

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, Sept. 8

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken bread, boiled potato, squash, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Menu: Breakfast: Muffins; Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

10 a.m.: Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course

Volleyball hosts Roncalli (8th grade at 6 p.m. followed by 7th grade in gym; games in Arena are C match at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity)

## Friday, Sept. 9

Senior Menu: Hamburger and cabbage dish, mixed vegetables, pears, muffin.

School Menu: Breakfast: Eggs and sausage; Lunch: Mac and Cheese, peas.

3/4 and 5/6 games at Clark prior to varsity game (around 5 p.m.)

7 p.m.: Football vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Clark

“There's always something to suggest that you'll never be who you wanted to be. Your choice is to take it or keep on moving.”

PHYLICIA RASHAD



## Nehls on GDILIVE.COM

Mike Nehls has been a football guest commentator on GDILIVE.COM. His expertise in the game has been an asset to the broadcast. Running the camera is Jeslyn Kosel.

## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

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## Up, then down

The east-west stop signs placed at Washington St. and West 5th Ave. were short lived. The stop signs were approved to be put up last month, Then at Tuesday night's council meeting, Jeff and Jamie Larson came before the council to discuss the stop signs. The council agreed and decided Tuesday night to have the stop signs removed.

## The Life of Barbara Morris



Memorial services for Barbara Morris, 76, of Britton will be at 11am on Saturday, September 10, at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel in Groton. A time of fellowship and gathering will follow. The service will be livestreamed at GDILIVE.COM.

Barbara moved on peacefully from her earthly life on Monday, September 5, 2022, at Avera St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen.

Barbara Carolyn Johnson was born on February 11, 1946, in Britton, South Dakota, to Lambert and Florence (Carlson) Johnson. She must have felt like she needed to keep up with her two older siblings on the family farm near Claremont because she was a firecracker right out of the gate. Barb went to country school as a youngster and later attended Groton High School where she graduated in 1964. Barb, having a natural knack for taking care of others and a sharp mind, pursued a degree as a Laboratory Technician from the Medical Institute of Min-

nesota. She returned to good ol' South Dakota and was an invaluable asset to the Britton Hospital as a Lab/X-ray Technician for 50 years. On September 5, 1969, Barb married Richard "Dick" Morris and together they were blessed with two sons, Richard, Jr., "Moose", and Jeff.

Barb was a member of the United Methodist Church in Britton. In her earlier years, she enjoyed bowling, golfing, and crocheting, though Barb would tell you she wasn't exact and didn't mind if she skipped stitches, or even rows. She and Dick appreciated a good laugh. The two of them loved to play cards and started the tradition the family still carries on of the adults dressing up for Halloween. She also had a thing for good company and good food. Barb took great pleasure in treating her friends and family to the Hankinson Casino for their crab leg buffet. She would typically sneak in some slots and cheap cigarettes while she was there, as well. To her last day, she felt compelled to bring treats and goodies to family gatherings, especially if she knew someone had a favorite something. Always thinking of others, Barb was sincere, thoughtful, generous, and loving.

Barb holds a special place in many hearts and will be greatly missed. Celebrating her life are her son, Jeff (Jody) Morris of Britton; daughter-in-law, Becky (Kevin) Kotzer of Groton; sister, Diana Ehrenberg of Rapid City; grandchildren: Megan Morris, Tyson Morris, Alex Morris, Nicholas Morris, Christopher Paulson, Adeline Kotzer and Cora Kotzer; sister-in-law, Marilyn Morris.

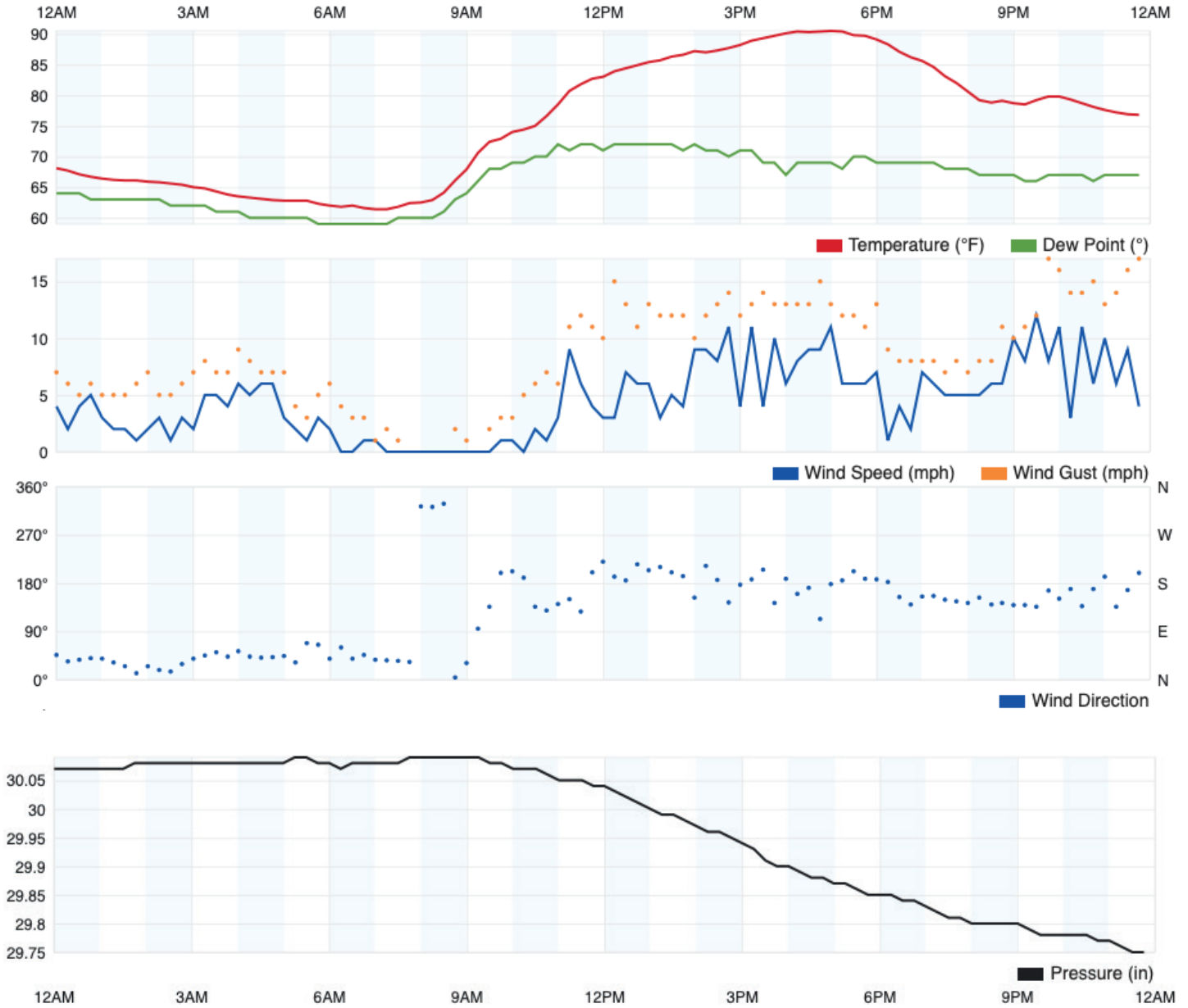
Preceding her in death were her mother and father; her mother-in-law and father-in-law; her husband, Dick; her son, "Moose"; her brother and sister-in-law, Roger and Diane Johnson; her brother-in-law, Bill Ehrenberg; her niece, Kit (Ehrenberg) Goheen; her brother-in-law, Todd Morris; and her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Duane and Marilyn Kindschi.

Honorary Urn Bearers will be all of Barb's Grandchildren.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

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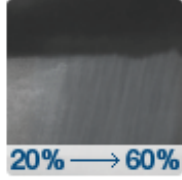
Today



Mostly Sunny  
then Partly  
Sunny and  
Breezy

High: 90 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy then  
Showers  
Likely

Low: 56 °F

Friday



Chance  
Showers

High: 69 °F

Friday  
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 46 °F

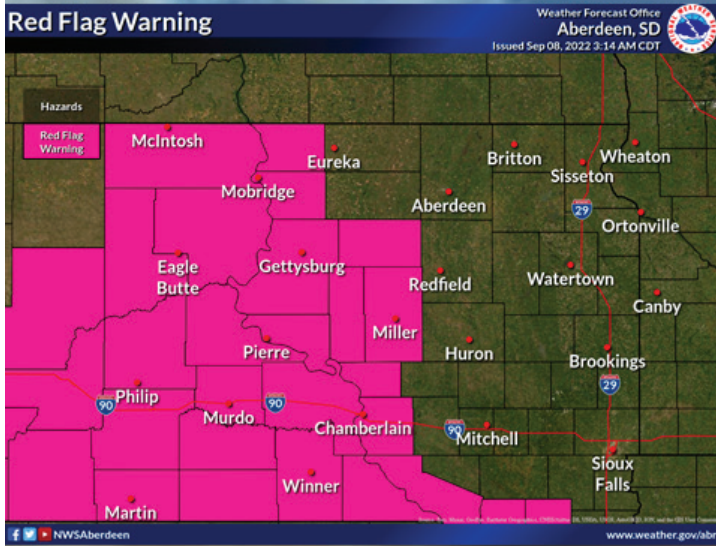
Saturday



Mostly Sunny

High: 71 °F

## RED FLAG WARNING TODAY, COOLER TOMORROW

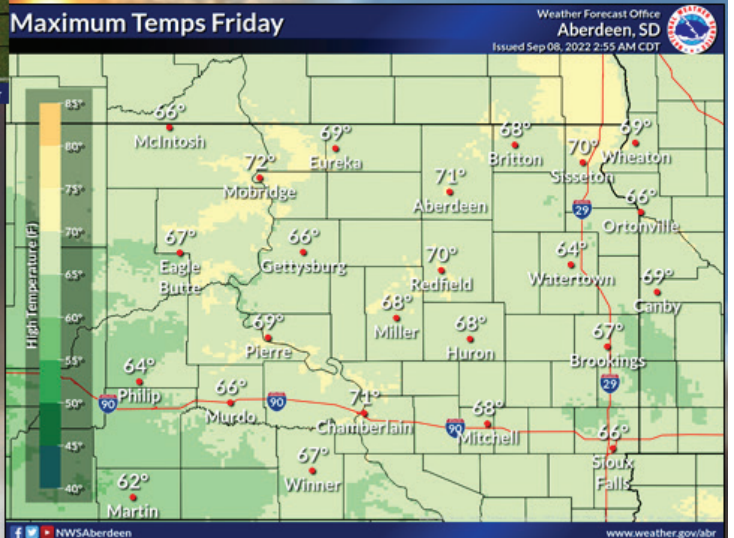


← THURSDAY

High Temps: 87-95°  
Relative Humidity: 20-25%  
Winds: 20-30 mph

FRIDAY →

High Temps: 66-72°  
Winds: N at 15-18 mph  
Fire Danger: Low  
Chance of precip.



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD  
Updated: 9/8/2022 3:33 AM Central

Be fire-aware today, particularly across central and western South Dakota, as the environment will favor fire ignition/spread. Today, highs will reach into the mid 90s, but we will see a cool down tomorrow to the mid 60s to low 70s after a cold front passes through this afternoon/evening. Winds today will be switching from southerly to northerly as the front passes. Tomorrow also has a chance for some showers. For more fire weather information visit <https://www.weather.gov/unr/rfd>

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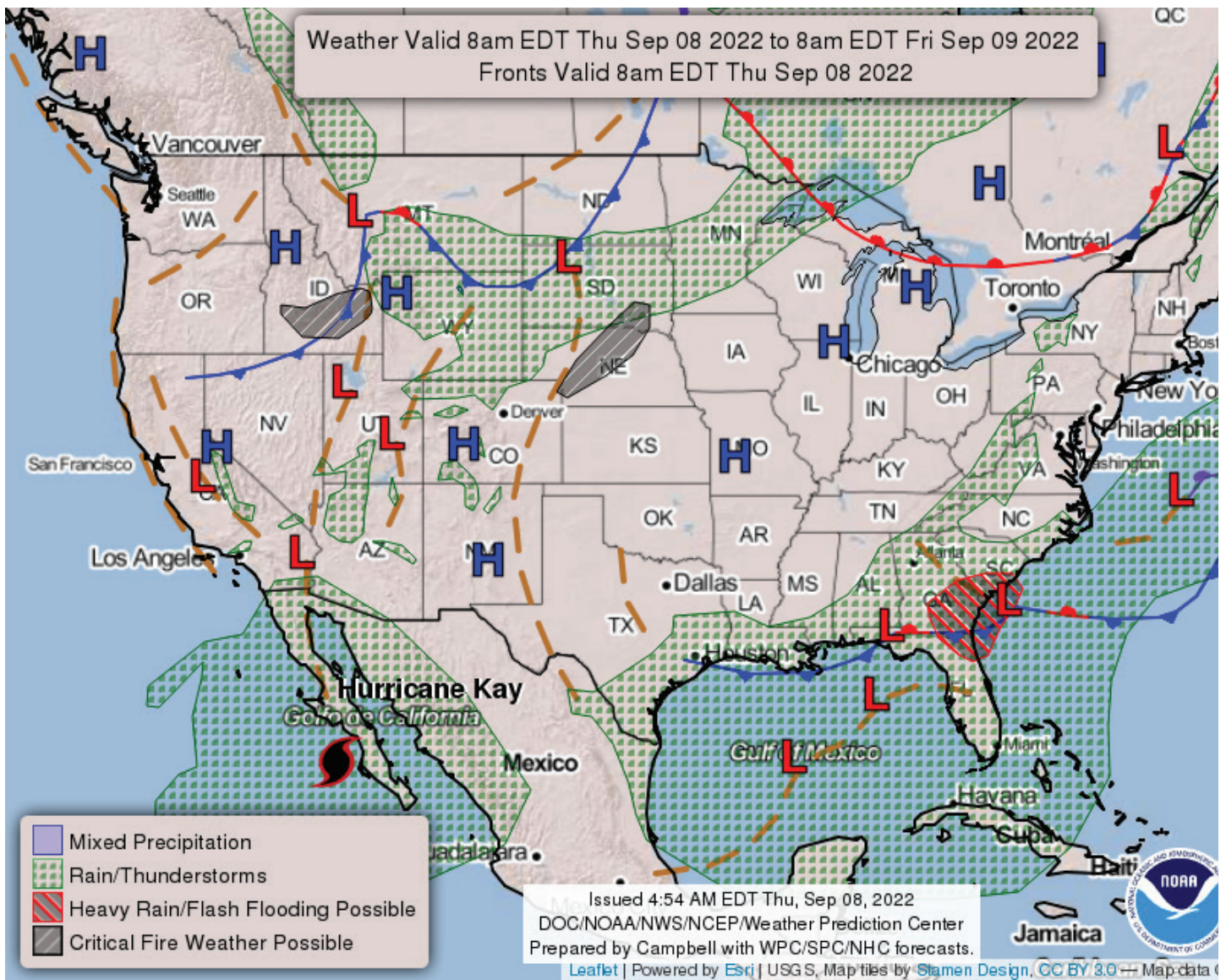
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 91 °F at 4:42 PM**  
**Low Temp: 61 °F at 6:56 AM**  
**Wind: 17 mph at 9:39 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 12 hours, 57 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1933  
Record Low: 32 in 1992  
Average High: 78°F  
Average Low: 50°F  
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.54  
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 16.88  
Precip Year to Date: 15.96  
Sunset Tonight: 7:58:41 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:02:28 AM



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## Today in Weather History

September 8, 1959: High winds and areas of blowing dust occurred across parts of central South Dakota from Walworth to Mellette. During the evening, wind gusts of 40 to 50 mph affected the counties either side of the Missouri River. Low visibility in blowing dust was blamed for a four-car crash near Pierre, injuring five persons, another accident near Mobridge injured one person. Barn buildings were blown over or unroofed near Delmont in Douglas County. Lightning started grass fires and burned several thousand acres of rangeland in Mellette and Lyman counties. In the late afternoon, high winds associated with a cold front gusted to 70 mph and destroyed six buildings on a farm north and east of Reliance. At 500 pm, winds ripped a camper off a pickup truck 12 miles south of Pierre. Winds were measured at 68 mph at Pierre. At 6 pm CDT winds gusting to 70 mph damaged many trees in the Watertown area, power lines, and some buildings. A trailer and truck, twelve miles north of Watertown, were blown over while traveling on Interstate 29. A large oil tank was also destroyed.

1900: A Category 4 storm made landfall in Galveston, Texas on this day in 1900. This hurricane killed between 6,000 and 12,000 individuals, making it the deadliest US Atlantic hurricane on record. The highest point in the city of Galveston was less than nine feet above sea level. The hurricane brought a storm surge of over 15 feet, which overwhelmed the entire island.

1925: In September 1925, South Carolina was in the middle of one of the most widespread and disastrous droughts in the state's history. The NWS Co-op station in Calhoun Falls reported 11 days above 100°F with a maximum temperature of 111°F on this day.

1987 - A tropical depression off the coast of South Carolina brought another round of heavy rain to the Middle Atlantic Coast Region and the Upper Ohio Valley. Showers and thunderstorms produced extremely heavy rain in eastern Pennsylvania, where flooding caused more than 55 million dollars across a seven county area. The afternoon high of 97 degrees at Miami FL was a record for the month of September. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Eighteen cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Roanoke VA with a reading of 42 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced very heavy rain in the central U.S. Thunderstorms during the late morning and afternoon produced five to nine inches of rain around Lincoln NE, with an unofficial total of eleven inches near Holmes Park. Up to six and a half inches of rain soaked northern and western Iowa. Eighty to ninety percent of the homes in Shenandoah IA, where 5.89 inches of rain was received, reported basement flooding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: A severe thunderstorm developed over the southern end of the Las Vegas Valley in Nevada. The storm moved north bringing damaging winds and heavy rain mainly across the eastern half of the metro area. Henderson Executive Airport recorded wind gusts of 80 mph. Air traffic control personnel temporarily evacuated the airport tower. Approximately 15 homes and trailers in Moapa were severely damaged by thunderstorm winds estimated at 80 to 90 mph.

2012: Severe storms impacted the New York City area, forcing a delay of the United States Open. A tornado hit a beach club in Queens, and another brought damage to Canarsie, Brooklyn, New York.



## Building the House

### Scripture: Matthew 16:13–20 (NIV)

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah..

### Insight By: Arthur Jackson

The events recorded in Matthew 16:13–20 took place in Caesarea Philippi, a Greco-Roman city located in the northern part of Israel, by Mount Hermon and the Jordan River. There, Peter said to Jesus, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (v. 16), and Jesus said to Peter, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (v. 18). While the sheer beauty of the natural environment of this region was favorable for Jesus and the Twelve to retreat to, what the area was otherwise known for wasn’t pretty. The city had a history of pagan religious influence that included the idolatrous activities of Syrians, Greeks, and Romans. It was known for its dark, immoral worship. Here, against this ugly backdrop, Jesus affirmed His personal identity as Messiah, the God-appointed person to execute God’s purposes and to establish His church as an unstoppable force in the world despite formidable opposition..

### Comment By: Bill Crowder

In 1889, the most ambitious private home construction project in the United States began. On-site manufacturing produced some 32,000 bricks a day. The work continued until the completion of George Vanderbilt II’s “summer house”—six years later. The result was the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. To this day, it remains the largest private residence in America, with 250 rooms (including 35 bedrooms and 43 bathrooms) consuming a staggering 178,926 square feet (16,226 square meters) of floor space.

This project, ambitious as it was, was nothing compared to the “building” intentions Jesus proclaimed to His disciples in Matthew 16. After Peter had confirmed that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (v. 16), Jesus declared, “I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (v. 18). While theologians debate the identity of the “rock,” there’s no debate about Jesus’ intentions. He would build His church to stretch to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:19–20), including people from every nation and ethnic group from around the globe (Revelation 5:9).

The cost of this building project? The sacrifice of Jesus’ own blood on the cross (Acts 20:28). As members of His “building” (Ephesians 2:21), purchased at so great a price, may we celebrate His loving sacrifice and join Him in this great mission..

**Reflect and Prayer:** How is the church to reflect Christ? What are some things that can hinder you from accurately reflecting Jesus?

Lamb of God, thank You for Your sacrifice. Enable me to celebrate You in my heart as well as with others in the family of faith.



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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)  
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm  
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 Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

04-11-20-31-35

(four, eleven, twenty, thirty-one, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$50,000

Lotto America

23-32-46-47-50, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 3

(twenty-three, thirty-two, forty-six, forty-seven, fifty; Star Ball: five; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$21,830,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 210,000,000

Powerball

03-16-30-33-36, Powerball: 20, Power Play: 3

(three, sixteen, thirty, thirty-three, thirty-six; Powerball: twenty; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$186,000,000

### **“Extremely critical” fire risk in Montana as heat sears West**

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Triple-digit temperatures broke records across parts of the Northern Plains on Wednesday, as forecasters warned strong winds could stoke out-of-control wildfires and said the dangerous conditions would sweep into the central Plains by Thursday.

The National Weather Service warned of “extremely critical” fire conditions across 22,600-square-miles (59,000 square kilometers) in northern Montana including the cities of Great Falls and Havre.

Record-breaking temperatures hammered Sheridan, Wyoming, which set a new high for September of 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 Celsius). Along a main thoroughfare in downtown Billings, where the temperature hit 102 degrees (39 C) and set a daily record, Gale Spotted Bear sat in the shade of a vacant building as he sought shelter from the punishing sun.

A native of the Blackfoot Reservation next to mountainous Glacier National Park, Spotted Bear said he’s struggled with heat waves that can be more intense on the plains.

“This year has been hotter than hell,” said Spotted Bear, adding that homeless people can be hit the hardest if they have nowhere to go. “It’s hard out here,” he said.

The high temperatures, wind gusts of up to 60 miles per hour (97 kilometers per hour) and tinder-dry fuels meant fires could spread rapidly.

Portions of western Montana, Oregon, northern California, Idaho and Washington state also had critical wildfire danger.

The risk will shift to the south and east Thursday. Fire warnings were issued for areas of South Dakota, Nebraska and Idaho.

Nearly 54 million people were under heat warnings and advisories across the West as temperature records were shattered in many areas.

Relief was nearing for parts of the region: A fast-moving cold front out of the Canadian Rocky Mountains was expected to drive down temperatures to well below average by Friday.

### **South Dakota settles with tribes to ensure voting rights**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota secretary of state will implement a voting rights coordinator

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and train state agencies to comply with federal voting rights laws as part of a settlement with two Native American tribes.

The settlement comes after U.S. District Judge Lawrence Piersol of South Dakota in May sided with two tribes, the Rosebud Sioux and the Oglala Sioux, and the Lakota People's Law Project in a lawsuit accusing the secretary of state of not adhering to the National Voter Registration Act.

The judge ruled that the state's agencies didn't provide enough opportunities to register to vote or update voter registration information at places such as motor vehicle and public assistance offices in areas near Native American reservations. The law requires the agencies to help people register to vote at such offices, including ones that provide public assistance or serve people with disabilities.

The secretary of state's office also agreed to pay \$625,000 in attorney's fees to the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

"This agreement requires South Dakota establish training and accountability mechanisms so voters, including Native voters, actually receive the legally required opportunities to register to vote," Oglala Sioux Tribe President Kevin Killer said in a statement.

## **Blinken, in Kyiv, unveils \$2B in US military aid for Europe**

By MATTHEW LEE and KARL RITTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made an unscheduled visit to Kyiv on Thursday as the Biden administration announced major new military aid worth more than \$2 billion for Ukraine and other European countries threatened by Russia.

In meetings with senior Ukrainian officials, Blinken said the Biden administration had notified Congress of its intent to provide \$2 billion in long-term Foreign Military Financing to Ukraine and 18 of its neighbors, including NATO members and regional security partners, that are "most potentially at risk for future Russian aggression."

Pending expected congressional approval, about \$1 billion of that will go to Ukraine and the rest will be divided among Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, the State Department said.

It will go to help those countries "deter and defend against emergent threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity" by enhancing their military integration with NATO and countering "Russian influence and aggression," the department said.

"This assistance demonstrates yet again our unwavering commitment to Ukraine's future as a democratic, sovereign, and independent state, as well as the security of allies and partners across the region," it said.

Foreign Military Financing, or FMF, allows recipients to purchase U.S.-made defense equipment, often depending on their specific needs.

The financing comes on top of a \$675 million package of heavy weaponry, ammunition and armored vehicles for Ukraine alone that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced earlier Thursday at a conference in Ramstein, Germany.

That package includes howitzers, artillery munitions, Humvees, armored ambulances, anti-tank systems and more.

Austin said that "the war is at another key moment," with Ukrainian forces beginning their counteroffensive in the south of the country. He said that "now we're seeing the demonstrable success of our common efforts on the battlefield."

"The face of the war is changing and so is the mission of this contact group," Austin told the meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, which was attended by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Ukraine's defense minister as well as officials from allied countries.

Germany and the Netherlands will provide training in demining to Ukrainian soldiers as well as demining equipment, the countries' defense ministers said on the sidelines of the meeting with Austin. The training will be carried out in Germany. The two countries previously joined forces to send howitzers to Ukraine.

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Thursday's contributions bring total U.S. aid to Ukraine to \$15.2 billion since Biden took office. U.S. officials said the new commitments were intended to show that American support for the country in the face of Russia's invasion is unwavering.

The announcements came as fighting between Ukraine and Russia has intensified in recent days, with Ukrainian forces mounting a counteroffensive to retake Russian-held areas in the south and east.

Shelling has continued near Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, with the warring sides trading blame again amid dire warnings from the U.N. atomic watchdog for the creation of a safe zone to prevent a catastrophe.

On Wednesday, the U.S. accused Moscow of interrogating, detaining and forcibly deporting hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians to Russia. Russian officials immediately rejected the claim as "fantasy."

In Kyiv before meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, Blinken visited the U.S. embassy and then the National Specialized Children's Hospital Ohmatdyt, where he saw boys and girls injured during Russian bombardments, including Maryna, a 6-year-old from the city of Kherson who lost a leg after a rocket struck her house.

In the hospital lobby, Blinken also met "Patron," a Jack Russell terrier that has helped Ukraine's military find more than 200 mines laid by Russian forces. Blinken knelt down, petted the dog and presented it with treats, saying the canine was "world famous."

In one ward, Blinken brought a basket of stuffed animals, which the children quickly dangled in front of Patron to get his attention.

Blinken told parents that "the spirit of your children sends a very strong message around the world."

## Truss: UK to cap domestic energy prices, end fracking ban

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Liz Truss said Thursday that her government will cap domestic energy prices for homes and businesses to ease a cost-of-living crisis that has left people and businesses across the U.K. facing a bleak winter.

She also said she will approve more North Sea oil drilling and lift a ban on fracking in a bid to increase the U.K.'s domestic energy supply.

Truss told lawmakers in Parliament that the two-year "energy price guarantee" means average household bills will be no more than 2,500 pounds (\$2,872) a year for heating and electricity.

Bills had been due to rise to 3,500 pounds (\$4,000) pounds a year from October, triple the cost of a year ago. Bills are skyrocketing because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the economic aftershocks of COVID-19 and Brexit.

"We are supporting this country through this winter and next and tackling the root causes of high prices so we are never in the same position again," Truss told lawmakers.

Business and public institutions like hospitals and schools will also get support, but for six months rather than two years.

The government says the cap will cut the U.K.'s soaring inflation rate by 4 to 5 percentage points. Inflation hit 10.1% in July and has been forecast to rise to 13% before the end of the year.

The government hasn't said how much the price cap will cost, but estimates have put it at over 100 billion pounds (\$116 billion). Truss has rejected opposition calls to impose a windfall tax on oil companies' profits. The cap will be paid for out of Treasury funds and by borrowing.

The opposition Labour Party says that means British taxpayers will have to foot the bill.

Labour energy spokesman Ed Miliband accused Truss of rejecting a windfall levy "purely on the basis of dogma."

The announcement, on Truss's second full day in office, comes after a summer in which the government refused to say how it would respond. Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson was not able to make major decisions after announcing in July that he would resign. Truss, who won the Conservative Party contest to replace Johnson as leader, declined to announce her plans before she was in office.

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Truss, a free-market conservative, has said she favors tax cuts over handouts, but has been forced to act by the scale of the crisis.

The invasion of Ukraine has caused an energy crisis across Europe. Russia has choked off the supplies of cheap natural gas that the continent depended on for years to run factories, generate electricity and heat homes

Britain imports most of its natural gas — though largely from Norway, not Russia — and so is vulnerable to shifts in global prices.

The U.K. has dramatically increased the amount of energy generated by wind power in recent years, and plans to build more nuclear power stations.

Truss also said she would issue scores more licenses for North Sea drilling and end a ban on fracking in Britain. Both measures will be condemned by environmentalists, who worry Truss may backtrack on the U.K.'s legally binding commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Britain suspended fracking in November 2019, saying it wasn't possible to accurately predict tremors associated with the drilling.

Truss says she supports the net zero commitment but it should not come at a huge cost to people and businesses

## Marilyn Monroe film 'Blonde' arrives in Venice

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

VENICE, Italy (AP) — The 79th edition of the Venice International Film Festival is starting to wind down, but they've saved one of the most anticipated films of the slate for last. "Blonde," Andrew Dominik's Marilyn Monroe film starring Ana de Armas, is having its world premiere Thursday night in competition.

The nearly three-hour epic is based on a work of biographical fiction by Joyce Carol Oates and examines the public and private life of the Hollywood icon from her troubled childhood as Norma Jeane to her global stardom as Marilyn Monroe. De Armas, who was born in Cuba, worked with a dialect coach for a year to prepare.

"Blonde" also stars Adrien Brody as Arthur Miller, and Bobby Cannavale as Joe DiMaggio. The Netflix film, produced by Brad Pitt's company Plan B, is the first movie ever made by the streamer to be rated NC-17 by the Motion Picture Association, meaning no one under the age of 17 is allowed to see the film in a theater.

The film will be playing in select theaters starting Sept. 16 before becoming available on Netflix on Sept. 23. It's one of many Oscar hopefuls launching in Venice, where it is also among the films up for the festival's awards on Sept. 10.

## Canada's horrific knife rampage over as last suspect dies

By ROB GILLIES and ROBERT BUMSTED Associated Press

ROSTHERN, Saskatchewan (AP) — The last suspect in a horrific stabbing rampage that killed 10 and wounded 18 in western Canada is dead following his capture, and police hope the stunning end to a gripping hunt that stretched into a fourth day will bring some peace to victims' families.

One official said Myles Sanderson, 32, died from self-inflicted injuries Wednesday after police forced the stolen car he was driving off a highway in Saskatchewan. Other officials declined to discuss how he died, but expressed relief the final suspected killer was no longer on the loose.

"This evening our province is breathing a collective sigh of relief," Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore, commander of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Saskatchewan, said at a news conference Wednesday night.

The other suspect, Sanderson's 30-year-old brother, Damien Sanderson, was found dead Monday near the scene of the bloody knife attacks inside and around the James Smith Cree First Nation reserve early Sunday. Both men were residents of the Indigenous reserve.

Blackmore said Myles Sanderson was cornered as police units responded to a report of a stolen vehicle being driven by a man armed with a knife. She said officers forced Sanderson's vehicle off the road and

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into a ditch. He was detained and a knife was found inside the vehicle, she said.

Sanderson went into medical distress while in custody, Blackmore said. She said CPR was attempted on him before an ambulance arrived, and emergency medical personnel then took him to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

"All life saving measures that we are capable of were taken at that time," she said.

Blackmore gave no details on the cause of death. "I can't speak to the specific manner of death," she said.

But an official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, earlier said Sanderson died of self-inflicted injuries, without giving any further details.

Video and photos from the scene showed a white SUV off to the side of the road with police cars all around. Air bags had deployed in the SUV. Some photos and video taken from a distance appeared to show Sanderson being frisked.

An independent investigation by members of Saskatchewan's Serious Incident Response Team went to the arrest site and will review Sanderson's death and police conduct.

The federal public safety minister, Marco Mendicino, also stressed that the events will be investigated.

"You have questions. We have questions," he told reporters during a Cabinet retreat in Vancouver, British Columbia, adding: "There will be two levels of police who will be investigating the circumstances of Myles Sanderson's death."

His death came two days after the body of Damien Sanderson was found in a field near the scene of the knife rampage. Police are investigating whether Myles Sanderson killed his brother.

Blackmore said that with both men dead, authorities will find it hard to figure out what set off the rampage.

"Now that Myles is deceased we may never have an understanding of that motivation," she said.

But she said she hoped the families of the stabbing victims will find some comfort that neither of the Sandersons remains a threat.

"I hope that this brings them closure. I hope they can rest easy knowing that Myles Sanderson is no longer a threat to them."

Some family members of the victims arrived at the scene Wednesday, including Brian Burns, whose wife and son were killed.

"Now we can start to heal. The healing begins today, now," he said.

The stabbings raised questions of why Myles Sanderson — an ex-con with 59 convictions and a long history of shocking violence — was out on the streets in the first place.

He was released by a parole board in February while serving a sentence of over four years on charges that included assault and robbery. But he had been wanted by police since May, apparently for violating the terms of his release, though the details were not immediately clear.

His long and lurid rap sheet also showed that seven years ago, he attacked and stabbed one of the victims killed in Sunday's stabbings, according to court records.

Mendicino, the public safety minister, has said there will be an investigation into the parole board's assessment of Sanderson.

"I want to know the reasons behind the decision" to release him, Mendicino said. "I'm extremely concerned with what occurred here. A community has been left reeling."

The Saskatchewan Coroner's Service said nine of those killed were from the James Smith Cree Nation: Thomas Burns, 23; Carol Burns, 46; Gregory Burns, 28; Lydia Gloria Burns, 61; Bonnie Burns, 48; Earl Burns, 66; Lana Head, 49; Christian Head, 54; and Robert Sanderson, 49. The other victim was from Weldon, 78-year-old Wesley Patterson.

Authorities would not say if the victims might be related.

Mark Arcand said his half sister Bonnie and her son Gregory were killed.

"Her son was lying there already deceased. My sister went out and tried to help her son, and she was stabbed two times, and she died right beside him," he said. "Right outside of her home she was killed by senseless acts. She was protecting her son. She was protecting three little boys. This is why she is a hero."

Arcand rushed to the reserve the morning of the rampage. After that, he said, "I woke up in the middle

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of the night just screaming and yelling. What I saw that day I can't get out of my head."

As for what set off the violence, Arcand said: "We're all looking for those same answers. We don't know what happened. Maybe we'll never know. That's the hardest part of this."

Court documents said Sanderson attacked his in-laws Earl Burns and Joyce Burns in 2015, knifing Earl Burns repeatedly and wounding Joyce Burns. He later pleaded guilty to assault and threatening Earl Burns' life.

Many of Sanderson's crimes were committed when he was intoxicated, according to court records. He told parole officials at one point that substance use made him out of his mind. Records showed he repeatedly violated court orders barring him from drinking or using drugs.

Many of Canada's Indigenous communities are plagued by drugs and alcohol.

Myles Sanderson's childhood was marked by violence, neglect and substance abuse, court records show. Sanderson, who is Indigenous and was raised on the Cree reserve, population 1,900, started drinking and smoking marijuana at around 12, and cocaine followed soon after.

In 2017, he barged into his ex-girlfriend's home, punched a hole in the door of a bathroom while his two children were hiding in a bathtub and threw a cement block at a vehicle parked outside, according to parole documents.

He got into a fight a few days later at a store, threatening to kill an employee and burn down his parents' home, documents said.

That November he threatened an accomplice into robbing a fast-food restaurant by clubbing him with a gun and stomping on his head. He then stood watch during the holdup.

In 2018, he stabbed two men with a fork while drinking and beat someone unconscious.

## Rep. Katie Porter's university housing deal draws scrutiny

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In Orange County, California, where the typical house sells for \$1 million, Rep. Katie Porter's four-bedroom, three-bath residence in a leafy subdivision on the University of California Irvine campus is a bargain.

The progressive Democrat and law professor, who has lamented the cost of housing in her district, purchased it in 2011 for \$523,000, a below-market price secured through a program the university uses to lure academics who couldn't otherwise afford to live in the affluent area. The only eligibility requirement was that she continue working for the school.

For Porter, this version of subsidized housing has outlasted her time in the classroom, extending nearly four years after she took unpaid leave from her \$258,000-a-year teaching job to serve in the U.S. House.

But the ties go deeper, with at least one law school administrator, who was also a donor to her campaign, helping secure extensions of her tenure while she remained in Congress, according to university emails obtained by The Associated Press.

That has allowed Porter, a rising Democratic star and fundraising powerhouse whose own net worth is valued at as much as \$2 million, to retain her home even as her return to the school remains in doubt.

Porter's housing situation does not violate U.S. House ethics rules. But it cuts against the profile she has sought to cultivate in Washington as an ardent critic of a political system that allows "the wealthy and well-connected" to "live in one reality while the rest of us live in another," as she wrote in an online fundraising solicitation in 2020.

It also coincides with a growth in interest in the school's housing program, which has resulted in a yearslong waitlist of more than 250 school academics and administrators, as a nationwide housing shortage sends prices for homes outside the on-campus development skyrocketing, university figures from 2021 show.

Whether voters care will be tested in November when Porter, who has amassed a \$19.8 million campaign fund, seeks a third term to the once reliably Republican district that has become more competitive in recent years.



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"It sounds like the sort of insider deal that really makes people mad at Congress," said Bradley A. Smith, a professor at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, and a Republican former member of the Federal Election Commission was appointed by Bill Clinton.

In an interview, Porter declined to say whether her housing arrangement was appropriate. But she said she "followed the applicable (University of California) policies, as well as all applicable state and federal law."

"I am always happy to be transparent with voters," Porter said. "I take a lot of pride in my record on transparency and good governance and have been asked about this before by voters and have always been happy to give them full and complete information."

Smith said the arrangement could run afoul of an FEC prohibition on third parties paying the living expenses of federal candidates. He cautioned, however, that the situation was nuanced and unique.

"Let's suppose they were paying her mortgage? I think that would pretty clearly be a problem," Smith said. "Here, it is a little different than that. They are just letting her keep a deal that she had previously. But it does seem to subsidize her income. If I were still serving on the commission and that complaint came in, I'd be very interested in seeing her response."

Porter said Smith's analysis "is interesting to think about" and his question about whether the prohibition could apply to her situation "is exactly right." But she added, "I don't think he necessarily has all of the facts about how the housing is structured to be able to definitively answer that question," citing her payment of property taxes, as well as homeownership fees and other expenses.

Smith responded that he is "not sure how the fact that she paid those fees changes anything."

For decades, the cost of housing in Orange County has soared above the national average. The University of California Irvine's solution was to build University Hills, their own exclusive academic community, where home values are capped to make them more affordable and favorable mortgage rates are offered to those approved to live there.

The pent-up demand to live in University Hills is understandable in light of Irvine's \$1.3 million median home price. Houses in the school's subdivision have sold in recent years for about half of their regular market value, according to University of California figures from 2021. The community is a short drive from the Pacific Ocean and Laguna Beach. And the list of amenities includes a network of parks, walking paths, scenic vistas and community pools. It also feeds into some of the most sought-after schools in the area.

But for academics and administrators, the trade-off is that they are required to work full-time for the university, with an exception built in for retirees. For those no longer employed by the school, however, an enforcement provision kicks in, which in Porter's case would require her to pay off her mortgage within months.

When Porter was recruited, school officials outlined their expectations in a letter informing her that they would sponsor her application to the housing program.

"Your primary duties, of course, will be to serve as a professor of law," school officials wrote in the letter, which Porter signed in December 2010. "It is expected that you will teach two classes ... you will be expected to hold office hours and be available to mentor students."

Eight years later, after her 2018 election, Porter ceased to fulfill those obligations.

Initially, administrators signed off on two separate one-year periods of leave that enabled her to keep her house, documents show. But school officials voiced more concern about the arrangement in the run-up to Porter's 2020 reelection, emails show.

"Is there any fixed limit on the number of years of leave without pay ... One of our administrators mentioned that they seemed to recall a two-year limit," law school Vice Dean Chris Whytock wrote in a April 2020 email. He added: "Some government service may, of course, last for a number of years."

Whytock, who donated \$500 to Porter's campaign in 2018, wrote a memo outlining the case for extending Porter's leave, while suggesting that there are no limits on how long such an arrangement could continue. The plan required the approval of the school's vice provost, which was granted in 2020, according to the emails.

Whytock did not respond to an email seeking comment.

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In a statement, UC Irvine spokesperson Tom Vasich said faculty "on approved leaves without pay remain UCI employees, and they can maintain their home in University Hills."

Porter said she intends to win her election, but would resume teaching if she lost. She declined to say whether she would look for housing elsewhere if she won.

After the AP interviewed Porter, spokesperson Jordan Wong provided an additional comment, stating the congresswoman "had no knowledge of Vice Dean Chris Whytock's role in researching her request for leave" and "at no point" was in contact with him about it.

Still, longtime government ethics watchdogs in Washington, including those with favorable opinions of the congresswoman, say it's difficult squaring Porter's housing situation with her crusading rhetoric.

"She has a reputation for being highly ethical and requiring others to live up to that standard," said Craig Holman, a lobbyist for the Washington-based government watchdog group Public Citizen. "Let's hope she is not running short of her own ethics with the university."

## Gloves off, Biden embraces tough tone on 'MAGA Republicans'

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In recent days, President Joe Biden has sharpened his attacks against Donald Trump and the so-called MAGA Republicans for posing a threat to democracy. He's likened the philosophy undergirding the dominant strain of the modern-day GOP to "semi-fascism."

And Democrats are taking notice.

The gloves-off, no-holds-barred approach from Biden as of late has emboldened Democrats across the country, rallying the party faithful ahead of the November elections even as his harshest rhetoric makes some vulnerable incumbents visibly uncomfortable.

Biden's increasingly stark warnings about Trump-fueled elements of the Republican Party are making up the core part of his midterm message, combined with repeated reminders to voters about recent Democratic accomplishments and a promise that democracy can still produce results for the American people. But it's the blistering statements from Biden about his predecessor and adherents of the "Make America Great Again" philosophy that have given many Democrats a bolt of fresh energy as they campaign to keep control of Congress.

"It's a particularly strong issue for our base," said Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan, who leads the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the official campaign arm of Senate Democrats. "Folks want us, want people to show that there is a clear contrast in the election between where Democrats are and Republicans have been."

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., noted that "politics is somewhat like a team sport, and the president is the quarterback."

"The team is not going to fight hard if they don't see the team leader fighting hard," said Khanna, who backed Bernie Sanders during the 2020 presidential primaries but has since been a vocal liberal defender of Biden.

Biden's forceful campaign-year posture comes as Democrats are feeling more optimistic about the midterms, when the party controlling the White House has historically faced losses in Congress. A combination of legislative accomplishments, polarizing Republican candidates and voter fury stoked by the overturning of Roe vs. Wade have Democrats feeling they could see smaller losses in the House than initially anticipated, while retaining their barebones majority in the Senate.

The president began road-testing his midterm message at a rally in the Washington suburbs late last month, as he railed against a Republican ideology that he said largely resembled "semi-fascism." The White House chose Philadelphia's Independence Hall as the backdrop for last week's address that outlined the danger that Trump's "extreme ideology" posed to the functioning of U.S. democracy.

And in a pair of Labor Day events in critical midterm battlegrounds, Biden continued to hammer the contrast while becoming even more comfortable in invoking his predecessor, whom he had avoided referring to by name for much of his presidency.

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"You can't call yourself a democracy when you don't, in fact, count the votes that people legitimately cast and count that as what you are," Biden said Monday in front of a union crowd in Pittsburgh. "Trump and the MAGA Republicans made their choice. We can choose to build a better America or we can continue down this sliding path of oblivion to where we don't want to go."

Biden will headline another political event Thursday, hosted by the Democratic National Committee in suburban Maryland. There, the president will speak about "the choice before Americans" on issues of abortion, Social Security and Medicare, democracy, school safety and climate, and how "extreme MAGA Republicans are working to take away our rights," according to a Biden adviser who requested anonymity to preview his remarks. That will be followed by a trip to Ohio on Friday, a state where the Senate contest between Democrat Tim Ryan and Republican J.D. Vance is becoming increasingly competitive.

Those close to Biden say the president has never shied away from a political fight.

"He's always made the case very aggressively when he thinks the other side is wrong," said Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., who has known Biden since the 1980s. "I think he's always tried to lift up the country and tried to appeal to our better angels while at the same time, making the case for when he thinks the other side is on the wrong track."

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., said issues of democracy, as well as Trump himself, are increasingly becoming topics of concern for voters.

"More and more people are feeling that, you know, this former president broke the law over and over and over again, and people around him are still doing his bidding to undermine our democracy," she said. Stabenow commended Biden's recent approach, noting that "threats are only going up, not down."

Still, the sharper-edged posture from Biden has been more complicated for Democrats competing in some of the most contested Senate races this cycle, as they seek to attract support from voters who may have backed Trump in 2020.

While she stressed that she has "concerns about attacks on our democracy," Sen. Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., said in an interview with WMUR News 9 in New Hampshire that "I think President Biden's comments just painted with way too broad a brush." Hassan is considered one of the party's most vulnerable incumbents, although she won't know her Republican challenger until the state's Sept. 13 primaries.

Asked about those same Biden remarks, Sen. Mark Kelly, D-Ariz., told The Associated Press that he hadn't seen them.

"I think a president has a right to give his opinion," added Kelly, who is facing Republican Blake Masters in one of the most closely watched Senate contests this fall. "You know, I don't share all of his opinions. But he has a right to give his opinion."

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said he didn't like the phrase "semi-fascism," calling it "awkward."

"But are they leaning toward fascism? Certainly," Durbin said. "When you deny the results of an election, when you're talking about mobs in the street taking over, I mean, that to me is not consistent with democratic values."

Republicans have accused Biden of divisive rhetoric in his string of speeches, particularly with his Philadelphia address. They say the president has tagged tens of millions of Americans who supported Trump as threats to democracy, although both the president and his aides have been careful to distinguish elected officials from voters themselves.

GOP officials still believe Biden remains a liability in competitive districts and states, although his approval ratings have brightened somewhat in recent weeks as the White House notched a series of achievements and as Trump's legal troubles — starting with the FBI search of his southern Florida estate — have dominated headlines.

"I hope Biden keeps going around the country," Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., said in a Fox News interview Tuesday night. "I hope he goes to every swing state and gives his raving lunatic speech everywhere around the country."

Yet in those swing states, more Democrats who had initially shied away from joining Biden are increasingly comfortable in doing so. Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat who is in one of the most closely

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contested gubernatorial races nationwide, joined Biden in Milwaukee on Monday, although Democratic Senate candidate Mandela Barnes stayed away.

After avoiding other presidential visits to the state, Pennsylvania Senate candidate John Fetterman, a Democrat, appeared with Biden in Pittsburgh.

Peters, the DSCC chairman, said it was up to each Democratic candidate to decide whether to appear alongside Biden, but said he believed the president was an asset. Peters noted that he was the sole Democratic candidate in 2014 to actively campaign with President Barack Obama during a midterm year heavily favorable to Republicans.

"Everyone ran away. I had him come in, and I won," Peters said. "So that's my data point."

## Cheetahs from South Africa go to parks in India, Mozambique

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME and SEBABATSO MÓSAMO Associated Press

BELA-BELA, South Africa (AP) — South Africa is flying cheetahs to India and Mozambique as part of ambitious efforts to reintroduce the distinctively spotted cats in regions where their population has dwindled.

Four cheetahs captured at reserves in South Africa have been flown to Mozambique this week after being held in quarantine for about a month and cleared for travel. Conservationists are preparing to fly 12 more cheetahs, reputed to be the world's fastest land mammals, to India in October.

Speaking to The Associated Press shortly after those going to Mozambique were tranquilized and placed into crates, wildlife veterinarian Andy Frasier said the relocations are tough for the animals.

"It's a very stressful process for the cats to be in a boma (livestock enclosure) environment because they have nowhere to go whilst we are darting them," said Frasier of shooting the cats with darts of tranquilizers.

"We need to use our drug doses very carefully and make sure that we give them enough drugs to anesthetize them safely," he said.

"They have woken up nicely in their crates and they are all relaxed enough that we are happy for them to leave in their transport," he said.

Frasier said the team is preparing for the larger and more challenging relocation of cheetahs to India which will require the cats to travel a much longer distance with stops in commercial airports.

Those cheetahs would be treated with a tranquilizer that lasts for three to five days during their travel, he said.

There are two subspecies of cheetahs. Those that once roamed in Asia were declared extinct in India in 1952 and are now found only in Iran. Since then there have been efforts to reintroduce these cats to India's savannahs. Initially the plan was to bring in cheetahs from Iran but now they are being moved from southern African countries.

In this restocking effort, Namibia is contributing eight cheetahs which will be flown to India this month, according to Vincent van der Merwe, manager of the Cheetah Metapopulation Initiative. South Africa will send an additional 12 cheetahs to India in October, he said.

"For a genetically viable population in India in the long-term you need at least 500 individuals, so every year we will send eight to 12 animals, to top them up, to increase numbers, to bring in new genetics until they have a viable population," said van der Merwe.

Indian officials say the move will aid global cheetah conservation efforts since their range in Africa is limited. The plan is for the cats to be kept in large enclosures in central Indian forests, protected from other predators like leopards or bears, to give them time to get used to their new home. The enclosures have prey — like deer and antelope — which scientists hope the cheetahs will hunt. After a few months of close monitoring, the cheetahs will be radio-collared and released.

The southern African countries of South Africa, Zambia, Namibia and Zimbabwe still have significant cheetah populations and are expected to play a significant role in their reintroduction in India following the first shipments this year.

South Africa's cheetah population is expanding at a rate of about 8% annually, allowing the country to move about 30 of the cats to other game reserves within South Africa and to export some to other

countries, van der Merwe said.

Conservationists say Mozambique's Zambezi River delta had a significant cheetah population which was drastically reduced by rampant poaching and because lions and leopards preyed upon the smaller cats.

In this week's operation the two male and two female adult cheetahs were tranquilized in South Africa's northern Limpopo province and then were flown to Mozambique's Marromeu National Reserve in the Zambezi delta region.

## Climate Migration: Kenyan woman loses nearly all to lake

By BRIAN INGANGA and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

KAMPI ya SAMAKI, Kenya (AP) — Winnie Keben had felt blessed to be raising her children in her husband's childhood home in the community of Kampi ya Samaki - just over a quarter mile (500 meters) from the shoreline of Lake Baringo.

The vast freshwater lake buzzing with birds and aquatic life in the semi-arid volcanic region of Kenya's Great Rift Valley had long been an oasis. It attracted fishers and international tourists to the community, about a five-hour drive from Nairobi.

But over the past decade Lake Baringo has doubled in size, due primarily to heavy rainfall tied to climate change, according to scientists, and its fast-rising waters are increasingly becoming a menace. The expanding lake has swallowed up homes and hotels and brought in crocodiles and hippos that have turned up on people's doorsteps and in classrooms.

"It was not like this in the past," Keben said. "People would move when the water moves, but it would go back soon enough."

Keben had never imagined leaving.

Then the lake took away almost everything.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series exploring the lives of people around the world who have been forced to move because of rising seas, drought, searing temperatures and other things caused or exacerbated by climate change.

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In her last moments in Kampi ya Samaki, Keben was washing off garden dirt in Lake Baringo's refreshing waters. It had been a day of working her maize fields with her husband. Evening was falling. Her mind was on getting back to the house to make dinner.

Then something moved.

"No sooner had I bent down to wash my right leg, than I saw a crocodile pop up from the waters," she said. "I screamed so loudly but unfortunately, I fell into the lake."

The crocodile dragged her into deeper water as she tried to fight it off. Her husband ran from the fields toward her screams. But she was struggling to stay above the surface.

She managed to reach her hand above the water and wiggle her fingers, hoping her husband, now at the shore, would see them.

Laban Keben saw, jumped in and grabbed her but the ferocious animal held on. Laban tried again. And again. After his third attempt, his wife and the mother of their children lost consciousness, he said.

"I saw her dying, leaving me behind," he said.

He thought of their daughter, barely six months old, and their two other children.

Not knowing what else to do, he started screaming for help. Another man ran over with a machete and struck at the crocodile, Laban said, and suddenly, it swam away, leaving Winnie's limp body behind.

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Her leg was nothing but bones with hanging flesh, said Laban, who along with local residents carried Winnie past flooded roads to the nearest paved one where vehicles could get her to medical care. But at the hospital in the next town, doctors said they were not equipped to treat such a severe injury.

Two hospitals later, she feared she would not survive.

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"I told my husband to pick up my children and to take them to my mum, as I knew I was not going to make it," she said.

Doctors ended up amputating the leg to save her life. Her mom stayed by her bedside until she was discharged from the hospital.

The family was forced to sell their chickens, and goats to cover her medical costs.

But while she was healing, an incessant rain continued to fall. The lake took still more from the Kebens. It flooded their home and farmland.

They left their community, the final loss.

A resident from another village, Meisori, learned of their ordeal and offered to take them in, a gesture of kindness for which she is grateful.

But leaving Kampi ya Samaki, where her husband and children were born, still hurts.

"I loved my place very much, as I could do farming with my husband and raise money for food and school fees," Winnie said.

With only one leg, Winnie said she no longer can farm. Her husband earns a meager living digging pit latrines and working at area farms to support their growing family. She gave birth to her sixth child last month.

"Now we are land beggars," she said.

Baringo is one of ten lakes in Kenya's Rift Valley that have been expanding over the past decade. The entire Eastern African rift system, which stretches south to Mozambique, and the Western Rift - all the way to Uganda - are also affected. The rainfed waters have submerged villages and islands and brought the fierce Nile crocodiles face-to-face with residents.

The rising lake waters have displaced more than 75,000 households, according to a 2021 report on the expanding lakes by Kenya's Ministry of the Environment and Forestry and the United Nations Development Program.

Flooding around Lake Baringo has been among the most severe, according to the report, with more than 3,000 households destroyed.

Lake Baringo remains an important source of freshwater for villagers, livestock, fisheries, and wildlife. But scientists fear it could someday merge with a large salt lake not far away, the also-expanding Lake Bogoria, contaminating the freshwater.

Keben remembers when the shoreline was a short walk from their home and the hippos and crocodiles stayed deep inside the lake.

"They never attacked people or animals," Keben said. "Today they attack everything."

Keben, 28, is still haunted by her attack a decade ago. She has not returned to her family's village — even for a brief visit — and with good reason. The risks of such attacks have only increased: Since she left, more crocodiles and hippos have turned up in Kampi ya Samaki.

It's not rare now to see village children scarred by sharp teeth marks.

Others, like Keben, have lost limbs, and an unknown number have died.

A 10-year-old boy was recently dragged off by a hippo and has not been found.

Keben said she doesn't plan to ever return to Kampi ya Samaki. Though she longs for the community.

"That is the place I called home," she said, her voice still filled with pain.

## European Central Bank set to join US Fed in jumbo rate hikes

By DAVID MCHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — The European Central Bank is set to join the U.S. Federal Reserve in making a jumbo interest rate hike Thursday as it tries to stamp out record inflation — although it risks worsening a recession that economists say is bearing down on Europe.

The meeting of the bank's governing council is not about whether to raise its main benchmark for the

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19 countries that use the euro currency, but by how much: between half a percentage point or an unprecedented three-quarters of a point, analysts say. The bank made its first increase in 11 years at its last meeting in July, raising rates by a half-point when it usually changes by only a quarter-point.

The ECB, which once predicted no rate increases at all this year, has torn up its road map in the face of record inflation of 9.1% last month, which has been driven by skyrocketing prices for natural gas and lasted much longer than expected. Inflation is far above the bank's goal of 2% considered healthiest for the economy.

The central bank's rationale for an increase of three-quarters of a point would be that "failing to act today would lead to larger moves and higher costs in the future," said Frederik Ducroz, head of macro-economic research at Pictet Wealth Management.

The price of natural gas — used to generate electricity, heat homes and run factories — has jumped more than tenfold as Russia has throttled back deliveries as tensions mount over the war in Ukraine. European politicians call it blackmail over their support for Kyiv.

The resulting inflation is making everything from groceries to utility bills more expensive, creating a cost-of-living crisis that will only worsen as many economists predict the eurozone sinking into recession at the end of this year and into 2023.

At her last news conference in July, ECB President Christine Lagarde said that under the bank's baseline economic forecast, "there is no recession, neither this year nor next year. Is the horizon clouded? Of course it is."

Raising interest rates is the typical central bank antidote for higher inflation. Higher rates influence the cost of credit throughout the economy, making it more expensive to borrow, consume and invest, thus dampening the demand for goods. The problem is that inflation is not coming so much from demand, but from the supply side of the economy — oil and natural gas costs — which the ECB can do little about directly.

The ECB is behind other central banks in raising interest rates, and analysts say it is now concerned its credibility as an inflation-fighter is at stake, opening the possibility that rates will go up faster than expected even a few weeks go.

Its benchmark is 0.5% for lending to banks. The Fed's main benchmark is 2.25% to 2.50% after several large rate hikes, including two of three-quarters of a point. The Bank of England's key benchmark is 1.75%.

A top ECB official, Isabel Schnabel, said last month that "determination" was better than "caution" which threatens to allow inflation to get baked into people's expectations for prices and wages. That's when it would be much harder to control.

Decisive action now offered the chance to snuff out excess inflation "even at the risk of lower growth and higher unemployment," Schnabel, a member of the six-member executive board that runs the bank day to day, said Aug. 27 at a Federal Reserve symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Price stability is the bank's primary mandate under the European Union treaty.

The ECB's action would come "even at the cost of inflicting further short-term pain on households, workers and companies," said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg bank. "However, the ECB has a good reason to be more aggressive."

Otherwise, bringing down ingrained inflation "in the future could be even more costly," he said.

Higher interest rates would help support the euro's exchange rate against the dollar by increasing demand for euro-denominated investment holdings. The euro's recent slide to under \$1 — driven by soaring energy costs and dampening economic prospects — raises inflation because it makes imported goods more expensive.

Some think the central bank is overreacting.

"There is a major risk that this determined approach by the ECB will not only lead to lower growth and employment than now, but lower than needed to tame inflation," wrote Erik F. Nielsen, group chief economics adviser at UniCredit Bank.

"Increasing concern about their reputation" could lead the ECB — and possibly the Fed as well — to

overdo the monetary tightening, he added.

"We still find it hard to see how aggressive rate hikes can bring headline inflation down in the eurozone," said Carsten Brzeski, chief eurozone economist at ING bank. "The economy is far from overheating and will almost inevitably fall into a winter recession, even without further rate hikes."

## Conservation plan highlights Arabs' fraught ties to Israel

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

HILF, Israel (AP) — Ayoub Rumeihat opened his palms to the sky in prayer as he stood among tombstones for Bedouins killed in action while serving the state of Israel.

Finishing the holy words, he gazed at the distant Mediterranean Sea across a valley full of olives and oak where his community has grazed goats for generations.

Rumeihat says the Bedouins, celebrated by the Israeli military for their knowledge of the land, fear the government now seeks to sever their ties to that same piece of earth.

Rumeihat and his fellow Bedouins see a plan to turn their land into a wildlife corridor as an affront to their service to the country. They say it's in line with steps taken by nationalist Israeli governments against the Arab minority in recent years that have deepened a sense of estrangement and tested the community's already brittle ties to the state.

The plan has sparked rare protests from Bedouins in Israel's northern Galilee region — some of the few native Palestinians to embrace early Jewish settlers before Israel's creation in 1948. Many have since served in the Israeli police and military, often fighting against fellow Palestinians.

"We were with you from the beginning," said Rumeihat, standing next to a tombstone engraved with a Star of David in honor of a Bedouin tracker likely killed by a Palestinian. "We are like the lemon and the olive trees. How can you uproot us?"

Palestinian citizens of Israel make up 20% of the country's 9 million people. They have citizenship and can vote, and some reach the highest echelons of government and business. But they have long faced discrimination in housing, jobs and public services and face neglect at the hands of the state. Many Jewish Israelis see them as a fifth column for their solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

Within that same minority are subgroups, like the Bedouins, who have become more embedded in Israeli society through their service in the security forces.

But in recent years, the Bedouins have accused Israel of belittling their service with its policies, particularly a 2018 law that defines the country as the nation state of the Jewish people. Bedouin and Druze Israelis, who both serve in the military, felt the law demoted them to second-class citizens.

The community sees the wildlife corridor as another slight. It will set controls on their grazing and could limit the residents' housing options in the future.

The Bedouins have started small weekly protests with Jewish supporters in the Galilee and also in Jerusalem, outside the offices of the prime minister and the Nature and Parks Authority.

The 2,600-acre (1,050-hectare) wildlife corridor is meant to allow foxes, quail and other animals to move safely around the urban landscape of Haifa, the country's third-largest city. The Bedouins call the lush ravines of the area al-Ghaba, or "forest" in Arabic.

Environmentalists say wildlife corridors, which serve as safe migration zones for animals, are an important part of conservation efforts.

Uri Shanas, an ecology professor at the University of Haifa-Oranim, said the corridor was essential because the surrounding area is built up and the animals, especially the endangered mountain gazelle, require the land bridge.

"The only place that it's still thriving in the world is in Israel and we are obliged to protect it," he said.

Palestinian citizens of Israel have in the past accused Israeli authorities of justifying land seizures under the guise of environmental stewardship. In January, Bedouins in southern Israel staged protests against tree planting by nationalists on disputed land. And advocacy groups say many forests in Israel were planted atop the ruins of Palestinian villages emptied during the events that led to Israel's creation.



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A spokeswoman for the parks authority, Daniela Turgeman, said the corridor plan was crafted with local leaders in the 1980s and surveyed plants and animals. She said that it allows for controlled grazing and said there are only "a few individuals who still have objections."

The Bedouins object to the plan's omission of traditional land-use rights and reject any limits on grazing. They claim private ownership of certain parcels and total grazing rights after settling in the area about 100 years ago, buying land, planting olive groves and farms, and building homes.

They also deny there was any prior consultation with the parks authority, which Turgeman said formed the plan after six recent meetings and "a joint tour" with local leaders.

Guy Alon, an official with the parks authority, told Israel's Channel 13 TV in July that the wildlife corridor would benefit Jews and Arabs while respecting property rights and striking an ecological balance.

For "Bedouins who come and say 'we want open spaces,' the nature reserve offers just that," he said. "Those who ask that we let them graze on the land, we respect that," he said.

After learning of the plan, three Bedouin villages filed an objection, charging the corridor didn't take into consideration private Bedouin property. The Haifa district planning committee rejected that objection, and an appeal is now being heard.

"Nature has been used as a political tool before many, many times, so for people there is no trust," said Myssana Morany, a lawyer with the Arab legal rights group Adalah, which filed the objection on the residents' behalf.

She said the parks authority has dealt with the Bedouins differently than it has with other citizens, pointing to nearby examples of its plans to integrate nature reserves with existing farms and other types of land use.

Environmental claims ring hollow to villagers who see ongoing construction at nearby Jewish villages as far more ecologically disruptive than grazing goats and olive groves.

Fatima Khaldi, 73, sitting in her large family home in the village of Khawaldeh, said local knowledge will protect the land more than any outside expertise. "Their whole goal is to remove us and destroy our heritage."

Mustafa Rumeihat, 70, a distant relative of Rumeihat, said he's worried his grandchildren won't inherit the family ties to the land.

"I see myself dying of desperation," he said, shuffling downhill from his pen of two dozen goats. "When my son asks me about the land, I won't be able to answer him."

## Alcaraz tops Sinner at 2:50 a.m.; latest US Open finish ever

By BRIAN MAHONEY and HOWARD FENDRICH AP Sports Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — This was a match that would not end. Should not end, one might say. Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner, two of the brightest young stars of men's tennis, traded shots of the highest quality and countless momentum swings across five sterling sets for 5 hours, 15 minutes until Alcaraz finally won the last point at 2:50 a.m. on Thursday, the latest finish in U.S. Open history.

It was "only" a quarterfinal, no trophy at stake, yet was as taut a thriller as this year's tournament has produced or, likely, will, a tour de force of big cuts on the full sprint and plenty of guts, concluding as a 6-3, 6-7 (7), 6-7 (0), 7-5, 6-3 victory for the No. 3-seeded Alcaraz, a 19-year-old from Spain.

"Honestly," said Alcaraz, who saved a match point in the fourth set, "I still don't know how I did it."

He also used words such as "unbelievable" and "amazing." No hyperbole there.

"This one will hurt for quite a while," said No. 11 Sinner, a 21-year-old from Italy. "But tomorrow, I will wake up — or today, I will wake up — trying to somehow (take away) only the positives."

When the 382nd, and final, point was over, Sinner and Alcaraz hugged each other. A handshake at the net would not suffice.

Alcaraz reached his first Grand Slam semifinal and is the youngest man to get that far at the U.S. Open since Pete Sampras won the title at 19 in 1990.

Alcaraz has a chance to move up to No. 1 in the rankings next week, and will face No. 22 Frances Tiafoe

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of the United States on Friday. The other men's semifinal that day is No. 5 Casper Ruud of Norway vs. No. 27 Karen Khachanov of Russia.

This match began Wednesday evening at about 9:35 p.m. and easily surpassed the previous mark for latest time of finish at the U.S. Open, which had been 2:26 a.m., shared by three matches.

Alcaraz has been working overtime in New York: His five-set victory over 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic in the fourth round wrapped up at 2:23 a.m. on Tuesday.

"I always say you have to believe in yourself all the time," Alcaraz said. "The hope is the last thing that you lose."

After his much more mundane, three-set victory over Andrey Rublev in a quarterfinal that finished at about 4:45 p.m. on Wednesday, Tiafoe was rather prescient when asked about Alcaraz and Sinner.

"I just hope they play a marathon match, super-long match," Tiafoe said with a smile, "and they get really tired come Friday."

Not only did this one run late, it ran long: Only a 5-hour, 26-minute match between Stefan Edberg and Michael Chang in 1992 took more time at the U.S. Open.

Asked afterward how he was feeling physically out there against Sinner, Alcaraz began with a quick response: "I felt great."

Then he paused, and smiled, before continuing: "Well, probably at the end of the match, I was (at) my end."

The clock already was past 2 a.m. when Coco Gauff, the 18-year-old American who was the runner-up at the French Open and bowed out in the U.S. Open quarterfinals on Tuesday, spoke for anyone paying attention to Alcaraz vs. Sinner when she tweeted: "this match is insane. I leave at 6am for the airport but I refuse to sleep and miss this. #Sinner #Alcaraz"

Still, even with thousands and thousands of empty seats, there were enough who remained on hand to make as much noise as a full house at times. Both players would wave their rackets or motion with their arms to encourage the fans to get even louder. And, naturally, the fans would oblige.

"Could have finished in three sets. Could have finished in four sets. Could have finished in five sets," Sinner said. "We both wanted to win, for sure. We both tried our best."

It was as back-and-forth as could be. The highlights were too many to list. Just one: Alcaraz won one point after extending a rally by wrapping his racket behind his back to make contact with the ball. One more: Alcaraz fell onto his backside, then sprung up to race to smack a backhand that won that point.

After taking the first set, Alcaraz held five set points in the second — but Sinner saved them all.

In the third, Alcaraz broke to lead 6-5 and served for that set — but Sinner broke to force a tiebreaker that he dominated.

In the fourth, it was Sinner who served for the match at 5-4, even coming within a point of victory there — but Alcaraz broke and wound up pushing what already was a masterpiece to a fifth.

And in the fifth, after another memorable shot — a running backhand passing winner that sailed just past Sinner's outstretched arm — earned a break point and a chance for a 5-3 lead, Alcaraz put a finger to his ear.

He would convert that, then serve it out. When the end did arrive, Alcaraz dropped to his back, his chest heaving, and covered his face with his hand.

## Police say Memphis shooting suspect killed 4 during rampage

ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Police in Memphis, Tennessee, said a man who drove around the city shooting at people, killing four, during an hours-long rampage that forced frightened people to shelter in place Wednesday, has been arrested.

Ezekiel Kelly, 19, who was charged as an adult with attempted first-degree murder in 2020, was taken into custody at around 9 p.m. in the Memphis neighborhood of Whitehaven, police spokeswoman Karen Rudolph said. Memphis Police Director Cerelyn "CJ" Davis said charges were pending during a news con-

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ference early Thursday.

Four people were killed and three others were wounded in seven shootings across Memphis, Davis said. The rampage began at 12:56 a.m. Wednesday and continued to about 8:30 p.m.

There was at least eight crime scenes: the seven shootings and the carjacking of a Dodge Challenger in Southaven, Mississippi, Davis said. Kelly was arrested when he crashed during a high speed chase after the carjacking in Southaven, which is located south of Memphis.

That was about two hours after police sent out an alert saying a man driving a light blue Infiniti was responsible for multiple shootings in the city. Police said he later killed a woman in Memphis and took her grey Toyota SUV, which he left behind when he carjacked the Dodge Challenger in Southaven. Police said he recorded his actions on Facebook.

As the shooter terrorized Memphis, public bus service was suspended and a downtown stadium where a minor-league baseball game was underway was placed on lockdown. Friends and relatives frantically called and texted each other to check on each others' safety. TV stations cut into regular coverage to keep viewers updated.

Police received "numerous tips" from the public during the ordeal, Davis said.

The University of Memphis sent a message to students saying a shooting had been reported near the campus. Rhodes College, which is about 4 miles away from the university, advised students on and off campus to shelter in place.

The area where Kelly was arrested was about 11 miles from the University of Memphis and about 12 miles from Rhodes College.

"If you do not have to be out, stay indoors until this is resolved," Memphis police said on Twitter, before the arrest.

Police did not discuss a motive or release the identities of those who were killed or wounded. It was too early in the investigation to discuss how the suspect got the gun or guns used in the shootings, said Ali Roberts, acting assistant special agent in charge for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Memphis.

Memphis has been shaken by several high-profile killings in recent weeks, including the shooting of a pastor during a daylight carjacking in her driveway, the shooting of an activist during an argument over money, and the slaying of a woman who was abducted while she was on a pre-dawn run.

"I understand it feels like so much violence and evil to experience in such a short time," Memphis City Council member Chase Carlisle said on Twitter. "We are SO much more than this."

In February of 2020, Kelly, then 17, was charged as an adult with attempted first-degree murder, aggravated assault, using a firearm to commit a dangerous felony and reckless endangerment with a deadly weapon, court records showed. Circumstances of the case were not immediately known.

Records show he pleaded guilty to aggravated assault and was sentenced in April 2021 to three years. Kelly was released from prison in March, 11 months after he was sentenced, Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland said.

## **Bannon expected to surrender in NY court in wall donor case**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump's longtime ally Steve Bannon is expected to turn himself in to authorities Thursday to face fresh charges that he duped donors who gave money to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Bannon's state-level charges in New York closely resemble an attempted federal prosecution that ended abruptly, before trial, when Trump pardoned Bannon on his last day in office. Presidential pardons apply only to federal crimes, not state offenses. In Bannon's case, any double jeopardy argument would likely fall flat because his federal case didn't involve an acquittal or conviction.

Bannon, 68, acknowledged in a statement Tuesday that he would be charged soon.

Bannon said Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg "has now decided to pursue phony charges against

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me 60 days before the midterm election," accusing the Democratic prosecutor of targeting him because Bannon and his radio show are popular among Trump's Republican supporters.

Bannon said federal prosecutors "did the exact same thing in August 2020 to try to take me out of the election," referring to his arrest months before Trump's reelection loss. "This is nothing more than a partisan political weaponization of the criminal justice system."

The Manhattan district attorney's office declined comment.

Federal agents pulled Bannon from a luxury yacht off the Connecticut coast and arrested him on charges he pocketed more than \$1 million in wall donations. Prosecutors alleged thousands of investors were tricked into thinking all of their donations would go toward the border wall project, although Bannon instead paid a salary to one campaign official and personal expenses for himself.

While the wall Bannon's group proposed was to be built on the U.S. southern border, more than 1,000 miles from the Big Apple, Manhattan prosecutors have jurisdiction to pursue charges against Bannon because some donors to the effort lived in New York.

Federal prosecutors, in the trial of a former Bannon co-defendant, noted that some residents of the New York City area had donated to the wall-building project. One witness that testified was an official with the charities bureau of the New York attorney general's office who said that a charity backing the wall project had filed paperwork to accept donations in the state. The attorney general's office is also involved in Bannon's state criminal case.

Bannon, who had pleaded not guilty to the federal charges, was dropped from the federal case when Trump pardoned him.

Two other men involved in the "We Build the Wall" project pleaded guilty in April. They had been scheduled to be sentenced this week, but that was recently postponed to December.

A third defendant's trial ended in a mistrial in June after jurors said they could not reach a unanimous verdict.

In another case not covered by Trump's pardon, Bannon was convicted in July on contempt charges for defying a congressional subpoena from the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. He is scheduled to be sentenced in October and faces up to two years in federal prison.

## California avoids outages after day of grid-straining heat

By JOHN ANTCHAK and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California avoided rolling outages during extreme heat, as operators of the state's electricity grid continued to warn that unprecedented demand on energy supplies could force them to periodically cut power to some customers.

The California Independent System Operator on Wednesday thanked residents and businesses for heeding another "flex alert," a request to reduce electricity consumption during peak evening hours.

"With your help, we made it through another day without rotating #poweroutages," Cal-ISO said on Twitter. Another flex alert was issued for Thursday from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. as temperatures were expected to spike again.

Targeted blackouts were avoided a day after miscommunication led utilities to mistakenly cut power to customers in several California cities.

The confusion occurred Tuesday afternoon between a dispatcher at the Northern California Power Agency, which owns and operates power generating facilities for 16 members including a dozen cities, and the California Independent System Operator as the grid it manages was perilously close to running out of energy amid record-breaking temperatures.

"That is certainly concerning to me," Elliot Mainzer, president and CEO of Cal-ISO, said Wednesday. "There was a lot happening on the grid for everybody last night. And so we'll double down on the communication to make sure that doesn't happen again."

With record demand on power supplies across the West, California snapped its record energy use around 5 p.m. Tuesday with 52,061 megawatts, far above the previous high of 50,270 megawatts set July 24, 2006.

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As residents and businesses cranked air-conditioning to escape withering heat across the West and solar power supplies began to wane, Cal-ISO issued a stage 3 energy emergency alert to prepare utilities to initiate outages if demand didn't decrease. The state's legal marijuana regulatory agency also urged businesses to turn off lights and reduce power or use backup generators.

The Northern California Power Agency said its dispatcher misinterpreted Cal-ISO's order to prepare to cut power and immediately undertook the process to cut 46 megawatts — enough to serve about 35,000 customers — in the cities of Alameda, Lodi, Santa Clara, Palo Alto, Healdsburg, and Ukiah.

It wasn't clear how many customers lost power, though the agency said no outage lasted more than an hour.

"Once the outages had been initiated, our dispatcher contacted (Cal-ISO) to inform them that the curtailment action had been undertaken, and was then notified there had been a misunderstanding of the initial order," NCPA said.

With the state on the brink of outages, Gov. Gavin Newsom for the first time triggered a wireless emergency alert system at 5:45 p.m. Tuesday that sent messages to 27 million cellphones urging them to turn off or reduce non-essential power.

Within moments, there was a reduction of more than 2,000 megawatts, bringing the state "back from the edge," Mainzer said.

"It took a very loud signal," Mainzer said. "I think they now recognize that we're not messing around. This is a real issue. And we need real response."

Newsom, speaking Wednesday in Beverly Hills, said he had debated pushing that button for the past four to five days. He ultimately decided to test it and concluded it was a game-changer, though he's reluctant to use it too often because he fears weakening its effectiveness. The emergency alert was not repeated Wednesday.

Western states are struggling through one of the hottest and longest September heat waves on record. Temperatures began soaring last week, and the National Weather Service warned that dangerous heat could continue through Friday, despite some slight moderation.

Nearly 54 million people were under heat warnings and advisories across the West as temperature records were shattered in many areas.

California's state capital of Sacramento hit an all-time high Tuesday of 116 degrees (46.7 C), breaking a 97-year-old record. Salt Lake City tied its all-time high temperature Wednesday at 107 degrees (41.6 C). The heat wave was expected to last until Saturday.

Reno, which sits just across the Nevada line along the Sierra's eastern front at an elevation of 4,500 feet (1,372 meters), topped the century mark for the ninth day in a row on Wednesday with its seventh consecutive daily record-high — reaching 104 degrees (40 C) after recording its hottest September day ever on Tuesday at 106 degrees (41.1 C), according to weather service records dating to 1893.

Scientists say climate change has made the West warmer and drier over the last three decades and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive. In the last five years, California has experienced the largest and most destructive fires in state history.

On the Northern Plains, the unusually late heat wave peaked Wednesday following a prolonged string of scorching days.

Along a main thoroughfare in downtown Billings, where the temperature set a daily record at 102 degrees (39 C), Gale Spotted Bear, native of the Blackfeet Reservation, sought shelter from the punishing heat in the shade of a vacant building.

"This year has been hotter than hell," said Spotted Bear, adding that homeless people can be hit the hardest if they have nowhere to go. "It's hard out here."

## School gun case sparks debate over safety and second chances

MARTHA IRVINE AP National Writer

Oak Park, Ill. (AP) — Keyon Robinson was just a month away from graduating from high school when

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he took a loaded gun, placed it in his backpack and headed to campus.

He'd fought with a relative that morning. He was angry, and scared someone would come after him. The firearm, a Glock-style ghost gun with no serial number that he'd bought via social media, was his security blanket.

"I felt like I just needed it for safety because of the stuff I got myself into," said Robinson, now 19.

He insists he never intended to hurt anyone at his school in Oak Park, a suburb that borders Chicago's West Side. "Realistically, I didn't need a gun at all."

And he never fired it. On May 3 — three weeks before a gunman massacred 19 children and two teachers in Uvalde, Texas — police arrested Robinson near the school's main entrance as he returned from lunch. He told the officers, who were acting on a tip, that he hadn't even taken the gun out of his backpack until they asked him to do so.

Still, in an instant, that one decision changed the trajectory of his young life. It also shook the entire school community, prompting intense discussions about how its young people might be protected.

Most gun incidents in and around campuses are more like Oak Park than Uvalde. They're not planned large-scale shootings, or active-shooter situations. More often, they're smaller altercations that escalate when someone has a gun at or near a school, a game or other event, according the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's K-12 school shooting database, which tracks incidents from the last five decades.

All these cases expose a hard truth: Keeping students from bringing guns to school is difficult.

Security staff and metal detectors miss things, experts say. Doors that are supposed to be locked get propped open. Items can be hidden even when schools require clear backpacks.

This fall, leaders at Oak Park and River Forest High, Robinson's school, began training more staff, adding security to the day shift, and moving more experienced team members to hot spots such as cafeterias, where fights are known to break out during lunch. Posters on the massive campus encourage students to be the school's eyes and ears: "If You See Something, Say Something."

The school, known as OPRF, is trying to walk a fine line — to keep students and staff safe without making them feel unwelcome or anxious. In 2020, the School Board voted 6-1 to end the school resource officer program amid national protests over police brutality. Cries for reform escalated that summer after a white Minneapolis police officer killed George Floyd, a Black man, as other officers stood by.

Now some officials are rethinking the decision to cut ties with police. But they're also holding fast to a widely held belief among educators — that connecting with students is the best way to build trust, identify threats and prevent tragedies.

By his own account, and according to school records provided by his attorney, Robinson was a student who bonded with teachers at OPRF, including support staff. One staffer noted his "unbelievable social skills" and respectfulness. He owned his mistakes, staff said, but he also struggled with depression, drug use and occasional impulsivity. Schoolwork was a challenge.

After his arrest, Robinson said he was expelled. But the district offered him the chance to complete his studies, away from his classmates and campus, where he can no longer set foot. A Cook County judge agreed that school in some form was "the best thing for him to do," though she gave him a stern reminder to avoid school grounds and weapons of any kind.

"Yes, your honor," Robinson responded.

With that, the judge allowed him to be released on bond after a few weeks in jail, and he spent most of the summer at his family's Oak Park apartment, wearing ankle monitors to track his movements. He hung out with his mom and siblings, played video games and finished the schoolwork. Eventually, he got his diploma.

"It's restrictive, always," Robinson said of the monitors. "But I got to be grateful."

As he awaits his fate in court, he's been granted permission to work at a fast-food restaurant. Ultimately, he'd like to go to community college or trade school, and maybe play football. He and his family hope felony charges will be deferred because this is a first-time offense.

Meanwhile, students have returned for a new year at OPRF as school officials and the community pro-

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ness what happened.

"It pains me to the core of my being that you have to do this on your jobs," School Board member Ralph Martire told staff after a security update at a recent meeting. "It shouldn't be that we should be this worried about violence at this level in educational setting. But we have to be — the world has to be."

The K-12 database shows that active shooter incidents — when a shooter kills or wounds victims on campus during "a continuous episode of violence" — accounted for 11 of 430 shootings in and around schools from the start of 2021 through August 2022.

Fights that escalate when someone has a gun accounted for 123 of those shootings. In South Carolina, a 12-year-old shot and killed a classmate in a middle school hallway, and in New Orleans, an 80-year-old woman was caught in crossfire at a graduation — both in the same month Robinson was caught with the gun.

Many in the Oak Park community worry. What if another student brings a weapon to school? Maybe they already have.

No one at the School Board meeting spoke Robinson's name, though the incident was on many minds. He is aware that his actions have affected people's sense of safety.

"Because of the mistake that I made, and other mistakes, then I think that it is reasonable to have more tighter security — and have an officer in the school now," he said. "I think that's something that's appropriate."

OPRF is among many schools nationwide that have shifted to a restorative justice model, moving away from zero-tolerance policies, which often disproportionately affect students of color. At OPRF, about 44 percent of roughly 3,400 students at the high school identify as Black, Hispanic, multiracial or Asian.

With restorative justice, incidents are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with more time spent processing what's happened to try to prevent repeat behavior. There are consequences, determined by the severity of the deed. But the goal is for students to spend more time learning and to make better choices, with support.

Superintendent Greg Johnson still sees a chance to rethink the role police could have at the school. Johnson, who is white, told the school board he understands the "very real challenge" people of color face with law enforcement.

"Our belief as a school district, though, is that the way through that is education and relationships," he said. "We need a partnership" with police, he added. "We need a member on our crisis team here."

A federal survey found that 42 percent of public schools had at least one resource officer one day or more a week in the 2015-16 school year, the most recent data available. The National Association of School Resource Officers, which helps train police to work in educational settings, estimates that 14,000 to 20,000 resource officers serve K-12 schools.

Still, at least two OPRF board members balked when another praised efforts to "harden" security this fall.

"We want to keep the buildings safe," member Gina Harris said. "But that language is challenging, as well as confronting for me as a Black woman and for families and students."

At one point in the meeting, a frustrated parent stood up to interrupt the board discussion. "This is a scary issue for us parents!" she said. "This is really a critical life-and-death situation that we're dealing with."

Lynda Parker, the school's assistant superintendent and principal, tried to reassure her. "It is as important to us — as we're living in it too," Parker said, gently.

Behavior problems and mental health issues have been on the rise at many schools since students returned to in-person learning, and OPRF is no exception. Having to quarantine at the height of the pandemic also took a toll on Robinson.

"I stopped playing football," he said. "I was not doing good in school over Zoom, so I feel like it had a big impact on my life, a huge impact on my life."

He'd been a running back and cornerback early in his high school career. When in-person school resumed, he'd lost motivation, he said, and got suspended from the team for vaping at school and other infractions.

"I wouldn't say we were goodie kids," he said of himself and his friends. "But, like, just typical teenagers."

But he liked school and the people there, he said, even the security staff, and considered many teach-

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ers mentors.

"They were supporting me and still pushing me to do better," he said, even when he was in jail. "Still, to this day, I have teachers texting me, checking on me."

At a recent status hearing for his case, Robinson, wearing jeans and a white dress shirt, sat silently with his mom, Nicole Bryant, who works at a daycare and drives for Uber to make ends meet. Robinson's attorney updated the court on his client's work schedule and location. One of Robinson's two electronic monitors was removed.

He faces charges including possession of a firearm, a class 3 felony, and aggravated unlawful use of a weapon, a class 4 felony. They could lead to substantial time in prison.

"The news media says 'kid with gun at school' — boom — and that's it. And people draw their conclusions," attorney Thomas Benno said. He's asking the court to consider Robinson's intent in having the gun with him — to protect himself.

Because Robinson had no criminal record, other than a traffic violation, Benno is seeking the deferred sentence, which means probation and other requirements detailed by the court. It's a strict, monitored program with no room for more mistakes, Benno said. He believes that's better than incarceration, in this instance, and that his young client, who school staff say is a leader in his social circles, will share his cautionary tale.

"He can go and tell kids, 'Hey, don't carry the gun,'" Benno said. "He's going to tell the story."

Some in the community still quietly question whether a second chance would send the right message.

Just four days into this academic year, OPRF had a soft lockdown over a report of a student with a gun. Under the "Secure and Teach" protocol, as the school calls it, teachers lock their doors and try to continue with their lessons while security investigates.

The report turned out to be unfounded. The community breathed a collective sigh of relief.

"I'd rather have them overreact than underreact, because the consequence is so great," said Brian Roman, a university professor and OPRF parent.

He's considered shifting his son to another school because of safety concerns. But he appreciates OPRF and the diversity it offers, and he still hopes his son can graduate from the school in 2024.

Last spring, Robinson's mom had been ready to celebrate her own son, the third of her four children. He had fought so hard to graduate, she told the school — he wanted to show everyone he could do it, despite his struggles. She, too, graduated from OPRF. Now she's just grateful her son was allowed to get his diploma, even if he couldn't walk with his class.

Leon Watson, a family friend, frowned when asked about Robinson, the gun and that day last May. "I was disappointed and surprised and confused," he said. "That's not him. It's not ... but he's kicking himself every day."

Robinson nodded in agreement. "Yeah," he said. "Every day."

His hopes for a second chance are now in the hands of the court.

## **Bolsonaro turns Brazil's bicentennial into campaign rally**

By CARLA BRIDI and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro transformed the nation's bicentennial Wednesday into a multi-city campaign event, but didn't use his appearances to undermine the upcoming election as his opponents had feared.

Bolsonaro, who trails former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in polls before the Oct. 2 vote, drew tens of thousands of supporters to rallies in Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro. The armed forces put on military displays in the cities, with the president attending.

The far-right Bolsonaro has stacked his administration with military officers and repeatedly sought their support, most recently to cast doubt on the reliability of the nation's electronic voting system, which raised fears his speeches on Independence Day would be filled with fresh attacks. The far-right nationalist held back from doing so, and instead focused on attacks on da Silva and his leftist Workers' Party.



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Bolsonaro compared da Silva to autocratic leftist leaders in Venezuela and Nicaragua and called Brazil's former president "a gangster."

"We will have a much better administration with us being elected, with the grace of God," the president said in a speech in Rio.

His prior efforts to sow doubt about the voting system has prompted widespread concern among his opponents that he may follow former U.S. President Donald Trump's footsteps in rejecting election results.

Bolsonaro arrived at the military display in Brasilia accompanied by at least one of the business executives who allegedly participated in a private chat group that included comments favoring a possible coup and military involvement in politics, and who is being investigated by Federal Police for possibly financing anti-democratic acts.

The crowd, decked out in green and yellow, chanted against da Silva, who wants to return to the post he held in 2003-2010.

Later, da Silva said he had never used Independence Day for electoral ends.

"Brazil needs better luck. It needs a government that takes care of people. A person who talks about harmony, love, economic growth, industrialization, job creation, pay increases," da Silva said. "Brazil needs love, not hatred."

Other presidential candidates also criticized Bolsonaro's electoral use of the country's independence bicentennial, and party leaders have suggested they will take the case to electoral courts.

Speaking at a rally after the parade in Brasilia, Bolsonaro made no reference to Brazil's struggle for independence and instead focused on his achievements while his supporters made clear they came to support their candidate.

"We came for democracy, we want a free country, with no corruption or robbing, we want a country with clean elections," said farmer Marcelo Zanella, 46, who drove some 800 kilometers (496 miles) from the state of Tocantins.

Tens of thousands also gathered on Sao Paulo's main downtown boulevard. Due to a downpour and the fact Bolsonaro wasn't scheduled to appear, turnout was apparently smaller than last year's.

Later, Bolsonaro attended another military display in Rio along Copacabana beach — where his supporters often hold demonstrations. It entailed rifle salutes, cannon fire, flyovers, paratroopers and warships anchored offshore. He delivered his speech from a sound truck, on the back of which a draped banner read: "CLEAN AND TRANSPARENT ELECTIONS."

Bolsonaro, a former army captain and lawmaker for decades before winning the 2018 presidential election, has spent most of his first term locking horns with Supreme Court justices, some of whom are also top members of the electoral authority.

He has accused some judges of hamstringing his administration and favoring da Silva. That has effectively turned those figures and their institutions into enemies for Bolsonaro's base.

When Bolsonaro launched his reelection bid July 24, he asked supporters for "one last" show of support on Independence Day.

Carlos Melo, a political science professor at Insper University in Sao Paulo, said Bolsonaro needed to energize his campaign and reach out to undecided voters.

"He needed something new and failed to do that. Bolsonaro once more only spoke with his supporters, indeed many of them, and with that the window might be closing for other voters to join him," Melo said.

Since his campaign began, Bolsonaro has softened his tone. In the southern city of Curitiba last week, he told supporters to lower a banner demanding a military coup.

Carlos Ranulfo de Melo, a political scientist at Federal University of Minas Gerais, said this likely reflects campaign strategy to avoid fiery rhetoric and instead focus on the improving economy.

"We will convince those who think differently from us, we will convince them of what is best for Brazil," Bolsonaro told the crowd in Brasilia.

The president is known for off-the-cuff outbursts. At last year's Independence Day rally, he pushed the country to the brink of an institutional crisis by proclaiming he would ignore rulings from a Supreme Court

justice. He later backtracked, saying his comments came in the heat of the moment, and the boiling tension was reduced to a simmer.

In both speeches in Brasilia and Rio, he made a couple veiled critiques of the Supreme Court, which elicited boos from the crowd.

"The institutional wear-and-tear was present in his speech in Brasilia, but in a less explicit way than last year," said Rafael Cortez, who oversees political risk at consultancy Tendencias Consultoria.

There had also been concerns about political violence, which didn't materialize during the afternoon.

In Rio, it was a scene of adulation. Sound trucks blasted songs exalting Bolsonaro to a crowd packing multiple blocks of the beachside boulevard, spilling onto the sand and down to the waterline. Motorboats and jet skis floated just offshore. When the first paratroopers started gliding down, one group began chanting, "Legend!", a nickname for the president.

"I came to honor my president," said Myleni Lima, 50, from the city's west zone. "I'm going to reelect him, me and the Brazilian people."

## Official: Suspect in Canada stab rampage died after arrest

By ROB GILLIES and ROBERT BUMSTED Associated Press

ROSTHERN, Saskatchewan (AP) — The final suspect in a stabbing rampage that killed 10 people in and around a Canadian Indigenous reserve died after being arrested by police Wednesday following a manhunt that stretched more than three days, authorities said. One official said he died of self-inflicted injuries.

Myles Sanderson, 32, was caught on a highway near the town of Rosthern in the province of Saskatchewan as officers responded to a report of a stolen vehicle being driven by a man armed with a knife, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said.

Officers forced Sanderson's vehicle off the road and into a ditch, Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore, commander of the RCMP in Saskatchewan, said at a news conference. He was detained and a knife was found inside the vehicle she said.

She said Sanderson went into medical distress after he was arrested. She said CPR was attempted on him before an ambulance arrived. She said emergency medical personnel then took him to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

"All life saving measures that we are capable of were taken at that time," she said.

Blackmore gave no details on the cause of death. "I can't speak to the specific manner of death," she said.

But an official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, earlier said Sanderson died of self-inflicted injuries, without giving any further details.

Video and photos from the scene showed a white SUV off to the side of the road with police cars all around. Air bags had deployed in the SUV. Some photos and video taken from a distance appeared to show Sanderson being frisked.

His death came two days after the body of his brother, 30-year-old Damien Sanderson, was found in a field near the scene of their rampage, which also wounded 18 people. Police are investigating whether Myles Sanderson killed his brother.

Blackmore said that with both men dead, authorities will find it hard to figure out what set off the rampage.

"Now that Myles is deceased we may never have an understanding of that motivation," she said.

But she started off her remarks at the news conference by stressing that people in Saskatchewan can rest easier.

"This evening our province is breathing a collective sigh of relief," Blackmore said.

Later, she added: "I hope that this brings them closure. I hope they can rest easy knowing that Myles Sanderson is no longer a threat to them."

Some family members of the victims arrived at the scene Wednesday, including Brian Burns, whose wife and son were killed.

"Now we can start to heal. The healing begins today, now," he said.

The stabbing rampage raised questions of why Myles Sanderson — an ex-con with 59 convictions and a long history of shocking violence — was out on the streets in the first place.

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He was released by a parole board in February while serving a sentence of over four years on charges that included assault and robbery. But he had been wanted by police since May, apparently for violating the terms of his release, though the details were not immediately clear.

His long and lurid rap sheet also showed that seven years ago, he attacked and stabbed one of the victims killed in the weekend rampage, according to court records.

Canadian Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said there will be an investigation into the parole board's assessment of Sanderson.

"I want to know the reasons behind the decision" to release him, Mendicino said. "I'm extremely concerned with what occurred here. A community has been left reeling."

Investigators have not given a motive for the bloodshed.

The Saskatchewan Coroner's Service said nine of those killed were from the James Smith Cree Nation: Thomas Burns, 23; Carol Burns, 46; Gregory Burns, 28; Lydia Gloria Burns, 61; Bonnie Burns, 48; Earl Burns, 66; Lana Head, 49; Christian Head, 54; and Robert Sanderson, 49, One was from Weldon, 78-year-old Wesley Patterson.

Authorities would not say how the victims might be related.

Mark Arcand said his half sister Bonnie and her son Gregory were killed.

"Her son was lying there already deceased. My sister went out and tried to help her son, and she was stabbed two times, and she died right beside him," he said. "Right outside of her home she was killed by senseless acts. She was protecting her son. She was protecting three little boys. This is why she is a hero."

Arcand rushed to the reserve the morning of the rampage. After that, he said, "I woke up in the middle of the night just screaming and yelling. What I saw that day I can't get out of my head."

As for what set off the violence, Arcand said: "We're all looking for those same answers. We don't know what happened. Maybe we'll never know. That's the hardest part of this."

Court documents said Sanderson attacked his in-laws Earl Burns and Joyce Burns in 2015, knifing Earl Burns repeatedly and wounding Joyce Burns. He later pleaded guilty to assault and threatening Earl Burns' life.

Many of Sanderson's crimes were committed when he was intoxicated, according to court records. He told parole officials at one point that substance use made him out of his mind. Records showed he repeatedly violated court orders barring him from drinking or using drugs.

Many of Canada's Indigenous communities are plagued by drugs and alcohol.

"The drug problem and the alcohol problem on these reserves is way out of hand," said Ivor Wayne Burns, whose sister was killed in the weekend attacks. "We have dead people, and we asked before for something to be done."

Myles Sanderson's childhood was marked by violence, neglect and substance abuse, court records show. Sanderson, who is Indigenous and was raised on the Cree reserve, population 1,900, started drinking and smoking marijuana at around 12, and cocaine followed soon after.

In 2017, he barged into his ex-girlfriend's home, punched a hole in the door of a bathroom while his two children were hiding in a bathtub and threw a cement block at a vehicle parked outside, according to parole documents.

He got into a fight a few days later at a store, threatening to kill an employee and burn down his parents' home, documents said.

That November he threatened an accomplice into robbing a fast-food restaurant by clubbing him with a gun and stomping on his head. He then stood watch during the holdup.

In 2018, he stabbed two men with a fork while drinking and beat someone unconscious.

When he was released in February, the parole board set conditions on his contact with his partner and children and also said he should not enter into relationships with women without written permission from his parole officer.

In granting Sanderson "statutory release," parole authorities said: "It is the Board's opinion that you will not present an undue risk to society."

Canadian law grants prisoners statutory release after they serve two-thirds of their sentence. But the

parole board can impose conditions on that freedom, and inmates who violate them — as Sanderson did more than once — can be ordered back to prison.

Sharna Sugarman, who was organizing a GoFundMe for the victims, questioned the parole board for releasing him and wondered why Sanderson was still on the loose so many months after he was deemed “unlawfully at large.”

“That’s just egregious to me,” said Sugarman, a counselor who counted one of the stabbing victims as a client. “If they claim that they’ve been looking for him, well, you weren’t looking that hard.”

## Swiatek tops Pegula; faces Sabalenka in US Open semifinals

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Iga Swiatek dropped four points in a row in her U.S. Open quarterfinal against Jessica Pegula by missing shots, some wildly. So with Pegula up by a break at 3-2 and serving at 30-love, Swiatek walked over to the sideline in the middle of a game to swap out her white racket for another one.

The Arthur Ashe Stadium roof was open, the 70-degree air was as cool and dry as it’s been during a hot, humid tournament, and Swiatek figured maybe she should try a tighter string tension to see whether that would help control the ball a little more.

Whether that actually did the trick, or simply put Swiatek’s mind at ease, the move certainly swung the direction of the match. The No. 1-ranked Swiatek grabbed 14 of the next 15 points and, while closing things out was not easy, she reached her first semifinal at Flushing Meadows by pulling out a 6-3, 7-6 (4) victory over Pegula on Wednesday night.

“I don’t know if it actually was the key or something,” Swiatek said after a match filled with a combined 13 breaks of serve, 10 in the second set alone. “For sure, I wasn’t thinking about the strings (anymore), and I just focused on the right stuff after the change.”

When play resumed, Swiatek popped up a short return that floated toward Pegula, who rushed a backhand swinging volley that landed out. That was followed by three forehand errors in a row by the No. 8 Pegula, the highest-ranked American player.

“I started missing everything for literally the rest of the set,” Pegula said between sips from a can of Heineken. “It was definitely a huge momentum change. I think it helped her a lot. So it was a good move by her. ... I was just going for too much. The games kind of flew by.”

Swiatek will face No. 6 seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus in Thursday’s semifinals. The other women’s semifinal is No. 5 Ons Jabeur against No. 17 Caroline Garcia, who eliminated 18-year-old American Coco Gauff on Tuesday.

Swiatek, a 21-year-old from Poland who won the French Open in 2020 and this June, twice failed to serve out the victory Wednesday, at 5-4 and 6-5 in the second set. But she was better in the tiebreaker, and when Pegula missed a backhand to close the contest, Swiatek ran toward her guest box, flung her racket and yelled.

Swiatek compiled a 37-match winning streak earlier this season, claiming the trophies at six consecutive events, but this is her first trip beyond the fourth round in New York.

“I wasn’t expecting that at the beginning of the tournament,” she said. “Trying to keep my expectations low.”

This marked Swiatek’s eighth win in a row against an opponent ranked in the top 10, all in straight sets. “I’m super proud of myself. My goal, basically, is to be consistent,” she said. “I remember when I was an underdog and every match like that was surreal. Now it feels pretty routine.”

Pegula, a 28-year-old whose parents own the NFL’s Buffalo Bills and NHL’s Buffalo Sabres, dropped to 0-4 in Grand Slam quarterfinals, including a trio of losses at that stage this season. All three of those came against a player atop the rankings at the time: Ash Barty at the Australian Open in January and then Swiatek at Roland Garros and Wednesday.

“I’m a little deflated right now,” Pegula said. “I’m not real happy.”

Of the four players remaining in the bracket, only Swiatek already owns a major championship. And only

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Sabalenka, who defeated two-time Slam runner-up Karolina Pliskova 6-1, 7-6 (4), ever has been this far at Flushing Meadows previously; she lost in the semifinals last year.

"I'm ready for it," Sabalenka said. "I'm ready for another fight."

Bounced from the semifinals at Wimbledon last year by Pliskova, Sabalenka made sure from the start that this one would be different, taking a 4-0 lead.

This year, Sabalenka could not participate at the All England Club, because all players from Russia and Belarus were banned over the invasion of Ukraine. Sabalenka spent that fortnight in Miami, practicing and preparing for a return to the tour.

"It was a tough time, especially when I was working out in the gym and there was Wimbledon playing on the TV," Sabalenka said. "I was always (turning) it off, because I couldn't watch it."

## At least 32 dead in fire at karaoke parlor in south Vietnam

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — The death toll from a fire at a karaoke parlor in southern Vietnam has risen to 32 and some parts of the building remain inaccessible more than a day later, state media reported.

The fire that began late Tuesday trapped workers and customers inside the multi-story venue in Thuan An city in Binh Duong province, state media said. The fire was brought under control quickly but smoldered into the next day.

Vietnam News Agency reported 32 deaths from the blaze as of late Wednesday and at least one karaoke room and one storage room have not been accessed because the temperature remained high.

Some people were injured from asphyxiation and others suffered broken limbs when they jumped from upper floors to try to escape the fire, reports said. Firefighters using ladders from their trucks managed to rescue others.

President Nguyen Xuan Phuc extended his condolences to families of the victims and asked government officials to support the families and quickly find the cause of the blaze. The preliminary finding was that it was caused by an electrical short circuit and started on the second or third floor.

Enforcement of safety standards at entertainment venues in many parts of Southeast Asia is sometimes lax and believed to contribute to multiple deaths in case of fires.

Police in Thailand said that a pub in the eastern province of Chonburi was presenting live entertainment without a license when a fire broke out in early August, trapping many people inside because exits were blocked or locked.

The toll from that fire has climbed to 23 dead, 13 of them on the night of the blaze and 10 in the month since then. Many had serious burns over most of their bodies, which are extremely difficult to guard against deadly infections. At least five other victims are believed to still be on ventilators.

## Obamas return to the White House, unveil official portraits

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, returned to the White House Wednesday, unveiling official portraits with a modern vibe in an event that set humor and nostalgia over his presidency against the current harsh political talk about the survival of democracy.

While her husband cracked a few jokes about his gray hair, big ears and clothes in his portrait, Mrs. Obama, a descendant of slaves, said the occasion for her was more about the promise of America for people like herself.

"Barack and Michelle, welcome home," declared President Joe Biden as the gathering cheered.

Biden, who was Obama's vice president, praised his former boss' leadership on health care, the economy and immigration and said nothing could have prepared him any better for being president than serving with Obama for those eight years.

"It was always about doing what was right," he said.

The portrait of Obama, America's 44th and first Black president, doesn't look like any of his predecessors, nor does Michelle Obama's look like any of the women who filled the role before her.

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Obama stands expressionless against a white background, wearing a black suit and gray tie in the portrait by Robert McCurdy that looks more like a large photograph than an oil-on-canvas portrait. The former first lady, her lips pursed, is seated on a sofa in the Red Room in a strapless, light blue dress. She chose artist Sharon Sprung for her portrait.

Scores of former members of Obama's administration were on hand for the big reveal.

Obama noted that some of them in the East Room audience had started families in the intervening years and feigned disappointment "that I haven't heard of anyone naming a kid Barack or Michelle."

He thanked McCurdy for his work, joking that the artist, who is known for his paintings of public figures from Nelson Mandela to the Dalai Lama, had ignored his pleas for fewer gray hairs and smaller ears. "He also talked me out of wearing a tan suit, by the way," Obama quipped, referring to a widely panned appearance as president in the unflattering suit.

Obama went on to say his wife was the "best thing about living in the White House," and he thanked Sprung for "capturing everything I love about Michelle, her grace, her intelligence -- and the fact that she's fine."

Michelle Obama, when it was her turn, laughingly opened by saying she had to thank her husband for "such spicy remarks." To which he retorted, by way of explanation, "I'm not running again."

Then the former first lady turned serious, drawing a connection between unveiling the portraits and America's promise for people with backgrounds like her own, a daughter of working-class parents from the South Side of Chicago.

"For me, this day is not just about what has happened," she said. "It's also about what could happen, because a girl like me, she was never supposed to be up there next to Jacqueline Kennedy and Dolley Madison. She was never supposed to live in this house, and she definitely wasn't supposed to serve as first lady."

Mrs. Obama said the portraits are a "reminder that there's a place for everyone in this country."

Tradition holds that the sitting president invites his immediate predecessor back to the White House to unveil his portrait, but Donald Trump broke with that custom and did not host Obama. So, Biden scheduled a ceremony for his former boss.

Mrs. Obama said the tradition matters "not just for those of us who hold these positions, but for everyone participating in and watching our democracy."

In remarks that never mentioned Trump but made a point as he continues to challenge his 2020 re-election loss, she added: "You see the people, they make their voices heard with their vote. We hold an inauguration to ensure a peaceful transition of power ... and once our time is up, we move on."

McCurdy, meanwhile, said his "stripped down" style of portraiture helps create an "encounter" between the person in the painting and the person looking at it.

"They have plain white backgrounds, nobody gestures, nobody — there are no props because we're not here to tell the story of the person that's sitting for them," McCurdy told the White House Historical Association during an interview for its "1600 Sessions" podcast.

"We're here to create an encounter between the viewer and the sitter," he said. "We're telling as little about the sitter as possible so that the viewer can project onto them."

He works from a photograph of his subject, selected from about 100 images, and spends at least a year on each portrait. Subjects have no say in how the painting looks. McCurdy said he knows he's done "when it stops irritating me."

Obama's portrait went on display in the Grand Foyer, the traditional showcase for paintings of the two most recent presidents. His portrait replaced Bill Clinton's near the stairway to the residence, the White House tweeted Wednesday night. George W. Bush's portrait hangs on the wall opposite Obama's in the foyer.

Mrs. Obama's portrait was hung one floor below on the Ground Floor, joining predecessors Barbara Bush, Hillary Clinton and Laura Bush, according to the tweet.

Two spokespeople for Trump did not respond to emailed requests for comment on whether artists have

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begun work on White House portraits for Trump and former first lady Melania Trump. Work, however, is underway on a separate pair of Trump portraits bound for the collection held by the National Portrait Gallery, a Smithsonian museum.

The White House Historical Association, a nonprofit organization founded in 1961 by first lady Jacqueline Kennedy and funded through private donations and sales of books and an annual Christmas ornament, helps manage the White House portrait process. Since the 1960s, the association has paid for most of the portraits in the collection.

Congress bought the first painting in the collection, of George Washington. Other portraits of early presidents and first ladies often came to the White House as gifts.

## Asia shares rise as Wall Street on track to end loss streak

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian benchmarks mostly rose Thursday, as investor optimism got a perk from a rally on Wall Street that's on track to break a three-week losing streak.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 surged nearly 2.0% in morning trading to 27,964.16. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.8% to 6,783.80. South Korea's Kospi edged up 0.4% to 2,385.55. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.3% to 18,986.70, while the Shanghai Composite rose nearly 0.1% to 3,248.76.

Somewhat reassuring to market watchers was Japan's revised seasonally adjusted real gross domestic product, or GDP, for the second quarter, which was revised upward to an annual rate of 3.5% growth, better than the initial estimate at 2.2%.

Data showed private consumption and business spending are holding up in the world's third-largest economy, which has managed to grow for three quarters straight. The on-quarter growth for GDP, or the sum of the value of a nation's products and services, was revised upward to 0.9% from 0.5%. The annual numbers show how the economy would have grown if the quarterly rate were to continue for a year.

"Economic conditions in the region will continue to be in focus, with China's trade balance data yesterday revealing challenges in both external and domestic demand," said Yeap Jun Rong, market strategist at IG in Singapore, referring to Wednesday's Chinese data.

Investors are also watching for what may happen on interest rates at the European Central Bank's meeting, as well as for comments from U.S. Fed Chair Jerome Powell, later Thursday.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 rose 1.8%, its biggest single-day gain in four weeks, with roughly 95% of the stocks in the benchmark index closing higher. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1.4% and the tech-heavy Nasdaq climbed 2.1%. Smaller company stocks outgained the broader market, driving the Russell 2000 index 2.2% higher.

The indexes are now all in the green for the week, a welcome respite for traders after a slump in recent weeks that erased much of the market's gains from a July and early August rally.

Wall Street watchers cautioned that the market is likely to see more volatility in coming weeks ahead of the next Federal Reserve interest rate policy update scheduled for Sept. 21.

"It's good that there's an up day, but I would caution anyone not to be too optimistic right now," said Randy Frederick, managing director of trading & derivatives at Charles Schwab. "You don't have a whole lot of reason for that."

Wall Street's focus remains on the highest inflation in decades and the Fed's attempt to rein it in with high interest rates. The central bank has already raised rates four times this year and markets expect them to deliver another jumbo-sized increase of three-quarters of a percentage point at their next meeting in two weeks.

The central bank has been clear about its determination to continue raising rates until it feels that inflation is leveling off or cooling. In June, Fed officials projected that the benchmark rate will reach a range of 3.25% to 3.5% by year's end and roughly a half-percentage point more in 2023.

"We are in this for as long as it takes to get inflation down," Fed Vice Chair Lael Brainard said at a banking industry conference on Wednesday. "Our resolve is firm, our goals are clear, and our tools are up to

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the task.”

Traders clawed back some of their recent losses with Wednesday's rally, which pushed the S&P 500 up 71.68 points to 3,979.87. The Dow rose 435.98 points to 31,581.28, and the Nasdaq gained 246.99 points to 11,791.90. The Russell 2000 climbed 39.68 points to 1,832.

Technology stocks and retailers made solid gains. Intuit rose 3.9%. Target rose 4.4% after announcing that it is dropping the mandatory retirement age for its CEO position, allowing CEO Brian Cornell to stay for three more years.

United Airlines rose 5.5% after raising its revenue forecast following a busy summer travel season. The encouraging update helped several competitors take flight. American Airlines rose 5.1% and Delta Air Lines added 3.3%.

Bond yields fell. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which influences interest rates on mortgages and other loans, fell to 3.27% from 3.34% late Tuesday. The two-year Treasury yield, which tends to track expectations for Fed action, fell to 3.45% from 3.51%.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude added 74 cents to \$82.68 a barrel. U.S. crude oil prices slid 5.7% Wednesday. Brent crude, the international standard, gained 68 cents to \$88.68 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 143.97 Japanese yen from 143.74 yen. The euro was little changed at \$1.00.

## US: Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians forced to Russia

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.S. said Wednesday it has evidence that “hundreds of thousands” of Ukrainian citizens have been interrogated, detained and forcibly deported to Russia in “a series of horrors” overseen by officials from Russia’s presidency.

Russia immediately dismissed the allegation as “fantasy,” calling it the latest invention in a Western disinformation campaign.

The charge came during a Security Council meeting called by the United States and Albania to discuss Russia’s “filtration operations.”

That involves Ukrainians voluntarily fleeing the war in their homeland and those forcibly being moved to Russia passing through a series of “filtration points” where treatment allegedly ranges from interrogations, data collection and strip searches to being yanked aside, tortured, sent to a detention center in Russia and never seen again.

US. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said estimates from a variety of sources, including the Russian government, indicate that Russian authorities have interrogated, detained and forcibly deported between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainians. She said they are sent to Russia, often to isolated regions in its far eastern regions.

“These operations aim to identify individuals Russia deems insufficiently compliant or compatible to its control,” Thomas-Greenfield said. “And there is mounting and credible evidence that those considered threatening to Russian control because of perceived pro-Ukrainian leanings are ‘disappeared’ or further detained.”

Russia’s presidency is not only coordinating filtration operations but is providing lists of Ukrainians to be targeted for filtration, she added.

She said estimates indicate thousands of children have been subject to filtration, “some separated from their families and taken from orphanages before being put up for adoption in Russia.” According to U.S. information, “more than 1,800 children were transferred from Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine to Russia” just in July, she said.

Russia’s U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, accused the West of trying to besmirch his country.

He said more than 3.7 million Ukrainians, including 600,000 children, have gone to Russia or Russian-controlled separatist areas in eastern Ukraine, but they “aren’t being kept in prisons.”

“They are living freely and voluntarily in Russia, and nobody is preventing them from moving or prevent-



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ing them leaving the country," he said.

Nebenzia said those Ukrainians went through "a registration rather than filtration procedure" similar to that for Ukrainian refugees in Poland and other countries in the European Union.

He said that since "we've wasted time talking about the latest conjectures and fantasies" Wednesday, Russia is proposing that the Security Council hold a meeting Thursday "on real threats to international peace and security caused by the supply by foreign states of arms and military goods to Ukraine."

French Ambassador Nicolas De Riviere, the current council president, scheduled the meeting for Thursday afternoon.

It will be the third consecutive Security Council meeting on Ukraine. On Tuesday, the council held a meeting at Russia's request to hear about the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in southeastern Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of shelling the facility and threatening a possible nuclear catastrophe.

Thomas-Greenfield said the United States knew Russia would deny using filtration, "but there's a simple way to know if any of this is true."

"Let the United Nations in," she told Nebenzia and other council members. "Give the independent observers access. Give NGOs access. Allow humanitarian access. Let the world see what is going on."

U.N. political chief Rosemary DiCarlo called for investigations of the "extremely disturbing" and persistent allegations "of forced displacement, deportation and so-called 'filtration camps' run by the Russian Federation and affiliated local forces."

She called for U.N. access to Ukrainians living in Russian-controlled areas and reiterated that the International Committee of the Red Cross and the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine "must have unimpeded access to all individuals detained in relation to the ongoing war."

"This includes access to places of internment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and detainees in the Russian Federation," she said. "Both sides to the conflict must fully abide with their obligations under international law."

Ilze Brands Kehris, the U.N. assistant secretary-general for human rights, urged Russia to provide her Geneva-based office access to all places of detention. She added that any adoptions of Ukrainian children in Russia would violate the Geneva Convention prohibiting the change of a child's personal status including its nationality.

Kehris said the U.N. human rights office "has verified" that Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups subject civilians to "filtration" security checks, which according to credible reports it received result in numerous human rights violations, including the rights to liberty, personal security and privacy.

The human rights office has documented that Russian troops and their affiliates subject Ukrainians to body searches that sometimes include nudity, interrogations about their personal background, family ties, political views and allegiances, and examinations of mobile devices, Kehris said.

The office has also documented that men and women perceived to having ties to Ukraine's military or government, or as having pro-Ukrainian or anti-Russian views "were subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and forced-disappearance" and were transferred to penal colonies, Kehris said.

## Record heat wave puts California in fossil fuel conundrum

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A record heat wave put California in a fossil fuel conundrum: The state has had to rely more heavily on natural gas to produce electricity and avoid power outages while Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration moves toward ending the use of oil and gas.

The heat wave that started more than a week ago has been hotter and longer than any other in the state, and it put unprecedented strain on power supplies. That prompted Newsom to plead with people to use less power to avoid rolling blackouts — a practice that involves cutting some people's power to save energy so the lights can stay on for everyone else.

The effort worked, but meeting the state's heightened energy demand also required activating generators

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fueled by natural gas, which is still a major part of the state's power picture. The Democratic governor's calls for conservation also drew criticism about new state policies governing electric vehicles and other measures that will only increase energy demand.

Newsom, speaking to reporters Wednesday, said the "pretty extreme" circumstances required the state to turn to more natural gas as a backup supply.

"We all want to accelerate the elimination of the gas, but it's a sober reminder of reality," he said.

Tuesday's demand for 52,000 megawatts set a record, as triple-digit temperatures blanketed much of the state. Sacramento hit a record high of 116 degrees (47 degrees Celsius), and normally cooler places like San Francisco and San Diego also reached sizzling temperatures.

Demand will only climb in the years ahead. By 2045, when the state is mandated to get all of its electricity from non-carbon or renewable sources, demand is expected to be as high as 78,000 megawatts due to more electric home appliances and cars on the road, according California Energy Commission estimates.

To meet that demand, both the government and major utilities like Pacific Gas & Electric are working to scale up renewable sources such as solar and wind power, as well as large-scale batteries that can store that power for use at night. The California Public Utilities Commission last year ordered utilities to procure enough additional power for 2.5 million homes by 2026.

Newsom just signed legislation aimed at keeping the state's last nuclear plant open for five years beyond its planned 2025 closure, and he suggested Wednesday that the plant could run even longer if needed.

The sun is typically the state's biggest power source during the day. But as the hot weather arrived, natural gas surpassed renewables for more time over the past week, according to the California Independent System Operator, which is responsible for managing and maintaining reliability on the state's power grid.

Gas was the primary energy source all day on Tuesday — the expected peak of the brutal temperatures.

Meanwhile, on Monday the state for the first time turned on four gas-powered generators to add more supply, enough to power 120,000 homes. It planned to rely on some diesel-powered generators as well.

But some of the state's fossil-fuel plants have their own reliability problems. Several power plants, including aging gas-fired ones along California's coast, partially broke down or produced less energy than planned, according to the ISO.

Four of the plants, which suck up ocean water to cool down their equipment, were slated to close in 2020, but the state has continually extended their lives to help stabilize the power supply. They now plan to stay open until at least 2023, but they could last even longer under legislation Newsom signed in June.

If the state wants to keep the old coastal gas-powered plants online beyond 2023, it needs to give the companies that own them more certainty about the future so they can decide whether to spend money to maintain them, said Siva Gunda, vice chairman of the California Energy Commission, the state's energy planning agency.

"Everything has to be moved forward at full throttle" with the "ambitious aim" that cleaner energy sources make up most of the state's power reserves, he said.

The intensity of the heat wave only emphasizes the need for California to move away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible, he said.

The grid challenges also provided plenty of fodder for Newsom's political critics, who have argued that Democrats' policies to move away from oil and gas don't add up.

The state recently adopted new regulations aimed at ending the sale of most new gas-powered cars in the state by 2035. But during the heat wave, officials also urged people not to charge cars or use other large appliances at night. The state has not banned car charging, but instead urged people to do so during the day.

"Gavin Newsom — You have to buy an electric car. Also Gavin Newsom — But you can't charge it," Republican state Sen. Melissa Melendez tweeted Tuesday evening after the state sent out an emergency wireless alert urging people to reduce power use.

Environmental groups say planning failures led California to rely on natural gas — and even ramp up its use — during the heat wave. The state needs to set clearer goals and benchmarks to meet its clean

energy targets and ensure that fossil fuels aren't used as a backup, said Ari Eisenstadt, campaign manager for Regenerate California, a campaign aimed at ending fossil fuel use in the state.

"Folks have been talking about natural gas as a bridge for decades," he said. "And if it were truly a bridge, we would have crossed it by now."

## FDA panel backs much-debated ALS drug in rare, 2nd review

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A panel of federal health advisers voted Wednesday to recommend approval for an experimental drug to treat Lou Gehrig's disease, a remarkable turnaround for the much-debated medication that was previously rejected by the same group earlier this year.

The Food and Drug Administration advisers voted 7-2 that data from Amylyx Pharma warranted approval, despite hours of debate about the strength and reliability of the company's lone study. The FDA is not required to follow the group's advice, but its positive recommendation suggests an approval is likely later this month.

The FDA has approved only two therapies for the disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, which destroys nerve cells needed for basic functions like walking, talking and swallowing.

ALS patients and their families have rallied behind Amylyx's drug, launching an aggressive lobbying campaign and enlisting members of Congress to push the FDA to grant approval.

Despite a negative review published by FDA's internal scientists ahead of the meeting, a majority of the outside panelists said Amylyx had presented enough evidence to suggest the drug is helping patients live longer. The same group of neurology experts narrowly voted against the drug in March, due to concerns about missing data and other issues in the company's study.

"To deprive ALS patients of a drug that might work, it's probably not something I would feel terribly comfortable with," said Dr. Liana Apostolova of Indiana University's School of Medicine, who voted for approval. "At the previous meeting it wasn't that clear and it's still questionable."

Amylyx also appeared to benefit from an unusual exchange in which a company executive — at the FDA's request — committed to pull the drug from the market if its benefits aren't confirmed by a large, ongoing study.

"I'm somewhat assured that if an approval is issued it can be withdrawn in the future," Apostolova noted.

Wednesday's vote concluded a rare second meeting to review several new statistical analyses submitted by Amylyx in support of the treatment's benefit in slowing disease and extending life.

The ALS drug review is being closely watched as an indicator of FDA's flexibility in reviewing experimental medications for the terminally ill and its ability to withstand outside pressure.

Dr. Billy Dunn, FDA's neurology review chief, opened the meeting by detailing the "concerns and limitations" with Amylyx's data, while emphasizing the need for new treatment options.

"We are highly sensitive to the urgent need for the development of new treatments for ALS," Dunn said.

Dunn also noted that a larger Amylyx study being conducted in the U.S. and Europe could provide "more definitive results" by 2024.

In a highly unusual move, Dunn suggested the agency might be more willing to approve the drug if Amylyx would commit to withdrawing its medication if the ongoing 600-patient trial fails to show a benefit. He then called on the company's co-founders to publicly commit to that step, and Amylyx co-CEO Justin Klee said the company would voluntarily withdraw its drug in that scenario.

The FDA has the power to force companies to pull drugs from the market, though it's generally faster if drugmakers voluntarily take that step. In cases where companies resist removal the regulatory process can drag on for years.

"I think the FDA — with all due respect — significantly understates the complexity and likelihood of their pulling the product from the market," said Dr. Caleb Alexander of Johns Hopkins University, one of the two panelists who voted against the drug.

Amylyx conducted one small, mid-stage trial of its drug that showed some benefit in slowing the disease,

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but it was plagued by missing data and other problems, according to FDA reviewers.

"The final result — for a single study — is borderline and not very statistically persuasive," FDA statistician Tristan Massie told panelists.

The Cambridge, Massachusetts, company says follow-up data gathered after the study concluded showed the drug extended life. Patients who continued taking the drug survived about 10 months longer than patients who never took the drug, according to a new company analysis.

Panelists favoring the drug cited that data, along with the drug's mild side effects, to suggest there would be little downside for patients even if it doesn't ultimately slow ALS.

"The drug is not harmful — it seems like it has a benefit — there's no safety signal here," said Dean Follmann, a biostatistician with the National Institutes of Health.

Earlier Wednesday, more than 20 ALS researchers, patients and family members told the advisers they supported approval. The agency has also received more than 1,200 written comments, largely from ALS patient advocates.

"I'm asking you to approve it because I know it works. It's extending my life and I want that for others," said Greg Canter, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2018 and participated in Amylyx's study. He credits the drug with improving his lung capacity and slowing his functional decline.

Amylyx's medication comes as a powder that combines two older drugs: one prescription medication for liver disorders and a dietary supplement used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Hanging over the review is FDA's controversial approval of the Alzheimer's drug Aduhelm last year, which was reviewed by the same agency scientists and outside advisers.

In that case, the FDA disregarded the overwhelmingly negative vote by its outside advisers, three of whom resigned over the decision. The agency's approval — which followed irregular meetings with drug-maker Biogen — is under investigation by Congress and federal inspectors.

## Shelling resumes near Ukraine nuclear plant, despite risks

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Shelling resumed near Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, with the warring sides trading blame again on Wednesday, a day after the U.N. atomic watchdog agency pressed for a safe zone there to prevent a catastrophe.

Russian forces fired rockets and heavy artillery on the city of Nikopol, on the opposite bank of the Dnieper River from Europe's largest nuclear plant, regional Gov. Valentyn Reznichenko said.

"There are fires, blackouts and other things at the (plant) that force us to prepare the local population for the consequences of the nuclear danger," Reznichenko said. Officials in recent days have distributed iodine pills to residents to help protect them in the event of a radiation leak.

In Enerhodar, where the power plant is located, Dmytro Orlov, the pre-occupation mayor, reported the city had come under Russian attack for a second time Wednesday and was without power. "Employees of communal and other services simply do not have time to complete emergency and restoration work, as another shelling reduces their work to zero," he said on the Telegram messaging app.

The Russian side blamed the Ukrainians. Vladimir Rogov, head of the Russia-installed Enerhodar administration, said on Telegram that heavy Ukrainian fighting had caused the city's blackout, and Russia's Defense Ministry blamed the outage on a Ukrainian attack on a power substation.

Russian rockets on Wednesday hit Mala Tokmachka 90 kms (55 miles) northeast of Enerhodar, killing three people and injuring five, Zaporizhzhia regional Gov. Oleksandr Starukh reported.

It's not possible to independently reconcile the conflicting reports of the fighting, which has caused international alarm.

The head of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, has warned that "something very, very catastrophic could take place" at the Zaporizhzhia plant and urged Russia and Ukraine to establish a "nuclear safety and security protection zone" around it. The fear is that the fighting could trigger a disaster on the scale of the Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine in 1986.

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Neither Moscow nor Kiev officials would immediately commit to a safety zone.

Conditions at the plant have worsened. Because of damage to external power lines from the fighting, the plant is generating electricity only to power safety systems that keep the reactor cores cool and prevent them from melting down, a Ukrainian official said. Any further power disruption could force the plant to use back-up diesel generators, requiring four diesel fuel trucks a day to travel through the fighting, said Oleh Korikov, Ukraine's acting chief inspector for nuclear and radiation safety.

"We could potentially be in a situation where we run out of diesel," he said. "And this can lead to an accident with damage to the active zone of the reactors and, accordingly, the release of radioactive products into the environment."

The plant had to activate its diesel generators late last month, according to Ukrainian officials.

Authorities could consider shutting down the plant, Korikov said, without offering details.

The plant's operator, Energoatom, said that despite the shelling, Ukrainian staff still working at the Russian-occupied plant will try to restore external power.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday defied pressure to halt the war, saying Moscow will forge ahead with its offensive and mocked Western attempts to stop Russia with sanctions.

Putin told an annual economic forum in the far-eastern port city of Vladivostok that even though the IAEA didn't assign blame for the shelling around the Zaporizhzhia plant, claims that Russian forces are responsible are "absolute nonsense." He asked rhetorically, "Well, are we shooting at ourselves or what?"

He claimed fragments of Western weapons have been found at the plant, denied that Russia has placed military equipment there and said he doesn't understand why Ukraine would fire on the facility, other than "to create an additional crisis."

Heavy fighting was reported on three fronts: in the north, near the city of Kharkiv; in the east, in the industrial Donbas region of mines and factories; and in the south, in the Kherson region, where Ukraine has mounted a counteroffensive to try to retake territory from the Russians.

Ukrainian forces have taken control of an unspecified number of towns in the Kherson region, military spokesperson Nataliya Humenyuk said. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in his nightly video address, also reported success in the Kharkiv region, without providing details.

The Ukrainian military said it had foiled Russian attempts to advance on a dozen settlements in the east, including the city of Bakhmut, which the UK defense ministry has identified as "probably Russia's planned main effort." Capturing Bakhmut would enable Moscow's forces to threaten Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, the region's two largest Ukrainian-held cities.

Sloviansk came under Russian fire on Wednesday, and a school and another building were damaged, according to mayor Vadym Lyakh.

Firefighters dug deep into the smoldering rubble of an apartment building and removed at least one body. Chunks of bricks, masonry and concrete lay among torn tree branches, broken glass and roof tiles. Metal doors, buckled by the blast's force, hung off their hinges.

The strike came at around 4 a.m., said resident Raisa Smelkova, 75, who lives in another part of the building. She and her husband were unhurt. The couple lived through the fighting in Ukraine in 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimea region.

"What is happening now is not just scary, it's gruesome," she said. "There is more destruction. Everything is worse. Just everything."

In other developments:

—Andrei Turchak, the leader of United Russia, the main Kremlin-directed political party, suggested that referendums on joining the Russian Federation could be held in the eastern Donbas and other Russia-controlled areas in Ukraine on Nov. 4, when Russia marks National Unity Day. Russia has already recognized some parts of the Donbas as sovereign.

—The United States said Wednesday that it has evidence showing "hundreds of thousands" of Ukrainian citizens have been interrogated, detained and forcibly removed to Russia. Russia dismissed the allegation as "fantasy," calling it the latest invention in a Western disinformation campaign.

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—The Russian military on Wednesday ended large-scale drills in the country's east that involved forces from China. It was seen as another show of increasingly close ties between Moscow and Beijing, contrasting with tensions with the West over the war.

## Judge strikes down 1931 Michigan law criminalizing abortion

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — A judge on Wednesday struck down Michigan's 1931 anti-abortion law, months after suspending it, the latest development over abortion rights in a state where the issue is being argued in courtrooms and, possibly, at the ballot box.

The law, which was long dormant before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June, violates the Michigan Constitution, said Judge Elizabeth Gleicher.

"A law denying safe, routine medical care not only denies women of their ability to control their bodies and their lives — it denies them of their dignity," Gleicher of the Court of Claims wrote. "Michigan's Constitution forbids this violation of due process."

The decision comes as the Michigan Supreme Court is considering whether to place a proposed amendment on the Nov. 8 ballot that would add abortion rights to the state constitution. A Friday deadline is looming.

Supporters submitted more than 700,000 signatures, easily clearing the threshold. But a tie vote by the Board of State Canvassers over spacing issues on the petition has kept it off the ballot so far.

In the case handled by Gleicher, the 1931 law makes it a crime to perform an abortion unless the mother's life is in danger.

The judge said the law "compels motherhood" and prevents a woman from determining the "shape of her present and future life."

The law "forces a pregnant woman to forgo her reproductive choices and to instead serve as 'an involuntary vessel entitled to no more respect than other forms of collectively owned property,'" Gleicher wrote, quoting constitutional scholar Laurence Tribe.

The law was suspended in May with an injunction, following a lawsuit by Planned Parenthood of Michigan. Gleicher said her latest decision applies to all state and local prosecutors. An appeal by the Republican-controlled Legislature is possible.

"The House is reviewing the ruling," spokesman Gideon D'Assandro said.

Gleicher acknowledged in July that she has been a regular donor to Planned Parenthood and gave \$1,000 to the 2018 campaigns of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel, both Democrats who support abortion rights.

But that support wasn't a reason to pass the case to another judge, said Gleicher, who also serves as chief judge on the Michigan Court of Appeals.

"Judges are presumed to be unbiased and impartial," she said.

In a separate lawsuit, Whitmer has repeatedly asked the state Supreme Court to bypass lower courts and settle the status of the 1931 law. The court hasn't decided whether to intervene.

"With our rights still hanging by a thread, the Michigan Supreme Court needs to provide certainty," the governor said Wednesday.

## EPA leader: Jackson needs 'fair share' of money to fix water

EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS undefined

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — The head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Wednesday that he wants Mississippi's capital city to receive "its fair share" of federal money to repair a troubled water system that left homes and businesses without running water for several days.

Even with water flowing from taps and people again able to flush toilets this week, Jackson lacks safe drinking water. The city of 150,000 is in the sixth week of a boil-water advisory from the state health department because of concerns that low pressure could allow contaminants into the water.

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EPA Administrator Michael Regan was in Jackson to meet with residents and state and local elected officials Wednesday. He touted the \$1 trillion federal infrastructure law that President Joe Biden signed in November.

Mississippi is set to receive more than \$4 billion from the law, with most of the money designated for highways and bridges, the White House said. The state's allocation includes \$429 million over five years to improve water systems.

"It's our desire that the city of Jackson gets its fair share," Regan said during a meeting with community leaders. "It's our desire that the city of Jackson doesn't have to live with what you all have lived with for far too long."

Jackson's main water-treatment plant malfunctioned in late August after torrential rain caused flooding along the Pearl River. The influx altered the quality of the raw water entering the plant from a reservoir. That slowed the treatment process, depleted supplies in water tanks and caused a dangerous drop in pressure.

But even before the rainfall, officials said some water pumps had failed and a treatment plant was using backup pumps. A rental pump was installed last week, and the system's water pressure is back to normal.

Groups are distributing bottled water at drive-thru sites, and restaurants are bringing tanks of clean water from suburbs.

About 25% of Jackson's residents live in poverty, and the city's tax base has declined with a sharp decrease in population since 1980 — a change that happened along with mostly white flight that started about a decade after public schools began integrating in 1970.

Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson sat with Regan at the community meeting and toured Jackson's main water plant with the administrator, Gov. Tate Reeves and Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba. Other members of Mississippi's congressional delegation also participated in meetings with them about short-term and long-term solutions for the city's water problems.

"We do know that will require all of us working together to cut through the bureaucracy," Regan said during a news conference at Jackson State University.

Thompson pointed out during the community meeting that Regan is from North Carolina, which also has a large Black population.

"He understands the challenges, especially (for) communities of color," said Thompson, the only Black member of Mississippi's congressional delegation. "Under this current administration, they have taken the fact that many of these communities have been underserved by its government and tried to right the ship."

Jackson's water system has been fragile for years, with officials warning that widespread loss of service was possible. A cold snap in 2021 froze pipes and some water treatment equipment, leaving tens of thousands of people without running water. Similar problems happened again early this year, on a smaller scale. The EPA also told Jackson months ago that its water system violates the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

## Apple maintains prices on new iPhones despite inflation

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP) — Apple's latest line-up of iPhones will boast better cameras, faster processors, and a longer lasting battery — all at the same prices as last year's models, despite inflationary pressure that has driven up the cost of many other everyday items.

That pricing decision, revealed Wednesday during Apple's first in-person product event in three years, came as a mild surprise. Many analysts predicted Apple would ask its devout fans to pay as much as 15% more to help offset rising costs for many components.

The hoopla surrounding Apple's new iPhone 14 models is part of a post-Labor Day ritual the company has staged annually for more than a decade. Wednesday's event was held on the company's Cupertino, California, campus at a theater named after company co-founder Steve Jobs. After Apple CEO Tim Cook strolled out on stage, most of the event consisted of pre-recorded video presentation that the company honed during previous events staged during the pandemic.

For several years, Apple's new iPhones have mostly featured incremental upgrades to cameras and bat-

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tery life, and this year's models were no exception. Pricing for the standard iPhone 14 will start at \$799; the deluxe iPhone 14 Pro Max will start at \$1099.

Among the latest improvements is a 48-megapixel camera in the Pro and Pro Max models that the company said will produce especially crisp pictures. The iPhone 13 versions of the Pro and Pro Max have 12-megapixel cameras. This year's high-end models will also have always-on displays that stay lit even when the device is locked, a feature that has long been available on many smartphones powered by Google's Android software.

Beginning in November, all the iPhone 14 models will be able to send SOS messages via a new satellite feature — a safety measure intended to let users request help when in remote areas without a wireless connection.

All the iPhone 14 models also will include a motion sensor capable of detecting serious car crashes and automatically connecting to emergency services.

With inflation still hovering at its highest level in 40 years, consumers have curbed their spending on many discretionary items. That's likely contributing to a recent decline in smartphone sales, although the iPhone has fared far better than competing Android devices .

The dimming sales outlook prompted the research firm International Data Corp. to predict a worldwide decline in 2022 smartphone shipments of 6.5%, almost double the 3.5% decline it had estimated a few months ago. Despite that anticipated drop in sales, the average price for new smartphones is expected to finish this year about 6% higher than last year, IDC estimated.

By keeping iPhones prices the same, Apple faces the potential risk of undermining its profits if inflation drives up its own costs. It's a hit that the company could easily afford, given it has reaped \$44 billion in profits through the first half of this year.

Apple could also end up fatten its bottom line if more consumers looking upgrade their mobile devices gravitate to the high-end Pro and Pro Max models, which generate bigger profit margins than the cheaper models. And it appears Apple is anticipating a growing number of consumers will be prepared to pay an additional \$200 to \$300 for deluxe versions of the iPhone 14, said Wedbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives.

Apple's stock price gained 1% Wednesday to close at \$155.96.

Consumers have already been snapping up iPhones this year, even though Apple charges among the industry's highest prices. Apple sold an estimated 106 million iPhones through the first half of this year, an 8% increase from the same time last year, according to Canalys, another research firm.

Forrester analyst Thomas Husson hailed the new lineup for its faster chips, improved design and "some incremental innovative features."

The company's Apple Watch Series 8, meanwhile, will include a new temperature sensor intended to help women retrospectively track their ovulation cycles in addition to the crash detection feature also debuting on the iPhone 14. The price for the latest Apple Watch, available in stores Sept. 16, will start at \$399, the same as last year's model.

In an effort to broaden the appeal of wearable technology, Apple is rolling out a Watch Ultra model designed to be more durable and offering a variety of special features tailored for hikers, scuba divers and other outdoor enthusiasts. The Watch Ultra, available in stores Sept. 23, will carry a premium price of \$799.

CCI Insight analyst Leo Gebbie predicted that the Ultra will compete with existing sports watch brands like Garmin and some luxury Swiss watchmakers that market their products around extreme sports.

Apple also took the wraps off its next generation of wireless earbuds, the AirPods Pro 2, which will also maintain a starting price of \$249.

## Michael Flynn: From government insider to holy warrior

By MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

BATAVIA, N.Y. (AP) — The crowd swayed on its feet, arms pumping, the beat of Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" thumping in their chests. The people under the revival tent hooted as Michael Flynn strode across the stage, bopping and laughing, singing the refrain into his microphone and encouraging



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the audience to sing along to the transgressive rock anthem.

"We'll fight the powers that be just/Don't pick our destiny 'cause/You don't know us, you don't belong!"

The emcee introduced him as "America's General," but to those in the audience, Flynn is far more than that: martyr, hero, leader, patriot, warrior.

The retired lieutenant general, former national security adviser, onetime anti-terrorism fighter, is now focused on his next task: building a movement centered on Christian nationalist ideas, where Christianity is at the center of American life and institutions.

Flynn brought his fight — a struggle he calls both spiritual and political — last month to a church in Batavia, New York, where thousands of people paid anywhere from a few dollars to up to \$500 to hear and absorb his message that the United States is facing an existential threat, and that to save the nation, his supporters must act.

Flynn, 63, has used public appearances to energize voters, along with political endorsements to build alliances and a network of nonprofit groups — one of which has projected spending \$50 million — to advance the movement, an investigation by The Associated Press and the PBS series "Frontline" has found. He has drawn together election deniers, mask and vaccine opponents, insurrectionists, Proud Boys, and elected officials and leaders in state and local Republican parties. Along the way, the AP and "Frontline" documented, Flynn and his companies have earned hundreds of thousands of dollars for his efforts.

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This story is part of an ongoing investigation from The Associated Press and "Frontline" that includes the upcoming documentary "Michael Flynn's Holy War," premiering Oct. 18 on PBS and online.

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The AP and "Frontline" spoke with more than 60 people, including Flynn's family, friends, opponents, and current and former colleagues, for this story. The news organizations also reviewed campaign finance records, corporate and charity filings, social media posts and similar open-source information, and attended several public events where Flynn appeared. Reporters examined dozens of Flynn's speeches, interviews and public appearances. Flynn himself sat down for a rare on-camera interview with what he calls the mainstream media.

"I don't even know why I'm talking to you, honestly," Flynn said as the interview got underway.

Throughout 2021 and 2022, Flynn made more than 60 in-person speeches in 24 states, according to a count by the AP and "Frontline." When he speaks, the former top adviser to then-President Donald Trump spreads baseless conspiracy theories, stoking fear and fueling anger and division and grievance.

Flynn is "one of the most dangerous individuals in America today," said Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a historian and expert on authoritarianism and fascism who wrote the book "Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present."

"He is spearheading the attack on our democracy, which is coming from many quarters, and he is affiliated with many of these sectors, from the military to Christian nationalism to election denial to extremist groups," she said. "All of this comes together to present a very live threat. And he's at the center."

Flynn has, with mixed success, supported like-minded candidates around the country, and has said his immediate goal is to influence this year's elections. In Sarasota, Florida, where he lives, he has worked in concert with members of the extremist group the Proud Boys to influence local politics. Their favored candidates in August won control of the county school board.

"Local action has a national impact" is his mantra.

"We need to take this country back one town at a time, one county at a time, one state at a time, if that's what it takes," he told a crowd in Salt Lake City.

## THE ULTIMATE INSIDER

Flynn's advocacy of falsehoods and conspiracy theories hardly makes him unique in a fact-challenged America, but his pedigree, military career and high-powered Washington contacts set him apart. He's a retired three-star general who less than two decades ago developed wartime strategies for countering insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan.

His selection as Trump's first national security adviser made him the ultimate insider, giving him nominal

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control — if only for a matter of weeks — of the administration's national security strategy. When he later found himself in legal trouble on suspicion that he had lied to the FBI about his conversations with the Russian ambassador to the United States, he cooperated with the same government establishment he now crusades against.

In the weeks after the November 2020 presidential election, Flynn picked up a presidential pardon — granted to forgive his guilty plea to lying to the FBI. He immediately became a chief promoter of the "Stop the Steal" effort and championed bogus claims about foreign interference and ballot tampering that weren't supported by credible evidence. But for some voters, Flynn's status as a retired general and top intelligence officer gave weight to the empty theories.

He falsely said Trump won, called the election outcome part of "a coup in progress," suggested Trump should seize voting machines and said Trump could order up the military in some states and rerun the election. In December 2020 he even made his way into the Oval Office to push his ideas directly to Trump.

Called before a congressional committee investigating the Capitol insurrection of Jan. 6, 2021, Flynn refused to say whether he believed the violence was justified or even whether he believed in the peaceful transition of power. He invoked his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself.

Retired Brig. Gen. Steven M. Anderson, who served with Flynn in Iraq, called Flynn's ideas antithetical to core values of the American military and the nation itself.

Anderson worries that Flynn is "a role model for thousands and thousands and thousands of soldiers and former soldiers," and that his ideas can empower them to take actions that hurt the country.

"We've got a retired three-star, former NSA, who says we can overthrow the election, use our military," Anderson said. The thinking goes, he said, "Well, then yes, sign me up for the Proud Boys."

Flynn uses the three stars he earned in the military as his symbol, a shorthand that reminds people he came from the highest levels of the nation's power structure — and that suggests he has a special knowledge of how things work in the shadowy world of Washington and global affairs.

"It's a crying shame that essentially he has evolved into the person he is now," said Anderson, who described his former colleague as a "subservient buffoon that unfortunately has forsaken his oath of office."

Doug Wise, a former CIA and military officer who knew Flynn for decades and briefly served as Flynn's deputy at the Defense Intelligence Agency, said even in the military, Flynn often pushed the envelope of what was permissible and demonstrated "extreme thinking." He believes Flynn hasn't transformed, he's just become more comfortable acting on the anger that burns inside him.

"I understand the reasons why he gravitated to the right wing because as his behavior and beliefs became more bizarre, I think they were very welcoming. Because who wouldn't want a highly respected Army three-star to join your group?" Wise said.

"I think he believed, post-government, and he was right in this ... that he was too well-connected to fail," Wise said. "And he got pardoned."

Flynn sees conspiracies in just about every corner of American life.

He's repeated falsehoods about Black Lives Matter and said that so-called globalists created COVID-19. He tells the tens of thousands of people who have paid to see him speak that there are 75 members of the Socialist Party in Congress, and has said the left and Democrats are trying to destroy the country. He asserts, above all else, that the United States was founded on Judeo-Christian values. The bedrock, he warns, is crumbling.

The country, Flynn often says in speeches and interviews, is in the midst of a "spiritual war," and he goes after many of the institutions and ideas that stand as pillars of American democracy.

He has told audiences he doesn't trust the U.S. government or government institutions that oversee the rule of law. He called the media "the No. 1 enemy" and said it has done a "horrible, horrible disservice to the country by just constantly lying and trying to deceive us." He says elementary schools are teaching "filth" and "pornography." He continues to assert, ignoring all evidence to the contrary, that elections can't be trusted. He says, over and over, that some of his fellow Americans are "evil."

"They dress like us and they talk like us, but they don't think and act like us," he told a podcaster recently. "And they definitely do not want what it is that we want."

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## 'HEAVY ARMAMENTS'

Survey data shows many Americans believe what Flynn says — that the 2020 election was stolen — and have bought into COVID-19 misinformation and other conspiracy theories that he spreads, said Kristin Kobes Du Mez, a professor of history at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, who studies the evangelical movement.

"Any of these factors alone could be considered dangerous. But all of them together and the distrust it is sowing in our democracy," Du Mez said. "I think it's extremely dangerous in this moment."

She points to Flynn's role as headliner of a multicity roadshow known as the ReAwaken America tour, an event that is a potent mix of politics, religion and commerce that has become a prime example of the Christian nationalist movement.

Flynn helped found the tour in 2021 with Clay Clark, an entrepreneur from Oklahoma who had been running business conferences before the pandemic. In his interview with the AP and "Frontline" in February, Flynn said he considered himself a "senior leader" of the team that's running it.

The thread of Christian nationalism runs through many of Flynn's events. At one fundraiser, a preacher prayed over him saying that America would stay a Christian nation and that Flynn was "heavy armaments" in the Lord's quiver. At the Christian Patriot's Rally at a church in Northern California, Flynn was presented with an assault-style rifle on stage. In Virginia in July, he said pastors "need to be talking about the Constitution from the pulpit as much as the Bible." In Texas last November, Flynn told a crowd "this is a moment in time where this is good versus evil."

"If we are going to have one nation under God, which we must, we have to have one religion. One nation under God, and one religion under God, right?" he said.

Christian nationalism seeks to merge the identity of Christians and Americans, so that to be a "true" American is to be Christian — and a certain type of Christian. The ideology pushes the idea that the United States was founded on biblical principles and has a favored relationship with a Christian God, said Samuel Perry, a sociologist at the University of Oklahoma who studies conservative Christianity and politics.

It is distinct from the practice of Christianity, and Perry's research has found that many Americans who are inclined toward Christian nationalism don't go to church.

"This has nothing to do with Christian orthodoxy. It has nothing to do with loving Jesus or wanting to be a good disciple or loving your neighbor or self-sacrifice or anything like that," Perry said. "It has everything to do with Christian ethno-culture and specifically white Christian ethno-culture."

Flynn casts himself as a victim of "the deep state" who paid a steep price for supporting Trump. Besides Trump, his supporters say, no one has been persecuted more than Flynn.

Flynn's rhetoric — us versus them, good versus evil, the idea that God is on "our" side — has been a staple among conservative Christians for decades, and is mainstream in conservative evangelicalism, Du Mez said.

The thinking, she said, can fuel violence.

"They're out to get us. Therefore, we need to strike first. And the threat is always dire," Du Mez says the thinking goes. "And if the threat is dire, then the ends justify the means."

"These values are not unconnected from the violence that we saw on Jan. 6," she added.

(When the AP and "Frontline" asked Flynn in February if he ascribes to Christian nationalist views, he dodged. He first asked what the term meant, then said he was "an Irish Catholic" then a "follower of Jesus," before criticizing the reporter: "That was a stupid question to ask me," he said, "because that means that you really have not studied Mike Flynn.")

Last October, Flynn was the star attraction at the WeCANAct Liberty Conference, a gathering in Salt Lake City for Utah's Platform Republicans PAC.

The program included dozens of speakers and exhibitors talking about a grab bag of ideas and causes that have seized and panicked the right -- about vaccines, human trafficking, elections and the QAnon conspiracy theory.

Among the sponsors and exhibitors were the John Birch Society; businesses selling everything from

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texting services for political campaigns to food dehydrators; Ammon Bundy's anti-government People's Rights group; and America's Frontline Doctors, which has spread false information about COVID-19 and promoted unproven treatments such as ivermectin, a drug used to treat parasitic infections. State lawmakers from Arizona and Utah spoke, and members of the Utah Republican Party's governing committee were among the organizers.

The program kicked off with an invocation by a preacher who brought the crowd to its feet as he described a "prophecy" of a "Great Awakening" where "Americans are going to rise up and defeat the cabal."

"We are in a spiritual war, and you can't win a war without attacking," he said.

The preacher ended by leading the crowd in what he called a "new version of the Lord's Prayer that fits the Great Awakening." The crowd repeated after him as he said: "Deliver us from the cabal, and from Satan's influence. For yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory. Forever and ever and ever. Amen."

Flynn appeared a few times throughout the day, at one point sitting in the audience. Across the Salt Palace Convention Center, people jostled their seatmates to point him out and craned their necks to see him.

That evening, he gave a meandering speech that he referred to as "an ass-chewing from a general." He falsely declared once again that Trump had won the 2020 election, said "our government is corrupt," and called for the FBI to be abolished, a surprising applause line in October 2021 that has now being taken up more broadly by some Republicans.

He called the left "our enemies" and said they are "godless" and "soulless."

One of Flynn's companies, Resilient Patriot LLC, was paid \$58,000 by the conference. An AP and "Frontline" review of state and federal campaign finance filings documented nearly \$300,000 in payments to Flynn and his businesses from candidates and political action committees since 2021, for things such as speaking fees, travel, book sales and campaign consulting. (Florida congressional candidate Laura Loomer reported paying his company \$1,100 in May for public relations services.)

After Flynn's keynote concluded, a podcaster helping to wrap things up for the evening came onstage and called him "one of the new founding fathers of this republic."

## 99 ENDORSEMENTS

As Flynn speaks and stumps to persuade people to join his movement, he has also been busy building a network of political candidates at the federal, state and local levels.

The AP and "Frontline" found that Flynn has endorsed 99 candidates for the 2022 election cycle. (He subsequently withdrew a handful.)

The country's most influential Republican is paying attention. Flynn's brother Joseph told an interviewer in May that during a visit the Flynn's made to Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate this spring, Trump himself produced a list comparing the success of his endorsed candidates with Flynn's.

At least 80% of Flynn's chosen candidates have publicly spread lies or sown doubt about Trump's 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden, or even participated in efforts to overturn the election, the AP and "Frontline" found. Several have suggested they would use their power if elected to change the way elections are run and how people are allowed to cast their vote.

About two dozen were at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 5-6, 2021.

One-third have served in the military.

At least 38 have used Christian nationalist rhetoric. Keith Self, a congressional candidate in Texas, has said he's running for Congress "to defend the Judeo-Christian foundations of this nation." Christine Villaverde, a congressional candidate in North Carolina, has vowed to fight to keep America "a Christian nation." Anthony Sabatini, a Florida state lawmaker who just lost a bid for Congress, recently posted on Facebook, "Only when Christians stand up & get loud, will we take this country back."

Flynn's support can be a sought-after prize. An AP and "Frontline" analysis of Facebook and Instagram ad data found ads from more than 20 candidates promoting their endorsements. Jackson Lahmeyer, an Oklahoma pastor who was defeated in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate by Sen. James Lankford, mentioned Flynn in 48 Facebook and Instagram ads, more than one-quarter of his total buy on the platforms.

Pastor Leon Benjamin, a Republican candidate for Congress in Virginia who denounced homosexuality and called gay marriages illegal in an August speech, said in an interview that Flynn's endorsement rep-

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resents "that affirmation and that understanding that we've got to have the right candidates in, and it's not always popular, not always goes along with the grain."

"If we keep doing the same things over and over again, that's the definition of insanity," he added. "So we got to do some different things to get different results."

More than 40 of Flynn's endorsements were for candidates seeking state or even local posts, the AP and "Frontline" found. Flynn endorsed two school board contenders in Camdenton, Missouri, candidates for sheriff in Florida, Nevada and Illinois and a city council candidate in North Carolina. He endorsed candidates for the state legislature in Michigan, Ohio, Arizona, Florida, Texas and Missouri. In Arizona, Michigan, California and Colorado, he gave his approval to candidates for secretary of state, a position that typically involves the administration of elections.

A dozen gubernatorial candidates won Flynn's backing, including Pennsylvania's Republican nominee, Doug Mastriano, a state lawmaker whom Flynn introduced at his campaign launch. Mastriano, a retired U.S. Army colonel, floated a plan to undo Biden's victory in his state, organized buses to the U.S. Capitol for Jan. 6 and was filmed walking past barricades and police lines that day. Mastriano has denied breaking the law and has not been charged with any crimes. Another Flynn endorsee, Dan Cox, who also organized buses for Jan. 6, won the Republican gubernatorial nomination in Maryland.

Still, Flynn's endorsement doesn't guarantee a win. Josh Mandel, the Ohio U.S. Senate candidate, was defeated by JD Vance, who got a late endorsement from Trump. Some Flynn-backed candidates, including gubernatorial candidate Joey Gilbert in Nevada and Colorado secretary of state candidate Tina Peters, made baseless claims of election fraud after they lost.

Flynn and his allies have suggested he wants to get back into government, and the growing influence that flows from the network he's building may help him get there, said Ron Filipkowski, a lawyer in Sarasota and longtime Republican activist who now tracks Flynn and other far-right figures online.

"He's going to build this grassroots movement, local elected officials beholden to him, loyal to him," Filipkowski said.

## FINANCING ELECTION DENIAL

Flynn has expanded his influence further through well-financed groups that advocate, among other things, changes to the way elections are run, based on the false premise that there is widespread voting fraud.

Flynn and Patrick Byrne, founder of Overstock.com, last year launched The America Project, with Flynn's brother Joseph as president. The group said it planned to spend \$50 million in the 2021 budget year, according to a filing with North Carolina charity regulators. But Joseph Flynn and Byrne separately told AP that it had spent tens of millions less, though each gave different totals.

While Flynn himself is not listed among its officers, he is the face of the group, and it's described as "General Flynn and Patrick Byrne's America Project." Byrne says Flynn is his closest adviser, telling the AP and "Frontline" that Flynn is his "Yoda" and "rabbi."

In April 2021, Flynn was named chairman of America's Future, one of the country's oldest conservative nonprofit groups. The organization was founded in 1946 and was previously led by ultra-conservative stalwarts, including Phyllis Schlafly and retired Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. Since Flynn took over, the group hired his sister, Mary O'Neill, as executive director and appointed Joseph Flynn to its board of directors. The group had about \$3 million in assets at the end of 2020, its most recent IRS filings show. Flynn told the AP and "Frontline" in February that he had raised an estimated \$1.7 million for America's Future since becoming chairman.

The two groups worked in close coordination last year, together donating more than \$4.2 million for a widely criticized and misinformation-driven review of the 2020 presidential election results commissioned by Arizona Republicans.

The America Project has given about \$5 million to "grassroots organizations" around the country, Joseph Flynn said in a July appearance on an online show.

Many of the groups they support back what they call "election integrity," a term often used by election deniers to justify making it more difficult to vote based on the falsehood that American elections are corrupt.

Campaign finance records show The America Project has given more than \$150,000 to Conservatives

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for Election Integrity, a group that has supported several secretary of state candidates who have worked to undermine trust in 2020 election results.

The America Project gave \$100,000 to a Colorado group, Citizens for Election Integrity, which used it for ads and text messages attacking a Republican candidate for secretary of state who ran against Flynn's endorsed candidate. In Michigan, The America Project gave \$100,000 in May to Secure MI Vote, which has reportedly pushed to roll back voter access.

In Georgia, they just announced they're backing an effort to challenge voter registrations for tens of thousands of people.

Joseph Flynn said during a speech in May that The America Project also funded and advised many of what he termed "audits" of elections around the country, including in Georgia, Michigan and Wisconsin, though he did not give specifics.

In February, Flynn stood in a burger joint in Orlando, Florida, to announce The America Project's most public initiative, "Operation Eagles Wings," the goal of which is to mobilize and train poll watchers and precinct captains, and to drive get-out-the-vote efforts.

"I think every single person in this country, every American citizen, now has to pay attention to politics. You know, when people go, 'I don't get involved. I don't do that political stuff. That's for the politicians.' Well, that's exactly why we are here. OK?" Flynn told the AP and "Frontline" during a contentious interview. "So, it's something else that you won't write or speak about or it'll be edited out."

As part of Operation Eagles Wings, The America Project has created affiliate groups in at least nine states. Its Florida affiliate said in a Facebook post last month it's seeking "America First Poll Watchers" and will train organizations for free. State affiliates in Illinois and Virginia advertised trainings in July and August on grassroots social activism, poll watching and how to get out the vote. The promotions also promise to teach attendees to "expose weaknesses," "monitor and evaluate absentee voting" and conduct "investigative canvassing."

The initiative has raised alarm bells with pro-democracy advocates.

"If people who tried to overturn the 2020 election, or who are fueled by election conspiracies, are trying to recruit their followers or allies to be election workers or volunteers as part of an election denial agenda, that poses real risks to fair and free elections," said Jacek Pruski, of the nonpartisan group Protect Democracy.

'NOT ALONE'

With his speeches, endorsements and outreach groups, Flynn has built a legion of acolytes who are listening closely to what he says and are ready to take action. They include Karen Ballash, 69, vice chair of the Summit County Republican Party in Utah, who heard Flynn speak in Salt Lake City.

"I totally believe in his message. We have to be the ones who make the change," she said. "If we don't do it, we won't have a country."

They include neophytes like Delainna Prettyman, who said she's just become politically engaged in the past year. "That sent me deep down a rabbit hole. I don't watch any news, any TV, anything. And I do a ton of research," said Prettyman, who lives in the Salt Lake City suburbs.

She came to love Flynn, and believed "everything he says."

"He's got a lot of intel and insight about everything that's going on. Of course, he can't say everything," she said. "We need more people like General Flynn."

Under the tent in Batavia, the crowd thrilled to Flynn's pronouncements from the stage. The general they claim as their own confirmed their feeling that the U.S. is changing, and not for the better. He validated the belief that the community they have built together is under attack.

They know many people — some of their very own friends and loved ones, and even Biden — say they are a destructive force. But inside the tent, Flynn assured them, they have found their tribe and they are in the right.

"We're not alone in this is what I'm telling you. OK? We're not alone in what it is that we are doing," Flynn said. "We're not alone. I want you to know that."

## Review: 'Barbarian' gleefully messes with horror customs

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

"Barbarian" starts at night with a heavy downpour and a thunderclap. So far, so good, for what seems to be a classic horror movie. Hold onto your ponchos.

Some two hours later you will have seen virtually every horror convention — from doors slamming on their own to weird monsters with mommy issues and subterranean torture rooms — ingeniously messed about with. Even the title is a misdirection.

"Barbarian" marks the auspicious feature film debut of director-writer Zach Cregger, someone well-versed in film tropes and with a subtle skill at social satire approaching Jordan Peele levels. He will also somehow make you laugh hard in oases of humor before the dread reappears.

It starts on a rainy middle-of-the-night street of a half-ruined section of Detroit when a young woman (Georgina Campbell) finds her Airbnb-rented house weirdly occupied by a stranger (Bill Skarsgård.) "I don't know what the protocol for all this is," he tells her. Their little awkward dance — checking booking receipts, offering to sleep on the couch — seems to point to a tiny tale of gender roles and microaggressions. Yet somehow it will evolve into a hair-on-fire horror flick with eyeball-gouged skulls.

Make no mistake: Cregger is playing with us every step of the way. Casting Skarsgård as the is-he-a-sweetie-or-not comes colored by his role as Pennywise in "It," and even the film's setting is a slight-of-hand — a bombed out section of Detroit with the Airbnb home in its center was actually filmed in Bulgaria.

Later, the arrival of Justin Long — playing a slimy TV figure of a new show tellingly called "Chip off the Block" — clouds things further, he being an actor long associated with good-guy comedy. Cregger is somehow leaning into Hollywood conventions even outside his own movie.

As good as the casting is, it is the house that is the real star, nicely appointed but cookie-cutter, in a sea of torn up and decayed homes. It has an alarming basement with a horrific room that has a soiled bed, a bucket and a camera. But there's more: An even creepier cavernous space below. You can almost hear Cregger cackling as our heroes face TWO horror-film ready basements. "You're safe," says one. "I don't think I am," another replies. (They're not, by the way, of course.)

One running joke is that Campbell spends so much time trying to escape the house and yet smashing her way back into it moments later that more than one person in the audience at a recent screening loudly implored her to get into her Jeep Cherokee and just drive away.

All along are reaches for real social issues — redlining, misogyny, character redemption, gun accidents and police misconduct, among them — that elevate the film from genre-gazing silliness. There may be a monster inside the house, but forces outside that structure keep that monster firmly inside.

"Barbarian" is firmly of it's time — online house rental bookings, smart-phone flashlights and real estate square footage listings — and yet timeless, like an arm ripped off and used as a club. It was predictable and yet was impossible to predict. It's worth booking one night soon.

"Barbarian," a 20th Century Studios release that lands in theaters Friday, is rated R for "some strong violence and gore, disturbing material, language throughout and nudity." Running time: 103 minutes. Three stars out of four.

## RBG's fashion collar highlights children's charity auction

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A gold judicial collar made of glass beads that belonged to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is being auctioned to benefit a charity, the first time any of the her signature neckwear will be available for purchase.

The piece is part of a collection of about 100 items being sold in an online auction that begins Wednesday. It concludes Sept. 16, just days before the two-year anniversary of the liberal icon's death at 87.

In addition to the collar, the items being auctioned include a pair of Ginsburg's opera glasses, a wooden gavel and artwork that hung in her Washington apartment.

There are quirky items too. Her son, James, said in an interview that in talking about the collection "it's

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hard not to mention about the cake topper. "The fondant sculpture was commissioned by friends for one of the justice's birthdays and depicts her standing in a judicial robe with her arms outstretched on the bow of a battleship dubbed "The Notorious RBG," the justice's nickname. Ginsburg said it reminds him a little bit of a scene from the movie "Titanic."

The auction also includes other Ginsburg fashion pieces: a white handbag, a shawl, scarves and two sets of fishnet lace gloves. She began wearing gloves in the late 1990s after undergoing colon cancer treatment. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the Supreme Court's first female justice, suggested them as a way to prevent illness while shaking hands, but Ginsburg liked gloves so much she just kept wearing them.

But it was Ginsburg's collars — which she wore on the bench as an accessory to her black robe — that were her most notable fashion item. She had dozens, her son and daughter-in-law said. The family donated several to the Smithsonian, including a sparkly black one she wore on the bench when she dissented in a case. Speaking at an event in 2020, Ginsburg — who became a pop culture figure in later years — said that at the time she was getting a collar "at least once a week" from fans worldwide.

The auction had initially been planned to include two of Ginsburg's collars. The other, made of fabric, was a gift from her law clerks. Stitched inside is a family motto: "It's not sacrifice, it's family." But the family said in a statement Tuesday that they had decided to keep the collar and permanently loan it to "an appropriate institution where it can be displayed for all to see." The family did not provide additional details.

The auction is the third this year of items owned by the justice, and her son said that it will be the last. In April, some 150 items — including art Ginsburg displayed in her home and office — raised more than \$800,000 for Washington National Opera, one of the late justice's passions.

Bonhams, which is conducting the latest auction, estimated the current group of objects as selling for a total of just under \$50,000. In January, however, an online auction of her books also conducted by Bonhams brought in \$2.3 million, almost 30 times the pre-sale estimate.

Bonhams said it expects the collar to sell for \$3,000 to \$5,000. In the earlier book auction, however, a copy of the Harvard Law Review from 1957-58 with Ginsburg's annotations sold for more than \$100,000, shattering Bonhams' estimate of \$2,500 to \$3,500.

Proceeds from the current sale will fund an endowment in Ginsburg's honor benefitting SOS Children's Villages, a organization that supports vulnerable children around the world. Ginsburg's daughter-in-law, Patrice Michaels, is on the organization's advisory board. Michaels, a composer and singer, said the gavel being auctioned is one Ginsburg gave her to use while performing a composition she had written about Ginsburg's dissents. The gold beaded collar was also one she chose from Ginsburg's collection.

"I thought it was just literally so beautiful," Michaels said. "The aesthetic of it and the feel of it being as elegant as my mother-in-law was appealed to me very much."

## Toronto fest roars back to life with Spielberg, 'Knives Out'

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

After two editions much diminished by the pandemic, the 47th Toronto International Film Festival is set to roar back to life beginning Thursday with a lineup crowded with much-anticipated titles, including Steven Spielberg's "The Fabelmans," Rian Johnson's "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery" and Gina Prince-Bythewood's "The Woman King," starring Viola Davis.

After two lean and largely virtual pandemic festivals, this year's TIFF will again be a full-scaled omnibus of upcoming fall movies. Some kinks are still being worked out; digital ticketing woes have plagued festival-goers in the days leading up to TIFF, the largest film gathering in North America. But for some, returning to the teeming theaters of Toronto will be as cozy and warm as putting on a cherished cable-knit sweater.

"Oh, I can't wait to sit down in that theater," says Rian Johnson, whose "Glass Onion" will premiere, like "Knives Out," at the Princess of Wales Theatre. "Above everything else, the movie is designed to be a good time with a crowd in a theater. September 10th can't get here soon enough."

While the top European festivals like Venice and Cannes derive much of their glow from their otherworldly glamour, Toronto — where the public can actually get tickets — finds considerable power in the buzz gener-



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ated from the critics, journalists and moviegoers attending. In the cacophony of the rapid-fire fall-festival circuit that goes from Venice to Telluride to Toronto, responses from TIFF audiences often speak loudest.

Toronto's top award isn't a juried prize but an audience award as voted on by attendees. Past winners ("Belfast," "Nomadland," "JoJo Rabbit") nearly always go on to be nominated for best-picture at the Oscars, if not win it. This year, several past winners will be returning, including Peter Farrelly, who'll premiere his Vietnam War tale "The Greatest Beer Run Ever" four years after "Green Book" was a surprise smash at TIFF; Martin McDonagh, back with the friendship-fallout "The Banshees of Inisherin" following 2017's "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"; and "La La Land" director Damien Chazelle, who will be in Toronto to talk about (but not screen) his upcoming Hollywood tale "Babylon."

Tyler Perry has been to Toronto once before — to help promote another TIFF award-winner, "Precious," in 2009. But he'll be coming for the first time as a director, premiering his "A Jazzman's Blues," a decades-spanning drama about a young Black jazz singer. It comes from the first screenplay Perry wrote 26 years ago.

"This is a totally new situation for me. I feel incredibly honored," says Perry. "Diary of a Mad Woman," my first film, I didn't direct because I didn't know how. It took all of these films and all of these television episodes to really understand filmmaking."

Perry's film is for Netflix, as is Johnson's after it paid \$450 million for the rights to two "Knives Out" sequels. A number of the premieres at TIFF come from streaming services, including Amazon Prime Video's "My Policeman" (the fall's other Harry Styles film, about a gay romance in 1950s England); Apple TV+'s "Causeway," starring Jennifer Lawrence as a rehabbing soldier; Netflix's "The Good Nurse," with Eddie Redmayne and Jessica Chastain; and "Wendell & Wild," Henry Selick's stop-motion animation that reteams Jordan Peele and Keegan-Michael Key, also for Netflix.

But a lot of the top premieres make compelling cases for the theatrical experience. Spielberg's "The Fabelmans" is based on his own coming of age as a filmmaker. Sam Mendes' "Empire of Light," with Olivia Colman and Colin Firth, is an homage to cinemas set in a 1980s British movie palace.

Nicholas Stoller's "Bros," starring and co-written by Billy Eichner, is in a different conversation with the movies, but one no less passionate about them. The first major studio gay rom-com, Universal Pictures' "Bros" is filled with jokes and commentary about Hollywood's poor LGBTQ history of inclusion and depiction. It's also an increasingly rare thing: a comedy for the big screen.

"For some reason, everyone just decided one day that comedy didn't work in theaters anymore. But it's not true. Or I don't think it's true," says Stoller. "If a comedy works, if it's really funny, it works in theaters. People want to go. Universal gets this. They're not doing this out of charity. They are excited that it's good for the LGBTQ community but they're like, 'We can make money on this. This is a genre that works in movie theaters, we just have to make them.'"

"People want to go to the movies to experience a party of some kind," adds Stoller.

And, with some 200 features from 63 countries on tap, TIFF is set to once again be a party. For some films, it may also be something of a wake. "Sidney," Reginald Hudlin's Apple TV+ Oprah Winfrey-produced documentary about Sidney Poitier, will debut eight months after the trailblazing actor's death in January at age 94.

"I've watched people watch the trailer and some people cry — from a trailer," says Hudlin. "What I hope people respond to is that they feel inspired. Sidney's a life that you think you know, because he's been a part of our lives our whole life, but when you reveal the details of his life, it's give you a new perspective. By taking him off the pedestal, you actually admire him even more."

## Putin and Xi plan to meet again, as relations with West fray

By The Associated Press undefined

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping are expected to meet next week in Uzbekistan for talks that could signal warming relations between two powers that are increasingly facing off against the West.

The meeting at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization — a political, economic and security forum that

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China and Russia dominate — comes at delicate times for both leaders, and it would be their second face-to-face meeting this year.

Putin is dealing with the economic and political fallout of his war in Ukraine that has left Russia more isolated — and defiant. Xi faces rising tensions with the West over the status of Taiwan and China's treatment of Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups.

Russia's ambassador to China told reporters Wednesday that the two would meet in the Uzbek city of Samarkand on Sept. 15-16. Then Putin confirmed it himself, telling top Chinese legislator Li Zhanshu at an economic forum in Russia that "we will see each other with President Xi Jinping soon, I hope, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan."

The visit to Uzbekistan, if it goes ahead, would be part of Xi's first foreign trip in 2½ years. Xi has only left mainland China once — to make a one-day visit to the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong — since the COVID-19 outbreak exploded in early 2020.

When asked about the trip at a daily briefing, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said: "On your question, I have nothing to offer."

Russia and China have increasingly aligned their foreign policies to oppose liberal democratic forces in Asia, Europe and beyond, making a stand for authoritarian rule with tight borders and little regard for free speech, minority rights or opposition politics.

The Russian military held sweeping military drills that ended Wednesday in the country's east that involved forces from China, another show of increasingly close ties between the two. And on Tuesday, the Pentagon said the Russian Ministry of Defense was in the process of purchasing millions of rockets and artillery shells from North Korea, a close ally of China, for its ongoing fight in Ukraine.

Experts say the Russian and Chinese leaders may be hoping that another meeting with each other will help bolster their standing at home and abroad.

For Putin, it's an opportunity to show that he still has powerful allies, said Alexander Gabuev, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "How can you isolate Russia, when China stands back to back with it?" Gabuev said.

For Xi, it could be a chance to be seen as standing up to Western opposition to the Ukraine war and burnish his nationalist credentials at a time when relations with the U.S. have grown increasingly tense over trade, technology, human rights issues and its threats to attack Taiwan.

"It is a very important signal that China will not give in to the pressure of countries that are trying to make Putin and Russia a pariah country," Gabuev said.

Coming just ahead of China's party congress, the overseas visits would also show Xi as confident of his position. Xi is seeking a third five-year term as Communist Party leader. While he's expected to secure it, that would represent a break with precedent.

Putin and Xi last met at the Olympics in Beijing in February, weeks before the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine. The two presidents oversaw the signing of an agreement pledging that relations between the sides would have "no limits." It remains unclear whether Xi knew at the time of Russia's plans to invade Ukraine.

While offering its tacit support for Russia's campaign there, China has sought to appear neutral and avoid possible repercussions from supporting the Russian economy amid international sanctions.

Even though Moscow and Beijing in the past rejected the possibility of forging a military alliance, Putin has said that such a prospect can't be ruled out. He also has noted that Russia has been sharing highly sensitive military technologies with China that helped significantly bolster its defense capability.

## Judge: Musk can use Twitter whistleblower but not delay case

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Elon Musk will be able to include new evidence from a Twitter whistleblower as he fights to get out of his \$44 billion deal to buy the social media company, but Musk won't be able to delay a high-stakes October trial over the dispute, a judge ruled Wednesday.

Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick, the head judge of Delaware's Court of Chancery, denied Musk's

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request to delay the trial by four weeks. But she allowed the billionaire Tesla CEO to add evidence related to whistleblower allegations by former Twitter security chief Peiter Zatkó, who is scheduled to testify to Congress next week about the company's poor cybersecurity practices.

Twitter has sued Musk, asking the Delaware court to force him to go through with the deal he made in April to buy the company. Musk has countersued and a trial is set to start the week of Oct. 17.

Musk's legal team has argued that the allegations made by Zatkó to U.S. officials may help bolster Musk's claims that Twitter misled him and the public about the company's problem with fake and "spam" accounts. Zatkó, a well-known cybersecurity expert known by his hacker handle "Mudge," said he was fired in January after raising flags about Twitter's negligence in protecting the security and privacy of its users.

The judge's ruling followed an hours-long hearing Tuesday at which attorneys for Musk and Twitter argued with each other about the merits of Zatkó's claims and the pace at which both sides are producing evidence ahead of the trial.

Twitter's attorneys sought to downplay the relevance of Zatkó's allegations to the merger dispute, arguing that an initial 27-page complaint he sent to Twitter and a later retaliation claim made no mention of the "spam bot" issues that Musk has given as a reason to terminate the deal. Zatkó "never said a word about spam or bots" until his July whistleblower complaint, said Twitter attorney William Savitt.

Twitter has argued for weeks that Musk's stated reasons for backing out were just a cover for buyer's remorse after agreeing to pay 38% above Twitter's stock price shortly before the stock market stumbled and shares of the electric-car maker Tesla, where most of Musk's personal wealth resides, lost more than \$100 billion of their value.

McCormick, the judge, said Wednesday the newly published whistleblower complaint gave Musk's team grounds to amend its countersuit but she declined to weigh in on the details.

"I am reticent to say more concerning the merits of the counterclaims at this posture before they have been fully litigated," she wrote. "The world will have to wait for the post-trial decision."

McCormick, however, sided with Twitter's concerns that delaying the trial would make it harder for the company to get back to business.

"I am convinced that even four weeks' delay would risk further harm to Twitter too great to justify," she wrote.

In afternoon trading, Twitter shares added 5.5% to \$40.77.

## Lainey Wilson leads CMA Awards nominations in her 1st year

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Louisiana-native Lainey Wilson is having a breakout year as she tops the Country Music Association Awards nominations in her first year as a nominee, earning nods in six categories including album of the year, female vocalist of the year and song of the year.

Wilson is only the fourth artist in the history of the CMAs to earn six nominations in her first year, following Glen Campbell, Brad Paisley and Kacey Musgraves. She's also up for new artist of the year, music video and musical event.

"This is my first time being cordially invited to the CMA Awards and what a wonderful invitation it is," Wilson said in a statement. "It has been such a challenging but beautiful journey up until this point and to see the country music community and the incredible fans be so receptive to me and my music is such a blessing. I'm so grateful for this moment."

Other leading nominees include Ashley McBryde, Carly Pearce, Chris Stapleton and writer-producer Shane McAnally, who all have nominations in five categories. The CMA Awards, hosted by Luke Bryan and Peyton Manning, will air on Wednesday, Nov. 9 on ABC.

"There is a whole lot of love, respect and admiration between the artists in these categories. We do a good job of challenging one another and raising the bar, all while cheering each other on. We all work hard and do our best to perform our asses off. Thank you for recognizing our work, for listening and for loving country music," McBryde said in a statement.

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Wilson's 2021 album "Sayin' What I'm Thinkin'" last year earned her critical accolades, spurred on by the success of her country radio No. 1 hit "Things a Man Oughta Know." Her next album, "Bell Bottom Country," is due out in October.

Reigning CMA entertainer of the year Luke Combs is back in the top category, alongside Miranda Lambert, Stapleton, Carrie Underwood and Morgan Wallen. This is Wallen's first nomination in the category.

"Music has been the driving force of my life since I started chasing this dream as a 17 year old, and what I've learned since then is that people make the music mean what it does. None of this matters without the songwriters who pour their hearts out alongside me, the co-producers who help give life to our words, and — most importantly — the fans who find themselves in those words," Lambert said in a statement.

McBryde and Pearce share four nominations for their hit duet "Never Wanted To Be That Girl," which they co-wrote with McAnally. McBryde and Pearce also are in the running for female vocalist of the year, alongside Lambert, Underwood and Wilson.

Stapleton is nominated for single and song of the year for "You Should Probably Leave," which he also co-produced with Dave Cobb. He's also nominated alongside Taylor Swift, for joining in her music video for "I Bet You Think About Me (Taylor's Version) (From The Vault)." Actor Blake Lively earned a nomination for directing the music video.

Lambert has extended her historic run as the most nominated female artist in CMA history, with now 61 nominations. She's only behind George Strait and Alan Jackson for most nominations. She earned her 16th straight nomination for female vocalist, also a record. She's also nominated for album of the year for "Palomino," which she co-produced.

Alongside Lambert and Wilson in the album of the year category are Combs for his record "Growin' Up," Maren Morris for "Humble Quest" and Old Dominion for "Time, Tequila & Therapy." Eric Church joins Combs, Stapleton, Wallen and Cody Johnson in the male vocalist of the year category.

## Movie chain Cineworld files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Movie theater operator Cineworld Group LLC has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the U.S. as it deals with billions of dollars in debt and lower-than-expected attendance at screenings.

"The pandemic was an incredibly difficult time for our business, with the enforced closure of cinemas and huge disruption to film schedules that has led us to this point," CEO Mooky Greidinger said in a statement.

The company and its subsidiaries have commitments for an approximate \$1.94 billion debtor-in-possession financing facility from existing lenders, which will help ensure Cineworld's operations continue as usual while it undergoes a reorganization.

Last month the British company, which owns Regal Cinemas in the U.S. and operates in 10 countries, said its theaters remained "open for business as usual" as it considered options for relief from its debt load.

Cineworld had built up \$4.8 billion in net debt, not including lease liabilities. The company, which has about 28,000 employees, previously said that its admissions levels have recently been below expectations. And with a "limited film slate," it expects the lower levels to continue until November. That would mean an additional crunch to its finances.

Cineworld anticipates exiting from Chapter 11 during the first quarter of 2023.

## Wins — and losses — can pile up with sped-up sports betting

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — With legal sports betting in its fifth year in much of the U.S., things are getting much more intense, with increasing ways to bet and more opportunities to rapidly win — and lose — money.

When the defending Super Bowl champion Los Angeles Rams kick off the NFL season Thursday night against the Buffalo Bills, 31 U.S. states plus Washington D.C. will offer legal sports betting. A record 46.6 million Americans say they plan to bet on the upcoming NFL season, up 3% from last year, according to

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the American Gaming Association.

This year's games will become the focus of the most intense scrutiny yet by gamblers.

This is due to the rapid rise of so-called microbetting, the ability to place wagers on outcomes as narrowly targeted as whether the next play will be a run or a pass, how many yards will it gain, or whether the drive results in a punt, a touchdown, a turnover or something else.

It's the fastest-growing segment of legal sports betting, and while it encourages sportsbooks, it has those who treat compulsive gambling worried that the opportunity to make rapid-fire bets, one after the other over the course of a three-hour game, will create new problems for gamblers or worsen the addiction of those who already have a problem.

Microbetting "is a must-have to be a competitor in this space," said Matt Prevost, chief revenue officer for BetMGM. Between 40% to 65% of all bets his company takes on football come after the opening kickoff.

Johnny Avello, director of race and sports for DraftKings, said his company is concentrating more on microbetting offerings this fall.

"We're going to have more markets like betting on the next play, who's going to carry the ball, how many yards it will gain," he said. "We've found that those are equally as popular as who's going to win the game or the total amount scored."

Miami-based Betr is going beyond that. It launched its microbetting app on Sept. 1 and minces no words about what it soon will offer the gambling public: "Instant gratification."

In baseball, its app lets users wager on each pitch: How fast it will be, whether it's a ball or a strike; or whether it gets put into play.

Joey Levy, the company's founder and CEO, called its product "a glimpse into the future of sports betting in the U.S. — an instant gratification focus to betting delivered in a simple, intuitive user experience that anyone can enjoy, even if they have not bet on sports before."

The company's app is currently in use for free-play only; Betr plans to take real money bets in numerous states as soon as they obtain licenses and regulatory approvals.

Established sports betting companies including FanDuel and DraftKings started taking real-money microbets in recent years.

In baseball, for example, FanDuel, which is the official odds provider for The Associated Press, lets gamblers bet on whether the first pitch of a baseball game will be a ball or a strike, whether it will result in a hit or an out, or some other result. DraftKings takes bets on how many pitches a batter will see in a given at-bat, and has dabbled in pitch speed wagers. But it currently limits its baseball microbets to batter-to-batter predictions.

Microbetting is an incredibly fast way to rack up wins — and losses.

Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling, says people placing microbets are at higher risk of developing a gambling disorder.

"The ability to place more bets, more quickly is a risk factor for any type of gambling," he said. "Now with microbetting, impulsivity and instant gratification is promoted as a selling point."

Whyte said continuous microbetting not only discourages responsible gambling behavior — like taking breaks and never chasing losses — but is also likely to appeal to those who already have gambling problems.

Numerous sportsbooks offer batter-to-batter bets in baseball on whether a hitter will reach base, strike out, walk or many other possibilities.

BetMGM does not currently offer batter-by-batter or pitch-by-pitch bets, although Prevost said, "We certainly are examining the technology."

In data released Wednesday, the American Gaming Association said 49% of NFL bettors will do so online this year, compared to 23% who plan to do it in person at a sportsbook.

The Bills and Tampa Bay Buccaneers (9% each) are the most popular picks to win the next Super Bowl, followed by the Rams and Kansas City Chiefs (8% each) and the Dallas Cowboys (7%).

Connecticut, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland and Wisconsin launched new markets since the start of the 2021 NFL season.

## Stone Age skeleton missing foot may show oldest amputation

By MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The 31,000-year-old skeleton of a young adult found in a cave in Indonesia that is missing its left foot and part of its left leg reveal the oldest known evidence of an amputation, according to a new study.

Scientists say the amputation was performed when the person was a child — and that the “patient” went on to live for years as an amputee. The prehistoric surgery could show that humans were making medical advances much earlier than previously thought, according to the study published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*.

Researchers were exploring a cave in Borneo, in a rainforest region known for having some of the earliest rock art in the world, when they came across the grave, said Tim Maloney, an archaeologist at Griffith University in Australia and the study’s lead researcher.

Though much of the skeleton was intact, it was missing its left foot and the lower part of its left leg, he explained. After examining the remains, the researchers concluded the foot bones weren’t missing from the grave, or lost in an accident — they were carefully removed.

The remaining leg bone showed a clean, slanted cut that healed over, Maloney said. There were no signs of infection, which would be expected if the child had gotten its leg bitten off by a creature like a crocodile. And there were also no signs of a crushing fracture, which would have been expected if the leg had snapped off in an accident.

The person appears to have lived for around six to nine more years after losing the limb, eventually dying from unknown causes as a young adult, researchers say.

This shows that the prehistoric foragers knew enough about medicine to perform the surgery without fatal blood loss or infection, the authors concluded. Researchers don’t know what kind of tool was used to amputate the limb, or how infection was prevented — but they speculate that a sharp stone tool may have made the cut, and point out that some of the rich plant life in the region has medicinal properties.

Also, the community would have had to care for the child for years afterward, since surviving the rugged terrain as an amputee wouldn’t have been easy.

This early surgery “rewrites the history of human medical knowledge and developments,” Maloney said at a press briefing.

Before this find, the earliest example of amputation had been in a French farmer from 7,000 years ago, who had part of his forearm removed. Scientists had thought that advanced medical practices developed around 10,000 years ago, as humans settled down into agricultural societies, the study authors said.

But this study adds to growing evidence that humans started caring for each other’s health much earlier in their history, said Alecia Schrenk, an anthropologist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who was not involved with the study.

“It had long been assumed healthcare is a newer invention,” Schrenk said in an email. “Research like this article demonstrates that prehistoric peoples were not just left to fend for themselves.”

## New rental? How to turn a bland space into a personal haven

By KIM COOK Associated Press

Even though she was moving into a rental apartment, Alexa d’Argence was eager to put her personal stamp on it.

“Loving my space is more important to me than my security deposit. So I just went for it with paint, shelves, window treatments and upgrading the medicine cabinet,” says d’Argence, who as a senior designer at BAR Architects in San Francisco knows something about creating a stylish space.

“My landlord actually appreciated the improvements. I’d say, consider changes that add value, and that wouldn’t be removed if you moved out,” she says.

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Non-designers might not feel as comfortable doing that, since most rental agreements stipulate that you can't permanently change anything. Another approach: Strike up a conversation with your landlord to talk about potential changes, and perhaps even offer to foot the bill.

Or, just make some temporary tweaks, little personal touches that can turn bland and basic into hip and homey with just a trip to the hardware store.

"Personalizing a rental is really easy these days; there are so many great accents that are designed to be temporary," says Jessica Dodell-Feder, HGTV Magazine's executive editor.

## THE WALLS

Jessica Shaw, interior design director of New York's The Turett Collaborative, is a fan of removable wallpaper. "I've used it in my own home. Etsy, where I found mine, has prints, murals and custom options. When your lease is up, you can gently remove it with no residue," she says.

And don't forget the ceiling. On one project, she created a wow factor by putting a colorful, removable geometric from Flavor Paper on a bedroom ceiling. Night sky patterns or photomurals of forests could be especially nice for city dwellers.

Denver designer Rachel Hoback put an eye-catching star-mosaic wallpaper on her stair risers. "This was a very quick and affordable project that made a huge difference in the look of our stairway," she says.

Removable wallpapers also can add pizzazz to kitchen backsplashes, bathroom walls and cabinetry. Tempaper, for one, offers a range of designs, including ones that look like painted ceramic tile, terrazzo, marble or embossed metallics.

Liz Morrow of Tacoma, Washington, temporarily papered her refrigerator.

"A fridge can be ugly or boring, but removable wallpaper can transform it easily into the most interesting part of the whole kitchen," she says.

Dodell-Feder agrees: "This is a no-commitment, fun solution to a blah kitchen."

## STORAGE

"We don't tend to consider customizing our rental storage spaces," Shaw says, "but there are ways to improve their aesthetics and functionality."

Set up custom organizers in closets to stow wardrobe and household items efficiently. (The Container Store and California Closets are among the bigger retailers with options.) Coordinating bins and baskets are inexpensive and ubiquitous in home décor stores.

Or create a roomy closet against a wall. You can take a clothes rack with you when you move. Rebrilliant's Liddle heavy-duty adjustable rack, for instance, has rubber feet that anchor against the floor and ceiling.

In a small kitchen, shelf risers and slide-in bins that pop onto cabinet shelves amp up your storage capacity. And adhesive hooks are good for hanging not just artwork but pans and utensils.

Metal utility carts come in a range of colors; if you can paint, then stencil or decoupage one yourself. They're handy for frequently used cooking items, or for bar gear.

## THE FURNITURE

Gita Mirchandani, a public relations executive in New York City, has gradually added colorful and meaningful pieces from her favorite designers to her overall-white apartment. There are Eames chairs, a George Nelson bench, Jonathan Adler screens and Philippe Starck dining chairs. "Each one serves as a significant landmark for moments in my life," she says.

She's also personalized her bedroom, and honored her heritage. "My headboard is a colorful, hand-painted Indian screen that reminds me every day of my fascinating background," she says.

Convertible furniture lets you create defined spaces that weren't there. Murphy-style beds fold up into a cabinet, with options like an attached sofa or table. Tables like those at Resource Furniture transform into dining, office or coffee tables, or consoles.

And a simple room screen can be a workhorse. There are rigid framed panels and folding screens in colored canvas, wovens, paper, metal and wood slats.

## THE WINDOWS

Curtains or blinds can bring texture, color and privacy.

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If there are no rods already installed, spring-tension or twist-and-fit rods adjust to various window sizes and have protective rubber ends. Kwik-Hang's brackets can be tapped into the window trim, without a drill. Or look for Redi-Shade's peel-and-stick window treatments; some also provide enhanced light control.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

Paint – especially spray paint – is an affordable way to upgrade a space. Some kinds can be used on rugs, and on decorative fabrics on furniture or curtains. (Glidden's Max Flex is one brand.)

Buy some builder-basic cabinet hardware or switch plate covers from a hardware store and paint them in your favorite hues. Follow product instructions on preparing and testing surfaces before painting.

Changing knobs and handles is another easy way to change the feel of a room, and there are many creative options out there.

Jazz up your bathroom by changing out your showerhead to a colored one, or one that sprays like rain or in colors; Sproos!, SparkPod and DreamSpa are some brands.

## Utah's Evan McMullin upends two-party fight for US Senate

By SAM METZ Associated Press

PROVO, Utah (AP) — Campaigning at a park filled with 19th-century pushcarts on a state holiday honoring Utah's early Mormon pioneers, Evan McMullin glad hands voters as he strolls past potato sack races and beverage stands selling cold, sugary drinks under a sweltering sun.

The independent U.S. Senate candidate who won the official backing of Utah's Democratic Party in this year's midterm election harks back to Utah's pioneer days as he explains his quest to unseat two-term Republican Sen. Mike Lee.

"When our ancestors arrived, the only way to make this harsh but very beautiful place work in order for them to survive and thrive was to work together," said McMullin, who casts his candidacy as an opportunity to "unite Americans across party lines to protect democracy."

To defeat Lee, McMullin's idealized call for cross-party unity will have to do a lot more than just win over Democrats and a few disgruntled conservatives. Republicans have won every U.S. Senate race in Utah since 1976.

It's been six years since McMullin, a soft-spoken former Republican congressional staffer, emerged as a third-party candidate as a conservative alternative to Donald Trump. McMullin won 21.5% of the vote in Utah in 2016, the most of any third-party candidate in the country. Trump still breezed to victory.

McMullin warned in a New York Times op-ed after Trump's election that he was an authoritarian who "undermined critical democratic norms including peaceful debate and transitions of power." This year, McMullin is hitting that message even harder, denouncing his role in the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, his attempts to overturn the 2020 election and his handling of classified documents.

McMullin has cast both Trump and Lee as threats to democracy, noting text messages obtained by the Jan. 6 House committee that show Lee discussing legally dubious schemes to keep Trump in power, before shifting course, backing away and voting to certify the election results.

"Authoritarians serve themselves and the small cadres that surround them," McMullin, an ex-CIA officer, said. "They never solve problems."

As both parties jockey for control of the evenly split Senate, the peculiar Republican-versus-independent contest has transformed Utah from an electoral afterthought into a possible spoiler. Conservative groups like Club for Growth are spending millions to defend Lee.

If McMullin were to win in November, he would become the Senate's third independent, joining Angus King of Maine and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Both caucus with the Democrats, though McMullin has said he wouldn't caucus with either party.

Both Lee and McMullin are vying for voters like Cindy Kemp of Lehi, who credits Trump for the country's thriving pre-pandemic economy but was often fed up with his public persona.

"With Trump and everything, we were like, 'What do we do?'" Kemp said after speaking to McMullin in Provo. "But he did good for the country."



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She plans to vote for McMullin.

Eighty miles (129 kilometers) north at a junior livestock auction in Ogden, Lee wears ostrich skin cowboy boots and sits cross-legged on a folding chair. Mingling with voters amid the the sound of squealing hogs after purchasing a sheep at the auction, he acknowledges the race defies traditional two-party dynamics yet hews closely to conventional Republican talking points: government spending, inflation and polling showing widespread disapproval of President Joe Biden.

In response to questions about prominent midterm election issues, Lee repeatedly prefaces his answers by circling back to a reminder that McMullin has been "embraced and endorsed and funded by the Democratic Party."

Lee, a one-time critic of the former president who even voted for McMullin in protest of Trump in the 2016 election, dismisses McMullin's alarm bells about extremism and says their race has less to do with Trump than Biden.

"Trump's not on the ballot. This one is not about him," Lee said as he walked through a cattle corral talking about the effects of inflation on feed and fuel prices.

"People in Utah feel strongly about the horrible state of affairs that Joe Biden has brought and the horrible conditions that we're now facing with inflation and all that goes along with it."

McMullin acknowledges issues like inflation and abortion rights are focal points in Senate races nationwide. Still, his campaign is laser-focused on what he believes are growing threats to democracy from power-hungry extremists willing to abandon it. It's difficult to fix issues like air quality near the Great Salt Lake or buoy economically depressed coal towns in Carbon County, he said, without a functional, representative democracy.

"It's democracy. And it's what democracy allows us to do," McMullin explains.

Although he says voters he speaks to largely agree having a functional government in Washington is important, McMullin is aware opinions clash within the coalition he hopes to unite behind him.

He insists voters are less polarized than people assume, yet despite that belief, offers carefully calibrated answers on polarizing topics such as abortion. He talks about "standing up to the extremes that want to criminalize women" and rejects abortion bans that don't have exceptions for rape, but says he "doesn't have all the answers" rather than articulating when he thinks abortion should be legal and when it shouldn't.

Much like Lee repeatedly references McMullin's Democratic Party support, McMullin repeatedly prefaces explanations about where he stands on issues by referencing "our coalition" — a group he says is the same one that supports Sen. Mitt Romney and includes Democrats, moderate Republicans and independents.

The "coalition," he said, also supports investing in more modern infrastructure, but he doesn't clarify his position on the billions in infrastructure spending approved since Democrats took control of Washington.

Back at the Weber County Fair, Lee says recently approved spending will exacerbate inflation and expand the role of government in everyday life.

"It's pretty relevant if the party that has endorsed you and is funding you and is backing you is behind a \$750 billion spending boondoggle at a time we're in a recession and at a time we're experiencing rampant inflation," Lee said of McMullin.

Although Lee's frequent "no" votes on bipartisan legislation garner criticism, they endear him to legions of Utah Republicans who call him "a fighter" and like that he isn't afraid to disrupt Washington.

"He fights for us and takes what we say and takes it to heart. Not like other politicians, who lie to us and do different things, like Mitt Romney," Heidi Hadley of Plain City said after meeting Lee at the fair.

## Sue Bird's career ends as Aces top Storm to reach to Finals

By TIM BOOTH AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE (AP) — This time there were tears, on the court and in the stands. The finality of the situation finally hitting Sue Bird and the thousands that showed up hoping to see her career continue for at least 40 more minutes.

Chelsea Gray was simply too good, sending the Las Vegas Aces to the WNBA Finals by beating the Seattle

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Storm 97-92 in Game 4 of their WNBA playoffs semifinal series Tuesday night.

It brought an end to Bird's illustrious career. With it came thanks from fans, tears and one last walk off the court in the same spot where Bird's career began more than two decades ago.

"Kinda weird. Definitely surreal. I think initially ... I felt sad about the season and the game. And I then think as the emotions started to come to the surface that was also what I know deep down in that was my last game," Bird said.

Gray scored 15 of her 31 points in the fourth quarter and the Aces won the best-of-five series 3-1, all the games tense, pressure-packed and filled with spectacular shot-making. The Aces ended up making more, most notably Gray, who made five of six shots down the stretch and scored 12 of the final 20 points for the Aces.

"I don't think anyone on planet Earth can guard her," Seattle coach Noelle Quinn said. "She was unconscious."

It will be the third Finals appearance in franchise history for Las Vegas. The Aces lost to Seattle in 2020 in the WNBA bubble played in Florida, and the franchise reached the Finals in 2008 while still in San Antonio, losing to Detroit.

"It's kind of like the girl that beat Serena (Williams). It's bittersweet," Aces coach Becky Hammon said. "I know myself and our staff and team and organization have so much respect for Sue. She's had a fairytale career, one that kids dream of. She got to live it."

Breanna Stewart tied the WNBA playoff record with 42 points, just the fifth player to score 40 or more in a postseason game, and Jewell Loyd added 29. But Seattle failed to find a third scorer and the Aces had an answer for every charge Seattle made after Las Vegas surged in front early in the second half.

The Aces will get the spotlight in the Finals. On this night, the aftermath of the result was all about Bird and the conclusion to her two decades as a pillar to the Storm franchise and the WNBA.

Bird stayed on the court after the final buzzer, receiving hugs from the entire Aces roster. She wiped away tears while the crowd cheered and cried along with her, and chanted "Thank you, Sue."

"I also wanted to kind of have one last moment to say thank you, to soak it all in because in some ways, it is a happy thing," Bird said. "I'm proud of everything we've accomplished here."

The oldest player in the league at age 41, Bird started the year thinking she'd retire, but brought finality to the decision midway through the regular season.

Las Vegas spoiled the party in Seattle's home regular-season finale when Bird was honored by the franchise and the league for her 21 seasons with the team and 19 as a player, missing two seasons with injury.

And it was the Aces that finally eliminated Bird and the Storm after four stressful games filled with big performances.

Bird closes out her career as one of the most decorated players of all-time: four WNBA titles, five Olympic gold medals, two collegiate titles at UConn, the WNBA all-time leader in assists and games played, and recognition as one of the great players during a golden generation for the league.

She'll also take into retirement the definition of being a floor leader and ultimately a winner. But she wasn't able to add a fifth title to that resume. Bird finished her final game with eight points and eight assists.

"As sad as it is that we're not having the ability to compete for a championship, I think what's more devastating ... is just the fact that we're no longer going to be on the court with Sue," Stewart said.

Gray was the biggest thorn for Seattle with her clutch shooting often late in the shot clock. Seattle pulled even at 67-all, only to have Gray hit a 3 as the shot clock expired.

Gray scored consecutive buckets later in the fourth to keep the Aces ahead, but her miss and Gabby Williams' three-point play gave Seattle an 83-82 lead with 2:40 left.

That was Seattle's last lead.

Wilson's three-point play put the Aces back ahead 85-83 and Gray wouldn't miss, her jumper with 30 seconds left giving the Aces a 92-87 lead. Wilson finished with 23 points and 13 rebounds. Gray finished as the first player in WNBA playoff history with 30 points and 10 assists in a game.

"When Chelsea is rocking and rolling my biggest thing is just getting the hell out of her way," Wilson

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said. "At the end of the day, you just got to get out of the way and let people rock."

## OTHER RETIREMENT

Tuesday was also the final game for Seattle's Briann January after 14 seasons in the league. January played for four teams with most of her career spent in Indiana.

## RECORD HALF

Stewart's 26 points in the first half was the most in the first half of a playoff game, topping the 24 points Angel McCoughtry had in the first half for Atlanta against Minnesota in 2011. McCoughtry finished that game with 38.

## UP NEXT

Las Vegas will host either Connecticut or Chicago in Game 1 of the WNBA Finals on Sunday.

## **EXPLAINER: Why is Xi Jinping's Central Asia trip important?**

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to meet with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, during a visit to the neighboring Central Asian nation of Uzbekistan this month, in what would be his first overseas visit since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Xi, 69, has participated in global gatherings by video link, but his physical absence and those of other top Chinese leaders has thrown a shadow over Beijing's global political and economic ambitions. Xi has only left mainland China to make a one-day visit to the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong on July 1 to speak at a ceremony commemorating the 25th anniversary of its handover from British to Chinese rule. Xi has overseen a sweeping crackdown on civil rights in the city since pro-democracy protests in 2019, with opposition voices either imprisoned, forced into exile or intimidated into silence.

According to Russian media, Xi will attend a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Uzbekistan where he will meet with Putin. The two last met in Beijing in January in Beijing, just weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

On that occasion, they issued a joint statement declaring their relationship had "no limits." Beijing has since refused to criticize Russian aggression or even describe it as an invasion, while condemning sanctions against Moscow and accusing the U.S. and NATO of provoking the conflict.

## WHAT ARE THE STAKES FOR XI GOING ABROAD?

Xi is at a crucial inflection point in his political career as he seeks — and is expected to receive — a third five-year term as Communist Party leader. That's a break with precedent that has limited members of the party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee to two terms in an effort to prevent a return of the one-man dictatorial rule of the founder of the People's Republic, Mao Zedong.

The party, which brooks no opposition, has total control over politics, information and the media and Xi faces no open threats. However, discontent has at times been raised over his consolidation of power, a sharply slowing economy, a relentless anti-corruption campaign that has targeted political opponents, and the hard-line "zero-COVID" measures mandating strict lockdowns, quarantines, testing and masking that have taken a toll on the economy and society.

At the same time, relations with the U.S., Australia and much of Europe have deteriorated over China's human rights record, its often abrasive diplomacy, assertions of sovereignty in the South China Sea and threats to attack Taiwan. Along with COVID-19 travel concerns, all those factors have contributed to Xi's apparent reluctance to travel overseas for state visits and international gatherings.

## WHAT IS THE SCO AND WHAT IS XI HOPING TO GAIN?

Alongside Russia, China dominates the eight-member SCO, which also includes most of the former Soviet Central Asian states, India and Pakistan. China has used the bloc to expand its influence in what was Moscow's backyard, including taking part in multinational military exercises displaying the capabilities of its fast-modernizing armed forces. China also sees the grouping as a counterweight to NATO and U.S. alliances in the Asia-Pacific.

The dynamic in the region has changed over recent months, however, with the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has drawn tepid support at best from most of the

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other SCO members. Xi may be hoping a meeting with Putin will bolster domestic perceptions of him as standing up to Western opposition to the Ukraine war and burnish his nationalist credentials at a time relations with the U.S. are growing increasingly tense over trade, technology, Taiwan and other issues.

Coming just ahead of the party congress, the overseas visit would also show Xi is confident of his position and support among the party's 96 million members, his six colleagues on the Politburo Standing Committee and leaders of the party's powerful military branch, the People's Liberation Army. As always, the party remains swathed in a veil of secrecy, and travel by top leaders is almost never announced until the last minute, or even not until they return from their trips.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT XI'S TRAVEL PLANS?

Xi and Putin will meet in the Uzbek city of Samarkand on Sept. 15-16, Russian Ambassador to China Andrei Denisov was quoted as saying by Russia's state news agency, TASS.

Xi is also expected to attend a summit of the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations in Indonesia in mid-November, bolstering China's position as the world's second largest economy and a key link in supply chains for goods from cellphones to dishwashers. Separately, China has told Thailand that Xi will attend a meeting in Bangkok of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum shortly after the G-20, "if he is not preoccupied with other responsibilities."

Many leaders combine a trip to APEC and the G-20. China has not confirmed that Xi will attend either gathering.

## **EXPLAINER: What help are North Korean weapons to Russia?**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea is apparently moving to sell millions of rockets and artillery shells — many of them likely from its old stock — to its Cold War ally Russia.

Russia has called a U.S. intelligence report on the purchasing plan "fake." But U.S. officials say it shows Russia's desperation with the war in Ukraine and that Moscow could buy additional military hardware from North Korea.

The ammunitions North Korea reportedly intends to sell to Moscow are likely copies of Soviet-era weapons that can fit Russian launchers. But there are still questions over the quality of the supplies and how much they could actually help the Russian military.

## WHAT EXACTLY WILL NORTH KOREA SUPPLY TO RUSSIA?

Slapped by international sanctions and export controls, Russia in August bought Iranian-made drones that U.S. officials said had technical problems. For Russia, North Korea is likely another good option for its ammunitions supply, because the North keeps a significant stockpile of shells, many of them copies of Soviet-era ones.

North Korea "may represent the single biggest source of compatible legacy artillery ammunition outside of Russia, including domestic production facilities to further supplies," said Joseph Dempsey, research associate for defense and military analysis at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said both North and South Korea -- split along the world's most heavily fortified border for more than 70 years -- keep tens of millions of artillery shells each. North Korea will likely sell older shells that it wants to replace with newer ones for multiple rocket launch systems or sophisticated missiles in its front-line army bases, he said.

North Korea's greater reliance on nuclear weapons and guided missiles may also remove the need for many of its older, unguided artillery shells that once played a prominent role, said Ankit Panda, an expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

But Bruce Bennett, a senior security expert at the California-based Rand Corporation, said most of the artillery rounds to be sent to Russia are likely to be ammunition for small arms, such as AK-47 rifles or machine guns.

"It's not millions of artillery shells and rockets -- that's more than the likely consumption. It could be mil-

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lions of small arms rounds," Bennett said.

## HOW GOOD ARE NORTH KOREAN WEAPONS?

According to an IISS assessment, North Korea has an estimated 20,000 artillery pieces including multiple rocket launchers in service, a number that Dempsey described as "significantly more than any other country in the world."

North Korea's state media have called its artillery guns "the first arm of the People's Army and the most powerful arm in the world" that can reduce enemy position into "a sea of flames."

But its old artillery systems, whose ammunitions will likely be supplied to Russia, have a reputation for poor accuracy.

During North Korea's artillery bombardment of South Korea's front-line Yeonpyeong Island in 2010 that killed four people, Bennett said that only 80 of the 300-400 weapons North Korea should have fired likely hit their target. In his assessment, Lee said about half of the North Korean shells launched ended up falling into waters before reaching the island.

"That is miserable artillery performance. The Russians may experience the same thing, which will not make them very happy," Bennett said.

Observers doubt the usefulness of North Korean ammunition for the Russian campaign in Ukraine, which they say has depleted the military. There have been photos of barrel-busted Russian guns on social media.

It's unclear how serious Russian shortage of ammunitions is. In July, a senior U.S. defense official told reporters that Russia was launching tens of thousands artillery rounds each day and couldn't keep it up forever.

"While substantial stockpiles likely still exist, they may be increasingly infringing on those reserved for the contingency of a wider future conflict," Dempsey said.

## NO NORTH KOREAN MISSILES EXPECTED

It's unlikely for North Korea to provide Russia with ballistic missiles that it views as crucial in its military strategies toward Washington and Seoul, said Yang Uk, an analyst at Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

And if North Korea decides to supply missiles to Russia, it would need to send their launch platforms as well because Russia doesn't have launchers for the North's Scuds and other missiles. North Korea has developed a highly maneuverable, nuclear-cable ballistic missile that was likely modeled on Russia's Iskander. But the two missiles are of different sizes, according to Shin Jongwoo, a military expert at the Seoul-based Korea Defense and Security Forum,

There would be a number of items that North Korea could provide to Russia, given that the two countries share weapons systems going back to Soviet times. But the type of ammunitions North Korea would provide to Russia "are likely to be old and somewhere close to expiring," said Moon Seong Mook, an analyst at South Korea's Korea Research Institute for National Strategy.

## WHAT COULD NORTH KOREA GET IN RETURN?

In return for weapons, North Korea will likely want food, fuel and other materials from Russia because the North finds it difficult to buy such goods from abroad under U.N. sanctions imposed over its nuclear program.

Panda said North Korea is likely benefiting in the form of cash transfers from Russia, or perhaps greater Russian leniency in not enforcing other sanctions on Pyongyang, including the transfer of materials necessary for the growth of North Korea's missile programs.

According to Bennett, North Korea would be willing to be compensated with fuel. For its more advanced arms, it could seek advanced weapons technologies from Russia, possibly including those it needs for its expected nuclear test, the first of its kind in five years, he said.

**Joanna Hogg, Tilda Swinton talk mothers, memory and regret**

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By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Joanna Hogg was extremely nervous about showing her mother her latest film, "The Eternal Daughter."

The writer-director of "The Souvenir" films had, again, mined her own life for material and inspiration. Here she wanted to make something about a woman about her age, in her 60s, and her mother on a trip together. It would be a ghost story, in a way, with conversations about memory, regret, life and happiness.

But she never got the chance to talk it over with her mother, who died while Hogg was editing the film. And she's feeling a bit fragile a few hours before its world premiere at the Venice International Film Festival, sitting beside her star and lifelong friend Tilda Swinton, who plays both the mother, Rosalind, and the daughter, Julie.

Hogg is not the only one feeling this way, either. This is the kind of film that gets under your skin. And no one is quite sure if they'll make it out of the interview with dry eyes (spoiler: they don't).

"Maybe we'll all just have a cry together," Hogg said.

"I have tissues!" Swinton responded, handing one to Hogg and one to this reporter.

"She was so looking forward to seeing this film. She loves ghost stories — loved ghost stories," Hogg said. "I was never brave enough to tell her what the film was about. But she probably knew because she was very intuitive."

It's something Hogg had been mulling for many years. There was a false start in 2008, but then she was emboldened by Swinton's portrayal of the mother, Rosalind, in "The Souvenir" films. They wanted to go deeper into this woman who was a child in England in World War II.

In "The Eternal Daughter," Julie would take her mother back to the large estate where she lived during the war, now a hotel, and ask her about her memories with the idea that it would become a film. The initial conceit was for Swinton to play Julie and to cast another, older actor for Rosalind. But Swinton had another idea: What if she just played both?

"It became a completely different film," Swinton said. "It was not about a relationship between two people. It was about something much more profound and mystical and psychiatric and painful. It became much deeper."

Swinton, whose mother died a decade ago, talked often with Hogg about surviving that loss. Then Hogg suffered the same after the shoot. Though her mother was in her early 90s, it came as a surprise.

"As I was making it, I was wondering how I would be able to show it to her," Hogg said, wiping away tears. "As a daughter I'm sitting here still feeling very guilty about what I've done, that somehow I'll be struck by lightning, that I've done something bad."

That anxiety that she felt then and is feeling even more deeply now became part of the fabric of the film. Julie too feels guilty for wanting to make a film about her mother and says that it feels like trespassing. It's something Swinton can relate to as well. Both are the artist children of non-artists of a bygone generation.

"That in itself is a burden," Swinton said. "Joanna and I share this sense of deep shame. The idea of being as vulnerable and exposing and having a kind of emotional relationship with the world feels so transgressive and such a betrayal. We have felt it all the years of making our work. So we are a mess today."

They even wondered occasionally if the film would mean anything to anyone but them. It was so personal. But as with many great films, though the conversations and anxieties presented in "The Eternal Daughter" are theirs, the specificity also makes it universal.

On set, the small crew would also contribute their own stories to the process. Everyone was personally invested, which Swinton said is rare when you're dealing with such "emotionally expensive" material.

"Having said that, it was so joyful," Swinton said.

Hogg continued: "Yes, the darker the film, the lighter the shoot. (Ingmar) Bergman was an example of that. He had a great time on shoots!"

Then, of course, there were the logistics of filming long conversations between two characters being played by the same actor. Hogg and her cinematographer made what Swinton called a "radical filmmaking choice" to not shoot the typical over the shoulder angle that establishes that orients an audience in the

scene, but to just shoot Julie and Rosalind individually.

Sometimes Swinton would spend full days shooting as Rosalind and the next as Julie, and other times it was half days with a switch in the middle.

"The skill behind that was quite remarkable because she is shapeshifting and each day swapping from one character to another and doing it with no gimmicks," Hogg said.

"It was strangely symbiotic and quite easy," Swinton added.

As with all of Hogg's films, there was no traditional script. The conversations are improvised, which allowed Swinton and Hogg, the one conversing with Swinton off camera as Julie or Rosalind, to follow their noses.

"Joanna's way of working, and the way of working that I am now absolutely devoted to, is the most, for me, inspiring and responsive way of working I can imagine," Swinton said. "I'm loathe to work any other way now."

"I find it extremely inspiring to ask oneself what would one say next," Swinton continued. "It's a revelation."

The editing of it, however, was "quite complicated," weaving together thousands of hours of improvised material.

With every film, once it's done, Hogg says goodbye and lets it out into the world. "The Eternal Daughter," which is playing in competition at Venice, will screen at several more festivals before A24 sets a release date.

"It's hopefully a gift for people. We've really opened ourselves up," Hogg said. "And our parents would be horrified."

Swinton added quickly, "Or not? Maybe not."

Then, as if rehearsed, the two lifelong friends said in unison: "Maybe they wouldn't be."

## Bruce Springsteen's artifacts coming to Grammy Museum

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bruce Springsteen's handwritten set lists and a favorite guitar are among the marquee items that will make a cross-country trip for a museum exhibit this fall.

The Grammy Museum announced Wednesday that Bruce Springsteen Live! will open at the Grammy Museum L.A. Live in downtown Los Angeles on Oct. 15. The interactive exhibit — which runs until April 2 — will feature Springsteen and the E Street Band's live performance footage, instruments, stage costumes and exclusive interviews.

Springsteen's exhibit ended its stint in New Jersey earlier this year.

"We're also thrilled to offer a special, expanded exhibit with the help of Springsteen fans for a one-of-a-kind immersive experience," said Jasen Emmons, chief curator and a vice president at the Grammy Museum. It will invite fans to submit videos of their concert experiences from Springsteen's previous shows on Sept. 23 — the legendary singer's 73rd birthday.

Springsteen's modified Fender guitar that was featured on several album covers such as "Human Torch" and "Born to Run" will be displayed. Other items will include stage clothing from Springsteen and members of E Street along with a signed itinerary from his Human Rights Tour, a six-week benefit tour in 1988. A ticket booth stage prop from the Tunnel of Love tour will also be highlighted at the exhibit.

A saxophone played by the late Clarence Clemons — who performed alongside Springsteen for 40 years — will be on display. The saxophone was passed on to Clemons' nephew, Jake Clemons, who continues to use the instrument as the newest member of the E Street Band since 2012.

Through an interactive kiosk, visitors will be able to view Springsteen's handwritten set lists and create their own encores to compare against the legendary performer's original.

The Grammy Museum partnered with the Bruce Springsteen Archives and Center for American Music at Monmouth University.

"Since his first west coast show as a touring musician at the Troubadour in 1973 to the present day, Bruce has performed over 100 shows in the Los Angeles area and has thrilled millions of fans with his electrifying performances," said co-curator Eileen Chapman, director of The Bruce Springsteen Archives and Center for American Music. "This extensive exhibit provides a peek behind the curtain and a stirring

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trip down memory lane.”

## Today in History: September 8, Ford pardons Nixon

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 8, the 251st day of 2022. There are 114 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 8, 1974, President Gerald R. Ford granted a “full, free, and absolute pardon” to former President Richard Nixon covering his entire term in office.

On this date:

In 1504, Michelangelo's towering marble statue of David was unveiled to the public in Florence, Italy.

In 1565, a Spanish expedition established the first permanent European settlement in North America at present-day St. Augustine, Florida.

In 1664, the Dutch surrendered New Amsterdam to the British, who renamed it New York.

In 1900, Galveston, Texas, was struck by a hurricane that killed an estimated 8,000 people.

In 1941, the 900-day Siege of Leningrad by German forces began during World War II.

In 1943, during World War II, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower announced Italy's surrender; Nazi Germany denounced Italy's decision as a cowardly act.

In 1951, a peace treaty with Japan was signed by 49 nations in San Francisco.

In 1964, public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia, reopened after being closed for five years by officials attempting to prevent court-ordered racial desegregation.

In 1985, Pete Rose of the Cincinnati Reds tied Ty Cobb's career record for hits, singling for hit number 4,191 during a game against the Cubs in Chicago.

In 1986, “The Oprah Winfrey Show” began the first of 25 seasons in national syndication.

In 2016, California and federal regulators fined Wells Fargo a combined \$185 million, alleging the bank's employees illegally opened millions of unauthorized accounts for their customers in order to meet aggressive sales goals.

In 2019, Rafael Nadal held off a strong comeback bid to win his 19th Grand Slam title in a five-set U.S. Open final against Daniil Medvedev.

Ten years ago: Strong storms pummeled the East Coast, spawning a pair of tornadoes in the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, while temperatures at Washington Dulles International Airport plunged 25 degrees in one hour, falling from 89 degrees to 64.

Five years ago: Hurricane Irma regained Category 5 status, battering Cuba with 160-mph winds and taking aim on the Miami area; the death toll across the Caribbean climbed past 20 after the storm ravaged islands including St. Martin, St. Barts, St. Thomas, Barbuda and Anguilla. In one of the country's largest evacuations, officials in Florida told more than 5 million people to leave their homes ahead of the hurricane; parts of interstates 75 and 95 northbound were bumper-to-bumper. Singer Troy Gentry, half of the country music duo Montgomery Gentry, died in a helicopter crash in Medford, New Jersey; pilot James Robinson was also killed.

One year ago: The trial of disgraced Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes began in San Jose, California, with prosecutors casting her as a conniving entrepreneur who duped investors, customers and patients for years, while defense lawyers described her as a tireless worker who tried to develop a faster, cheaper and less invasive way to test blood samples. (Holmes would be convicted on four counts of investor fraud and conspiracy.) The Supreme Court blocked the lethal injection of convicted killer John Henry Ramirez after his attorney argued that Texas was violating his religious freedom by not letting his pastor lay hands on him at the time of his lethal injection. (The court later ruled that states must accommodate the wishes of death row inmates who want to have their pastors pray aloud and even touch them during their executions.) Derek Jeter, Ted Simmons, Larry Walker and the late labor executive Marvin Miller were inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame as the Class of 2020 was honored a year late because of the coronavirus pandemic.



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Today's Birthdays: Ventriloquist Willie Tyler is 82. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., is 81. Actor Alan Feinstein is 81. Pop singer Sal Valentino (The Beau Brummels) is 80. Author Ann Beattie is 75. Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis is 72. Cajun singer Zachary Richard (ree-SHARD') is 72. Musician Will Lee is 70. Actor Heather Thomas is 65. Singer Aimee Mann is 62. Pop musician David Steele (Fine Young Cannibals) is 62. Actor Thomas Kretschmann is 60. Gospel singer Darlene Zschech (chehk) is 57. Alternative country singer Neko (NEE'-koh) Case is 52. TV personality Brooke Burke is 51. Actor Martin Freeman is 51. Actor David Arquette is 51. TV-radio personality Kennedy is 50. Rock musician Richard Hughes (Keane) is 47. Actor Larenz Tate is 47. Actor Nathan Corrdry is 45. R&B singer Pink is 43. Singer-songwriter Eric Hutchinson is 42. Actor Jonathan Taylor Thomas is 41. Rapper Wiz Khalifa is 35. Actor Gaten Matarazzo (TV: "Stranger Things") is 20.