. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average family spends approximately \$2,200 annually on energy bills. Thirty percent of that cost can be removed just like that through energy-efficient home modifications.

That being said, the increase in demand for sustainable homes and home upgrades may also be driven by a sense of personal responsibility. A sweeping study by Simon-Kucher & Partners covering 17 countries and 10,000 participants revealed that a significant paradigm shift in purchasing habits was occurring. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported that they had changed their spending habits over the past five years to accommodate a greener lifestyle. In addition, one-third of the population is willing to spend more for sustainable products or services—as much as 25 percent!

If you’re feeling the same inclination, there are many ways to upgrade your home’s energy efficiency. Insulating walls is usually where people begin, but sealing air leaks (even the small ones!) with caulking, spray foam and weather stripping can save anywhere from five to 30 percent on energy. Ducts specifically are known to have leaks that can cause losses of as much as 60 percent of the heated air traveling through them. Energy efficient light fixtures, windows, doors, skylights, appliances and hot-water heaters are all available for purchase these days, and when used in congruence with a programmable thermostats and smart-device timers, you can save a surprising amount of money in energy savings by the end of the year.

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South Dakota COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

1372

Active Cases

4,308
-125

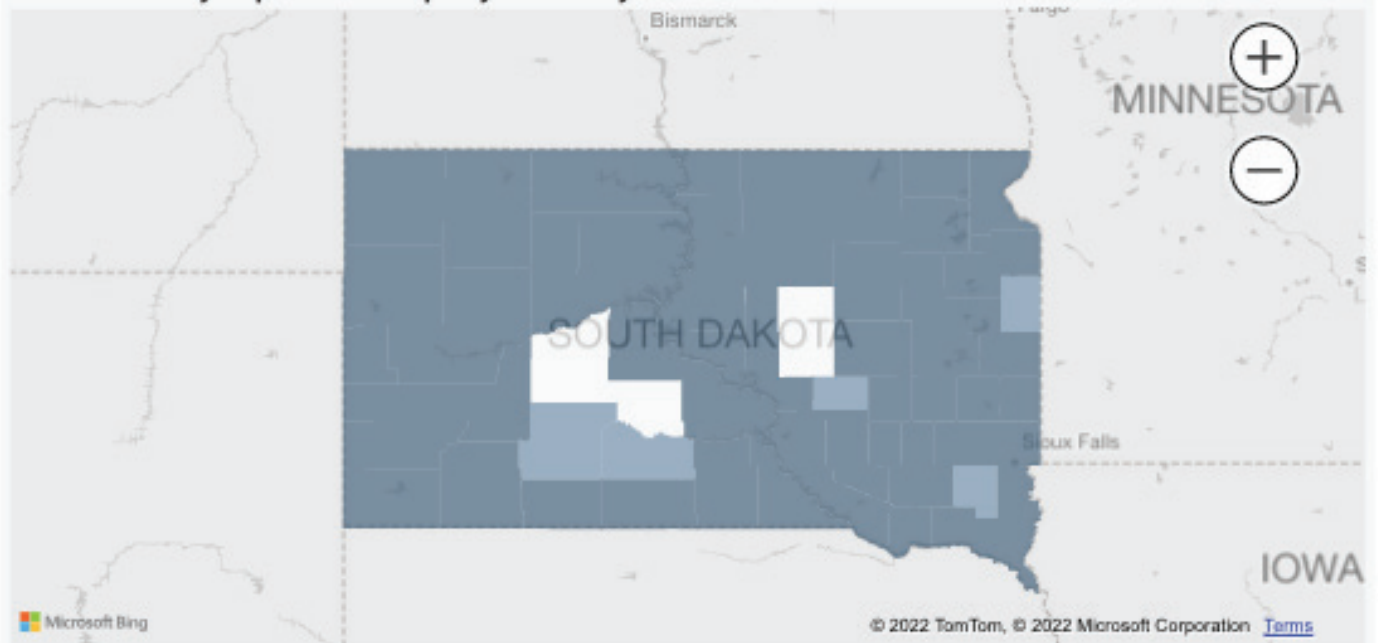
Recovered Cases

245,951

Currently Hospitalized

102

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

253,232

Total Tests

2,278,...

Deaths Among Cases

2,973

Ever Hospitalized

11,391

Percent of State Population with...

74%

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Brown County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

47

Active Cases

198
-18

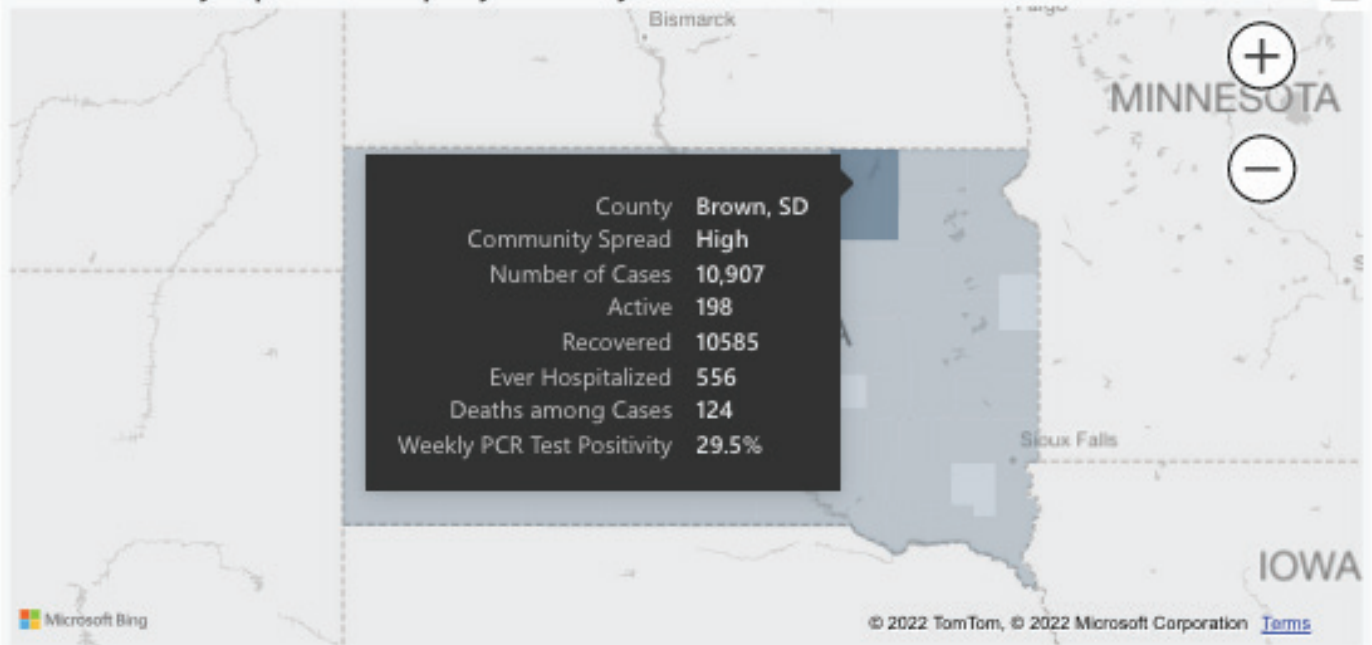
Recovered Cases

10,585

Currently Hospitalized

102

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

10,907

Total Tests

108,737

Deaths Among Cases

124

Ever Hospitalized

556

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

74%

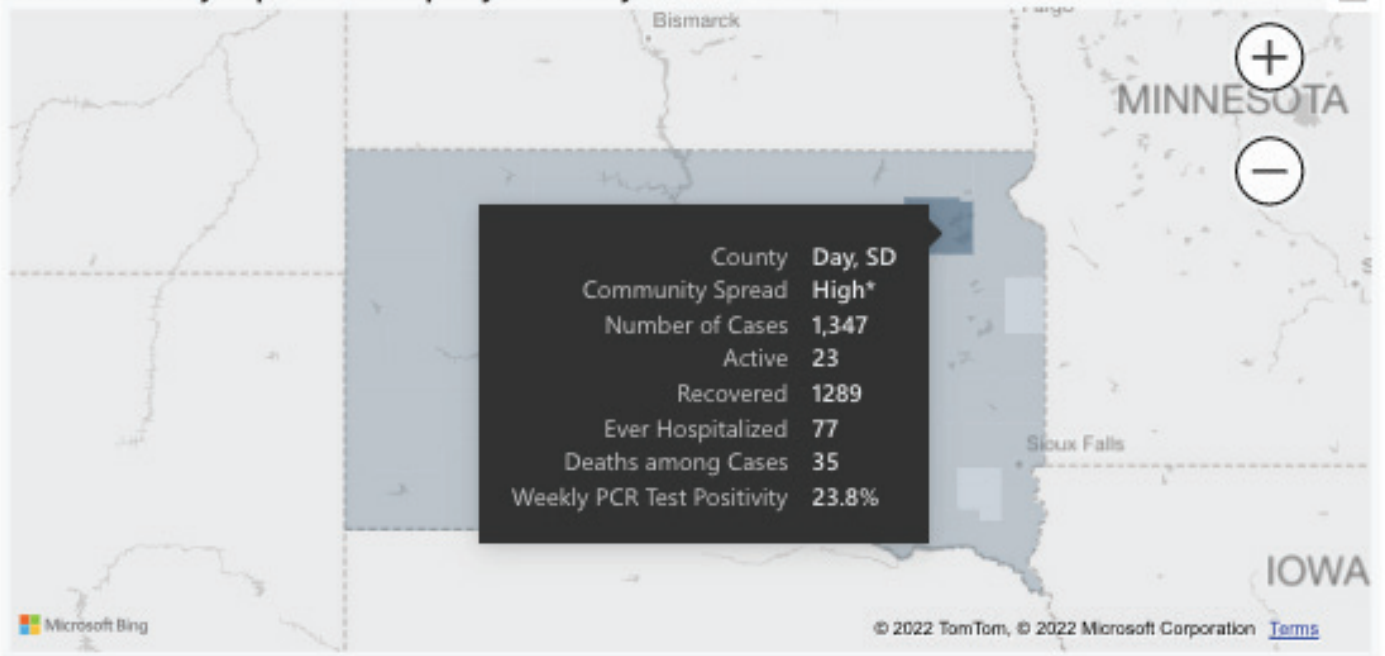
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Day County COVID-19 Report



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

11,391

03/07/2020 - 08/08/2022

Currently Hospitalized

102
+13

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)	1,367	203
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176	3
Omicron (BA.2)	143	131
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	118,642	5,926	1,625
Female	134,588	5,465	1,348

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	17,145	161	3
10-19 years	29,761	182	2
20-29 years	43,913	611	14
30-39 years	42,456	847	54
40-49 years	35,075	982	89
50-59 years	32,383	1,520	227
60-69 years	27,392	2,298	481
70-79 years	15,035	2,432	697
80+ years	10,072	2,358	1,406

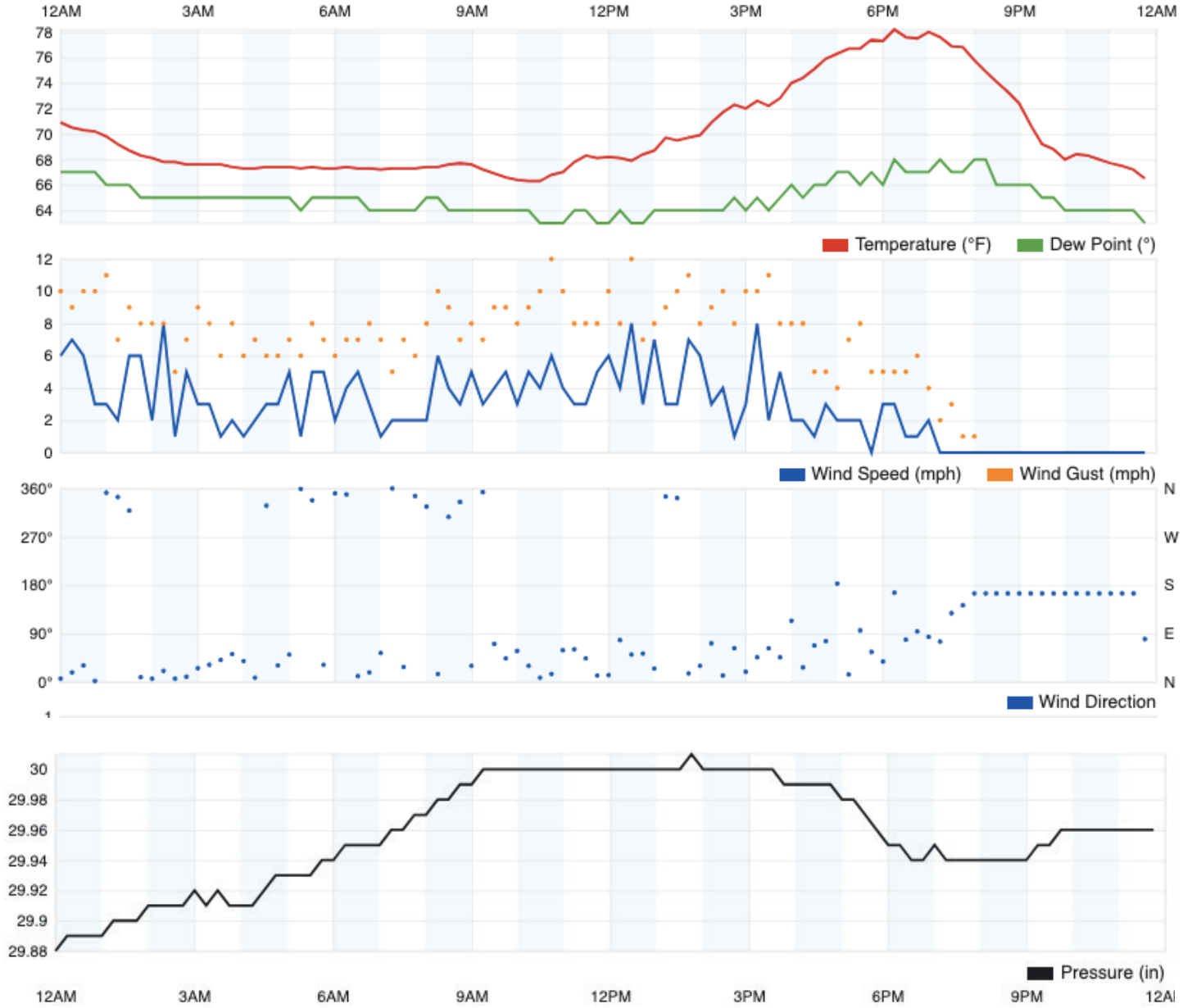
RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths
Asian / Pacific Islander	3,512	112	20
Black	6,188	213	22
Hispanic	10,804	357	39
Native American	32,123	1,952	448
Other	2,161	60	13
Unknown	5,287	78	21
White	193,157	8,619	2,410

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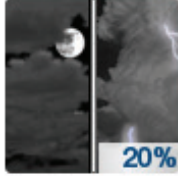
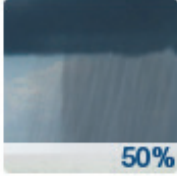


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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs







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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance Showers	Chance T-storms	Chance Showers
High: 83 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 77 °F

Rain Chances Gradually Increase

Today Aug 14 th , 2022	Tonight	Monday Aug 15 th , 2022	Mon Night
			
79 to 92°	60 to 65°	71 to 77°	57 to 61°

Rain chances will gradually increase from west to east over the next 24 hours, with the best opportunity for rain occurring late tonight into Monday for areas along and south of US 14. Some thunderstorms are possible, but no severe weather is expected.

High pressure will bring drier conditions for Tuesday into Wednesday



We'll see the potential for rain to gradually increase from west to east over the next 24 hours, with the best opportunity for rain occurring late tonight into Monday for areas along and south of US 14. Some thunderstorms are possible through Monday, but no severe weather is expected.

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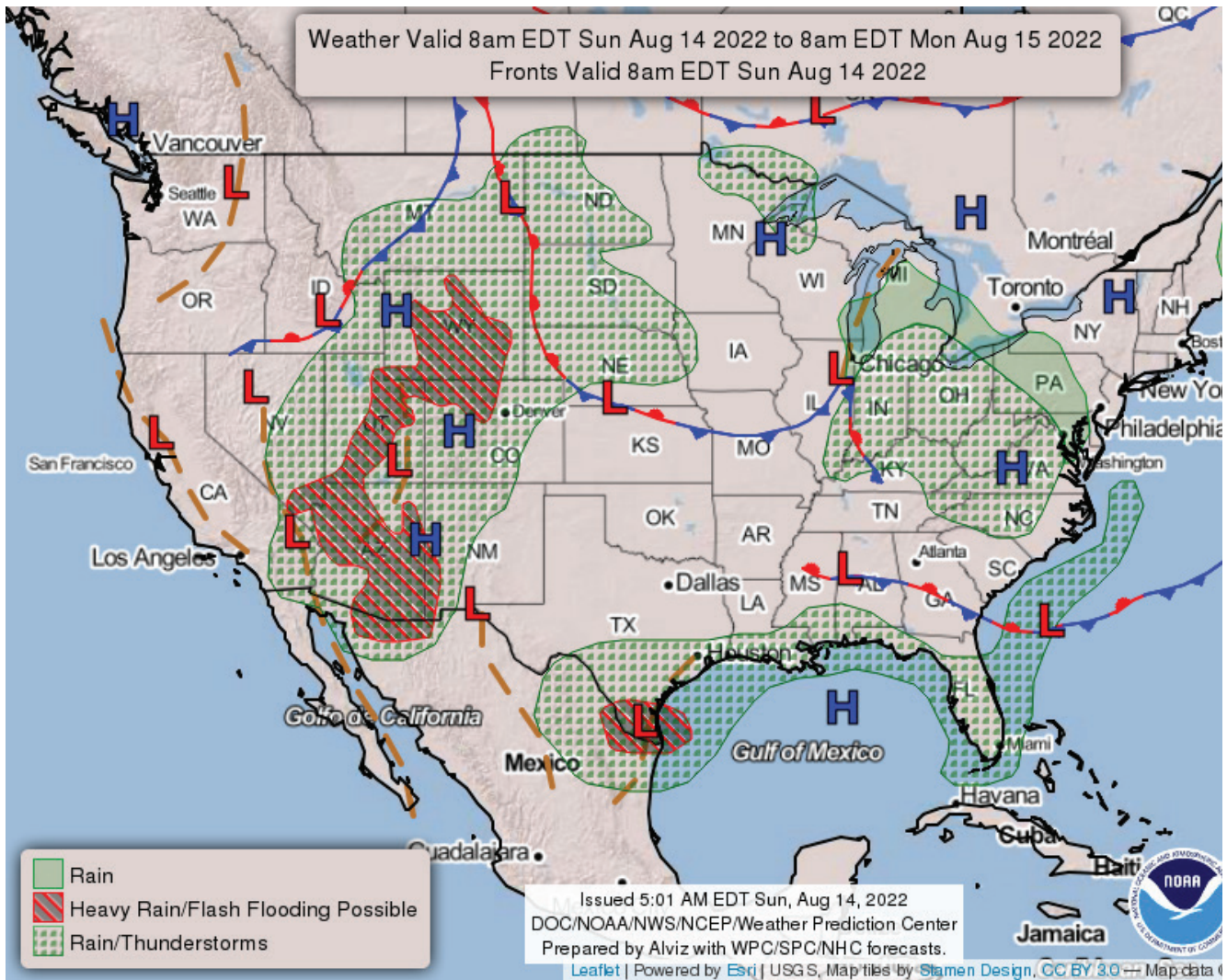
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 78 °F at 6:37 PM
Low Temp: 66 °F at 11:56 PM
Wind: 12 mph at 12:00 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 12 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1952
Record Low: 38 in 1968
Average High: 83°F
Average Low: 57°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.01
Precip to date in Aug.: 0.65
Average Precip to date: 15.11
Precip Year to Date: 15.19
Sunset Tonight: 8:43:14 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:32:02 AM



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Today in Weather History

August 14, 1898: A deadly, estimated F4 tornado moved southeast from 12 miles northwest of Clear Lake, passing 7 miles north of town and ending about 4 miles west of Gary. Deaths occurred on two farms. One man was killed when the kitchen of his farm house was torn off. Five members of one family were killed along with two labors on another farm as every building was swept away. Buildings suffered massive damage on eight farms. This tornado was one of the earliest, estimated F4 tornadoes on record for South Dakota.

August 14, 2008: Several severe thunderstorms developed along a cold front across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail, some flash flooding, and a couple of weak tornadoes occurred with these storms. An EF0 tornado touched down briefly at the Brown County Fairgrounds, blowing over several tents and awnings. Another EF0 tornado touched down briefly in an open field causing no damage north of Stephan in Hyde County.

August 14, 2009: A warm front brought severe thunderstorms with large hail up to the size of golf balls along with sixty mph winds to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Also, very heavy rain fell across western Brown County with 2 to 4 inches of rain reported. This heavy rain brought flash flooding conditions. Numerous county roads and area fields were overrun with flowing water. The water level on Richmond Lake rose nearly a foot the next day after the event from high inflows. This rapid rise in the lake level resulted in numerous boat and fishing docks being submerged. Several boats were also trapped under lift canopies due to the high water. There were reports of several boats breaking free of their mooring and floating toward the spillway.

1936 - Temperatures across much of eastern Kansas soared above 110 degrees. Kansas City MO hit an all-time record high of 113 degrees. It was one of sixteen consecutive days of 100 degree heat for Kansas City. During that summer there were a record 53 days of 100 degree heat, and during the three summer months Kansas City received just 1.12 inches of rain. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1953: Hurricane Barbara hits North Carolina as a Category 2 hurricane. Damage from the storm was relatively minor, totaling around \$1.3 million (1953 USD). Most of it occurred in North Carolina and Virginia from crop damage. The hurricane left several injuries, some traffic accidents, as well as seven fatalities in the eastern United States; at least two were due to electrocution from downed power lines. Offshore Atlantic Canada, a small boat sunk, killing its crew of two.

1969: Hurricane Camille, a powerful, deadly, and destructive hurricane formed just west of the Cayman Islands on this day. It rapidly intensified, and by the time it reached western Cuba the next day, it was a Category 3 hurricane. Hurricane Camille was spawned on August 5th by a tropical wave off the coast of Africa. The storm became a tropical disturbance four days later on the 9th and a tropical storm on the 14th with a 999-millibar pressure center and 55 mph surface winds.

1975: In London, England, a localized torrential downpour known as The Hampstead Storm, drops 6.72 inches of rain in 155 minutes at Hampstead Heath. One died in the storm. The water floods the Underground and forces sewer covers up.

1987 - Slow moving thunderstorms deluged northern and western suburbs of Chicago IL with torrential rains. O'Hare Airport reported 9.35 inches in 18 hours, easily exceeding the previous 24 hour record of 6.24 inches. Flooding over a five day period resulted in 221 million dollars damage. It was Chicago's worst flash flood event, particularly for northern and western sections of the city. Kennedy Expressway became a footpath for thousands of travelers to O'Hare Airport as roads were closed. The heavy rains swelled the Des Plaines River above flood stage, and many persons had to be rescued from stalled vehicles on flooded roads. (13th- 14th) (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1989 - Afternoon thunderstorms in Illinois soaked the town of Battendorf with 2.10 inches of rain in thirty minutes. Evening thunderstorms in Montana produced wind gusts to 66 mph at Hobson. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



Grace for Trials

Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:1–8 (English Standard Version)

Joshua to Succeed Moses

31 So Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel. 2 And he said to them, "I am 120 years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in. The Lord has said to me, 'You shall not go over this Jordan.' 3 The Lord your God himself will go over before you. He will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them, and Joshua will go over at your head, as the Lord has spoken. 4 And the Lord will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. 5 And the Lord will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to the whole commandment that I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

7 Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. 8 It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed..

Insight By: Alyson Kieda

As the Israelites were preparing to enter the promised land, Moses wouldn't be leading them (Deuteronomy 31:2–3). Why? At Meribah, when God told him to speak to a rock so that water would pour from it, Moses disobeyed by striking the rock instead (Numbers 20). The result was the same, but the problem was Moses was so angry at the bickering people that he made it appear that he and Aaron were responsible for bringing water from the rock. As he struck the rock, he declared: "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" (v. 10). Because Moses "did not trust in [God] enough to honor [Him] as holy in the sight of the Israelites" (v. 12), he wasn't allowed to enter the promised land.

Comment By: Amy Boucher Pye

Annie Johnson Flint was crippled by severe arthritis just a few years after high school. She never walked again and relied on others to help care for her needs. Because of her poetry and hymns, she received many visitors, including a deaconess who felt discouraged about her own ministry. When the visitor returned home, she wrote to Annie, wondering why God allowed such hard things in her life.

In response, Annie sent a poem: "God hath not promised skies always blue, / flower-strewn pathways all our lives through. . . ." She knew from experience that suffering often occurred, but that God would never abandon those He loves. Instead, He promised to give "grace for the trials, help from above, / unfailing sympathy, undying love." You may recognize that poem as the hymn "What God Hath Promised."

Moses also suffered and faced strife, but He knew God's presence was with him. When he passed his leadership of the Israelites to Joshua, he told the younger man to be strong and courageous, because "the Lord your God goes with you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). Moses, knowing that the people of Israel would face formidable enemies as they entered and took the promised land, said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (v. 8).

Disciples of Christ will face hardship, but we have God's Spirit to encourage us. He'll never leave us..

Reflect and Prayer: When you endure trials, how do you trust in God? How could you share your stories of His faithfulness with others?

Heavenly Father, when I'm feeling discouraged and distressed, please remind me through Your Spirit that You'll never leave me.

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2022-23 Community Events

- 07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
07/27/2022: 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
No Date Set: 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)
No Date Set: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: 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
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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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

03-05-10-22-24

(three, five, ten, twenty-two, twenty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$25,000

Lotto America

12-14-27-43-47, Star Ball: 7, ASB: 2

(twelve, fourteen, twenty-seven, forty-three, forty-seven; Star Ball: seven; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$18,880,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 82,000,000

Powerball

19-24-35-43-62, Powerball: 2, Power Play: 10

(nineteen, twenty-four, thirty-five, forty-three, sixty-two; Powerball: two; Power Play: ten)

Estimated jackpot: \$56,000,000

GOP candidates stress urgency at annual Nevada cookout

By GABE STERN Associated Press/Report for America

GARDNERVILLE, Nev. (AP) — Standing in front of 1,500 Republicans at a rural ranch backdropped by the Sierra Nevada mountains, Nevada's Republican governor candidate Joe Lombardo referenced the "elephant in the room" without naming him.

The second-place finisher in the gubernatorial primary, Reno attorney Joey Gilbert, has baselessly claimed the mathematical counting was off and has continued to attack Lombardo. Lombardo to this point hasn't addressed Gilbert directly, who requested a statewide recount of the results and later filed a lawsuit that was thrown out last week. He didn't say Gilbert's name on Saturday either, but acknowledged "we haven't come together" since the primary.

"No matter who you voted for, we've got to get past that," he said.

At the 7th annual Basque Fry, Republican heavyweights were eager to unite against incumbent Democrats at what has become a yearly tradition held in rural Douglas County. The event, which includes live music, an inflatable rodeo ride and Basque cuisine, is modeled after Adam Laxalt's grandfather and former Nevada governor Paul Laxalt's cookouts. The elder Laxalt was the son of Basque immigrants, and Adam now hosts the event with the Morning in Nevada PAC.

National and state politicians fired up the crowd with a message of urgency 80 days before midterm elections that will decide which party controls both the State House in Carson City and Congress in Washington D.C. Speaking to reporters before he took the state, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz called Laxalt's race "the single best pickup opportunity for Republicans."

"Part of the reason is that Adam managed to unify the Republican Party early," Cruz said. "There are all sorts of different slices and flavors of Republicans state by state. And one of the challenges we have in some of the other states is we have candidates who came through pretty rocky primaries, where there's still some bruised feelings."

Some speakers referenced the new IRS agents included in the Inflation Reduction Act as an example of government overreach, though the amount of employees hired from the IRA was often skewed. Others urged attendees to do even more than they had in campaigning and to not take the "Red Wave" for granted.

Several speakers, including Cruz and Laxalt, condemned the search of former President Donald Trump's

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Mar-a-Lago home. Laxalt called it an example of “weaponizing the FBI” — a rally cry that many Republican lawmakers have made in the past week to tap into voter outrage.

The main theme centered on unity in often razor-thin races.

“If we lose in Nevada, we lose everything,” said conservative author and commentator Kurt Schlichter, who added he was optimistic for the state after seeing Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s win in Virginia last November.

Behind the long tents around the stage was a set of smaller tents akin to a farmers market, selling merchandise and offering pamphlets for conservative cause: A “Save our Douglas Schools” tent for county board trustee nominees; Power2Parent tent which advocates for school choice and against sex education; merchandise stands with cowboy hats that say “Trump Won” and “Texans for Trump,” alongside “Not my dictator” shirts featuring Joe Biden with a photoshopped Hitler mustache.

Some politicians walked around the tents, interacting with supporters.

The campaign of U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto sent out a statement on Saturday about the event, calling Laxalt the “face of the Big Lie, a reference to when Laxalt spearheaded in Trump’s 2020 Nevada campaign and ensuing legal challenges to the vote-counting process.

“Laxalt is willing to break the rules, promising to file early lawsuits to help him gain power, because he’s only out for himself, not Nevada,” said spokesperson Josh Marcus-Blank.

Alongside Cruz, headliners included Schlichter, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, and Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts, among others.

Noem, who gained notoriety among Republicans for bucking federal mandates in the throes of the pandemic, talked about her upbringing in South Dakota, her father’s influence on her before he died while she was in college and her philosophy for not adhering to COVID-19 shutdown during 2020. She spoke of the state’s zero corporate income tax and 4.5% sales tax.

“This can be your story,” she said. “Leadership has consequences.”

Laxalt was one of the last to take the stage and reflected on the Basque Fry a year ago, just days before he announced his Senate run. He said the left has since taken over media, big tech and “ruling elites.” He talked of surging crime in major cities and what he has often characterized as the border crisis. He called Masto Biden’s “rubber stamp” for signing the Inflation Reduction Act and repeated that “the entire US Senate will hinge on this race.”

“Whatever you’ve done to help with politics in the past, do more,” he told supporters. “We need you now more than ever.”

Brief scuffles slow tallying in Kenya’s close election

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenya’s peaceful presidential election saw a brief disruption late Saturday when riot police responded to scuffles at the national tallying center amid tensions over the close results.

An agent for longtime opposition leader and candidate Raila Odinga announced from the lectern that the tallying center was the “scene of a crime” before calm was restored. The agent, Saitabao Ole Kanchory, offered no evidence in the latest example of the unverified claims that both top campaigns have made as Kenya waits for official results.

The electoral commission has seven days from Tuesday’s election to announce results. Chair Wafula Chebukati on Saturday again said the process was too slow, and the commission told nonessential people watching at the center to leave.

Police remained at the center on Sunday morning.

“We must all avoid raising tensions that could easily trigger violence,” local human rights groups and professional associations said in a joint statement Sunday urging restraint from candidates and their supporters.

The race remains close between Odinga and Deputy President William Ruto as the electoral commission physically verifies more than 46,000 results forms electronically transmitted from around the country.

Turnout dipped sharply in this election, to 65%, as some Kenyans expressed weariness with seeing long-

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familiar political leaders on the ballot and frustration with economic issues including widespread corruption and rising prices. Outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta crossed the ethnic lines that have long marked politics by backing Odinga. The president fell out with his deputy Ruto years ago.

Past elections have been marked by political violence, but civil society observers, police, religious leaders and others have said this one has been peaceful.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a call with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta on Saturday "encouraged continued peace and patience as the vote tallying from Kenya's Aug. 9 election proceeds," spokesman Ned Price said.

In western Kenya, residents said they were tired of waiting for results, but stressed that they were also sapped from the turbulence of the past.

"We aren't ready for any violence here," said Ezekiel Kibet, 40, who said he would accept the results if the process is transparent. "We are thinking of how our kids will go back to school."

"Let whoever will win rule us," added Daniel Arap Chepkwony, 63. "Many people think that we here will come out with our weapons, but we will not."

Physician Green wins Hawaii Democratic primary for governor

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — For their 16th wedding anniversary, Democrats in Hawaii gifted Josh Green and his wife, Jaime, a comfortable margin of victory in the gubernatorial primary Saturday.

Green, the state's current lieutenant governor, handily defeated former first lady Vicky Cayetano and Kaiali'i Kahele, who decided to seek the governor's office instead of a second term in the U.S. House.

Green, with lei of yellow and purple flowers and green leaves piled high up to his neck, alternated between throwing fists in the air and giving the shaka sign to a boisterous crowd of supporters at his victory party.

"On to November, we will win the governorship and lead Hawaii forward," he said to the cheering crowd.

He will face former two-term Republican Lt. Gov. Duke Aiona in the general election, who defeated mixed martial arts championship fighter B.J. Penn in his party's primary.

In an interview with Hawaii News Now, Aiona said his supporters "trusted my ability to lead the state, and I'm truly, truly appreciative and grateful for that."

Green has served as second-in-command for the past four years to Hawaii Gov. David Ige, who has already served two terms and isn't eligible to run for reelection.

The winner of the Democratic primary is favored to win the general election in the liberal state.

Many voters said Hawaii's high housing costs were a top issue for them. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the median price of a single-family home topped \$1 million in Honolulu, Maui and Kauai counties.

To address the housing shortage, Green said he would issue an executive order to eliminate red tape and streamline construction approvals and enforce existing laws to shut down illegal vacation rentals.

Aiona said he would eliminate the state Land Use Commission, which he blamed for slowing housing development.

Herbert Rowland, an Oahu construction worker, said he likes Green's plans for tackling Hawaii's housing problem and homelessness.

"I'm from this island, been here all my life. I don't want my children to move off this island because it's too expensive and they can't find a house," Rowland said recently while holding a Green campaign sign and waving at passing cars in Honolulu.

Aiona supporter Viola Alipio said she believes he will address rising crime in the state. Earlier in his career, Aiona served as a Family Court judge and Circuit Court judge. He spearheaded the Hawaii Drug Court program, which offers rehabilitation to nonviolent offenders as an alternative to prison.

"I know him very well. I know his values — it all lines up to what my values are. Family, honesty, transparency," she said at a recent Aiona sign-waving event in Kailua.

Green was a state senator and representative before serving as lieutenant governor. He was a doctor in rural areas on the Big Island before entering politics. He has continued working part time as a physician

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while in the state Legislature and as lieutenant governor.

Green developed a following during the COVID-19 pandemic for his explanations of infection rates and trends and hospital treatment capacity.

The state's largest unions endorsed his candidacy in the primary, including the Hawaii Government Employees Association and the Hawaii State Teachers Association.

The race got heated when Kahele and Cayetano questioned income that Green received while lieutenant governor from a limited liability company called Green Health International LLC. Green, who has continued in his emergency room doctor side job while lieutenant governor, said the money was for work he performed as a physician.

Kahele drew attention this year for his own side job as a Hawaiian Airlines pilot and his heavy use of proxy voting in Congress. Like everyone who has voted by proxy, he submitted a required letter attesting he was "unable to physically" vote at the Capitol. He cited "the ongoing public health emergency."

Green was born in Kingston, New York, and grew up in Pittsburgh. He moved to Hawaii with the National Health Service Corps in 2000.

Kahele's decision to run for governor opened up his congressional seat representing rural Oahu and the Neighbor Islands.

Former state Sen. Jill Tokuda beat state Rep. Patrick Pihana Branco for the Democratic nomination for that seat, Hawaii's 2nd Congressional District.

Among Republicans, former U.S. Air Force intelligence analyst and businessman Joe Akana defeated business owner Joseph Webster.

Hawaii is a vote-by-mail state so voters began mailing their ballots and placing them in drop boxes across the islands late last month. Election clerks in each county made a few voter service centers available for people registering to vote at the last minute or voting in person.

In the 1st Congressional District, incumbent U.S. Rep. Ed Case beat attorney and political newcomer Sergio Alcupilla in the Democratic primary. Case in the general election will face former U.S. Navy SEAL Conrad Kress, who defeated two other candidates to win the Republican primary.

In the U.S. Senate race, sitting U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz defeated Democratic primary challenger Steve Tataii, a conflict resolution consultant. Tataii made an unsuccessful bid for Congress in 2016.

In the Republican primary for U.S. Senate, state Rep. Bob McDermott beat five other candidates.

Palestinian gunman wounds 8 in late-night Jerusalem shooting

JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian gunman opened fire at a bus near Jerusalem's Old City early Sunday, wounding eight Israelis in an attack that came a week after violence flared up between Israel and militants in Gaza, police and medics said.

Two of the victims were in serious condition, including a pregnant woman with abdominal injuries and a man with gunshot wounds to the head and neck, according to Israeli hospitals treating them.

The U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Tom Nides, tweeted that there were American citizens among the wounded. An embassy spokesperson disclosed no other information or details.

The shooting happened as the bus waited in a parking lot near the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray. Israeli media identified the suspected attacker as a 26-year-old Palestinian from east Jerusalem.

Israeli police said forces were dispatched to the scene to investigate. Israeli security forces also pushed into the nearby Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan pursuing the suspected attacker.

Later on Sunday, police said the suspected attacker turned himself in. Speaking at a meeting of his Cabinet Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid said the suspected attacker was a resident of Jerusalem who was operating alone during the shooting and who had previously been arrested by Israel.

The attack in Jerusalem followed a tense week between Israel and Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Last weekend, Israeli aircraft unleashed an offensive in the Gaza Strip targeting the militant group Islamic

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Jihad and setting off three days of fierce cross-border fighting. Islamic Jihad fired hundreds of rockets during the flare-up to avenge the airstrikes, which killed two of its commanders and other militants. Israel said the attack was meant to thwart threats from the group to respond to the arrest of one of its officials in the occupied West Bank.

Forty-nine Palestinians, including 17 children and 14 militants, were killed, and several hundred were injured in the fighting, which ended with an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire. No Israeli was killed or seriously injured.

The Islamic militant group Hamas, which controls Gaza, stayed on the sidelines.

A day after the cease-fire halted the worst round of Gaza fighting in more than a year, Israeli troops killed three Palestinian militants and wounded dozens in a shootout that erupted during an arrest raid in the West Bank city of Nablus.

In Ukraine, rebuilding starts with neighbors' help

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

NOVOSELIVKA, Ukraine (AP) — As battles raged around Kyiv, one Russian advance was stopped in front of Maria Metla's home. Artillery gutted most of the house, while the rest was pulverized by tank fire.

Metla, 66, is now counting on her neighbors to have somewhere to live this winter.

Crews of volunteers turn up on most mornings to prize away anything that can be reused — setting up neat piles of bricks, destroyed kitchen appliances for scrap metal, and chunks of insulation panels.

The salvaged material is reused to help rebuild homes destroyed along the perimeter of Russia's failed attempt during the initial stages of the war to surround and capture Ukraine's capital.

The village of Novoselivka, 140 kilometers (nearly 90 miles) north of Kyiv, was a scene of intense fighting during the 36-day attack on the capital. Metal doors are buckled by bullet holes from heavy machine-gun fire and houses like Metla's were smashed by ground and aerial bombardment.

"We dragged what we could to the basement. Five bombs — one, two, three, four, five — exploded in the field behind us," Metla said while standing in what used to be the living room of her destroyed home. She keeps a burned exercise bike and a religious icon of St. Nicholas as reminders of life before the war.

Ukraine's authorities said last month that the country had suffered more than \$100 billion — equivalent to two-thirds of its 2020 gross domestic product — in infrastructure damage alone but estimate that the reconstruction effort could cost more than seven times that amount.

Officials are appealing to Western countries to tap frozen Russian assets on top of what they are willing to donate to help pay for the bill.

Container homes from Poland are being set up near Novoselivka, a village filled with orchards, sunflower patches, and back gardens with chickens, outside the historic northern city of Chernihiv. But the scale of the damage has prompted scores of local initiatives.

"In many other countries, if your home is destroyed, you might put up a 'For Sale' sign and move to another town. It's not like that here," said Andriy Galyuga, a local volunteer organizer. "People are very attached to where they are from and they don't want to leave."

Galyuga's organization, Bomozhemo, is in contact with similar initiatives that have sprung up all around the Ukrainian capital.

At one smashed home, Galyuga bounds up a broken stairwell to direct a 25-member crew of volunteers loading salvaged cinder blocks onto a slide and determinedly prying off construction material with pickaxes and crowbars.

Children and retired women help the effort watched by the worried home owner, Zhanna Dynaeva, who makes food for the workers, many of whom have also lost their homes.

The gaunt-looking Dynaeva, is staying with a friend, but visits her home daily to maintain an immaculate garden. She carries trays of drinks and sandwiches on the day the volunteers came to visit.

"I am so grateful to them. People around me have helped so much," she said. As she gives an account of her escape from the bombardment, Dynaeva bursts into tears and is hugged by her homeless neighbor,

Metla.

"I'm hoping I can stay on my property, maybe in a makeshift home to start," Dynaeva says. "I don't know what will happen to us. Winter will be here soon. I just worry all the time."

High oil prices help Saudi Aramco earn \$88B in first half

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi energy company Aramco said Sunday its profits jumped 90% in the second quarter compared to the same time last year, helping its half-year earnings reach nearly \$88 billion. The increase is a boon for the kingdom and the crown prince's spending power as people around the world pay higher oil prices at the pump.

Aramco's net profits for the first half of the year were helped by strong second-quarter earnings that hit \$48.4 billion — a figure higher than the first full half year of 2021, when profits reached just \$47 billion.

The oil and gas company, which is nearly entirely state-owned by Saudi Arabia, said this sets a new quarterly earnings record for Aramco since it first floated around 5% of the company on the Saudi stock market in late 2019.

Aramco said profits were helped by higher crude oil prices and volumes sold, as well as higher refining margins. The vast oil reserves belonging to Saudi Arabia are among the cheapest to pump and produce in the world.

Aramco's financial health is crucial to Saudi Arabia's stability. Despite years of efforts to diversify the economy, the kingdom continues to rely heavily on oil and gas sales for revenue in order to pay public sector wages, subsidies, generous benefits to Saudi citizens, keep up its defense spending and carry out Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 infrastructure goals.

Brent crude has been trading at around \$100 a barrel, even as OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, and non-OPEC producers, led by Russia, have incrementally increased production levels that had been cut during the height of the pandemic.

Aramco President CEO Amin Nasser said the latest financial results reflect increasing demand for oil, even as countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia, pledge to cut their carbon emissions to avert catastrophic global warming levels driven by the burning of fossil fuels.

"The world is calling out for affordable, reliable energy and we are answering that call," he said, before adding that Aramco expects oil demand to continue to grow for the rest of the decade, despite downward economic pressures and inflation.

"At a time when the world is worrying about energy security, you are investing in the future of our business. Our customers know that whatever happens, Aramco will always deliver," Nasser said in a short video released with the financial results.

Saudi Arabia is currently producing around 10 million barrels per day, with much of that exported to Asia and its largest customer, China. The crown prince said last month that the kingdom's maximum production capacity is 13 million barrels per day, and Aramco said it is working to expand its scope to one day reach that ceiling.

The company will pay a dividend of \$18.8 billion for the second quarter to shareholders, as it has promised to do since its IPO. The higher profits bode well for the Saudi government, which is the main shareholder of Aramco.

Despite public anger, no progress in Iraq political deadlock

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Weeks after followers of an influential cleric stormed parliament, Iraq's political crisis shows no signs of abating, despite rising public anger over a debilitating gridlock that has further weakened the country's caretaker government and its ability to provide basic services.

Iraq's two rival Shiite political camps remain locked in a zero-sum competition, and the lone voice potentially able to end the rift — the revered Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani — has been conspicuously silent.

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For now, hundreds of supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr, a firebrand Shiite cleric, are still camped outside the legislative building in Baghdad, ready to escalate if their demands are not met.

Al-Sadr has called for early elections, the dissolution of parliament and constitutional amendments. He has given the judiciary an end-of-the-week deadline to dissolve the legislature.

His Shiite rivals in the Iran-backed camp have conditions of their own. They accused him of violating the constitution, prompting counter-protests that have spurred fears of bloodshed.

Neither faction seems willing to compromise to end the 10-month-old political crisis, the longest since the 2003 U.S. invasion reset the political order. The caretaker Cabinet — unable to pass laws or issue a budget — grows more feeble by the day, while the public lashes out in protest against poor services, including power cuts during the scorching summer heat.

UNITING THE WARRING FACTIONS

When al-Sadr commanded thousands of followers to storm Baghdad's heavily fortified government zone on July 30, he paralyzed state institutions and prevented his political rivals from proceeding with the formation of a government.

Al-Sadr might have felt emboldened by the silence of the 92-year-old al-Sistani, a revered spiritual figure whose word holds enormous sway among leaders and ordinary Iraqis.

Three officials at al-Sistani's seminary in the holy city of Najaf said he has not used his influence because he did not want to appear to take sides in the most acute internal Shiite crisis since 2003. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

"The Marjaiya is watching the situation with concern," said one of the officials, referring to the ayatollah. He said al-Sistani "will not interfere at the present time. His entry may be perceived as benefiting one party over another."

Al-Sistani has seldom intervened in political matters, but when he has, it has altered the course of Iraqi politics.

In 2019, his sermon led to the resignation of then-Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi amid mass anti-government protests, the largest in Iraq's modern history. Mustafa al-Kadhimi's administration was sworn in with the goal of holding early elections, which took place in October.

The ayatollah has grown weary of current Iraqi political dynamics, the official in Najaf said. He has not resumed his usual Friday sermons, which were suspended during the pandemic. His doors remain closed to Iraq's political elites, a sign that he disapproves of them.

The seminary in Najaf is also divided over al-Sadr. Some fear his audacity is deepening the Shiite divide, while others agree with his anti-corruption and reformist rhetoric. Dozens of students from the seminary recently joined the protests.

Al-Sistani does have red lines that, if crossed, would compel him to intervene, the officials said. They include bloodshed and attempts to erode what are seen as Iraq's democratic foundations.

"Muqtada knows these red lines and will not cross them," one official said.

SEARCHING FOR A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS

Even if the Shiite rivals were to agree to hold elections, fundamental differences remain about electoral rules. There's no legal precedent to guide decision-makers.

Al-Sadr has hinted he will escalate protests if the judiciary does not dissolve parliament by the end of the week. The judiciary says it does not have the power to disband the legislature.

His rivals in the Coordination Framework alliance, made up of largely Iran-backed Shiite parties, claim al-Sadr's pressure on the judiciary is unconstitutional. They don't object to new elections, provided there is a national consensus on how the vote will be conducted.

Such a consensus seems unattainable.

Al-Sadr wants to use the same rules as in the October election, when Iraq was divided into 83 electoral districts. The current law benefits parties with a strong grassroots base like al-Sadr's, who grew his seat tally from 54 to 73, while the Iran-backed parties saw a decrease from 48 to 16.

The Framework wants the law to be amended. However, the parliament building is closed, with hundreds

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of al-Sadr's followers camped outside preventing MPs from entering.

WHAT THE REST OF IRAQ THINKS

Ordinary Iraqis are increasingly frustrated because the caretaker government is struggling to provide basic services, such as electricity and water.

The political crisis comes at a time of growing unemployment, particularly among young Iraqis. The country has endured consecutive droughts that severely damage agriculture and fisheries industries, further diminishing prospects for jobs.

Protests in southern Iraq turned violent last week after stone-throwing demonstrators clashed with security forces outside oil fields in the provinces of Missan and Dhi Qar. More than a dozen protesters were detained, and more than a dozen members of the security forces were injured.

In Missan, Mustafa Hashem protested against severe water shortages that damaged livelihoods in Iraq's marshes. He said the security forces engaged in "brutal and unjustified repression" against peaceful protesters.

More protests were held in the southern province of Basra after three straight days of power cuts during the peak summer heat. Protests are common during the summer in Iraq, when rising temperatures overwhelm the national grid, causing outages. This year, many demonstrators called for al-Sadr to champion their rights.

Salinity levels in Basra this summer are nearly the same as four years ago when tens of thousands of people were hospitalized because of poor water quality, said environmentalist Shukri al-Hassan. The 2018 health crisis spurred violent protests that served as the harbinger for mass anti-government rallies the following year.

Unable to pass a budget law, the caretaker government has resorted to stop-gap measures to fund urgent expenses such as food and electricity payments to neighboring countries. Meanwhile, crucial investments, including in water infrastructure, have been stalled.

Sinema took Wall Street money while killing tax on investors

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, the Arizona Democrat who single-handedly thwarted her party's longtime goal of raising taxes on wealthy investors, received nearly \$1 million over the past year from private equity professionals, hedge fund managers and venture capitalists whose taxes would have increased under the plan.

For years, Democrats have promised to raise taxes on such investors, who pay a significantly lower rate on their earnings than ordinary workers. But just as they closed in on that goal last week, Sinema forced a series of changes to her party's \$740 billion election-year spending package, eliminating a proposed "carried interest" tax increase on private equity earnings while securing a \$35 billion exemption that will spare much of the industry from a separate tax increase other huge corporations now have to pay.

The bill, with Sinema's alterations intact, was given final approval by Congress on Friday and is expected to be signed by President Joe Biden next week.

Sinema has long aligned herself with the interests of private equity, hedge funds and venture capital, helping her net at least \$1.5 million in campaign contributions since she was elected to the House a decade ago. But the \$983,000 she has collected since last summer more than doubled what the industry donated to her during all of her preceding years in Congress combined, according to an Associated Press review of campaign finance disclosures.

The donations, which make Sinema one of the industry's top beneficiaries in Congress, serve a reminder of the way that high-power lobbying campaigns can have dramatic implications for the way legislation is crafted, particularly in the evenly divided Senate where there are no Democratic votes to spare. They also highlight a degree of political risk for Sinema, whose unapologetic defense of the industry's favorable tax treatment is viewed by many in her party as indefensible.

"From their vantage point, it's a million dollars very well spent," said Dean Baker, a senior economist at

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the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a liberal-leaning think tank. "It's pretty rare you see this direct of a return on your investment. So, I guess I would congratulate them."

Sinema's office declined to make her available for an interview. Hannah Hurley, a Sinema spokesperson, acknowledged the senator shares some of the industry's views on taxation, but rebuffed any suggestion that the donations influenced her thinking.

"Senator Sinema makes every decision based on one criteria: what's best for Arizona," Hurley said in a statement. "She has been clear and consistent for over a year that she will only support tax reforms and revenue options that support Arizona's economic growth and competitiveness."

The American Investment Council, a trade group that lobbies on behalf of private equity, also defended their push to defeat the tax provisions.

"Our team worked to ensure that members of Congress from both sides of the aisle understand how private equity directly employs workers and supports small businesses throughout their communities," Drew Maloney, the organization's CEO and president, said in a statement.

Sinema's defense of wealthy investors' tax treatment offers a jarring contrast to her background as a Green Party activist and self-styled "Prada socialist" who once likened accepting campaign cash to "bribery" and later called for "big corporations & the rich to pay their fair share" before launching her first campaign for Congress in 2012.

She's been far more magnanimous since, praising private equity in 2016 from the House floor for providing "billions of dollars each year to Main Street businesses." After her election to the Senate, Sinema interned during the 2020 congressional recess at a private equity mogul's boutique winery in northern California.

The soaring contributions from the industry to Sinema trace back to last summer. That's when she first made clear that she wouldn't support a carried interest tax increase, as well as other corporate and business tax hikes included in an earlier iteration of Biden's agenda.

During a two-week period in September alone, Sinema collected \$47,100 in contributions from 16 high-ranking officials from the private equity firm Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe, records show. Employees and executives of KKR, another private equity behemoth, contributed \$44,100 to Sinema during a two-month span in late 2021.

In some cases, the families of private equity managers joined in. David Belluck, a partner at the firm Riverside Partners, gave a \$5,800 max-out contribution to Sinema one day in late June. So did three of his college-age kids, with the family collectively donating \$23,200, records show.

"I generally support centrist Democrats and her seat is important to keep a Democratic Senate majority," Belluck said, adding that his family has known Sinema since her election to Congress. "She and I have never discussed private equity taxation."

The donations from the industry coincide with a \$26 million lobbying effort spearheaded by the investment firm Blackstone that culminated on the Senate floor last weekend.

By the time the bill was up for debate during a marathon series of votes, Sinema had already forced Democrats to abandon their carried interest tax increase.

"Senator Sinema said she would not vote for the bill .. unless we took it out," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told reporters last week. "We had no choice."

But after private equity lobbyists discovered a provision in the bill that would have subjected many of them to a separate 15% corporate minimum tax, they urgently pressed Sinema and other centrist Democrats for changes, according to emails as well as four people with direct knowledge of the matter who requested anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

"Given the breaking nature of this development we need as many offices as possible weighing in with concerns to Leader Schumer's office," Blackstone lobbyist Ryan McConaghy wrote in a Saturday afternoon email obtained by the AP, which included proposed language for modifying the bill. "Would you and your boss be willing to raise the alarm on this and express concerns with Schumer and team?"

McConaghy did not respond to a request for comment.

Sinema worked with Republicans on an amendment that stripped the corporate minimum tax on private

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equity from the bill, which a handful of vulnerable Democrats also voted for.

"Since she has been in Congress, Kyrsten has consistently supported pro-growth policies that encourage job creation across Arizona. Her tax policy positions and focus on growing Arizona's economy and competitiveness are longstanding and well known," Hurley, the Sinema spokesperson, said.

But many in her party disagree. They say the favorable tax treatment does little to boost the overall economy and argue there's little compelling evidence to suggest its benefits are enjoyed beyond some of the wealthiest investors.

Some of Sinema's donors make their case.

Blackstone, a significant source of campaign contributions, owns large tracts of real estate in Sinema's home state, Arizona. The firm was condemned by United Nations experts in 2019 who said Blackstone's financial model was responsible for a "financialization of housing" that has driven up rents and home costs, "pushing low-income, and increasingly middle-income people from their homes."

Blackstone employees, executives and their family members have given Sinema \$44,000 since 2018, records show.

In a statement, Blackstone called the allegations by the U.N. experts "false and misleading" and said all employee contributions are "strictly personal." The firm added that it was "incredibly proud of its investments in housing."

Another significant financial services donor is Centerbridge Partners, a New York-based firm that buys up the debt of distressed governments and companies and often uses hardball tactics to extract value. Since 2017, Sinema has collected at least \$29,000 from donors associated with the firm, including co-founder Mark Gallogly and his wife, Elizabeth Strickler, records show.

In 2012, Centerbridge Partners purchased Arizona-based restaurant chain P.F. Chang's for roughly \$1 billion. After loading the struggling company up with \$675 million of debt, they sold it to another private equity group in 2019, according to Bloomberg News. The company received a \$10 million coronavirus aid loan to cover payroll, which the federal government later forgave, but shed jobs and closed locations as it struggled with the pandemic.

Centerbridge Partners was also part of a consortium of hedge funds that helped usher in an era of austerity in Puerto Rico after buying up billions of dollars of the island government's \$72 billion debt — and filing legal proceedings to collect. A subsidiary of Centerbridge Partners was among a group of creditors who repeatedly sued one of the U.S. territory's pension funds. In one 2016 lawsuit, the group of creditors asked a judge to divert money from a Puerto Rican pension fund in order to collect.

A Centerbridge representative could not provide comment.

Liberal activists in Arizona say they plan to make Sinema's reliance on donations from wealthy investors a campaign issue when she is up for reelection in 2024.

"There are many takes on how to win, but there is no universe in which it is politically smart to fight for favorable tax treatment of the wealthiest people in the country," said Emily Kirkland, a political consultant who works for progressive candidates. "It's absolutely going to be a potent issue."

Agent: Rushdie off ventilator and talking, day after attack

By CAROLYN THOMPSON and HILLEL ITALIE Associated Press

MAYVILLE, N.Y. (AP) — "The Satanic Verses" author Salman Rushdie was taken off a ventilator and able to talk Saturday, a day after he was stabbed as he prepared to give a lecture in upstate New York.

Rushdie remained hospitalized with serious injuries, but fellow author Aatish Taseer tweeted in the evening that he was "off the ventilator and talking (and joking)." Rushdie's agent, Andrew Wylie, confirmed that information without offering further details.

Earlier in the day, the man accused of attacking him Friday at the Chautauqua Institution, a nonprofit education and retreat center, pleaded not guilty to attempted murder and assault charges in what a prosecutor called a "preplanned" crime.

An attorney for Hadi Matar entered the plea on his behalf during an arraignment in western New York.

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The suspect appeared in court wearing a black and white jumpsuit and a white face mask, with his hands cuffed in front of him.

A judge ordered him held without bail after District Attorney Jason Schmidt told her Matar, 24, took steps to purposely put himself in position to harm Rushdie, getting an advance pass to the event where the author was speaking and arriving a day early bearing a fake ID.

"This was a targeted, unprovoked, preplanned attack on Mr. Rushdie," Schmidt said.

Public defender Nathaniel Barone complained that authorities had taken too long to get Matar in front of a judge while leaving him "hooked up to a bench at the state police barracks."

"He has that constitutional right of presumed innocence," Barone added.

Rushdie, 75, suffered a damaged liver and severed nerves in an arm and an eye, Wylie said Friday evening. He was likely to lose the injured eye.

The attack was met with shock and outrage from much of the world, along with tributes and praise for the award-winning author who for more than 30 years has faced death threats for "The Satanic Verses."

Authors, activists and government officials cited Rushdie's courage and longtime advocacy of free speech despite the risks to his own safety. Writer and longtime friend Ian McEwan called Rushdie "an inspirational defender of persecuted writers and journalists across the world," and actor-author Kal Penn cited him as a role model "for an entire generation of artists, especially many of us in the South Asian diaspora toward whom he's shown incredible warmth."

President Joe Biden said Saturday in a statement that he and first lady Jill Biden were "shocked and saddened" by the attack.

"Salman Rushdie — with his insight into humanity, with his unmatched sense for story, with his refusal to be intimidated or silenced — stands for essential, universal ideals," the statement read. "Truth. Courage. Resilience. The ability to share ideas without fear. These are the building blocks of any free and open society."

Rushdie, a native of India who has since lived in Britain and the U.S., is known for his surreal and satirical prose style, beginning with his Booker Prize-winning 1981 novel "Midnight's Children," in which he sharply criticized India's then-prime minister, Indira Gandhi.

"The Satanic Verses" drew death threats after it was published in 1988, with many Muslims regarding as blasphemy a dream sequence based on the life of the Prophet Muhammad, among other objections. Rushdie's book had already been banned and burned in India, Pakistan and elsewhere before Iran's Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa, or edict, calling for Rushdie's death in 1989.

Khomeini died that same year, but the fatwa remains in effect. Iran's current supreme leader, Khamenei, never issued a fatwa of his own withdrawing the edict, though Iran in recent years hasn't focused on the writer.

Investigators were working to determine whether the suspect, born a decade after "The Satanic Verses" was published, acted alone.

District Attorney Schmidt alluded to the fatwa as a potential motive in arguing against bail.

"Even if this court were to set a million dollars bail, we stand a risk that bail could be met," Schmidt said.

"His resources don't matter to me. We understand that the agenda that was carried out yesterday is something that was adopted and it's sanctioned by larger groups and organizations well beyond the jurisdictional borders of Chautauqua County," the prosecutor said.

Barone, the public defender, said after the hearing that Matar has been communicating openly with him and that he would spend the coming weeks trying to learn about his client, including whether he has psychological or addiction issues.

Matar is from Fairview, New Jersey. Rosaria Calabrese, manager of the State of Fitness Boxing Club, a small, tightly knit gym in nearby North Bergen, said Matar joined April 11 and participated in about 27 group sessions for beginners looking to improve their fitness before emailing her several days ago to say he wanted to cancel his membership because "he wouldn't be coming back for a while."

Gym owner Desmond Boyle said he saw "nothing violent" about Matar, describing him as polite and

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quiet, yet someone who always looked "tremendously sad." He said Matar resisted attempts by him and others to welcome and engage him.

"He had this look every time he came in. It looked like it was the worst day of his life," Boyle said.

Matar was born in the United States to parents who emigrated from Yaroun in southern Lebanon, the mayor of the village, Ali Tehfe, told The Associated Press.

Flags of the Iran-backed Shia militant group Hezbollah are visible across the village, along with portraits of leader Hassan Nasrallah, Khamenei, Khomeini and slain Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

Journalists visiting Yaroun on Saturday were asked to leave. Hezbollah spokespeople did not respond to requests for comment.

Iran's theocratic government and its state-run media assigned no motive for the attack. In Tehran, some Iranians interviewed by the AP praised the attack on an author they believe tarnished the Islamic faith, while others worried it would further isolate their country.

On Friday, an AP reporter witnessed the attacker stab or punch Rushdie about 10 or 15 times.

Event moderator Henry Reese, 73, suffered a facial injury and was treated and released from a hospital, police said. He and Rushdie had planned to discuss the United States as a refuge for writers and other artists in exile.

A state trooper and a county sheriff's deputy were assigned to Rushdie's lecture, and police said the trooper made the arrest. But afterward some longtime visitors to the Chautauqua Institution questioned why there wasn't tighter security given the threats against Rushdie and a bounty of more than \$3 million on his head.

On Saturday the center said it was boosting security through measures such as requiring photo IDs to purchase gate passes, which previously could be obtained anonymously. Patrons entering the amphitheater where Rushdie was attacked will also be barred from carrying bags of any type.

The changes, along with an increased presence of armed police officers on the bucolic grounds, came as something of a shock to Chautauquans who have long relished the laid-back atmosphere for which the nearly 150-year-old vacation colony is known.

News about the stabbing has led to renewed interest in "The Satanic Verses," which topped best seller lists after the fatwa was issued in 1989. As of Saturday afternoon, the novel ranked No. 13 on Amazon.com.

The death threats and bounty Rushdie faced over the book after its publication led him to go into hiding under a British government protection program, which included an around-the-clock armed guard. After nine years of seclusion, Rushdie cautiously resumed more public appearances.

In 2012 he published a memoir about the fatwa titled "Joseph Anton," the pseudonym he used while in hiding.

He said during a New York talk that year that terrorism was really the art of fear: "The only way you can defeat it is by deciding not to be afraid."

Russian shelling heavy in east; Ukraine strikes key bridge

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia's military pounded residential areas across Ukraine overnight, claiming gains, as Ukrainian forces pressed a counteroffensive to try to take back an occupied southern region, striking the last working bridge over a river in the Russian-occupied Kherson region, Ukrainian authorities said Saturday.

A Russian rocket attack on the city of Kramatorsk killed three people and wounded 13 others Friday night, according to the mayor. Kramatorsk is the headquarters for Ukrainian forces in the country's war-torn east.

The attack came less than a day after 11 other rockets were fired at the city, one of the two main Ukrainian-held ones in Donetsk province, the focus of an ongoing Russian offensive to capture eastern Ukraine's Donbas region.

The Russian Defense Ministry claimed Saturday its forces had taken control of Pisky, a village on the outskirts of the city of Donetsk, the provincial capital that pro-Moscow separatists have controlled since 2014.

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Russian troops and the Kremlin-backed rebels are trying to seize Ukrainian-held areas north and west of the city of Donetsk to expand the separatists' self-proclaimed republic. But the Ukrainian military said Saturday that its forces had prevented an overnight advance toward the smaller cities of Avdiivka and Bakhmut.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov also claimed that Russian strikes near Kramatorsk, 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of Donetsk city, destroyed a U.S.-supplied multiple rocket launcher and ammunition. Ukrainian authorities did not acknowledge any military losses but said Russian missile strikes Friday on Kramatorsk had destroyed 20 residential buildings.

Neither claim could be independently verified.

The Ukrainian governor of neighboring Luhansk province, part of the Donbas region that was overrun by Russian forces last month, claimed that Ukrainian troops still held a small area in the province. Writing on Telegram, Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai said the defending troops were holed up inside an oil refinery on the edge of Lysychansk, a city that Moscow claimed to have captured, and also control areas near a village.

"The enemy is burning the ground at the entrances to the Luhansk region because it cannot overcome (Ukrainian resistance along) these few kilometers," Haidai said. "It is difficult to count how many thousands of shells this territory of the free Luhansk region has withstood over the past month and a half."

Further west, the governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region reported more Russian shelling of the city of Nikopol, which lies across the Dnieper River from Europe's largest nuclear power plant.

Gov. Yevhen Yevtushenko did not specify whether Russian troops had fired at Nikopol from the occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Writing on Telegram, he said Saturday that there were no casualties but residential buildings, a power line and a gas pipeline were damaged.

Nikopol has undergone daily bombardment for most of the past week, and a volley of shells killed three people and damaged 40 apartment buildings on Thursday, he said.

Russia and Ukrainian officials have accused each other of shelling the Zaporizhzhia plant in contravention of nuclear safety rules. Russian troops have occupied the plant since the early days of Moscow's invasion, although the facility's Ukrainian nuclear workers continue to run it.

Ukrainian military intelligence alleged Saturday that Russian troops were shelling the plant from a village just kilometers away, damaging a plant pumping station and a fire station. The intelligence directorate said the Russians had bused people into the power plant and mounted a Ukrainian flag on a gun on the outskirts of Enerhodar, the city where the plant is located.

"Obviously, it will be used for yet another provocation to accuse the armed forces of Ukraine," the directorate said, without elaborating.

Ukrainian officials have repeatedly alleged that Russian forces were using the plant as a shield while firing at Ukrainian communities across the river, knowing that Ukrainian forces were unlikely to fire back for fear of triggering a nuclear accident.

They said Russian shelling on Friday night killed one woman and injured two other civilians in the city of Zaporizhzhia. Ukraine's southern Mykolayiv region also said a woman died there in shelling.

For several weeks, Ukraine's military has tried to lay the groundwork for a counteroffensive to reclaim southern Ukraine's Russian-occupied Kherson region. A local Ukrainian official reported Saturday that a Ukrainian strike had damaged the last working bridge over the Dnieper River in the region, further crippling Russian supply lines.

"The Russians no longer have any capability to fully turn over their equipment," Serhii Khlan, a deputy to the Kherson Regional Council, wrote on Facebook.

The British Defense Ministry said Saturday that damage to bridges across the Dnieper means that "ground resupply for the several thousand Russian troops on the west bank is almost certainly reliant on just two pontoon ferry crossing points."

"Even if Russia manages to make significant repairs to the (damaged) bridges, they will remain a key vulnerability," the British said.

On Saturday, the deputy director of the Russian-controlled Kakhovka hydropower plant 60 kilometers (37

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miles) upriver from the city of Kherson said one of its generating units was out of service after a Ukrainian missile strike. Arseniy Zelenskyy said further strikes could endanger the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant because its water intakes use the reservoir formed by the Kakhovka plant's dam.

Days after explosions at a Russian air base in Crimea destroyed up to a dozen aircraft, a Ukrainian presidential adviser said Kyiv should make retaking the Black Sea peninsula that Moscow annexed in 2014 one of its goals of the war.

"Russia started a war against Ukraine and the world in 2014, with its brazen seizure of Crimea. It is obvious that this war should end with the liberation of Crimea," Mykhailo Podoylak, the head of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office, wrote Saturday on Twitter. "And also with the legal punishment of the initiators of the 'special military operation'" - the Kremlin's term for its war in Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials have not claimed responsibility for the explosions Tuesday at the Saki air base in Crimea. Russian defense officials have denied any aircraft were damaged — or that any attack even took place — attributing the blasts to on-site munitions that exploded.

3 newborn lion cubs a rare joyous sight in war-scarred Gaza

By FARES AKRAM Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Three day-old lion cubs were on display Saturday in a cardboard box at a Gaza City zoo, a rare joyous sight for children and adults alike, just days after Israeli aircraft pounded the territory and Gaza militants fired hundreds of rockets at Israel.

Veterinarian Mahmoud al-Sultan said each cub weighed about 700 grams. He said he felt lucky the birth was successful despite the deafening sound of constant explosions during three days of fighting. The cubs' mother had suffered miscarriages in the past, said al-Sultan.

Loud noise "causes stress to the wild animals, especially the lions, whose roars get higher, and they keep moving in a circular way inside the cage," he said.

The cubs were born on Friday, several hours apart, and five days after an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire halted the fighting between Israel and Islamic Jihad militants. Forty-nine Palestinians, including 17 children, were killed and several hundred were injured in the fighting.

Shocks from war aren't the only threat to animals. Gaza is impoverished, with double-digit unemployment, largely as a result of a border blockade Egypt and Israel imposed after Hamas militants took control of the territory 15 years ago.

In the past, a number of animals in small private Gaza zoos starved to death or were killed in the long-running conflict, which included four Israel-Hamas wars and countless smaller skirmishes.

International animal welfare groups carried out several evacuations to move frail lions and tigers to sanctuaries in Jordan and Africa. The costly effort to rescue animals, while some 2.3 million Gazans remain largely trapped in a small territory, has also drawn criticism.

On Saturday, visitors flocked to the small Nama zoo on the outskirts of Gaza City, with children allowed to pet the newborns. Nama is operated by a private charity, putting it in a slightly better position than the small number of private zoos that often struggle to provide for the animals.

Schools organize daily trips to the zoo and the entry fee is less than \$1, helping to cover costs.

The zoo also houses a variety of birds, along with monkeys, deer, foxes, wolves and hyenas.

Audit: Va. failed on earlier advice before I-95 gridlock

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Virginia government failed to carry out numerous lessons from a 2018 snow-storm that caused highway gridlock, as exhibited by a similar event along Interstate 95 in January that left hundreds of motorists stranded, a state watchdog office concluded.

The Office of the Inspector General report, released Friday, was critical of how the state transportation, police and emergency management agencies performed during the severe snowstorm that began Jan. 3, the Richmond Times-Dispatch reported.

Logjams along a 40-mile (65-kilometer) stretch of I-95 in both directions not far from the nation's capital

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led to outrage among motorists, some of whom were stuck in their vehicles overnight and pleaded on social media for help.

In April, a state-commissioned report created by a nonprofit group didn't place blame on any single person or agency. But it found state agencies collectively "lost situational awareness" and failed to keep up with growing gridlock through a confluence of heavy snowfall, abnormally high traffic and staffing shortages related to COVID-19. Up to 11 inches (28 cm) of snow fell in the area.

Friday's performance audit mentioned many of the same issues, but the I-95 mess could have been avoided if state officials had taken preventive measures recommended by Virginia DOT after a snowstorm in late 2018 blocked traffic on Interstate 81, in far southwest Virginia. Those recommendations included making plans for storms more severe than are forecast and communicating those dangers effectively to citizens.

"They've got to prepare for when things go awry and they don't get what they expect," said Ben Sutphin, the audit manager for the I-95 investigation.

The state's communication to the public about the severity of the road hazards was ineffective or misleading, the report said. Drivers also underestimated dangers because of mild weather during the New Year's weekend before the storm. The report specifically cited a message to stranded motorists that "state & locals coming ASAP with supplies & to move you."

A lack of backup electrical power for state Department of Transportation road cameras also made it hard to monitor highway conditions, the report said.

The inspector general didn't fault then-Gov. Ralph Northam for failing to declare a state of emergency before the storm "because the forecasted event ... did not rise to the level to issue an emergency declaration." Northam, a Democrat, was in the waning days of his administration, with Republican Glenn Youngkin taking office less than two weeks later.

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., who was himself caught in the gridlock, said Friday that he hopes the report's recommendations will be followed. "We should always be applying lessons learned to improve safety for Virginians."

What killed tons of fish in European river? Mystery deepens

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Laboratory tests following a mass die-off of fish in the Oder River detected high levels of salinity but no mercury poisoning its waters, Poland's environment minister said Saturday as the mystery continued as to what killed tons of fish in Central Europe.

Anna Moskwa, the minister of climate and environment, said analyses of river samples taken in both Poland and Germany revealed elevated salt levels. Comprehensive toxicology studies are still underway in Poland, she said.

She said Poland's state veterinary authority tested seven species of the dead fish and ruled out mercury as the cause of the die-off but was still waiting for results of other substances. She said test results from Germany had also not shown a high presence of mercury.

The Oder River runs from Czechia to the border between Poland and Germany before flowing into the Baltic Sea. Some German media had suggested that the river have been be poisoned with mercury.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said Friday that "huge amounts of chemical waste" were probably dumped intentionally into his country's second-longest river, causing environmental damage so severe it would take years for the waterway to recover.

On Saturday, Morawiecki vowed to do everything possible to limit the environmental devastation. Poland's interior minister said a reward of 1 million zlotys (\$220,000) would be paid to anyone who helps track down those responsible for polluting the river.

Authorities in the northeastern German state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania warned people not to fish or use water from the Szczecin lagoon, as the river's contaminated water was expected to reach the estuary area on Saturday evening.

"The extent of the fish die-off is shocking. This is a blow to the Oder as a waterway of great ecological

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value, from which it will presumably not recover for a long time," said Alex Vogel, the environment minister for Germany's Brandenburg state, along which the river runs.

The head of Polish waters, Poland's national water management authority, said Thursday that 10 tons of dead fish had been removed from the river. Hundreds of volunteers were working to help collect dead fish along the German side.

German laboratories said they detected "atypical" levels of "salts" that could be linked to the die-off but wouldn't fully explain them on their own.

Morawiecki acknowledged that some Polish officials were "sluggish" in reacting after huge numbers of dead fish were seen floating and washing ashore, and said two of them were dismissed.

"For me, however, the most important thing is to deal with this ecological disaster as soon as possible, because nature is our common heritage," Morawiecki said.

His comments were echoed by Schwedt Mayor Annekathrin Hoppe, whose German town is located next to the Lower Oder Valley National Park. She called the contamination of the river "an environmental catastrophe of unprecedented scale" for the region.

What takes years and costs \$20K? A San Francisco trash can

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — What takes four years to make and costs more than \$20,000? A trash can in San Francisco.

That costly, boxy bin is among six trash cans hitting San Francisco's streets this summer in the city's long saga in search of the perfect can. Overflowing trash cans are a common sight in the Northern California city, along with piles of used clothes, shoes, furniture and other items strewn about on sometimes-impassable sidewalks.

City officials hired a Bay Area industrial firm to custom-design the pricey trash can along with two other prototypes that cost taxpayers \$19,000 and \$11,000 each. This summer, residents have the opportunity to evaluate them along with three off-the-shelf options added to the pilot program after officials faced criticism.

Last month, the city deployed 15 custom-made trash cans and 11 off-the-shelf trash cans — each of those costing from \$630 to \$2,800 — with QR codes affixed to them asking residents to fill out a survey. City officials said they intend to pay no more than \$3,000 per can.

San Francisco began its search for the perfect trash can in 2018 when officials decided it was time to replace the more than 3,000 public bins that have been on the streets for almost 20 years.

Officials say the current bins have too big a hole that allows for easy rummaging. The bins also have hinges that need constant repair and locks that are easy to breach. Some people also topple them over, cover them in graffiti, or set them on fire.

The city is so serious about the endeavor it has created interactive maps so residents can track and test the different designs, which include the Soft Square, the priciest prototype at \$20,900. The boxy stainless steel receptacle has openings for trash and for can and bottle recycling and includes a foot pedal. The Slim Silhouette, at \$18,800 per prototype, is made of stainless steel bars that give would-be graffiti artists less space to tag.

If one of the custom-designed bins is chosen, the cost to mass produce it will be \$2,000 to \$3,000 per piece, said Beth Rubenstein, a spokeswoman for San Francisco's Department of Public Works.

"We live in a beautiful city, and we want (the trash can) to be functional and cost-effective, but it needs to be beautiful," she said.

But the good looks of the shiny new trash cans have not protected them from vandalism and disrespect. Three weeks after being unveiled, several have already been tagged with orange and white graffiti. Others already show the drip stains of inconsiderate coffee drinkers or have attracted dumping, with people leaving dilapidated bathroom cabinets and plastic bags full of empty wine bottles next to them.

Trash on San Francisco city streets has been an issue for decades. In 2007, then-Mayor Gavin Newsom

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eliminated about 1,500 of the city's 4,500 trash cans because he said they were not helping keep streets clean and were becoming magnets for more trash. Officials couldn't say how many receptacles are currently on the curb, but the city plans to replace at least 3,000.

"A trash can is one of the most basic functions of city governance and if the city can't do something as simple as this, how can they solve the bigger issues of homelessness and safety and poverty?" asked Matt Haney, a former supervisor who lives in the Tenderloin neighborhood and now represents the area in the California Assembly.

New trash cans will be the latest addition to the city's arsenal against its dirty streets. In 2014, San Francisco launched its "Pit Stop" program in the Tenderloin neighborhood, the epicenter of drug dealing and homelessness in the city, setting up portable public toilets. In 2018, the city created a six-person "poop patrol" team amid demand to power wash sidewalks.

Haney said that as a supervisor he reluctantly agreed last year to approve the pilot program despite the high prices to avoid delays.

"I think most people, including me, would say just replace the damn cans with cans that we know work in other cities, just do it," he said.

Haney said the "whole trash can saga has this stench of corruption," referring to disgraced former Department of Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru, who pleaded guilty in January to federal wire fraud charges. Nuru awarded the contract to maintain San Francisco's trash cans to a company owned by a relative of a developer who has pleaded guilty to conspiracy and is cooperating with federal authorities in the case against Nuru.

On top of the corruption, the city has long been the butt of jokes for how long it takes to complete public works projects of all kinds.

A bus rapid transit system along Van Ness Avenue, one of the city's main arteries, finally opened this year after 27 years of construction. A new subway line connecting Chinatown with other areas of the city that started construction in 2010 is four years behind schedule. In 2017, the city completed the Transbay Transit Center only a year late, but the \$2 billion terminal abruptly shut down six weeks later after crews discovered two cracked steel girders.

Ultimately, what trash can the city gets will depend on feedback from sanitation employees, and the surveys completed by the end of September, Rubenstein said. The new cans are not expected on the streets until the end of 2023.

Diane Torkelson, who often picks up trash in her Inner Richmond neighborhood with other volunteers, recently trekked 5 miles (8 kilometers) with a dozen other civic-minded San Franciscans to examine three of the cans.

The two prototypes were already full when the group arrived to check them out, she said.

"If the trash can is full, it's of no use, no matter how well it was designed," she said.

Expanded IRS free-file system one step closer in Dems' bill

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The flagship climate change and health care bill passed by Democrats and soon to be signed by President Joe Biden will bring U.S. taxpayers one step closer to a government-operated electronic free-file tax return system.

It's something lawmakers and advocates have been seeking for years. For many Americans, it's frustrating that beyond having to pay sometimes hefty tax bills, they also have to shell out additional money for tax preparation programs or preparers because of an increasingly complex U.S. tax system.

"It's definitely something we should do, and when the IRS is adequately resourced, it's something that will happen," said Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen at a June Senate Finance Committee hearing.

And now that the IRS is set to receive nearly \$80 billion through the so-called "Inflation Reduction Act," the agency has the means to develop new systems to help Americans pay their taxes. The legislation passed Congress on Friday.

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Several hurdles stand in the way. Even in a best-case scenario, it will likely take years to get a new, free system up and running. There's also pushback from commercial tax preparation companies, which question whether Americans want the IRS to prepare their taxes.

Perhaps this biggest hurdle is an agreement between the IRS and some commercial tax preparation companies, known as the Free File Alliance, which prevents the federal agency from creating its own free tax return filing system. In short, the IRS agreed not create its own filing system if companies would instead provide free services to taxpayers making \$73,000 or less.

This program, though, has been marred with controversy, with commercial firms misrepresenting their services and low taxpayer participation rates.

The Government Accountability Office in April reported that while 70% of taxpayers were eligible for services through the Free File Alliance, only 3% of taxpayers actually use the service. The watchdog recommended the IRS find new free filing options before the Alliance expires in October 2023.

With the funding in the bill, the IRS has an opportunity to create a new system.

Included is a provision that allots \$15 million to the IRS to make plans for a free direct e-file tax return system. Those plans would have to be developed within nine months and would include cost estimates for creating and administering a system. They would also require public input.

There are also legislative attempts to move this effort along.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., in July resubmitted a bill called the Tax Filing Simplification Act that would require the IRS to create its own free online tax filing service and move away from its partnership with private online tax preparation companies.

"I've been pushing for a free tax filing system for years, and now the IRS is on the verge of having significant funding to modernize its IT systems, which means it's time to develop simplified filing tools laid out in my Tax Filing Simplification Act," Warren told The Associated Press.

"Americans spend too much time and money to file their taxes, and the IRS should adopt these proposals to help millions of Americans file taxes and claim refunds."

At her Finance Committee appearance, Yellen called for a new system.

"There's no reason in the world that a modern economy shouldn't have a system that makes it easy for such a large group of taxpayers to file their returns," she said.

Vanessa Williamson, a senior fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, said "if the IRS moves forward with a free product, it could save lower-income families the money they used to give to H&R Block or TurboTax."

"Tax prep companies are notorious for tricking tax filers into paying for services they should be getting for free," Williamson said, "so an IRS free file service would be a very welcome step that would save Americans money."

In 2019, ProPublica wrote about Intuit's TurboTax and H&R Block Inc.'s efforts to mislead taxpayers away from the federally supported free services for which they qualified. And in May, New York Attorney General Letitia James secured a \$141 million settlement with Mountain View, California-based Intuit Inc., which had to pay restitution to some taxpayers.

Intuit withdrew from the Alliance in July 2021, stating in a blog post that the company could provide its benefits without the Free File Alliance's limitations. H&R Block withdrew from the partnership in 2020.

"Most Americans don't want the tax collector to also serve as the tax preparer," said Derrick L. Plummer, a spokesman for Intuit.

"The IRS already has a core mission that it needs to focus on, and creating a new system would cost billions of taxpayer dollars and jeopardize the financial freedom of millions more," he said. A spokesperson for H&R Block did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

Ideas for what a government run free-file program might look like are already being studied.

Bruce Sacerdote, a Dartmouth economist, has examined systems in other countries in which taxpayers don't have to enter much data on their electronic forms because the government has already done so.

"The IRS has tremendous amounts of information on wages and dividends," he said, adding that a government-supported tax filing system "could be a wonderful thing."

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Such systems are used in Germany, Japan and other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries that collaborate to develop policies that promote economic growth.

"As a taxpayer, there could be a great benefit to pre-population," he said. "Filing taxes is enormously time-consuming. Given all the information the IRS has on taxpayers, they could simply send you a completed return."

Conspiracies complicate voting machine debate in Louisiana

By SARA CLINE AND CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The need for Louisiana to replace its voting machines is not in dispute.

They are badly outdated — deployed in 2006, the year after Hurricane Katrina struck -- and do not produce paper ballots that are critical to ensuring election results are accurate.

What to do about them is another story.

The long-running drama includes previous allegations of bid-rigging, voting machine companies claiming favoritism and a secretary of state who is noncommittal about having a new system in place for the 2024 presidential election.

Local election clerks also worry about the influence of conspiracy theorists who have peddled unfounded claims about voting equipment and have been welcomed into the debate over new machines.

"It would be a travesty to let a minority of people who have little to no experience in election administration tear down an exceptional process that was painstakingly built over many, many years," Calcasieu Parish Clerk of Court Lynn Jones told state officials in a meeting this summer. "And for us to throw it out of the window because of unfounded theories is mind-boggling."

The uncertainty is playing out against a backdrop of attacks on the integrity of elections, fueled by former President Donald Trump's lies that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from him and promoted by a web of his allies and supporters. Some of those same supporters have been trying to convince election officials across the country that they should ditch machines in favor of paper ballots and hand-counts.

Whatever success they have had so far has been limited primarily to GOP-dominated rural counties. But in Louisiana, a heavily Republican state that Trump won by nearly 20 percentage points, they have managed to insert themselves into an already long-delayed process of choosing a new statewide voting system.

Louisiana officials have been trying for at least four years to replace their outdated touchscreen voting machines. Although some counties in four other states still use the machines, Louisiana is the only one where they are in place statewide — some 10,000 in all.

The machines' main problem, aside from their age and the challenge of finding replacement parts, is that votes are recorded electronically without a paper record of each voter's selections. That means if a result is in dispute, there are no individual paper ballots to review to ensure the outcome was accurate. Under a new state law, Louisiana's next voting system must have a paper trail of ballots cast so election results can be properly audited.

"The problem in Louisiana is that if someone were to allege the voting machines had been hacked, there would be no conclusive evidence to rebut that," said Mark Lindeman, director of Verified Voting, which tracks the use of voting equipment in the United States. "It leaves election officials to prove a negative."

While election clerks agree the machines are antiquated and there is a need for a paper record, the equipment does not appear to have caused any major problems in recent years.

In 2018, the nation's top homeland security and cybersecurity officials urged states to replace any remaining voting systems without a paper trail to improve security and increase public confidence. Congress allocated \$805 million before the 2020 election to help states pay for security upgrades, including new equipment.

Louisiana officials, in a 2018 report to the federal agency disbursing the money, said they planned to use the state's share to cover the costs of "a new electronic voting system" and noted the state had already begun the procurement process.

But that same year, the contract was voided amid allegations of bid-rigging. In 2021, Secretary of State

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Kyle Ardoin shelved another replacement attempt after the process was challenged by voting machine companies that claimed favoritism for the state's current vendor, Dominion Voting Systems.

Following the 2020 presidential election, Dominion was ensnared in a web of conspiracy theories pushed by Trump and his allies, claiming their voting machines were rigged to steal the election. The company has pushed back, filing defamation lawsuits against conservative media outlets and Trump allies, including MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell.

The false claims have taken root in conservative communities, where local officials have been pressured to stop using computer equipment for casting and counting ballots. Nearly two years after the last presidential election, no evidence of any widespread fraud or manipulation of voting machines has surfaced, and courts have rejected dozens of court cases filed by Trump and his allies.

Last December, Phil Waldron — a retired Army colonel who circulated a PowerPoint presentation offering suggestions for how to overturn the 2020 election — was invited to speak to the commission tasked with recommending the new voting system for Louisiana. Waldron gave a 90-minute presentation focusing on counting paper ballots by hand, according to The Washington Post.

More recently, Lindell, one of the most prominent supporters of ditching election machines and counting every ballot by hand, traveled to Baton Rouge to testify before the same commission.

At a June meeting at the Capitol, Ardoin set aside rules limiting public testimony to three minutes per person so Lindell could address the commission at length. During his 17-minute address, Lindell detailed his national quest against "corrupted" voting systems and "stolen" elections.

"We lose everything if we keep even one machine moving forward," Lindell told the commission. He went on to describe Louisiana as "the tip of the spear" in his efforts to end the use of voting machines across the country.

At the meeting, multiple clerks said they were opposed to what Lindell was advocating -- having every voter fill out a paper ballot and having every ballot counted by hand, a process that would involve tens of thousands of ballots in the most populous counties.

"Don't mistake not wanting to go back to a pen-and-paper as not wanting to have an auditable vote trail," said David Ditch, the clerk of court for Iberia Parish. "Everybody -- every political persuasion and everybody that comes into my office -- says the same thing, 'We love the way we vote now. We just wish we had something to prove it in the end.'"

The commission ultimately voted to recommend the use of either hand-marked or machine-marked ballots or a combination of the two, and for the state to keep electronic tabulators for counting ballots. Commissioners, including Ardoin, voted in favor of machine-scanned vote tallies — not hand-counts.

The next move is Ardoin's.

A Republican first elected in 2018, he has defended the state's elections as secure even as he has handed a megaphone to some of the most prominent election conspiracy theorists.

In response to written questions, his office said Ardoin was "currently reviewing the commission's recommendations and will work with his staff as those recommendations relate to the next steps in acquisition of a new voting system."

When asked whether the goal was to have a new voting system in place before the 2024 presidential election, Ardoin's office said it was "difficult at this time to say what the timetable will be" but that two years is "probably the closest estimate."

At a gathering in July of the nation's top state election officials, Ardoin raised the issue of hand-marked paper ballots while dismissing hand-counting as something that would "extend elections over years."

His remarks prompted a fellow Republican, Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill, to tell the group that he had once served as an international observer in Russia and had seen hand-counting up close.

"If you'd like to have an orientation about how that goes, that is the easiest way to cheat that you can introduce to anybody," Merrill told attendees. "I can assure you that's not a direction that you want to go. The people that are promoting that are ignorant or ill-informed, period."

Afghan rights leader heartbroken after year of Taliban rule

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A year after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, prominent Afghan rights activist Sima Samar is still heartbroken over what happened to her country.

Samar, a former minister of women's affairs and the first chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, left Kabul in July 2021 for the United States on her first trip after the COVID-19 pandemic, never expecting Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to flee the country and the Taliban to take power for the second time soon after on Aug. 15.

"I think it's a sad anniversary for the majority of people of my country," Samar said, particularly for the women "who don't have enough food, who do not know what is the tomorrow for them."

A visiting scholar at the Carr Center for Human Rights at the Kennedy School at Harvard, she has written the first draft of an autobiography and is working on a policy paper on customary law relating to Afghan women. She is also trying to get a Green Card, but she said, "I honestly cannot orient myself, where I am, and what I'm doing."

She wishes she could go home — but she can't.

In an interview Friday with The Associated Press, she recalled a Taliban news conference a few days after they took power when they said if people apologized for past actions they would be forgiven.

"And I said, I should be apologizing because I started schools for the people?" said Samar, a member of Afghanistan's long persecuted Hazara minority. "I should apologize because I started hospitals and clinics in Afghanistan? I should apologize because I tried to stop torture of the Taliban? I should apologize to advocate against the death penalty, including (for) the Taliban leadership?"

"All my life I fought for life as a doctor," she said. "So I cannot change and support the death penalty. I shouldn't apologize for those principles of human rights and be punished."

Samar became an activist as a 23-year-old medical student with an infant son. In 1984, the then-communist government arrested her activist husband, and she never saw him again. She fled to Pakistan with her young son and worked as a doctor for Afghan refugees and started several clinics to care for Afghan women and girls.

Samar remembered the Taliban's previous rule in the late 1990s, when they largely confined women to their homes, banned television and music, and held public executions. A U.S.-led invasion drove the Taliban from power months after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, which al-Qaida orchestrated from Afghanistan while being sheltered by the Taliban.

After the Taliban's ouster, Samar returned to Afghanistan, moving into the top women's rights and human rights positions, and over the next 20 years schools and universities were opened for girls, women entered the workforce and politics and became judges.

But Samar said in an AP interview in April 2021 — four months before the Taliban's second takeover of the country — that the gains were fragile and human rights activists had many enemies in Afghanistan, from militants and warlords to those who wanted to stifle criticism or challenge their power.

Samar said the Afghan government and leadership, especially Ghani, were mainly responsible for the Taliban sweeping into Kabul and taking power. But she also put blame on Afghans "because we were very divided."

In every speech and interview she gave nationally and internationally over the years, she said Afghans had to be united and inclusive, and "we have to have the people's support. Otherwise, we will lose."

As chair of the Human Rights Commission, she said she repeatedly faced criticism that she was trying to impose Western values on Afghanistan.

"And I kept saying, human rights is not Western values. As a human being, everyone needs to have a shelter ... access to education and health services, to security," she said.

Since their takeover, the Taliban have limited girls' public education to just six years, restricted women's work, encouraged them to stay at home, and issued dress codes requiring them to cover their faces.

Samar urged international pressure not only to allow all girls to attend secondary school and university, but to ensure all human rights which are interlinked. And she stressed the importance of education for

young boys, who without any schooling, job or skill could be at risk to get involved in opium production, weapons smuggling or in violence.

She also urged the international community to continue humanitarian programs which are critical to save lives, but said they should focus on food-for-work or cash-for-work to end peoples' total dependency and give them "self-confidence and dignity."

Samar said Afghan society has changed over the past two decades, with more access to technology, rising education levels among the young and some experience with elections, t even if they weren't free and fair.

She said such achievements leave the possibility of positive change in the future. "Those are the issues that they (the Taliban) cannot control," she said. "They would like to, but they cannot do it."

Samar said she hoped for eventual accountability and justice for war crimes and crimes against humanity. "Otherwise, we feel the culture of impunity everywhere, everywhere -- and the invasion of Russia to Ukraine is a repetition of Afghanistan's case," she said.

Her hope for Afghan women is that they can "live with dignity rather than being a slave of people."

Montenegro mourns after 10 are killed in street attack

By PREDRAG MILIC Associated Press

CETINJE, Montenegro (AP) — Montenegro declared three days of national mourning Saturday, a day after 10 people, including two children, were killed in a daylight attack by a 34-year-old gunman who police said had recently exhibited a "change in behavior."

The attacker used a hunting rifle to first shoot to death two children, 8 and 11, and their mother, who lived as tenants in his house in the western city of Cetinje's Medovina neighborhood. He then walked to the street and randomly shot 13 more people, seven of them fatally. The gunman was shot dead later after a gunbattle with police.

Police investigating the rampage issued a statement Saturday saying it was still unclear what motivated the gunman — identified only by his initials, V.B. But they said people close to the attacker said he had recently started exhibiting a "change in behavior but nothing that indicated he could commit such a crime." The attacker had an appointment to see a mental health care specialist but went on the rampage prior to it.

The police statement also said the law enforcement officers sent to the scene came under fire from the attacker and responded by firing at him at least 20 times and seriously injuring him.

"It is still being investigated if he died as the result of the serious injury (by police) or as the result of being shot at by a local citizen," the statement said.

The prosecutor coordinating the investigation, Andrijana Nastic, told journalists Friday that the gunman was killed by a passerby and that a police officer was among the wounded. She said nine of those killed died at the scene and two died at a hospital.

Witnesses of the attack were struggling Saturday to come to terms with the carnage. They described scenes of chaos and horror as the gunman unleashed his fury on innocent people just going about their daily business on a warm summer afternoon.

"You could hear women crying, people shouting in panic that a man has a weapon and is indiscriminately shooting around. I heard gunshots," said witness Milena Stanojevic. "I've seen a lot of crying, tears and sadness and today, silence and disbelief."

Cetinje, a city of 17,000 people and the seat of Montenegro's former royal government, is 36 kilometers (22 miles) west of Podgorica, the current capital of the small Balkan nation.

Four of the wounded were transferred to the Clinical Center in Podgorica for surgery and were still in intensive care Saturday, according to its chief neurosurgeon, Dr. Ivan Terzic. Two others suffered less severe injuries and were recovering at a hospital in Cetinje.

R Kelly accuser to give key testimony on trial-fixing charge

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — R. Kelly's federal trial in Chicago that starts Monday is in many ways a do-over of his 2008 state child pornography trial, at which jurors acquitted the singer on charges that he produced a video of himself when he was around 30 having sex with a girl no older than 14.

There's one big difference: This time, prosecutors say, she will testify.

Kelly, 55, goes into Chicago federal court already sentenced by a New York federal judge to a 30-year prison term for a 2021 conviction on charges he parlayed his fame to sexually abuse other young fans.

Among the most serious charges the Grammy Award winner faces at his federal trial is conspiracy to obstruct justice by rigging the 2008 trial, including by paying off and threatening the girl to ensure she did not testify.

Testimony by the woman, now in her 30s and referred to in filings only as "Minor 1," will be pivotal. The charges against Kelly also include four counts of the enticement of minors for sex — one count each for four other accusers. All are also slated to testify.

Even just one or two convictions in Chicago could add decades to Kelly's New York sentence, which he is appealing. With the New York sentence alone, Kelly will be around 80 before qualifying for early release.

Prosecutors at the federal trial plan to play the same VHS tape that was "Exhibit No. 1" at the 2008 trial. While it was the only video in evidence 14 years ago, at least three other videos will be entered into evidence at the federal trial.

Prosecutors say Kelly shot the video of Minor 1 in a log cabin-themed room at his North Side Chicago home between 1998 and 2000 when she was as young as 13. In it, the girl is heard calling the man "daddy." Federal prosecutors say that she and Kelly had sex hundreds of times over the years in his homes, recording studios and tour buses.

Before the 2008 trial, Kelly carried a duffel bag full of sex tapes everywhere he went for years, but some tapes later went missing, according to court filings. In the 2000s, bootleg copies of some videos appeared on street corners across the U.S.

Kelly, who rose from poverty on Chicago's South Side to become a star singer, songwriter and producer, knew a conviction in 2008 would effectively end his life as he knew it.

On June 13, 2008, Kelly shut his eyes tight and bowed his head as jurors returned from deliberations. As a court official read the jury's decision and it became clear Kelly would be acquitted on all counts, tears streamed down his cheeks and he said over and over, "Thank you, Jesus."

Two Kelly associates, Derrel McDavid and Milton Brown, are co-defendants in Chicago. McDavid is accused of helping Kelly fix the 2008 trial, while Brown is charged with receiving child pornography. Like Kelly, they have also denied any wrongdoing.

Double jeopardy rules bar the prosecution of someone for the same crimes they were acquitted of earlier. But that shouldn't apply to the Chicago federal trial because prosecutors are alleging different crimes related to Minor 1, including obstruction of justice for fixing the 2008 trial.

Minor 1 first met Kelly in the late 1990s when she was in junior high school. She had tagged along to Kelly's Chicago recording studio with her aunt, a professional singer working with Kelly's music. Soon after that meeting, Minor 1 told her parents Kelly was going to be her godfather.

In the early 2000s, the aunt showed the parents a copy of a video she said depicted their daughter having sex with Kelly. When they confronted Kelly, he told them, "You're with me or against me," a government filing says.

The parents took it as a threat.

"Minor 1's mother did not want to go up against Kelly's power, money, and influence by not following what he said," the filing adds.

Kelly told the parents and Minor 1 they had to leave Chicago, paying for them to travel to the Bahamas and Cancun, Mexico. When they returned, prosecutors say Kelly sought to isolate Minor 1, moving her around to different hotels.

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When called before a state grand jury looking into the video, Minor 1, her father and mother denied it was her in it. Prosecutors say an attorney for Kelly sat in on their testimony and reported back to Kelly what they said.

Prosecutors from the Cook County state's attorney's office chose to push ahead with charges and to take the case to trial in 2008 despite what they knew was a major hurdle: their inability to call the girl in the video to testify.

Any confidence Kelly may have had of beating similar charges a second time were likely dashed when he learned Minor 1 was now cooperating with the government. With more resources, federal prosecutors also boast conviction rates of more than 90% compared to around 65% for their state counterparts.

In 2008, his lawyers argued the man in the VHS video who appeared very much to be Kelly was not Kelly. They showed jurors that Kelly has a large mole on his back, then played excerpts of the video in which no mole was visible on the man.

One of Kelly's attorneys, Sam Adam Jr., told jurors during closings that no mole on the man's back meant one thing: "It ain't him. And if it ain't him, you can't convict."

Some 2008 jurors told reporters after the trial that they weren't convinced the female in the video was who state prosecutors said she was.

That shouldn't be an issue at the Chicago federal trial. Prosecutors say both the girl and her parents will testify.

What defense Kelly's legal team will present this time isn't clear.

The defense is likely to say Kelly's accusers are misrepresenting the facts. Kelly was more blunt in a 2019 interview with Gayle King of "CBS This Morning," saying about the women: "All of them are lying."

Troubling questions unresolved in latest end to Till case

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

By her own telling, Mississippi authorities provided Carolyn Bryant Donham with preferential treatment rather than prosecution after her encounter with Emmett Till led to the lynching of the Black teenager in the summer of 1955.

Instead of arresting Donham on a warrant that accused her of kidnapping days after Till's abduction, an officer passed along word that relatives would take her and her two young sons away from home amid a rising furor over the case, Donham said in a 2008 memoir made public last month. The sheriff would later claim Donham, 21 at the time, could not be located for arrest.

Once her husband and his half-brother were jailed on murder charges in Till's death, she said in the unpublished manuscript, two men with the sheriff's office drove her and her sister-in-law to the lockup for a relaxed visit outside their cell and even ferried the women back home. Later, before their murder trial, the men somehow were allowed to attend a family dinner without guards, she said.

"I was shocked! How in the world were they released from jail to come to eat supper with us? I didn't see who dropped them off or picked them up to return them to jail, but we had a wonderful evening together," Donham recalled in the memoir, written by her daughter-in-law based on the older woman's words.

Nearly 70 years later, Donham's retelling of the days surrounding Till's abduction and lynching stokes fresh frustration among relatives of Till and activists pushing for Donham's prosecution, particularly now that a Mississippi grand jury has decided against charging her with kidnapping in his abduction or manslaughter in his death.

For them, the revelations also raise questions about whether Donham, now 88, is still being protected despite what they see as new evidence against her.

Carolyn Donham has rarely commented publicly on the Till case, and she has not said anything publicly about the recent decision against new charges. That's why her memoir — made public by a historian who said he obtained it during an interview years ago — created such a stir when it was released a few weeks ago. The decision not to indict her followed media reports with details of the document, but it's unclear whether grand jurors considered contents of the autobiography.

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In the 99-page memoir, Donham said Till, 14 and visiting relatives in Mississippi from Chicago, walked into the family-owned store where she was minding the counter on Aug. 24, 1955. Neither husband Roy Bryant nor his half-brother, J.W. Milam, were around that day — it was just her and Till, who also went by the family nickname of “Bobo.”

In the account, Donham repeats her testimony from the murder trial that Till grabbed her and made lewd comments. He also whistled, she said, in the only part of her story backed up by Till cousin and witness Wheeler Parker Jr. during an interview with The Associated Press.

Evidence indicated Till was abducted at gunpoint days later by two armed white men, and a woman likely identified the youth for them. While Donham denied in the memoir identifying Till and says she instead tried to help him, she was named in a kidnapping warrant along with Bryant and Milam. Donham was never arrested, despite police knowing where she was located at least part of the time.

For a period, Donham said, she was spirited away with the knowledge of officers and “shuffled” between homes by the Bryant family. Then, with Donham in the courtroom, the two men were tried and acquitted in Till’s murder. The kidnapping charges were dropped later, and no one has been charged or tried since.

Following their acquittal, Bryant and Milam admitted to the abduction and killing in an interview with Look magazine.

In the memoir, Donham said she did not even know there was a warrant for her arrest until an FBI agent told her during a renewed probe decades later.

The warrant sat unknown and unseen in the basement of a Mississippi courthouse until June, when members of the Till family and others found it during a search. At the time of the killing, Donham wrote, “they didn’t even tell me there was a warrant.”

“I was never arrested or charged with anything,” she said.

The nagging question for some is, why not?

Keith Beauchamp, a filmmaker and activist who helped find the warrant, believes the decision against indicting Donham lies not with the grand jurors who voted against new charges but with a system that goes back generations.

Mississippi law enforcement, which was all-white at the time of the killing, allowed Donham to avoid justice in a misguided quest to protect “white womanhood,” he said, and that same veil is covering her now.

“Chivalrous impulse allowed this woman to go untouched for 67 years,” said Beauchamp, who released the documentary “The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till” in 2005 and helped write and produce the upcoming movie “Till,” a drama set to premiere in October.

But in announcing a Leflore County grand jury’s decision not to indict Donham, District Attorney Dewayne Richardson on Tuesday cited neither race nor womanhood or anything else but evidence. Members of the panel were presented with testimony from witnesses who told about the investigation of Till’s killing from 2004 until now, he said in a statement.

“After hearing more than seven hours of testimony from witnesses with direct knowledge about this case and the investigators that investigated this case, the Grand Jury determined that there was not sufficient evidence to indict Donham,” said Richardson, who is Black.

Members of the Till family weren’t pleased with the decision. Yet the Rev. Wheeler Parker of Chicago, a Till cousin who was with the youth the night he was abducted from a family home, sounded a conciliatory tone about the failure to obtain an indictment, a decision which he called “unfortunate, but predictable.”

“The state of Mississippi assured me and my family that they would leave no stone unturned in the fight for justice for my cousin, Emmett. They kept their promise by bringing this latest piece of evidence before the grand jury,” he said.

Expressing appreciation for the prosecutor’s efforts, Parker said one person alone “cannot undo hundreds of years of anti-Black systems that guaranteed those who killed Emmett Till would go unpunished, to this day.”

It’s unclear whether a grand jury will ever again hold the fate of Carolyn Donham in its hands.

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At least three investigations have ended without charges in less than 20 years, including a Justice Department review that was closed without prosecution in December. Bryant and Milam died decades ago, and other associates believed by some to have been involved also are dead. Donham is the only person known to still face the risk of arrest.

The Till family and others have promised to keep pushing for someone to prosecute Donham, and additional witnesses could still be alive, said Dale Killinger, a retired FBI agent who investigated the Till case in a probe that ended without an indictment on a manslaughter charge in 2007.

"There's still a possibility that there is other evidence out there," Killinger said in an interview.

Perhaps, but it's unclear whether anyone with a badge is looking for it. The Justice Department has not given any indication it would reopen the case, and the office of Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch cited the Justice Department's decision in saying no prosecution was planned even before Richardson announced the grand jury had decided against charges.

In her memoir, Donham denied doing anything to get Till killed and expressed sorrow for his family's pain. She portrayed herself as another victim of the horrible crime, as someone who quit trusting strangers and has been hounded by the media for decades.

For some, enough is enough.

"Donham may not have paid the price that some wanted her to pay, but she has suffered for what happened to Till. Anyone who claims otherwise is not being honest with themselves. It is time to let her be," The Greenwood Commonwealth newspaper in Leflore County said in an editorial after the grand jury decision was announced.

To Ollie Gordon, another one of Till's cousins, some justice may have been served even without anyone being convicted in the killing.

"Ms. Donham has not gone to jail. But in many ways, I don't think she's had a pleasant life. I think each day she wakes up, she has to face the atrocities that have come because of her actions," Gordon said.

Sinema took Wall Street money while killing tax on investors

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, the Arizona Democrat who single-handedly thwarted her party's longtime goal of raising taxes on wealthy investors, received nearly \$1 million over the past year from private equity professionals, hedge fund managers and venture capitalists whose taxes would have increased under the plan.

For years, Democrats have promised to raise taxes on such investors, who pay a significantly lower rate on their earnings than ordinary workers. But just as they closed in on that goal last week, Sinema forced a series of changes to her party's \$740 billion election-year spending package, eliminating a proposed "carried interest" tax increase on private equity earnings while securing a \$35 billion exemption that will spare much of the industry from a separate tax increase other huge corporations now have to pay.

The bill, with Sinema's alterations intact, was given final approval by Congress on Friday and is expected to be signed by President Joe Biden this coming week.

Sinema has long aligned herself with the interests of private equity, hedge funds and venture capital, helping her net at least \$1.5 million in campaign contributions since she was elected to the House a decade ago. But the \$983,000 she has collected since last summer more than doubled what the industry donated to her during all of her preceding years in Congress combined, according to an Associated Press review of campaign finances disclosures.

The donations, which make Sinema one of the industry's top beneficiaries in Congress, serve a reminder of the way that high-power lobbying campaigns can have dramatic implications for the way legislation is crafted, particularly in the evenly divided Senate where there are no Democratic votes to spare. They also highlight a degree of political risk for Sinema, whose unapologetic defense of the industry's favorable tax treatment is viewed by many in her party as indefensible.

"From their vantage point, it's a million dollars very well spent," said Dean Baker, a senior economist

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at the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a liberal-leaning think tank. "It's pretty rare you see this direct of a return on your investment. So I guess I would congratulate them."

Sinema's office declined to make her available for an interview. Hannah Hurley, a Sinema spokesperson, acknowledged the senator shares some of the industry's views on taxation, but rebuffed any suggestion that the donations influenced her thinking.

"Senator Sinema makes every decision based on one criteria: what's best for Arizona," Hurley said in a statement. "She has been clear and consistent for over a year that she will only support tax reforms and revenue options that support Arizona's economic growth and competitiveness."

Sinema's defense of the tax provisions offer a jarring contrast to her background as a Green Party activist and self-styled "Prada socialist" who once likened accepting campaign cash to "bribery" and later called for "big corporations & the rich to pay their fair share" shortly before launching her first campaign for Congress in 2012.

She's been far more magnanimous since, praising private equity in 2016 from the House floor for providing "billions of dollars each year to Main Street businesses" and later interning at a private equity mogul's boutique winery in northern California during the 2020 congressional recess.

The surge in contributions from the industry to Sinema trace back to last summer. That's when she first made clear that she wouldn't support a carried interest tax increase, as well as other corporate and business tax increases, included in an earlier iteration of Biden's agenda.

During a two-week period in September alone, Sinema collected \$47,100 in contributions from 16 high-ranking officials from the private equity firm Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe, records show. Employees and executives of KKR, another private equity behemoth, contributed \$44,100 to Sinema during a two-month span in late 2021.

In some cases, the families of private equity managers joined in. David Belluck, a partner at the firm Riverside Partners, gave a \$5,800 max-out contribution to Sinema one day in late June. So did three of his college-age kids, with the family collectively donating \$23,200, records show.

"I generally support centrist Democrats and her seat is important to keep a Democratic Senate majority," Belluck said, adding that his family has known Sinema since her election to Congress. "She and I have never discussed private equity taxation."

The donations from the industry coincide with a \$26 million lobbying effort spearheaded by the investment firm Blackstone that culminated on the Senate floor last weekend. By the time the bill was up for debate during a marathon series of votes, Sinema had already forced Democrats to abandon their carried interest tax increase.

"Senator Sinema said she would not vote for the bill ... unless we took it out," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told reporters last week. "We had no choice."

But after private equity lobbyists discovered a provision in the bill that would have subjected many of them to a separate 15% corporate minimum tax, they urgently pressed Sinema and other centrist Democrats for changes, according to emails as well as four people with direct knowledge of the matter who requested anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

"Given the breaking nature of this development we need as many offices as possible weighing in with concerns to Leader Schumer's office," Blackstone lobbyist Ryan McConaghy wrote in an email last Saturday obtained by the AP, which included proposed language for modifying the bill. "Would you and your boss be willing to raise the alarm on this and express concerns with Schumer and team?"

McConaghy did not respond to a request for comment.

Sinema worked with Republicans on an amendment that stripped the corporate tax increase provisions from the bill, which a handful of vulnerable Democrats also voted for.

Liberal activists in Arizona say they plan to make Sinema's reliance on donations from wealthy investors a campaign issue when she is up for reelection in 2024.

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Monkeypox? Climate? Deciding what's a national emergency

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In November 1979, a little over a week after student militants seized control of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took 52 American citizens hostage, President Jimmy Carter issued Executive Order 12170 declaring a national emergency against Iran.

That order remains in effect today, renewed most recently in the weeks before last Thanksgiving by President Joe Biden, who noted then that "our relations with Iran have not yet normalized."

The Biden administration's declaration Aug. 4 of a public health emergency on monkeypox frees up federal money and resources to fight a virus that has already infected more than 10,000 people in the United States. But public health emergencies expire every 90 days, unless extended by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Those are different from national emergency declarations, which give presidents broad leeway to make policy and tap federal funds without congressional approval. That's what activists have clamored for to better fight climate change, but Biden has held off despite energy shortages in much of the world and high gasoline prices at home.

"This is actually the true test of whether President Biden takes the climate crisis seriously," Karen Orenstein, climate director of Friends of the Earth. "There could not be a more crucial move."

Presidents have declared 76 national emergencies in the last nearly five decades, and 42 remain in effect, according to a list compiled by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University Law School.

Biden has recently declared emergencies related to hostage-taking and detained U.S. nationals abroad, while extending one on Mali. He's also issued them on Myanmar and Afghanistan and authorizing sanctions on Russia, Ethiopia and individuals linked to the global illicit drug trade.

Such declarations stem mostly from the National Emergencies Act of 1976, which came after President Richard Nixon issued a series of them, including on currency restrictions and a national postal strike.

The law requires that those declarations automatically end after a year, unless the president orders a renewal. Congress can also end emergencies, but doing so effectively requires a veto-proof two-thirds vote, which has never happened.

"The origin of the law was clearly an attempt to set limits on presidential power," said Chris Edelson, author of "Emergency Presidential Power: From the Drafting of the Constitution to the War on Terror." "Before the actions passed, presidents could declare emergencies and no one really knew what it meant. And they stood for decades."

An emergency declared in 1950 by President Harry S. Truman to combat communism globally in the context of the Korean War was still in effect in the 1970s, before the law.

Emergencies set since it took effect have similar, extended shelf lives, though. President George W. Bush's emergency three days after the Sept. 11 attacks still stands. President Donald Trump declared COVID-19 a national emergency in 2020 and Biden has extended it through at least February 2023.

Only once has Congress even discussed thwarting emergency declarations, Edelson said. That was in 2019, when 12 Senate Republicans joined Democrats to block Trump's efforts to declare one on the U.S.-Mexico border and put \$6 billion-plus from the military and other federal funds toward building a wall. Trump used a veto to preserve his border emergency declaration until Biden nixed it upon taking office.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., warned during the wall funding fight that allowing Trump to do what he wanted might let future Democratic presidents to do similar on the climate. Trump used a veto to keep his border emergency declaration in place until Biden nixed it upon taking office.

"It sets long-term precedents," Rubio told CNBC in 2019. "Tomorrow, the national security emergency might be climate change, so let's seize fossil fuel plants or something."

That prediction hasn't yet proved prescient. Biden said last month that climate change "is an emergency" but didn't issue a declaration, which would have let him take major actions meant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including limiting offshore drilling and U.S. oil exports.

With Congress approving nearly \$375 billion over a decade in climate change-fighting strategies as part

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of a larger budget package, political pressure on him to do so may dissipate.

The White House hasn't said whether declaring a national climate emergency is now off the table. But it's hard to imagine the administration imposing limits on oil and production after prices at the pump hit record highs. They have since fallen steady throughout the summer — a fact the White House has trumpeted.

Still, declaring a national climate emergency could let Biden move to fundamentally remake the U.S. economy in a greener way, a pledge that was a centerpiece of his 2020 presidential campaign. The president also has promised to slash the nation's carbon emissions in half by 2030 — a goal the budget package's climate provisions aren't enough to meet.

"Now more than ever we need to declare a climate emergency," said Cassidy DiPaola, a spokesperson for the Stop the Oil Profiteering campaign. She said the budget measure, known as the "Inflation Reduction Act," is "totally packed with handouts to the fossil fuel industry."

"Our messaging to Biden is saying, 'Hey, you need to fix what the IRA left out and what the IRA sacrificed,'" said DiPaola, who added that of the measure, "This is Congress that passed IRA. President Biden has still made all of these climate commitments."

Delaying a national climate emergency declaration even this long, however, may undermine the core argument that a crisis is at hand.

"The real indicator that this doesn't really meet the definition of an emergency as intended by the act — even though it's not clearly defined — is that he waited," said Edelson, who is also a professor of government at American University in Washington, about climate concerns. "If it's a real emergency, you act right away."

Adam Green, co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, countered that conservatives on the Supreme Court and in Congress have repeatedly defied popular opinion on top issues — underscoring Biden's need to act unilaterally.

"Everyone grants the president can declare an emergency if there is an individual fire or hurricane. But when the entire planet is suffering heatwaves, unprecedented fires are rampant, and oceans are on the verge of flooding American cities, the president can't declare that an existential climate emergency?," Green asked. "He clearly has the power and his grandchildren are depending on him to use it."

Today in History: August 14, McVeigh sentenced to death

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Aug. 14, the 226th day of 2022. There are 139 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 14, 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced that Imperial Japan had surrendered unconditionally, ending World War II.

On this date:

In 1848, the Oregon Territory was created.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill issued the Atlantic Charter, a statement of principles that renounced aggression.

In 1947, Pakistan became independent of British rule.

In 1948, the Summer Olympics in London ended; they were the first Olympic games held since 1936.

In 1973, U.S. bombing of Cambodia came to a halt.

In 1980, actor-model Dorothy Stratten, 20, was shot to death by her estranged husband and manager, Paul Snider, who then killed himself.

In 1994, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, the terrorist known as "Carlos the Jackal," was captured by French agents in Sudan.

In 1995, Shannon Faulkner officially became the first female cadet in the history of The Citadel, South Carolina's state military college. (However, Faulkner quit the school less than a week later, citing the stress

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of her court fight, and her isolation among the male cadets.)

In 1997, an unrepentant Timothy McVeigh was formally sentenced to death for the Oklahoma City bombing. (McVeigh was executed by lethal injection in 2001.)

In 2009, Charles Manson follower Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, 60, convicted of trying to assassinate President Gerald Ford in 1975, was released from a Texas prison hospital after more than three decades behind bars.

In 2020, India's coronavirus death toll overtook Britain's to become the fourth-highest in the world after another single-day record increase in cases.

Ten years ago: Vice President Joe Biden sparked a campaign commotion, telling an audience in southern Virginia that included hundreds of Black voters that Republican Mitt Romney wanted to put them "back in chains" by deregulating Wall Street. (Biden later mocked Republican criticism over the remark while conceding he'd meant to use different words.) Ron Palillo, the actor best known as the nerdy high school student Arnold Horshack on the 1970s sitcom "Welcome Back, Kotter," died in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, at age 63.

Five years ago: Under pressure from right and left, President Donald Trump condemned white supremacist groups by name, declaring them to be "repugnant to everything that we hold dear as Americans." The CEO of Merck, the nation's third-largest pharmaceutical company, resigned from a federal advisory council, citing Trump's failure to explicitly condemn white nationalists who marched in Charlottesville, Virginia. (Kenneth Frazier was one of the few African Americans to head a Fortune 500 company. The CEOs of Intel and Under Armour also resigned from the American Manufacturing Council later in the day.) A jury in Denver, siding with pop star Taylor Swift, ordered a fired radio DJ to pay her a symbolic \$1 after concluding that he had groped her.

One year ago: The Taliban captured Mazar-e-Sharif, a large, heavily-defended city in northern Afghanistan, and approached the capital Kabul, less than three weeks before the U.S. hoped to complete its troop withdrawal. President Joe Biden authorized an additional 1,000 U.S. troops for deployment to Afghanistan to ensure what he called an "orderly and safe drawdown" of American and allied personnel. A 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, turning thousands of structures into rubble; the quake left more than 2,200 people dead and injured more than 12,000 others.

Today's Birthdays: Broadway lyricist Lee Adams ("Bye Bye Birdie") is 98. College Football Hall of Famer John Brodie is 87. Singer Dash Crofts is 84. Rock singer David Crosby is 81. Country singer Connie Smith is 81. Comedian-actor Steve Martin is 77. Movie director Wim Wenders is 77. Actor Antonio Fargas is 76. Singer-musician Larry Graham is 76. Actor Susan Saint James is 76. Author Danielle Steel is 75. Rock singer-musician Terry Adams (NRBQ) is 74. "Far Side" cartoonist Gary Larson is 72. Actor Carl Lumbly is 71. Olympic gold medal swimmer Debbie Meyer is 70. Actor Jackee Harry is 66. Actor Marcia Gay Harden is 63. Basketball Hall of Famer Earvin "Magic" Johnson is 63. Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn., is 63. Singer Sarah Brightman is 62. Actor Susan Olsen is 61. Actor-turned-fashion/interior designer Cristi Conaway is 58. Rock musician Keith Howland (Chicago) is 58. Actor Halle Berry is 56. Actor Ben Bass is 54. Actor Catherine Bell is 54. Rock musician Kevin Cadogan is 52. Actor Scott Michael Campbell is 51. Actor Christopher Gorham is 48. Actor Mila Kunis is 39. Actor Lamorne Morris is 39. TV personality Spencer Pratt is 39. Former NFL player Tim Tebow is 35. Actor Marsai Martin is 18.