

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, Sept. 25

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

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

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study 8:00 am. Worship (St. John's 9:00 am, Zion 11:00 am)

UMC: Conde worship, 8:30 p.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school after children's sermon during worship.

Emmanuel: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

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



Monday, Sept. 26

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes.

Senior Menu: Sloopy joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit salad.

Noon: Senior Citizens Potluck at Groton Community Center

Boys Region 1A Golf Tournament - site and time to be determined

4 p.m.: Cross Country meet at Olive Grove Golf Course

4 p.m.: Combined 7th/8th Grade FB game at Aberdeen Roncalli

5:15 p.m.: JV Football game at Aberdeen Roncalli
Volleyball at Faulkton: C match at 5:15 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity.

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

Pantry at Community Center open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

UMC: The Walk Bible Study by Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton


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

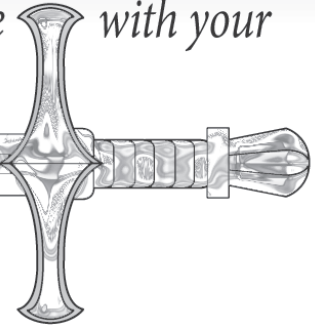
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "I am about to fulfill my words against this city; words concerning disaster, not prosperity. At that time they will be fulfilled before your eyes. But I will rescue you on that day, declares the Lord; you will not be given into the hands of those you fear. I will save you; you will not fall by the sword but will escape with your life, because you trust in me, declares the Lord."

JEREMIAH 39: 16-18 



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1. Is the book of 2 Peter in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Joel declared, “Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into ...” *Hooks, Hammers, Dust, Spears*

3. From Genesis 35, who died giving birth to Benjamin? *Rachel, Leah, Naomi, Ruth*

4. Who wrote down the book of Romans for Paul? *Stephen, Benaiah, Cyrus, Tertius*

5. Who was the mother of David? *Not mentioned by name, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah*

6. In Proverbs 23:4, “Labour not to be ...”? *Wise, Rich, Glorified, Found*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Spears, 3) Rachel, 4) Tertius, 5) Not mentioned by name, 6) Rich

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

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by Healthy Exchanges

Chocolate Sunrise Pudding Treats

When every minute counts and you have more commitments in your day than you have hours, you don’t have to forsake desserts — not even chocolate desserts. One bite of this ultra-quick delight and you’ll feel you have your world under control once again.

- 1 cup (8-ounce can) sliced peaches, packed in fruit juice, undrained
- 1/2 cup unsweetened orange juice
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free instant chocolate pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1/2 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans

1. In a blender container, combine undrained peaches and orange juice. Cover and process on BLEND for 10 to 15 seconds or until mixture is smooth. In a large bowl, combine dry pudding mix, dry milk powder and blended peach mixture. Mix well using a wire whisk. Blend in whipped topping.

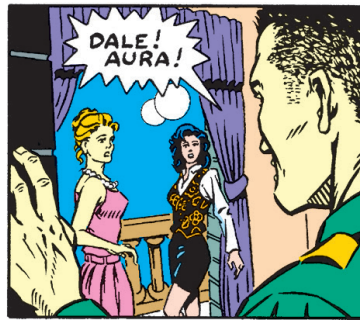
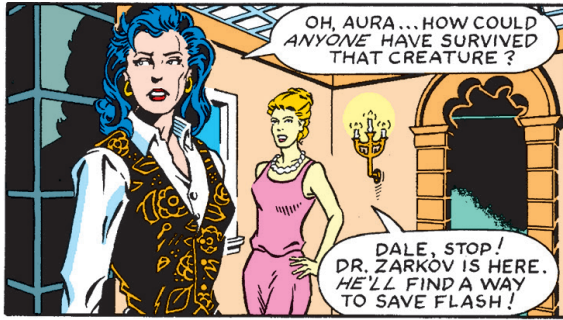
2. Evenly spoon mixture into 4 dessert dishes. Top each with 3/4 teaspoon pecans. Refrigerate for at least 10 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

• Each serving equals: 154 calories, 2g fat, 5g protein, 29g carb., 400mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Fruit, 1/2 Fat-Free Milk, 1/2 Starch, 1/2 Fat.

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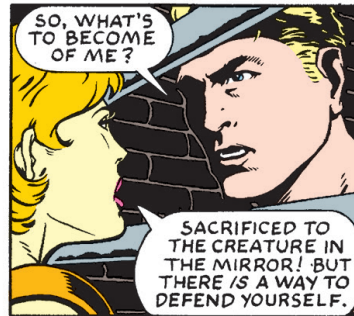
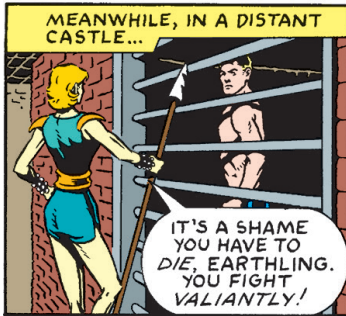
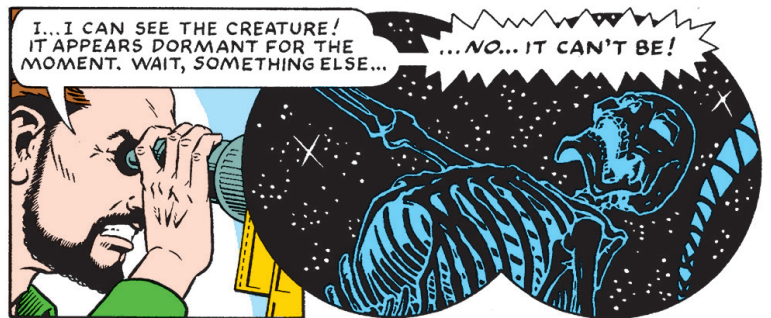
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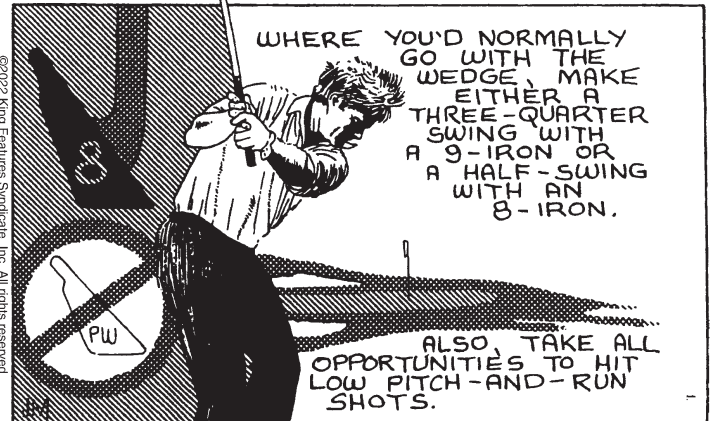
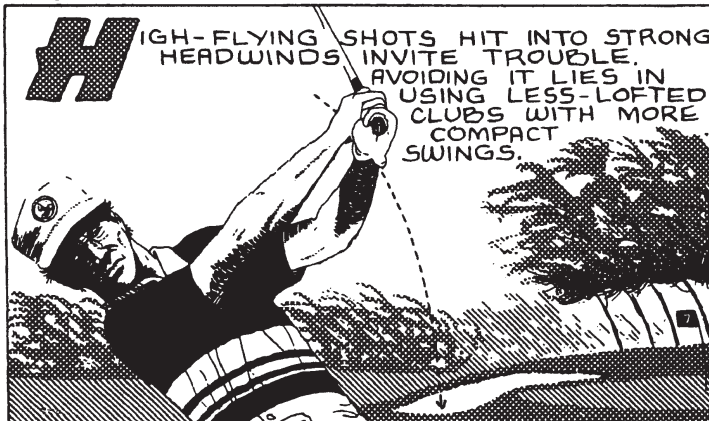
FLASH GORDON

SAFELY BEHIND A PROTECTIVE SCREEN, DR. ZARKOV PROBES THE MYSTICAL MIRROR IN SEARCH OF FLASH!

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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Herbal Product Can Help Soothe Gastrointestinal Symptoms

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have had gastroparesis for many years. About two years ago, it led to small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (which I once read about in your column). I worked with a dietician for several months. One of the treatments she suggested was an herbal product called Iberogast. The combination of herbs helps the stomach to empty quicker. I use it each night before bed (as part of a 12-hour fast), or whenever I have overeaten and feel bad. It has been most helpful for me. Iberogast is available online. — L.E.

ANSWER: Iberogast is a combination of nine medicinal plant extracts. Studies in Germany and Austria, where it is most commonly used, have shown the medication to be more effective than the placebo (and about as effective as one common prescription medication) in the treatment of functional dyspepsia and irritable bowel disease. The medication has generally been regarded as safe, but there are rare cases of liver injury associated with this medication, with at least one of which eventually requiring a liver transplantation.

All medications — whether prescription or over-the-counter, natural or synthetic — have the potential for harm. Iberogast is pretty safe, with just a handful of bad outcomes in its 50 years of use, involving millions of doses, but it can still cause rare and severe adverse effects. Iberogast is worth considering in people whose symptoms have not been successfully treated with other therapies.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I've heard a lot about fat-removing procedures, such as CoolSculpting and red light therapy, and I'm wondering if they really work. What is your opinion on these products? — *Anon.*

ANSWER: The most important point here is that these are procedures designed to improve a person's appearance, and they do little or nothing to improve physical health. They do not cause people to lose significant weight, and removal of the superficial fat right below the skin does not improve diabetes or heart risk factors. The benefits are purely cosmetic.

CoolSculpting is the brand name of a system that freezes and damages fat cells. Red light therapy, also called "cool laser" or "low-level laser therapy," damages the fat cells without having to make incisions, such as for liposuction. There are other technologies used, such as focused ultrasound and electrical pulse devices, among others.

Trials on CoolSculpting showed that 86% of people saw improvement in cosmetically important areas. The laser treatment is not as well-studied. An early trial found that 70% of people treated with laser were satisfied, compared to 26% of those treated with a "sham" device that had no laser, just red lights. The device did show some slimming effects on the hips, thighs and waist.

Unfortunately, not everyone has a good response to these therapies. Several people, including a famous model, have sued the manufacturers due to an uncommon adverse effect of the procedure, called paradoxical adipose hyperplasia, where the fat cells, instead of dying, grow and become hard — and may not even be removable with surgery. Again, these noninvasive procedures really do work to improve appearance for most people, but do not improve overall health. And, they have the potential for significant cosmetic side effects, even if it is only rarely.

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

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Adrien Brody and Ana de Armas star in "Blonde." Courtesy of Netflix

"Blonde" (NC-17) -- In this new biopic based on the novel of the same name, audiences get to see a different side of Hollywood legend Marilyn Monroe. Ana de Armas ("Knives Out") portrays the woman first known as Norma Jeane, as she evolves into the iconic actress we've come to recognize. Bobby Cannavale ("Boardwalk Empire") stars as Joe DiMaggio, Monroe's second husband, and Adrien Brody ("The Pianist") stars as Arthur Miller, her third husband. While the talented de Armas has received praise for her performance, the film itself has received criticism for its excessive nudity. But, with biopics like these, it's far too tricky to please everyone. Check it out for yourself when "Blonde" premieres Sept. 28. (Netflix)

"Hocus Pocus 2" (PG) -- The sequel to the 1993 Halloween favorite "Hocus Pocus" premieres on Sept. 30, right on time for the Halloween season. The Sanderson sisters are back causing mayhem in Salem, as Bette Midler, Kathy Najimy and Sarah Jessica Parker all reprise their roles from the first film. The sisters are conjured by high school students Becca and Izzy, who unite with others in the town in an attempt to stop the deranged trio of witches. The direct-to-streaming movie doesn't fully excel at bringing back the magical feel of the first film, even with its musical numbers and returning characters, but Disney just can't help themselves when it comes to remakes and sequels. (Disney+)

"Ambulance" (R) -- Jake Gyllenhaal and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II star in this movie directed by Michael Bay (the "Transformers" films and "Armageddon"). Gyllenhaal and Abdul-Mateen play two adoptive brothers, Danny and Will, who agree to execute a \$32 million bank heist together. The heist doesn't go exactly as planned, when LAPD officers swarm the bank to stop the brothers. Will and Danny make a narrow escape on an ambulance, unbeknownst to an EMT (Eiza Gonzalez) onboard treating a police officer. With four people now stuck in an ambulance on the run, it's hard to tell who will make it out alive. Premiering Sept. 30, "Ambulance" is pure Michael Bay, with big-budget action scenes every step of the way. Premieres Sept. 30. (Prime Video)

"Reasonable Doubt" (NR) -- Defense attorney Jax Stewart (Emayatzy Corinealdi) loves to work with criminals; she welcomes the challenges that come with these clients. Jax tries to balance her career with being a mother and a wife but difficulties with her husband lead to a trial separation. While figuring out how to sail these murky waters, Jax deals with the recent rekindling of a friendship with Damon (Michael Ealy), a client she once defended, as well as a new, perplexing murder case on her hands. The style of this series is quite like "Scandal" and "Little Fires Everywhere," which makes sense with Kerry Washington serving as executive producer. Premieres Sept. 27. (Hulu)

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1. Which duo released "I'd Really Love to See You Tonight"?
2. Name the singer who recorded "Could I Have This Dance."
3. Which group released "Our House"?
4. Who released "Why You Treat Me So Bad"?
5. Name the song that contains the lyrics: "Right to the end, Just like a friend, I tried to warn you somehow, You had your way, Now you must pay."

Answers

1. England Dan & John Ford Coley, in 1976 on their "Nights Are Forever" album. It made it to No. 2 on Billboard, bested

by "Play That Funky Music" by Wild Cherry.

2. Anne Murray in 1980. The song was used in the "Urban Cowboy" film that year as well as on the soundtrack.

3. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, in 1970. Songwriter Graham Nash said it was about his very ordinary life with singer Joni Mitchell. The song has been covered by others, including Helen Reddy and Phantom Planet.

4. Club Nouveau, in 1986.

5. "Who's Sorry Now," covered by Connie Francis in 1957 on her first album. The song was originally written in 1923 and released by Isham Jones, and was considered a big band swing song.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



"I think she overreacted. ... How were you to know she was a real blonde?"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

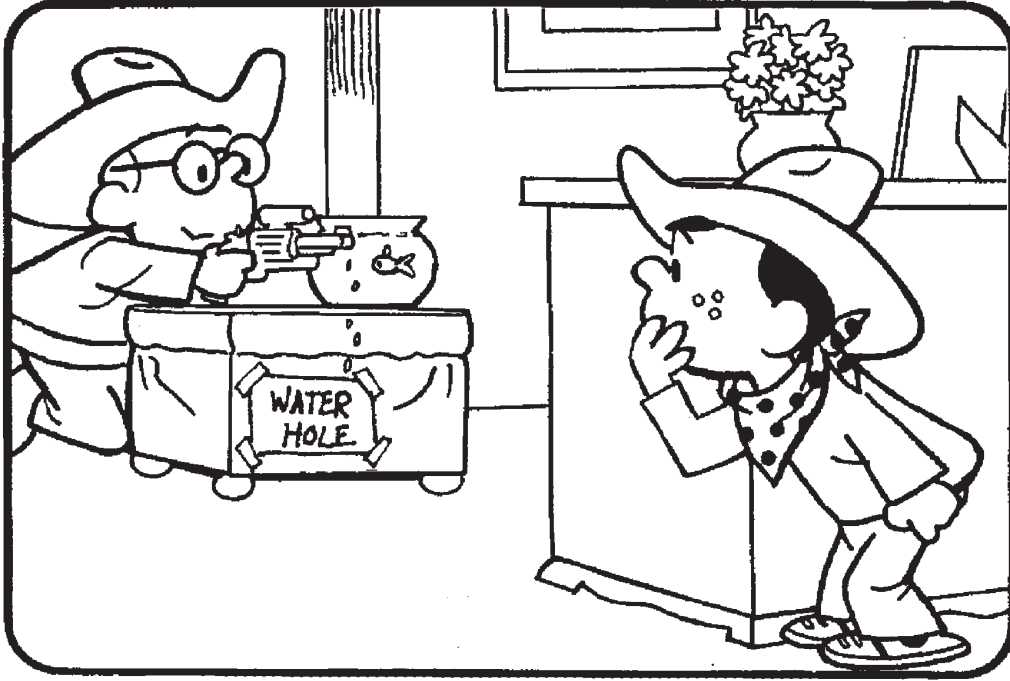


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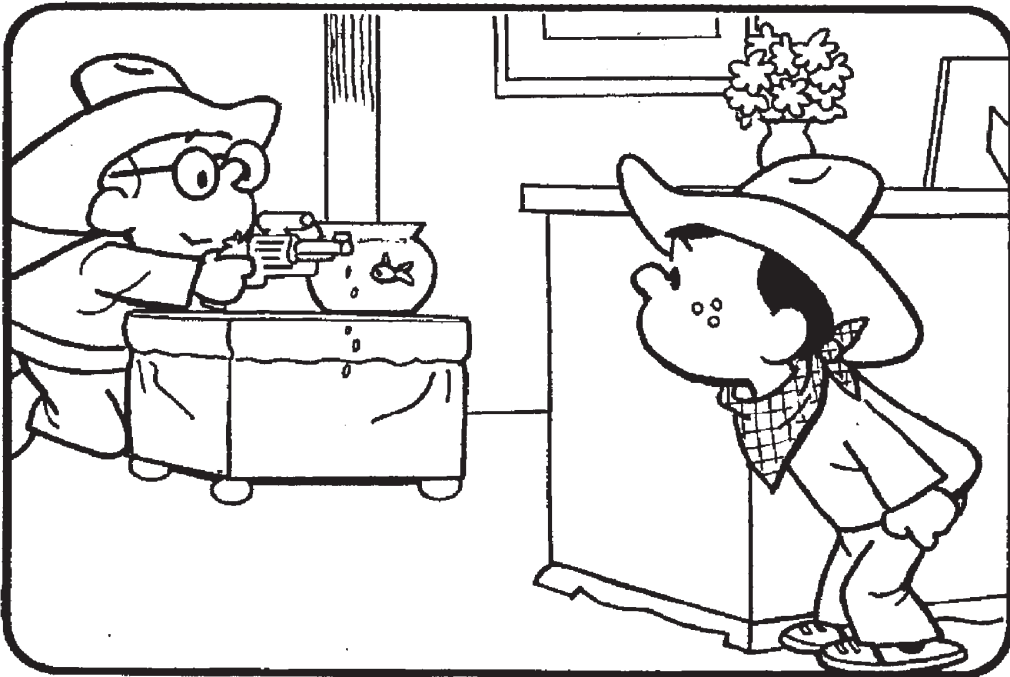
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Hat is different. 2. Sign is missing. 3. Vase is smaller. 4. Arm is hidden. 5. Bandanna is different. 6. Picture frame is moved.

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* Necklace chains that have turned dark due to oils in your skin can be washed in warm water with a dab of shampoo mixed in. Also, keep your old earring backs -- they might fit a different pair if one gets lost! -- M.F. in Washington

* To freshen the color of carpets (and destroy moth larvae or flea eggs), liberally sprinkle salt on them before vacuuming. I use a cleaned out Parmesan cheese container for this. It works very well. -- J.K. in Pennsylvania

* To clean the glass inside your oven door, use the stovetop cleaner for your glass stovetop. -- V.P. in Florida

* Use cold, salted water to defrost a chicken for roasting. You will have very flavorful and moist meat. -- E.D. in Kansas

* Save plastic lidded containers from the kitchen. Cover with colorful duct tape, and they can be used as storage or even as gift wrapping.

* Disposable razors can be used to remove burrs from sweaters or wool slacks. Just be sure to keep it out of the reach of children. -- O.D. in Tennessee

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

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Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman



QUICK FIGURING IS MAGICAL

GOOD at juggling numbers? Let's see.

Ask a friend to think of a number from 1 to 100.

Have him or her subtract 1, multiply the result by 2, add the original number, and reveal the total.

Once you have the total, without revealing your secret, add 2, divide by 3, and you will obtain the original number.

Example: Suppose the original number was 22. Subtracting 1 leaves 21, times 2 is 42. Adding the original number makes 64, the amount revealed to you.

You add two, divide by 3, and you know the number thought of was 22. Quick figuring helps, of course.

FACE FACTS! How many faces are contained in this drawing—13, 15, 17? Guess, then turn page every which way to find them. Answer: Seventeen.

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INS AND OUTS! Said Kin Hubbard: "I don't know anything as willing, and that seems to enjoy its work as much as a —." What two words are missing?

Answer: "...revolving door."

X-WORD TEASE! Consider yourself a whiz if you can solve this tricky mini-crossword in less than two minutes. Take note: It consists of a curious blend of words and letters. Definitions:

- Across:** 1. A tunnel. 2. Toothpaste container. 3. Old radio component. 4. A type of sock.
Down: 1. Golf pegs. 2. 180-degree turns. 3. Social insects. 4. Retiree's quest.

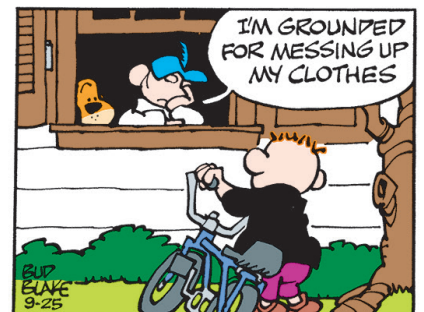
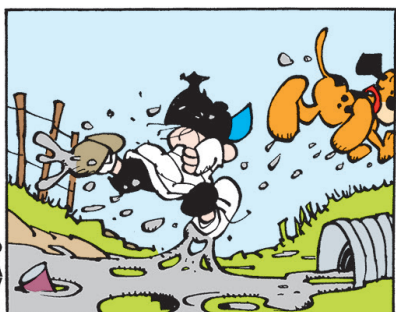
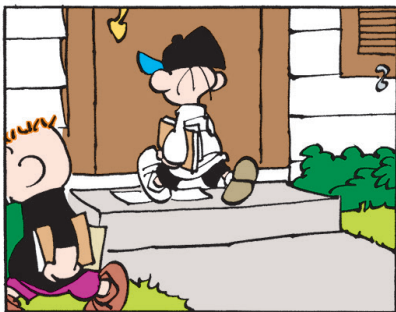
No fair peeking at answer below.

Across: 1. Tube. 2. Tube. 3. Tube. 4. Tube.
 Down: 1. T's. 2. U's. 3. B's. 4. E's (ease).

1	2	3	4
2			
3			
4			

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE 9-25

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Piratic quaffs
- 5 605, in old Rome
- 8 Last write-up
- 12 Like some vaccines
- 13 Ecol. watchdog
- 14 Stratagem
- 15 Turkey's most populous city
- 17 Actress Falco
- 18 Second of two
- 19 Church keyboards
- 21 Six, in Sicily
- 22 Harvest
- 23 Fireplace residue
- 26 Society newbie
- 28 Golf great Sam
- 31 Coach Ewbank
- 33 Passing craze
- 35 Capital on a fjord
- 36 Cardiff's country
- 38 "Uh-huh"
- 40 Kids' game
- 41 Antitoxins
- 43 French article
- 45 Juan's pals
- 47 Cease-fires
- 51 Track assignment
- 52 Brazil's most populous city

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

- 54 Karaoke prop
- 55 Brit. record label
- 56 Bridal cover
- 57 Writer Kingsley
- 58 Wee bit
- 59 Old U.S. gas brand
- 8 Pizza sauce herb
- 9 Hungary's most populous city
- 10 "The doctor —"
- 11 Casual tops
- 16 Must have
- 20 Scale members
- 23 "How adorable!"
- 24 Mermaid's home
- 25 Finland's most populous city
- 27 Inlet
- 29 Carte lead-in
- 30 Pooch
- 32 "Stayin' Alive" band
- 34 Shoulder muscle
- 37 "No seats" sign
- 39 Criminal, to cops
- 42 Plus
- 44 Debonair
- 45 — mater
- 46 Hurt severely
- 48 Poolroom supply
- 49 Yale students
- 50 Without help
- 53 "I — Rock"

DOWN

- 1 Stir up
- 2 — Major
- 3 "The Martian" actor Damon
- 4 Bed boards
- 5 Question after a mission
- 6 PC's brain
- 7 Bravery

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY



"You know very well what fish!"

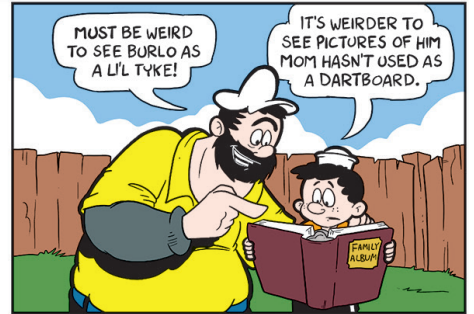
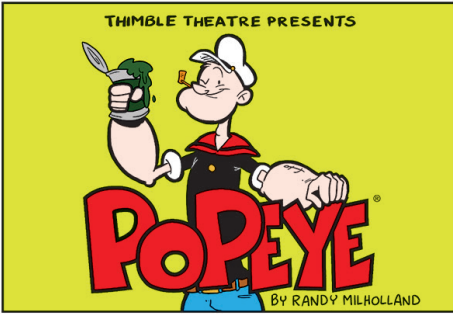
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

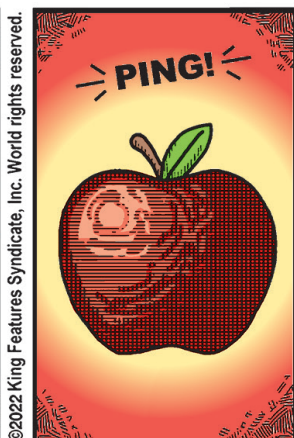


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R.F.D.



by Mike Marland

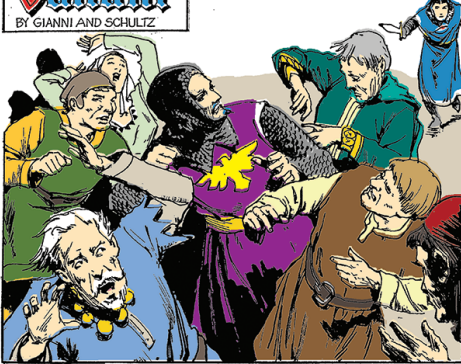


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Hal Foster's
Prince Valiant
By Gianni and Schultz

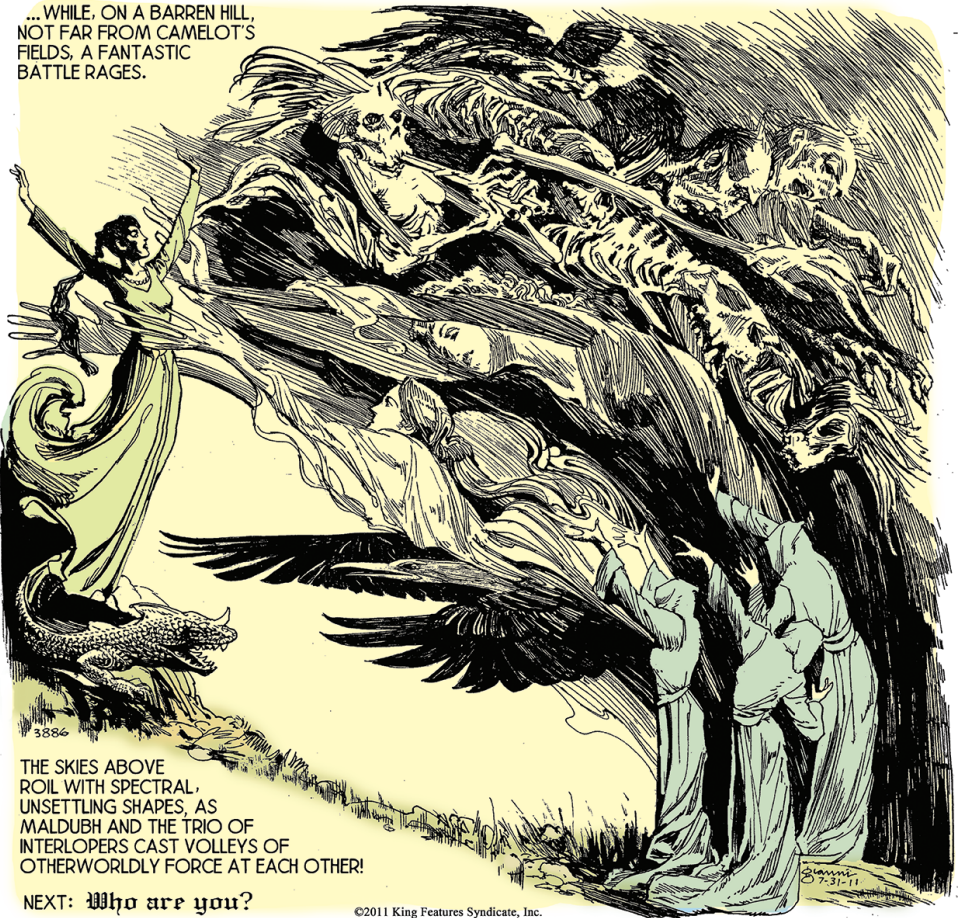
DRACO DECIDES DISCRETION IS THE BETTER PART OF AMBITION, AND FLEES INTO THE GRANDSTAND ...



...WHERE AN ALLY THRUSTS A NEW WEAPON INTO HIS HANDS, AND HE TURNS TOWARD THE PURSUING VAL ...



...WHILE, ON A BARREN HILL, NOT FAR FROM CAMELOT'S FIELDS, A FANTASTIC BATTLE RAGES.



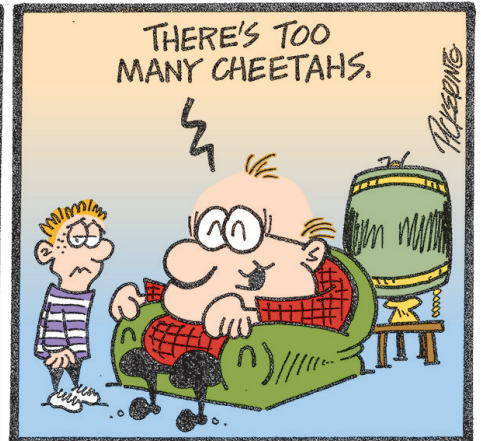
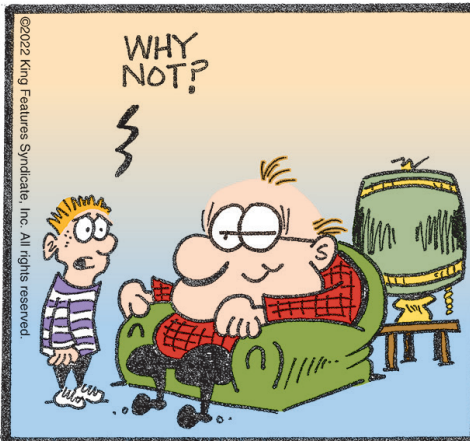
THE SKIES ABOVE ROIL WITH SPECTRAL, UNSETTLING SHAPES, AS MALDUBH AND THE TRIO OF INTERLOPERS CAST VOLLEYS OF OTHERWORLDLY FORCE AT EACH OTHER!

NEXT: Who are you?

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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Pickering

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Free College Courses

In an attempt to keep brain cells active this winter, I have signed up for a college course. The good news is that it's all online and it's free. The other good news is that it's sponsored by a major university.

It's called Open Courseware, and I found my class on the internet. Yale, Harvard, MIT, Stanford and many others have "massive open online courses," also known as MOOCs, and their main purpose is to provide learning opportunities. You have to appreciate MIT especially. They make course material for their 2,600 classes "available on the web, free of charge, to any user anywhere in the world."

Most of these open courseware classes are self-paced (do them when you want after downloading the lecture). Most don't get you a certificate or a degree, but then most don't cost anything either. Beware, of course, scammers who'd like to take your personal information and charge you for a class that's actually free and doesn't require you to sign up. Your best bet, until you're familiar with open courseware, is to stick to the big-name universities.

For a three-minute video showing an explanation of MIT's open courseware, see www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICa_4xUr8BA.

Read the fine print on the website as you hunt for a class. Read the syllabus (description of the course) and the list of texts to be used. If you're required to read books, see if they're free to download online. (Some of the material downloads are huge.) Pay attention to the estimated time commitment for the course you want to take.

If you definitely want to attend in-person college but need financial help, see www.aseniorcitizenguide-forcollege.com. Click on "Find Your State Tuition Waivers" and see if any in your state are covered. Some colleges will have a link to an application for a tuition waiver for seniors; some will just have a website and phone number to call for information.

Note: The Great Courses (www.thegreatcourses.com) are not open courseware and will cost money.

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Teaching Petless Kids to Care for Animals

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: We can't have pets in our apartment, but I want to teach my children about responsibility and compassion for animals. Are there volunteer opportunities for kids out there? -- Jessica in Seattle

DEAR JESSICA: There certainly are volunteer opportunities for kids in most communities. The hard part can be finding one that will work for your kids, fit in with school schedules and provide the kind of rewarding experience you want them to have. PAWS.org, for example, has several volunteer opportunities in the Lynnwood, Washington, area. The shelter doesn't allow kids under 18 to work directly with animals, but it hosts a special Day of Service for those 10 or older to help spruce up its dog trail, and hosts a PAWSwalk each summer. Kids also can choose to "donate their day" -- ask for donations to the organization in lieu of birthday presents, for example. That's just one organization in one area. Kids and parents should search for local shelters and animal-rescue organizations to see what volunteer or fundraising opportunities are available. Another, more immediate opportunity may be right in your neighborhood. Do you have friends or neighbors



by Ryan A. Berenz

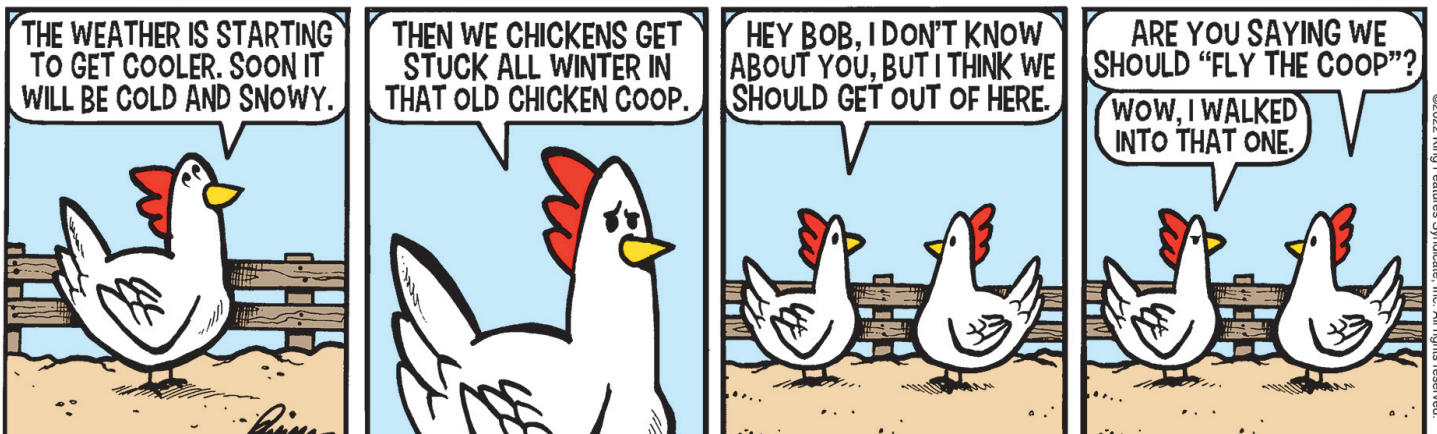
with pets? Are they willing to let your kids visit and play with their dog or cat? Is there an elderly relative or friend who needs help walking their dog or taking their cat to the veterinarian? Remember that, as the parent, you'll need to supervise your kids for many of these events or pet-care opportunities. But you'll be giving them key tools to be awesome pet owners of the future.

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

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Teaching Petless Kids to Care for Animals

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* There are more people in Monaco's orchestra than in its army.

* While tanning remains popular despite the documented health risks, the CDC has estimated that if folks under the age of 18 stopped using tanning beds, over 60,000 melanomas and melanoma-related deaths could be prevented.

* In 1987, a man convinced 2.8 million people to send him a penny each for his college education.

* People who play videogames are less likely to have nightmares.

* Switzerland is the only country in the world that could fit more than its entire population into bunkers in case of an emergency.

* Eggo waffles were originally called Froffles upon their creation in 1953 -- a portmanteau of "frozen" and "waffles." Customers started calling them Eggos due to their egg flavor, and the company renamed the product two years later.

* Dubai is the most air-conditioned city in the world.

* Maggots and leeches are the first living creatures to be approved by the FDA as medical devices.

* A 1924 Arizona law made it illegal for donkeys to sleep in bathtubs.

* Crakow shoes, a pointy footwear popular in the 14th century, could get so long that the toe of the shoe had to be attached to the leg with a string so that it wouldn't drag.

* Ever noticed that all ads for the iPhone display a time of 9:41? That's because Steve Jobs first announced the device's launch in 2007 at 9:41 a.m.

* New employees at Google are called Nooglers, and on their first Friday of employment, have to wear a special hat bearing the Google colors and that distinctive moniker.

Thought for the Day: "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed." -- Booker T. Washington

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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO



WUPS! DEPT' MAKE SURE ALL YOUR GUESTS ARE GONE BEFORE YOU START KNOCKING 'EM...

B. ROSENFELD, SEATTLE, WASH.



The Garden Bug

Saving seeds

Harvest seed pods by the stem when the green color is all gone, and they appear brown and dry. Crumble the pods in a bowl until the inner seeds are released. Spread the seeds on some paper, keeping each kind separate. Let them dry for one week; then collect them into small paper packets or envelopes, labeling each one with its plant name and the date you gathered them. Store your seed packets in a dry, dark location. - Brenda Weaver



Sources: rodalesorganiclife.com, howtosaveseds.com, www.motherearthnews.com



by Freddy Groves

Extension for Debt Hardship Relief Period

If you owe benefit debts to the Department of Veterans Affairs, your hardship relief period, previously set to expire on Sept. 30, has been extended to Dec. 31.

Those types of debts can include those for education, disability compensation and non-service pension, and you might have been approved for either a waiver, a compromise or an extended repayment

plan, as well as the hardship suspension of debt.

These debts impact half a million veterans and sometimes can be the result of a clerical error, the veteran not being able to understand the paperwork or a letter being lost in the mail. Worse is when the error occurred when the veteran didn't see the fine print and suddenly started receiving collection bills for debts he didn't know he owed.

By now you might have received a letter from the VA, if you have been making payments. Don't be afraid to open that letter. It's likely extension information for you. Consider using it to apply for a hardship extension that will carry you to the end of the year.

If you ever received an overpayment and were told you have to pay it back, give them a call at 800-827-0648. If the money you owe results from either a pharmacy co-payment or medical care debt, instead call 866-400-1238 and talk to them.

Get to the bottom of the actual source of the debt. Did a clerk make a mistake? Did you fail to verify dependents or write in a wrong number? Do you have the canceled checks to show that you actually paid? Find out what's wrong.

The VA has taken a number of steps over the years to help veterans saddled with VA-related debt. They canceled co-pays from April 2020 to September 2021. They changed the income to qualify for relief. They took away the Financial Status Report for hardship eligibility. And, a big deal: They cut nearly all the reports to credit agencies for medical debt. That can have a big impact on your future credit score.

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Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. U.S. STATES: Which state's official animal is a panther?
2. LITERATURE: What was the color of the man's hat in the "Curious George" book series?
3. TELEVISION: Chuck Woolery was the original host of which TV game show?
4. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What was the location of the first White Castle restaurant?
5. COMICS: What's the name of the newspaper where Clark Kent works?
6. MOVIES: Which 1980s movie features a character named Aurora Greenway?
7. PSYCHOLOGY: What fear is represented in the phobia eisoptrophobia?
8. GEOGRAPHY: How many African countries have Portuguese as their official language?
9. ANIMAL KINGDOM: On average, cats sleep how many hours a day?
10. HISTORY: The ancient city of Rome was built on how many hills?

Answers

1. Florida.
2. Yellow.
3. "Wheel of Fortune."
4. Wichita, Kansas.
5. The Daily Planet.
6. "Terms of Endearment."
7. A fear of mirrors.
8. Six.
9. About 15 hours.
10. Seven.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Our Rural Way of Life

When I first ran for Governor, South Dakota needed new opportunities. For years, our economic growth had not kept up with the nation. Young South Dakotans were too often leaving our state to pursue college or a career. Cities like Sioux Falls were growing, but our rural communities were slowly falling behind.

I grew up in rural South Dakota – I love what our rural communities stand for. I knew that we could turn that trend around, and that’s exactly what we’ve done in the last four years.

Because of the example of Freedom that South Dakota set during the pandemic, millions of Americans visited our state. Thousands chose to make South Dakota their home. But they didn’t only move to Sioux Falls or Rapid City. We have folks moving to small towns, too – even some of our smallest town!

This was possible because we prioritized strengthening our small towns. Folks shouldn’t have to choose between the career of their dreams and our rural way of life, and now they don’t have to. We’ve made several key investments in our rural communities that have made this possible.

When I was first elected, I pledged to connect every corner of South Dakota to high-speed broadband, but it looked like this would take 10 years to accomplish. Because of South Dakota’s tremendous tax revenues, we managed to fully fund our broadband program in just a couple years. We have connected thousands of South Dakotans to high-speed internet. Families in small towns now can get Wi-Fi access right at home. Farmers can get internet to monitor various aspects of their operations.

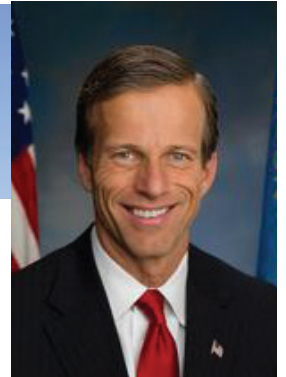
Rural healthcare is an issue that has also fallen behind over the years, but we addressed that challenge, too. I proposed and signed legislation to extend telehealth flexibilities to South Dakotans. Now, you can talk to your doctor over the internet from wherever you are, making it so much easier to get the healthcare that you need, even from a rural community.

We also improved training and purchased new equipment for our emergency first responders and are investing in regional emergency response services. This will have a particularly strong impact on our rural communities. We want to be sure that every South Dakotan can be taken care of in an emergency, no matter where you live.

Our entire state’s economy depends on agriculture, and this is doubly true in our small towns. Lieutenant Governor Larry Rhoden and I made our living farming and ranching, so we understand the challenges that our farmers face. I worked to secure favorable trade deals that give our producers new markets to sell their goods. We provided grants to 99 small meat processors across the state to increase competition, which will benefit our ranchers. And we’re investing in opportunities to innovate our agriculture industry and keep it strong for the next generation.

Our rural communities are thriving in South Dakota. For the first time in a long time, our young folks are choosing to stay here. People are moving to our small towns to share our way of life. And we are making investments to build on this momentum and keep rural South Dakota strong for the future.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Border Disorder

There is an undeniable crisis at our southern border. So far this fiscal year, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has encountered more than 2 million illegal immigrants, far exceeding the Biden administration's previous record, which it set last fiscal year. This doesn't include known "gotaways," immigrants who evaded apprehension after crossing the border – more than 1.1 million combined in the previous two fiscal years alone.

President Biden recently claimed he's put a process in place to manage migrants and that he is working to make it safe, orderly, and humane. Conditions at the border contradict the president's claim, as well as his vice president and appointed border czar's recent assertion that the border is secure. Border Patrol is overwhelmed, local police departments are stretched thin, and border facilities and private shelters are beyond capacity. One Texas sheriff worries illegal immigrants may be released into communities with minimal or no screening because Border Patrol is so strained. This is especially concerning as convicted criminals, large shipments of drugs, and individuals on the terrorist watch list are known to be crossing the border.

Deaths at the southern border have surged under the Biden administration. The Department of Homeland Security reports 748 migrants have died crossing the border in fiscal year 2022, surpassing last year's record. The number of CBP search and rescue missions have substantially increased as well. These conditions have resulted in the United Nations International Organization for Migration declaring the U.S.-Mexico border "the deadliest land crossing in the world."

The situation at the border is neither safe, orderly, nor humane. It is also clear the border is not secure. An illegal immigrant recently told a reporter, "Everybody believes that the border is open." This is the message that President Biden's immigration policies have conveyed since he first took office more than 20 months ago. The longer this inaction continues, the more individuals will be encouraged to attempt the dangerous journey across the southern border.

For months, as this crisis raged, Democrats have downplayed and outright ignored it. Democrats recently shoved their massive spending package through the Senate, containing hundreds of billions of dollars for Green New Deal priorities, but zero resources for addressing the border crisis. Republicans offered multiple proposals to provide resources to secure the border, but Democrats unanimously rejected all of them.

It was not until recently, when border-state governors began sending some illegal immigrants to places like New York City, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., to alleviate their overstretched communities that there was a sudden and predictable outcry from Democrats who accused these governors of manufacturing a crisis. Washington, D.C., a city of 700,000 people, declared a state of emergency and requested federal resources when they received about 9,400 migrants over five months. New York City, with 8.4 million residents, has not received as many as the nation's capital. Eagle Pass, Texas – population: 29,000 – sees 10,000 migrants each week. Where is the real crisis?

The situation at our southern border is appalling, but it's preventable. If the president has any real interest in making it "safe, orderly, and humane," he would make border security a priority. His record so far suggests it's more likely we'll see the scenes of chaos and human suffering continue.

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CONGRESSMAN

DUSTY JOHNSON

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Commitment to America

For the past two years, big government policies in Washington, D.C. have decimated our economy, left the southern border open, and skyrocketed inflation.

Our nation has faced tough times, but there is hope, and I believe our country will soon turn the corner. Today, House Republicans launched the Commitment to America. Ahead of November and a likely Republican-led Congress, House Republicans have identified ways to reverse the damage done by the Biden Administration's policies. Our plan focuses on issues the American people care about—our economy, safer communities, freedom, and government accountability.

The announcement today revealed four pillars House Republicans are committed to:

We commit to building an economy that is strong. We'll support policies to fight inflation and lower the cost of living. We recognize the need to make America energy independent and reduce gas prices, and strengthen our supply chain, ending dependence on China.

We commit to making America a nation that is safe. A safe nation includes a border that is secure, combatting illegal immigration, reducing crime in our communities, and defending our national security. Supporting our troops, establishing a Select Committee on China, and exercising peace through strength with our allies will counter some of our biggest global threats.

We commit to ensuring a future that is built on freedom. Ensuring success for every student, achieving healthier and longer lives for our loved ones, and confronting Big Tech's agenda that doesn't protect our children online or our sensitive and personal data.

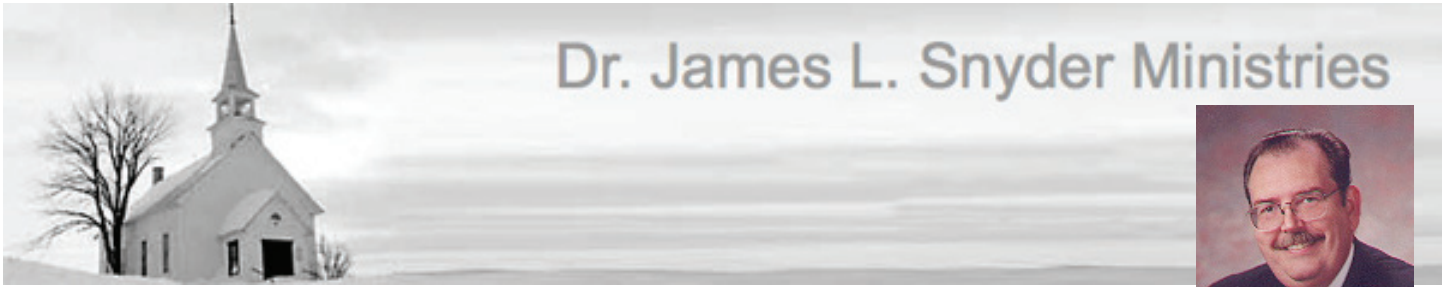
We commit to being a government that is accountable. From accountability of Members of Congress to our election process to preserving our Constitutional freedoms, Americans should be able to trust their elected officials to uphold the Constitution and make decisions that don't abuse their power.

Our fellow citizens are concerned about paying the bills, putting food on the table, keeping their children safe, and whether they can trust their government. Our plan addresses concerns held by many from coast to coast, including our friends and families in South Dakota. I and my fellow House Republicans look forward to upholding our Commitment to America.

To learn more about the Commitment to America, you can visit the website [here](#).

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Who's Really in Charge



Living in the country, our family did not have a television in our home. Unfortunately, most people in our neighborhood did not have a television. That just was normal.

Somehow we managed to entertain ourselves without TV, and of course, we did not have the Internet then. So how we got along without Facebook and cell phones is more than I can remember.

Then in 1963, something happened that changed the world when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

When that happened, my father decided he needed a TV to keep up with the news concerning this event. With that TV came something called the TV remote control. I've never seen that kind of thing before and was rather curious about what in the world it was all about.

My father set up the TV and showed us the TV remote control in his hand and how it worked.

"This remote control," my father explained, "is to control the TV."

Then he looked around at us as we sat there and said, "Because I am the man of this home, I have control of this TV remote control. So this is my responsibility."

Looking at me, the oldest of the children, he said, "As a man, you are to be in charge of this TV remote control." When he said that, he looked at all the kids, then looked at my mother, and smiled.

Since my wife and I have been married, I have tried to communicate this to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I am the man of the house and responsible for the TV remote control.

There are many things in our home I have no control over. I'm not allowed in the kitchen area for a variety of reasons. I tried when first married and have been barred from going there ever since. I even tried to wash the dishes once, which was a kitchen flood disaster.

So, my responsibility is the TV remote control.

That went well for an extended period, but recently something has changed. The remote control batteries have been running out too quickly.

One night I told my wife that the batteries were dead and asked if we had any new batteries for this remote control. She said, "Oh, I thought you were in charge of the TV remote control?"

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She then brought me fresh batteries for the remote control with a very suspicious snicker on her face. I looked at her suspiciously, took the batteries, inserted them into the remote control, and it worked just fine.

The next day I tried to turn on the TV, and the remote control was not working for some reason. I checked it and found the batteries were dead.

I asked my wife, "Didn't I put new batteries in the remote control yesterday?"

My wife looked at me and nodded her head. "Do you need new batteries again?"

She then got two new batteries, brought them to me, I gave her the old ones and put in the new ones, which were working very nicely. So I sat back in my chair in complete control of the TV. I was beginning to appreciate my father's advice.

The remote control worked fine for the next few days, and I forgot about running out of battery power.

Then three days later, the batteries again were dead. I had to stop and think a little about what was happening. Batteries don't work like this, at least from my experience.

When my wife walked into the room, she looked at me and said, "Is your remote control working okay today?"

How she said it caused me to think a little about what was happening. Something seemed a little bit out of whack.

Then she handed me two new batteries, took the old ones and walked away with a smile.

Thinking about this, I came up with a plan to figure out if she was playing me or not. I put a little X on the old batteries, and a little 0 on the new ones. I have been wrong so many times, but the thing that danced in my head was, what if I'm right about this?

The batteries worked for two days, and then on the third day, once again, they were dead.

Before I could say anything, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage brought me two new batteries for the remote. "You probably need new batteries today, don't you?"

I put the new batteries in, and the remote was working as usual. So before I went to bed, I checked the marks on the batteries, and it was a 0.

When I got up in the morning, I first checked the batteries and discovered both batteries had an X on them. So now I was beginning to see what was happening, she was switching them out at her discretion.

While I was trying to process this whole thing I was reminded of one of my favorite of Bible verses. Proverbs 3:5-6, "5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

When I think I know everything is going on around me, that's when I get into deep trouble. I try to start out every day with the idea that I don't know everything. The only person I can really trust for everything is the Lord.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that as the planet warms, it will be the huge demand for and use of air conditioning that will push us all over the edge of cataclysmic warming? – Joseph Still, New York, NY

As innocuous as it may seem, the common household air conditioner is actually a significant contributor to climate change! According to researchers from the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), almost four percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are the result of air conditioning use alone.

Even more worrisome, that number is expected to grow. AC usage, especially in countries like India, China and Indonesia, has been increasing steadily as average yearly income increases. In an analysis by the International Energy Agency, it was found that AC use would likely triple by 2050.

AC usage is of course problematic, but it is also unavoidable, so what can we do? For starters, there are definitely improvements that could be made with regard to the engineering of AC units. Interestingly enough, the technology is quite archaic—in fact, it is nearly the same as it was 100 years ago.

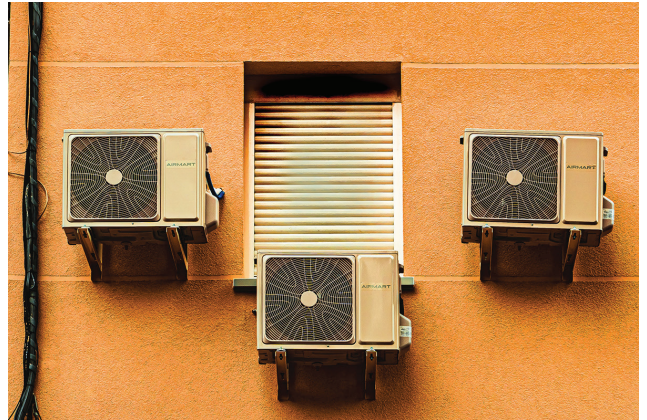
Many air conditioners use a vapor compression cycle to cool the air inside your home. It is a system that requires refrigerants—chemical compounds like chlorofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons—to accomplish the cooling effect. However, most of these refrigerants actually destroy the ozone layer.

Thankfully, more modern air conditioners avoid the use chlorofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons, opting for less destructive refrigerant alternatives. There are dozens available that do not harm the ozone layer; however, they are still considered greenhouse gasses.

Despite these improvements, modern air conditioners will still need a lot of re-engineering if we hope to ever make them carbon neutral. They are very inefficient, not just use, but in their production and transportation, too. According to the NREL and Xerox PARC study, of the 1,950 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) released into the atmosphere as a result of AC use every year, only 531 million tons are associated with actually cooling the air; 599 million tons of CO₂ are associated with the dehumidification process, and 820 million tons are due solely to leakage during production and transportation.

Fortunately, there are a few worthwhile prototypes being tested today that may finally change the AC game for good. The startup Transaera has been testing what they call metal organic fibers (MOF's), a type of manufactured, highly porous material, that is capable of passively pulling moisture from the air. Since almost half the energy usage of a traditional AC unit is spent on dehumidification, passive dehumidification would translate into huge energy savings, and therefore, huge carbon savings as well.

Another startup known as Blue Frontier has been working on an AC unit that uses liquid desiccants (drying agents) to passively dehumidify the air that passes through it. In addition, the machine only uses refrigerants to regulate a heat pump that maintains the salt concentration of the desiccants. This vital change in design separates contact between the air passing through the machine and the refrigerant itself, thereby preventing refrigerant leakage. The end result is an AC unit that contributes 85-87 percent less carbon emissions than traditional AC units!



Some new technologies hope to make the increasingly necessary "luxury" of air conditioning less of a planetary burden.

Credit: pexels.com.

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South Dakota COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

956

Active Cases

709
-44

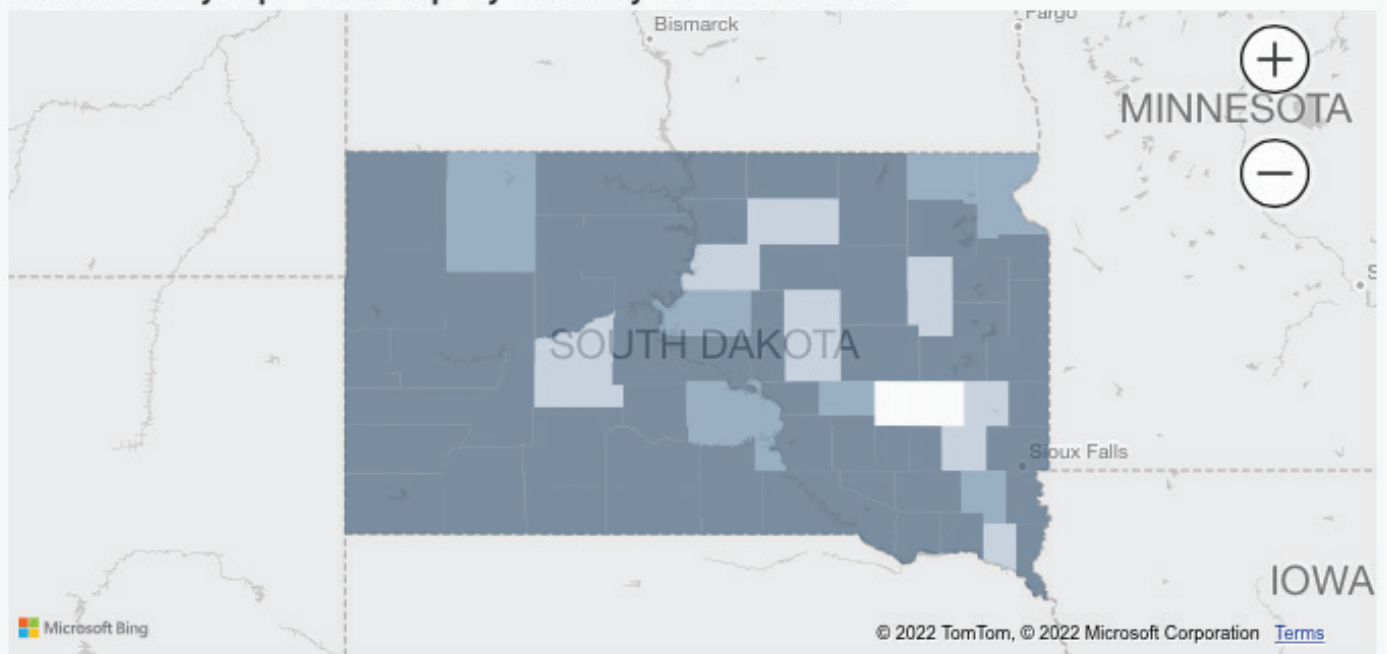
Recovered Cases

256,913

Currently Hospitalized

94

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

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

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

260,639

Total Tests

2,324,411

Deaths Among Cases

3,017

Ever Hospitalized

11,726

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

76%

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Brown County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

51

Active Cases

35
+6

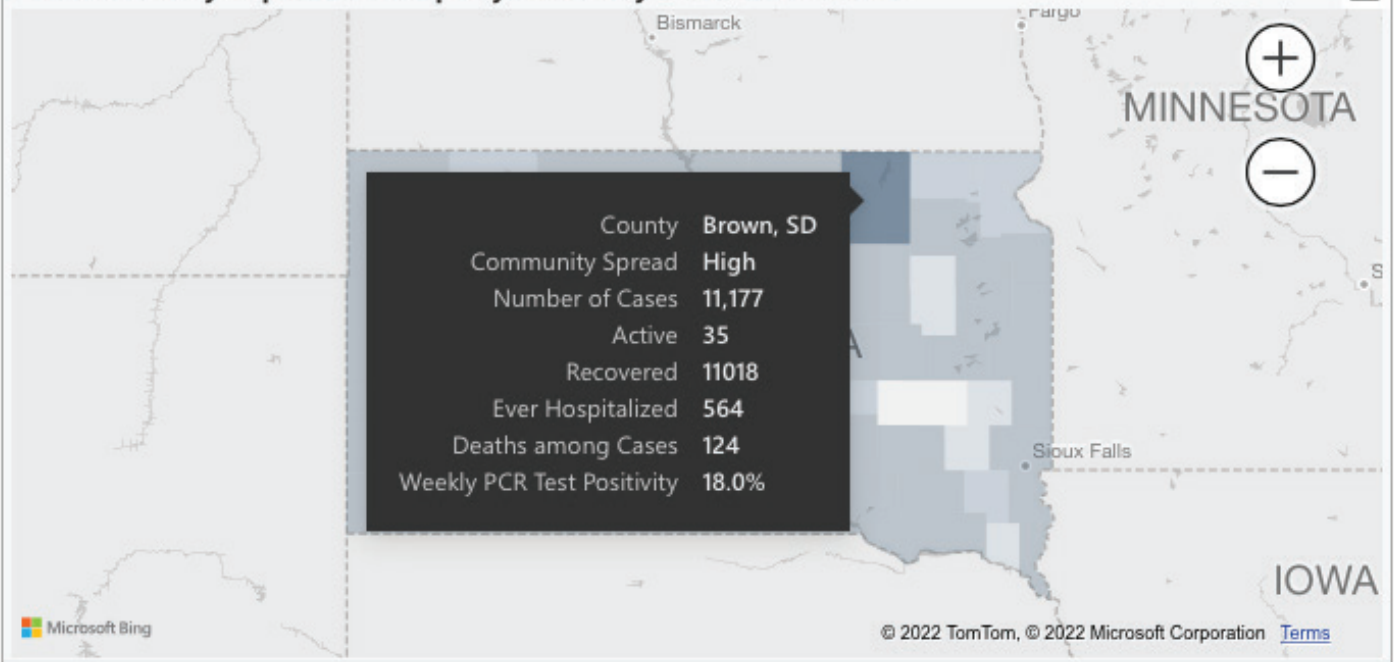
Recovered Cases

11,018

Currently Hospitalized

94

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

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

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

11,177

Total Tests

110,550

Deaths Among Cases

124

Ever Hospitalized

564

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

76%

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Day County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

7

Active Cases

0
-3

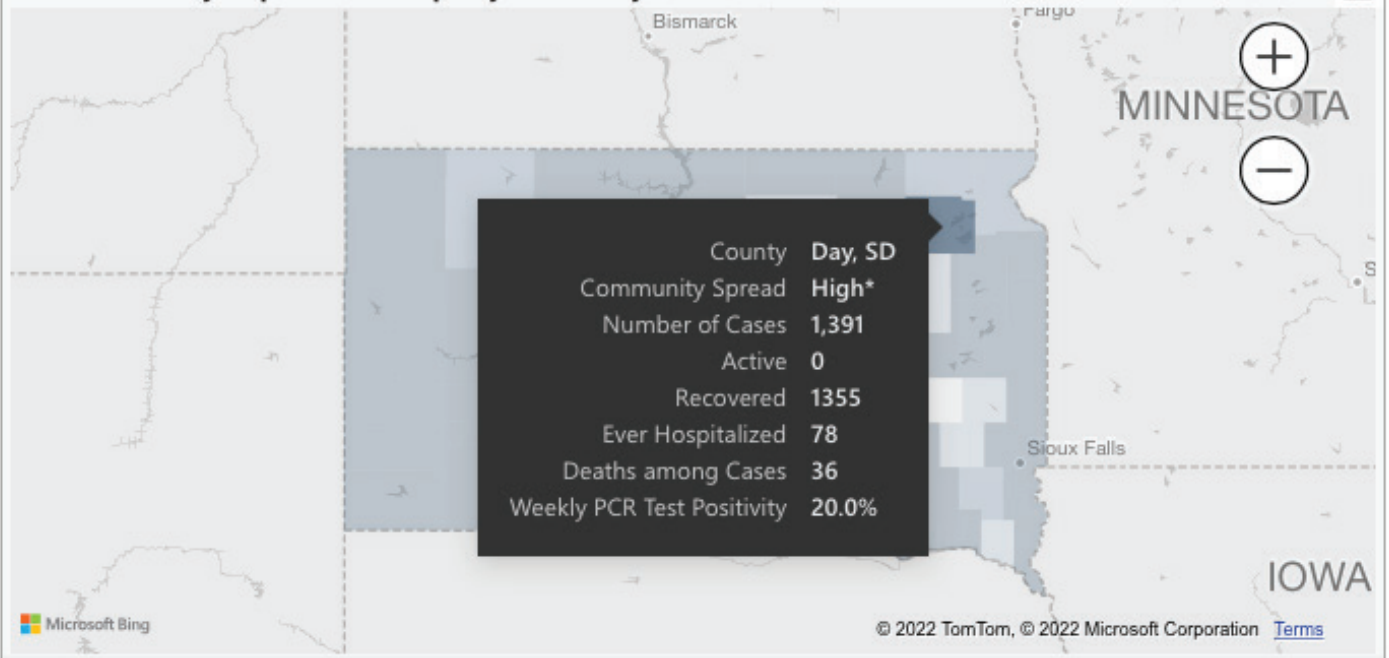
Recovered Cases

1,355

Currently Hospitalized

94

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

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

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

1,391

Total Tests

17,627

Deaths Among Cases

36

Ever Hospitalized

78

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

76%

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Ever Hospitalized

11,726

03/07/2020 - 09/19/2022

Currently Hospitalized

94
+9

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases	# of Cases - Last 3 Months
Delta (B.1.617.2 & AY lineages)	1,720	151
Omicron (B.1.1.529 & BA lineages)	1,578	349
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176	3
Omicron (BA.2)	146	29
Gamma (P.1)	4	1
Beta (B.1.351)	2	0

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths Among Cases
Male	121,911	6,101	1,641
Female	138,728	5,625	1,376

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	17,831	173	3
10-19 years	30,399	188	2
20-29 years	44,916	630	14
30-39 years	43,371	865	54
40-49 years	35,858	993	89
50-59 years	33,167	1,548	228
60-69 years	28,392	2,352	485
70-79 years	15,871	2,508	707

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	# of Hospitalizations	# of Deaths
Asian / Pacific Islander	3,614	114	20
Black	6,318	218	23
Hispanic	11,111	366	39
Native American	33,472	2,000	452
Other	2,278	64	14
Unknown	5,691	82	22
White	198,155	8,882	2,447

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#555 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

At midday today, we're at a seven-day, new-case average of 54,088, considerably down from our last Update, just five days ago, when we were at 61,712. I am hoping that number continues to drop for now because, as we will discuss soon, there's an increase predicted within a few weeks and we are, once again, going into it at far too high case numbers. Pandemic total is now at 95, 811,812 reported cases; we should pass 96 million early next week. Hospitalization average is down a bit from 32,057 to 30,342. Seven-day average deaths are down from 464 to 430 although the 14-day trend is actually increasing. I hope that washes out in the next few days. Total deaths to date are at 1,052,158.

I've read an article which presents the distressing possibility that Covid-19 will remain a leading cause of death in the US indefinitely. Dr. Bob Wachter, chair of the University of California, San Francisco's department of medicine, told NBC news last week that "It's likely, when we think of causes of death in our society, that Covid's on the list probably forever." It was the third leading cause of death in 2020 and again in 2021 and might drop on the list slightly this year and in the future; but this is pretty depressing. In the modern era, we had largely eliminated infectious diseases from the top-10 list of causes of death, only pneumonia and influenza hanging in there in recent years. Well, last year, Covid-19 knocked it off the top 10, leaving just one infectious disease, albeit a different one, behind. There are things we could do to reduce the deaths numbers from Covid-19: masking, vaccination, boosters, and treatments. I do not foresee any of those breaking into a leading role in upcoming months and years. Whether this pandemic is officially "over" or not, it's looking more and more like we're going to accept a high level of dying from this virus into the future as a basic cost of doing business. I have nothing to say here; I guess I'll just wait to see how we go.

We've discussed new subvariants, specifically BA.4.6 and BA.2.75, but now we have different ones in our sights. For example, there's B.2.75.2, which has eclipsed its nearest parent, BA.2.75—no one's worried about that one anymore at all. On the other hand, BA.2.75.2 has a spike protein (S) that binds more tightly to host cells than any prior version of this virus. That likely creates some resistance to antibodies; it does seem in some preliminary testing against antibodies from recent blood donors to be causing concern as a potential immune escape. We have yet to discover how it does against anti-BA.5 antibodies like those generated from recent infections or this new bivalent booster vaccine, but some preliminary work from Imperial College London and the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden which I've seen in preprint (so not yet peer-reviewed) concludes "BA.2.75.2 [is] the most neutralisation resistant variant evaluated to date. These data raise concerns that BA.2.75.2 may effectively evade humoral immunity in the population." I have seen reporting that the subvariant is and other reporting that it definitely is not still susceptible to our last remaining monoclonal antibody treatment, bebtelovimab, but I haven't seen a paper. If I can track down what's happening with that, we'll know whether we still have something to offer the immunocompromised who become infected.

Then there's BA.5.2.1.7 or BF.7 for short. Its incidence in the US has doubled in just two weeks. This bears watching, especially as we see a much higher incidence in the Northeast from which every single wave of this pandemic has originated. It has been increasing in incidence in several European countries too, specifically Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and France. Anything gaining ground so quickly in a crowded field like this one is a concern. It appears to have a similar transmission advantage as BA.2.75 and therefore may be more transmissible than BA.5. We have no information at this time about acuity of infection, but no Omicron subvariants have so far surpassed BA.5 in that category, so maybe this will not be a concern. There is concern it has an advantage in terms of immune evasion, which would not be great news; but we're not yet ready to make a call on that.

Amid this concern about immune evasion, we should also keep in mind that all such talk is about humoral immunity—antibodies—and remember that humoral immunity is only part of our protection against viral infection. As you may recall from our many earlier discussions (for brush-up see my Update #150 posted July 22, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3796230603726651>), there is a whole

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other arm of the immune system, the cell-mediated response, for which all of these fancy new immune-evading variants have nothing: Your T-cell responses are working every bit as well against today's version of this virus as they did at the very beginning. They won't prevent you from getting sick, but against these recent variants, they do stand a pretty good chance of keeping you out of a hospital—or a coffin.

At the moment, BA.5 represents 83.1 percent of US cases with BA.4.6 at 11.9 percent, BF.7 at 2.3 percent, BA.4 at 1.4, and 2.75 at 1.4. This means BF.7 has already passed BA.2.75, the one we thought was going to be our next big problem. Understand that the WHO is currently tracking some 200 subvariants of Omicron. Not all of these will prove to be problematic, but we don't yet know which of them might be, either here in the US or around the world. We will not know for some time yet whether this rapid growth will continue, but we need to stay on our toes as things develop. It's probably too early to panic, but neither should we be too sanguine about having beaten this virus—it's too early for that as well. It is not too soon to consider the possibility of masking indoors again this winter; we know well-fitting, preferably high-quality, masks protect the wearer. They're not 100 percent, but they protect. And get a booster: They're not 100 percent either, but they also protect. Layering is good. I'll add that, while SARS-CoV-2 has not exactly been predictable throughout the course of this pandemic, it does appear that future evolution is going to be on the Omicron line; there is very little to make us think separate lines of mutation are underway. That gives us at least a starting point for keeping up with it. We do know for sure that, as long as we have this extremely high rate of transmission, further mutation and evolution are inevitable, so we can just buckle up and hang on for the ride.

We approved these new bivalent boosters without human trials data. While this isn't a big concern considering this is the way we've been approving annual influenza vaccination updates approximately forever, it's nice to see some human clinical data; and we now have some of that for the Moderna booster. I will note that I am working here with a summary; I have been unable to access the actual data. The news is good. It appears from a nonrandomized, open-label (so not blinded) phase 2/3 clinical trial published in the New England Journal of Medicine that this booster triggers stronger neutralizing antibody responses after four weeks than did the previous vaccine, and there were no accompanying safety concerns. At four weeks, people with no prior experience with the virus generated a significantly higher level of neutralizing antibodies than from the earlier vaccine. Those with a history of infection were likewise more protected.

Now with a predicted worse-than-usual flu season coming up and also a predicted winter surge of Covid-19, most likely building next month and peaking in December and January, the question arises how you will know what you have if you get sick. The Omicron version of Covid-19 looks a whole lot like influenza: cough, aches, fever, runny nose, nausea, shortness of breath, fatigue. The loss of senses of taste and smell that were so prevalent with earlier variants aren't so much a thing at this point. Hmmm. That's a puzzle. What to do?

First, stay home if you're sick. Honestly, you shouldn't be running around infecting other people with flu either. Both of these viruses present risks to others, especially older people, people with underlying conditions, and pregnant women, so whatever you have, park yourself at home for the duration. Your friends and coworkers will—or should—thank you. The only way to reliably know which virus you have is to test. Home Covid-19 tests are, as we've discussed, widely available, but alas, no longer free unless you have health insurance to cover them. You may recall that testing too early in your infection can result in a false negative (test says you do not have Covid-19 when actually you do). If you have symptoms and test negative, retest with a rapid test 24 to 48 hours later or have a PCR test, which is better at picking up virus earlier in the course of infection. Also, if you're symptomatic and Covid-19-negative, get tested for flu. There are at-home tests available for influenza virus as well. I am not highly knowledgeable about this market, but I believe these are quite expensive (upwards of \$100) for those without insurance. If someone here knows more about costs for flu tests, I'll be pleased to edit better information into this post, so please feel free to get in touch. There are specific therapies for each infection, Paxlovid for Covid-19 and Tamiflu for influenza; but these are very expensive without insurance. Now that the federal funding for no-cost treatments for Covid-19 has dried up, I believe we're going to be on our own this winter to pay for these things unless there is a further Congressional appropriation to cover the cost of providing them;

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this does not look likely to me.

I've read a series of studies which indicate there may be a long-term negative effect on your immune system of a SARS-CoV-2 infection, even if you don't get very sick and suffer no symptoms of long-Covid. It appears we've had an uptick in viral illness since this pandemic began: influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), monkeypox, polio, reinfections of Covid-19. This would not be a good thing. All of this is preliminary, but the trend is towards a conclusion that there's something here. Let's take things in order.

There are basically three possible outcomes after a viral infection, as follows: (1) you clear the infection and recover completely, (2) you suppress the virus into latency and recover with the virus still dormant (not replicating or acting) in your body (think chicken pox and years-later development of zoster, or shingles), or (3) you fight the virus to a chronic state, which means it continues to replicate at low levels, often continuing to cause more minor symptoms or ongoing damage. So #1 is mostly what happens; when all of the various parts of the immune system operate as they are designed to do, we rid ourselves of the virus and carry on from there. Possibilities #2 and #3 are things that happen not infrequently; but we are now seeing some signs of a fourth possibility, that the virus changes our immune cells in a way that affects our ability to fight pathogens off in the future, for how long, we simply don't yet know.

In case you've joined us recently or have forgotten some of the basics, you can review the way innate and adaptive immune responses work from my Update #150 linked above in our discussion of immune evasion. A review may help you to follow this discussion.

A study from Australia published in BMC Medicine in January had a look at the activities of various immune cells over time after a SARS-CoV-2 infection in 69 recovering patients who had varying acuity (severity) of infection from mild to critical. More than 50 percent of them reported ongoing symptoms more than six months post-infection. Anti-S (spike) antibodies, presumably neutralizing antibodies, persisted at least six months, but a number of cells involved in an innate, that is nonspecific, first-line defense against future infections (NK cells, LD neutrophils, and CXCR3+ monocytes) and adaptive, that is specific, responses to particular pathogens, response showed populations of involved cells (helper T, follicular helper T, and regulatory T cells) were different from those in healthy nonconvalescent individuals. There were significant perturbations to gene expression in these cells up to at least six months post-infection. This indicates normal immunological function may have been disrupted for months after the acute infection has resolved.

Another study published in PLOS Medicine about a year ago from a team at the Faculty of Medicine, LMU Munich, looked at dendritic cells, antigen-presenting accessory cells of the immune system which recognize infections and trigger innate and adaptive responses. Their function is to process antigen (pathogen) material and present it on their surface to T cells so the T cells can respond. They function as communication between the innate (non-specific) and adaptive (specific) arms of the immune response. They also looked at changes in monocytes, a specific type of white blood cell that finds and destroys pathogens, as well as calling in other kinds of white blood cells to help in this process. The study compared 65 hospitalized Covid-19 patients with mild or moderate to severe disease to healthy controls. Findings were that SARS-CoV-2 infection is associated with a long-lasting reduction and functional impairment of dendritic cells (DCs). This depletion and dysfunction is associated with lower responsiveness of other T cells in a response to future infection of many types. Their conclusions say, "Depletion and functional impairment of DCs beyond the acute phase of the disease may have consequences for susceptibility to secondary infections and clinical management of COVID-19 patients."

Yet another study, this one from the University of Alabama's School of Medicine and published in The Journal of Clinical Investigation several months ago looks at 46 acute hospitalized and 39 non-hospitalized people who had recovered from confirmed Covid-19 infections and compared them with 20 healthy (Covid-19-negative) controls. Findings were that many T cells had been activated and "exhausted," suggesting the cells are dysfunctional and are not going to be able to adequately respond to subsequent infection. There were deficiencies of other lymphocytes, a specific type of white blood cell, of which T cells are one subset, important in responding to infections. This serves as an indication the cells will not respond well to other inflammatory diseases, upping the ante in future infections.

There was one more study published this week in the journal Nature. From a group in China, South Korea,

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Sweden, and Chile, it looked at B cells, the ones that produce antibodies, and T cell in healthy controls and recovered individuals. Their findings were that, while the size of overall B cell populations were not different in recovered patients compared to healthy controls, the recovered patients showed diminished populations of fully-functional B cells. Due to metabolic changes in B cells, they were less able to respond to infection. Overall reductions in lymphocytes played a role in this reduced response. Both CD4+ and CD8+ cells were reduced. (If you need a refresher on the respective roles of CD4+ and CD8+ cells in an immune response, check out my Update #389 posted March 18, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/pfbid02iQmWjrfouAnduKMSsXR6rW6ZmRen8CGUohmAZ9hmuTwZpBjr5Lbgiip8puSsL-rZVI>.) The T and B cell changes seen in this study may impact future immunological responses as well; exactly how this works is still a subject for research.

Work remains to be done, but we seem to have evidence there's a reasonable chance that Covid-19 results in a diminished ability to respond to future viral infections or maybe lead to other chronic illnesses. If this is true, we're not yet clear on how long that diminished ability lasts. What we do know is that damage to the immune system is not a good thing, however long it lasts.

Most studies of Covid-19, understandably, focus on people who get sick; but a group of researchers at the University of California San Francisco wanted to understand why some people who are infected with SARS-CoV-2 don't get sick, so they decided to study people who aren't sick, that is, 1400 unvaccinated, positive-testing, asymptomatic individuals. To be clear, these are not people who avoid infection; these are people who, despite being infected, don't get sick. I read their paper in preprint (which means it has not yet been peer-reviewed or published), and it's pretty exciting stuff. What they did was analyze the participants' DNA, looking for genes associated with resistance to developing symptoms, and they found something of interest. There's a group of genes collectively called HLA (for human leukocyte antigen) that are "pivotal" in immune response, and in that group there was one fairly common (about one in 10 people) mutation called HLA-B*15:01 significantly associated with remaining asymptomatic. The association was strengthened by the observation that homozygosity for this particular allele increased the probability of remaining asymptomatic by more than eight-fold.

[Since I could not reasonably embed the following explanation into that last sentence, here's a quick primer on what it means: You are probably aware that your genes are carried on structures called chromosomes, so called because of the dye they take up in staining procedures (chroma = color, soma = body, so "colored bodies"). Our chromosomes come in pairs, that is, we have two copies of each gene, one on each chromosome in a pair. You can think of alleles as the content of a gene, specifically what's coded in that gene (like blue eyes or brown eyes, type A blood or type B blood, etc.); most genes have two or more alternative alleles that might occupy your particular chromosomes. When you have two different alleles for a gene on your two chromosomes in the pair, you are said to be heterozygous (hetero = different); when you have identical alleles for the gene on both chromosomes in the pair, you are homozygous (homo = same). So what these researchers discovered is that people with one "normal" and one mutated allele for this HLA gene, one on each chromosome in the pair (heterozygosity), are better than the rest of us in resisting getting symptoms of Covid-19 when infected; but people with the same mutated allele for the gene on both chromosomes (homozygosity) are more than eight times more resistant to getting symptoms than even the heterozygotes. When we see this large a difference in a particular trait between heterozygous and homozygous individuals, that's a pretty good sign the gene in question is important to the trait.]

The HLA-B*15:01 mutation apparently brings about a rapid response to SARS-CoV-2 using T cells induced by prior infections with common cold virus, in other words, pre-existing cross-immunity from another coronavirus. It looks like these T cells are already pre-programmed in such a way that they can recognize SARS-CoV-2 even when there has been no prior exposure to this virus. That means the response is as quick as it would be in someone who has had prior exposure, providing early viral clearance and preventing symptoms from ever developing. Now to figure out whether there are those who are genetically protected entirely from infection. And who knows what else there is to learn in this realm?

And that's all I have for today. I hope you're staying warm and keeping yourself safe as we head into fall. I'll be back in a few days.

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Quinn Quacks

It's hard to decide what you want to do when you "grow up" until you get there. Then it's too late. – Quinn Quacks

You can impress some people at a party by just winking, nodding your head, and saying "for sure" to whatever they say. – Quinn Quacks= = = = =

Quinn Column

Rix Quinn – Where is my hair?

Many male friends tell me, "I am losing my hair. What can I do about it?"

I suggest they do what I did... get rid of your mirror.

But seriously, I understand their plight. I still shed mountains of hair daily, much of it from the head. So, here's my question: is your hair really receding? Maybe you just combed it differently. A few years ago, I just thought my forehead had experienced a growth spurt.

Take this quick test: Get an old high school photo. Compare it with your hairline today. If you notice major mane loss – or if hair falls on the photo while you look at it – you might try remedial action.

Right now, I'm using a scalp cream. Not only does it smell good, but it makes my gray hair shine. So, last night, I even put a little on my shoes.

Balding remedies have existed for years. Hippocrates developed one made of onions, horseradish, and pigeon droppings. Users named this fowl mixture "Why Is My Girlfriend Vomiting?"

Today, however, we've got wonderful options including toupees, chemical remedies, and hair transplants. So, don't despair. There's repair out there somewhere for missing hair on a scalp that's bare.

Got a story idea for Rix? E-mail him at rix@rixquinn.com.

Preschool Developmental Screening

Groton Area Schools #06-6

Preschool Developmental Screening is for children ages 3-4 who reside in the Groton Area School District. The child needs to be 3 years of age before the screening date/day. This screening is not required to enter Kindergarten.

The screening consists of adaptive, personal/social, communicating/speaking, motor, and concepts skills. If you believe your child has difficulties in any of these areas please contact the school.

If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

Screenings will be held on Friday, September 30 8:00-3:30. Information will be sent to families who have already been identified. Please contact Heidi Krueger at 605-397-2317 to schedule a screening time.

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ANOTHER JARK/WORLIE AUCTION



RETIREMENT CEMENT TOOLS & EQUIPMENT AUCTION

Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022
Sale Time: 10:00 AM

507 E. RR Ave, Groton, SD



SKID STEER – WHEEL LOADER

• Mustang 2056 Turbo w/2 speed Cab, AC/Heat, Hydr. Tach, 6' Bucket, 2302 hours, ('10) • 5' Mustang Skid Steer Bucket (cement) • Kobelco LK300A Wheel Loader w/Bucket, Forks, 16.9-24 Tires, Eng. Overhauled 4084 hrs ago (\$23,000)– Runs/Works.

GUN SAFE - TOOLS – EQUIP – TANKS

- Safari 24 Gun Safe (NIB)
- Husqvarna FS309 Cement Saw -Nice
- Subaru Robin Ex17 Cement Saw
- DP-75ASB Diesel Generator (New)
- Wen 5500 Generator (New)!
- Screeds w/Honda & B&S Motors
- BNT-40 14.4v Lithium Rebar Cutter
- Honda Drive Motor w/Vibrating Cable & Water Pump
- Impala 30 ton Hydr. Press
- Mikasa MVC-88GH Packer (Honda)
- Wacker VPA1750 Packer (Honda)
- Wacker Power Float (Honda)
- DeWalt & Jet Table Saws
- Insulated Concrete Blankets
- 8 Sets of Scaffolding
- Bosch Elec. Jack Hammer
- Stihl TS 400 & TS 500 Cement Saws
- Weldmark 135+ Welder
- DP Air Compressor
- Older Floats, Packers & Screeds
- Hammer Drills
- Hand Tools, Trowels, Air Hose Reel
- 5/8" Rod (4', 8', 20')
- 4) 6"x6"x15' St. Tubes (1/4")
- 90) 4x8 Wall Forms
- 4' & 8' Corner Forms
- Newer 2' Forms
- Stakes & Wire Ties
- 2x4's, 2x6's, 2x10's,
- Several 2x12's (15' & 20')
- 500 gal. Propane Tank (needs valve)
- 500 gal. Diesel Tank (1/2 full)
- Lots of Hand Tools

TRACTOR – LOADER – SNOWMOBILE

Case IH 50 CVT FWA Tractor w/L350 Loader, Bucket, Forks, 3 pt, PTO, 2 Hydr, 575 hours! • Case IH BS172H 6' Snow Blower (Nice) • Case IH TLX180H 80" 3 pt. Tiller • Farm King 847 7' Leveler • Fimco 3 pt. Sprayer w/ 50 gal. Tank, Folding Booms • King Cutter 3 pt. 6' Disk • Field Svc Tank • '08 Polaris RMK 700 Snowmobile w/155" Track/ 2 1/4" Lugs (all consigned)



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GHS Class of 1961

In back, left to right, are Larry Sombke, Groton; Jack Von Wald, Aberdeen; Larry Buntrock, Britton; Duane Flihs, Groton; and Robert Jay Howard, Groton;
in front, left to right, are Dennis Swanson, Eastpoint, Fla.; Arnold Bahr, Groton; Vicki Johnson, Vadnais Heights, Minn.; Joyce (Ragels) Darling, Deadwood; and Marilyn (Sour) Rundberg, Bloomington, Minn.

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GHS Class of 1962

In back, left to right, are John Gibbs, Aberdeen; Corinne (Foss) Sharp, Edina, Minn.; Jim Rose, Columbia; and Steve Dresbach, Groton;

in front, left to right, are Duane Kurtz, Aberdeen; Kathy (Tastad) Erickson, Britton; Darlys (Swanson) Myrick, Ft. Myers, Fla.; JoAnn (Bonn) Haar, Roscoe; and Margaret (Rossow) Marten, Roseville, Minn.

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GHS Class of 1963

In back, left to right, are R. Van Johnson, Sioux Falls; Dennis Henley, Athelstane, Wis.; Dennis Baadte, Denver, N.C.; Doug Krueger, Alberta, Minn.; Art Gengerke, Groton; and

Margaret (Froehle) Henneman, New Auburn, Wis.; in front, left to right, are Jean (Heitmann) Wetjen, Monument, Colo.; Dorene (Sager) Nelson, Groton; Jackie (Dunker) Hammond, Sioux Falls; Sharon (McKiver) Sombke, Groton; Linda (Baule) Krienke, Minnetonka, Minn.; and Carol (Knickrehm) Osterman, Groton.

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GHS Class of 1964

In back, left to right, are Richard Krueger, Aberdeen; Connie (Bleibaum) Stauch, Groton; Lou Hammond, Sioux Falls; Janis (Nierman) Havens, Wheat Ridge, Colo; Arthur Schlenker, Mt. Vernon; Mike Wagner, Sioux Falls; Gary Van Riper, Brookings; Gladys Reder, San Francisco, Calif.; Sherry (Johnson) McKiver, Aberdeen; and Dona (Clocksene) Higgs, Rochester, Minn.;

in front, left to right, are Judy (Rohwer) Windorski, Braham, Minn.; Betty (Swanson) Strom, Groton; Nancy (Ruden) Mueller, Rosemount, Minn.; Linda (Swisher) Gengerke, Groton; Susan (Tastad) Teas, Ames, Iowa; Mary (Froehle) Looyen, Blaine, Minn.; and Diane (Rix) Feller, Sioux Falls.

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GHS Class of 1965

In back, left to right, are Sheila (Johnson) Anderson, Winfred; Rose (Padfield) Krueger, Alberta, Minn.; Sandy (Dunker) Dresbach, Groton; Connie (Falk) Rose, Columbia; Jackie (Ries) Graves, McAllen, Texas; Linda (Knoll) Thurston, Groton;

in front, left to right, are Bob Holum, Philadelphia, Penn.; Julie (Olson) Berry, Oconto, Wis.; Dave Von Wald, Hoven; and George Wegner, Plymouth, Minn.

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Wolves Football Drops Road Battle at No. 13 Augustana

Sioux Falls, S.D. – The Northern State University football team held with No. 13 Augustana on the road Saturday afternoon, but the Vikings came out on top, scoring touchdowns in three of the four quarters. Northern recorded more first downs and yards passing in the game, however costly turnovers in their own territory led to Viking points.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 13, AU 21

Records: NSU 2-2, AU 4-0

Attendance: 3519

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Augustana tallied the first touchdown of the contest with 3:43 to play in the first, a 32-yard rush by David Addo
- With under five minutes to play in the half, Payton Eue cut the Viking led to four, sending a 44-yard field goal through the uprights
- Northern took their only lead of the contest with just under ten minutes remaining in the third on a 10-yard reception by Kaleb Skelly; the first of touchdown of the sophomore's career
- The Vikings recorded two more touchdowns in the third and fourth, taking a 21-10 lead over the Wolves with 14:48 to play
- Eue added a 31-yard field goal at 3:17, scoring the final points of the afternoon for NSU
- The Wolves recorded 20 first downs to the Vikings 14, and notched 85 yards rushing and 205 yards passing
- NSU tallied 290 yards of total offense with Augie's 230, averaging 4.0 yards per play
- The Northern State defense forced one fumble, recorded 3.0 sacks for a loss of 20 yards, and held Augustana to 4-of-16 on third down
- Will Madler tallied 205 yards passing and one touchdown, however was sacked twice and threw two interceptions in the game
- Wyatt Block led the rushing attack with 34 total yards, including a 21-yard long
- Ben Noland was just shy of 100 yards, notching 86 yards receiving, averaging 10.8 yards per catch
- Trey King and Brennan Kutterer led the defense with eight and seven tackles respectively, while Ian Marshall, Jordan Hillesheim, and Logan Grossinger each recorded a sack
- Eue averaged 45.9 yards per punt and 62.0 yards per kickoff, scoring eight team points

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Kaleb Skelly: 32 yards receiving, 1 touchdown
- Trey King: 8 tackles (4 solo, 4 assisted), 1.0 tackles for a loss
- Brennan Kutterer: 7 solo tackles, 1.0 tackles for a loss
- Luke Gunderson: 5 tackles, 72 return yards
- Payton Eue: 2-for-2 FG attempts (44 & 31 yards), 1-for-1 PAT

UP NEXT

Northern State continues their road slate next Saturday at the University of Mary. Kickoff is set for 2 p.m. from Bismarck. The Wolves return home for the annual Gypsy Days game on October 8 versus Winona State. For a full list of game day promotions [CLICK HERE](#). Fans are also reminded that all game day information and protocols are posted on the Dacotah Bank Stadium homepage.

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Northern State Pulls Together in Win over Minnesota State

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University volleyball team bounced back into the win column on Saturday, defeating Minnesota State in four sets. After dropping the first set, the Wolves swept the next three with scores of 25-18, 25-15, and 25-16.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 3, MSU 1

Records: NSU 8-6 (3-3 NSIC), MSU 2-12 (1-5 NSIC)

Attendance: 1238

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern led the match statistically hitting .234 with 47 kills
- The Wolves added a match high 65 digs, 45 assists, 12 blocks, and ten aces
- The NSU held MSU to a .114 attack percentage, forcing 28 attack errors in the win
- The Wolves hit a match high .300 in the third set
- Three Wolves tallied double digit kills, with six notching at least one kill in the contest
- Defensively Northern saw five players record three blocks or more, while three recorded double figure digs

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Sally Gaul: 13 kills, 14 digs, 4 blocks
- Hanna Thompson: 11 kills, .290 attack%
- Taylor Buckley: 10 kills, 13 digs, 5 blocks
- Kennedy Gravelle: 7 kills, .462 attack%, 6 blocks
- Keri Walker: 40 assists, 5 digs, 3 blocks
- Madison Langlie: 26 digs, 3 assists, 2 aces

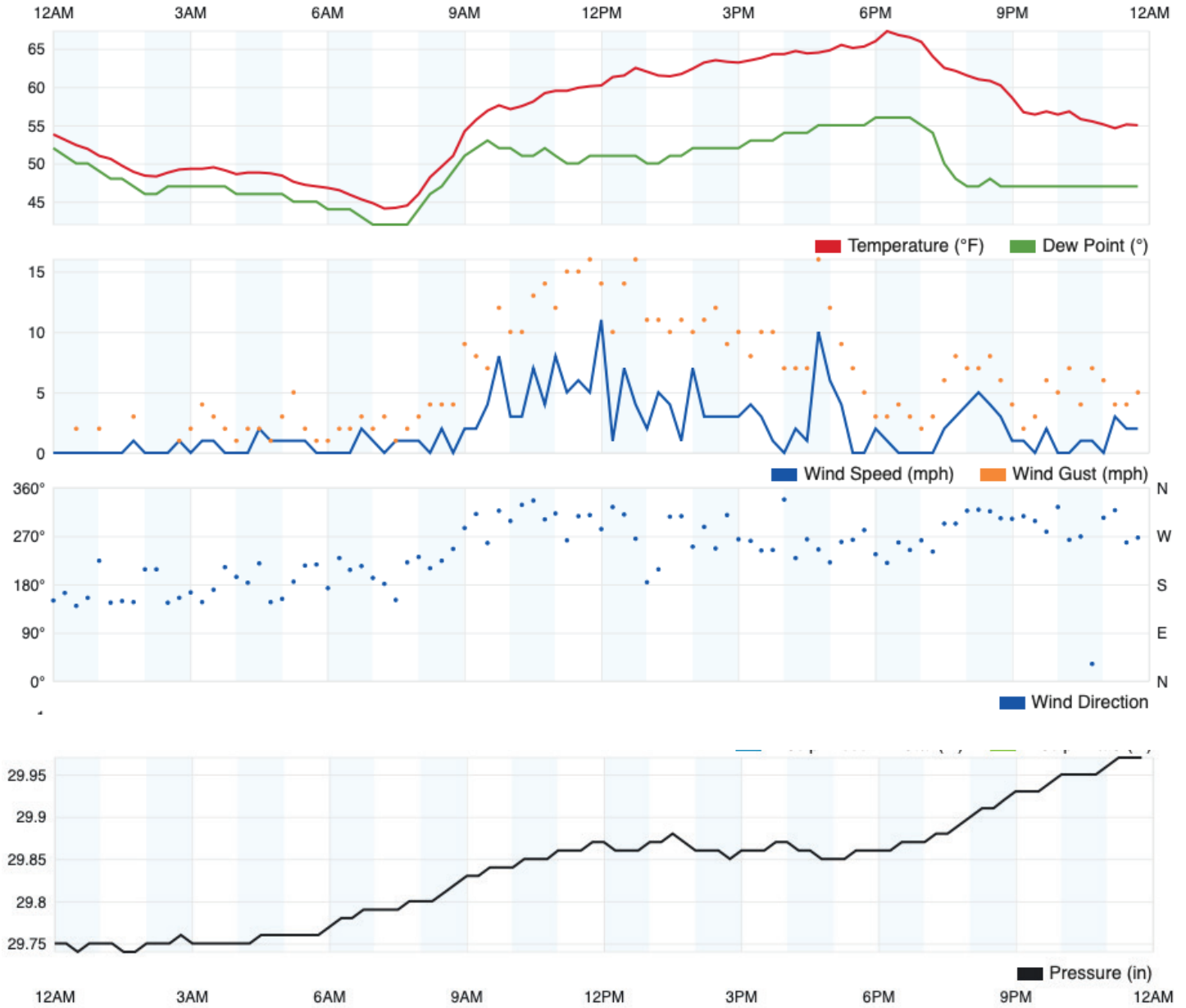
UP NEXT

Northern State travels to Upper Iowa and Winona State next Friday and Saturday. Match start times are set for 6 p.m. on Friday versus the Peacocks and 4 p.m. on Saturday against the Warriors.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

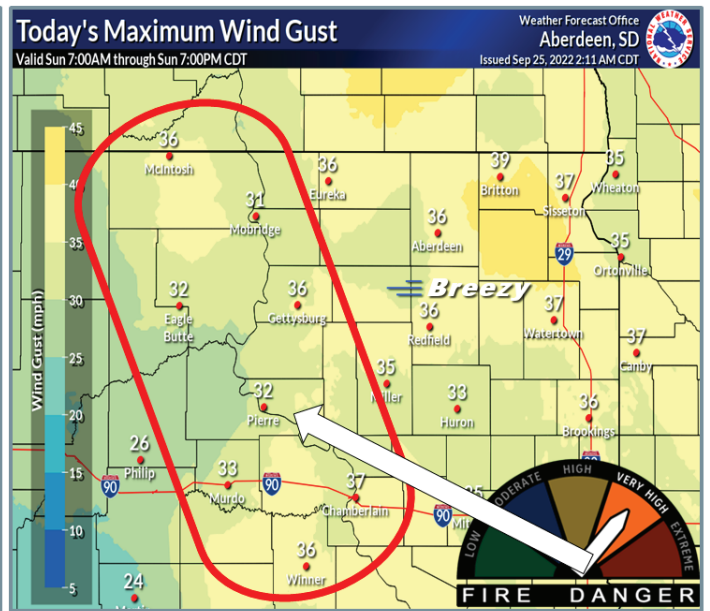
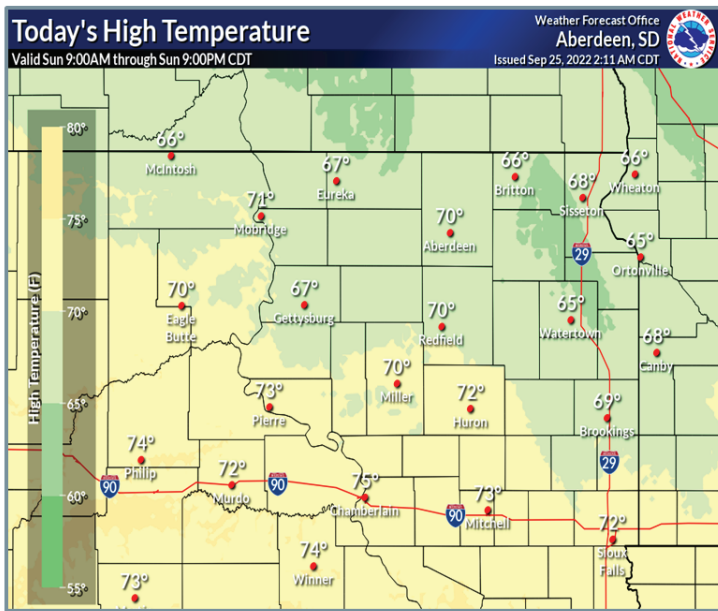
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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 68 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 65 °F



Breezy/Very High Fire Danger

September 25, 2022
2:34 AM



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

It will be mild and breezy today, with very high grassland fire danger this afternoon. #sdwx #mnwx

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 67 °F at 6:13 PM

Low Temp: 44 °F at 7:21 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 11:34 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 12 hours, 03 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1938

Record Low: 19 in 1926

Average High: 71°F

Average Low: 43°F

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.66

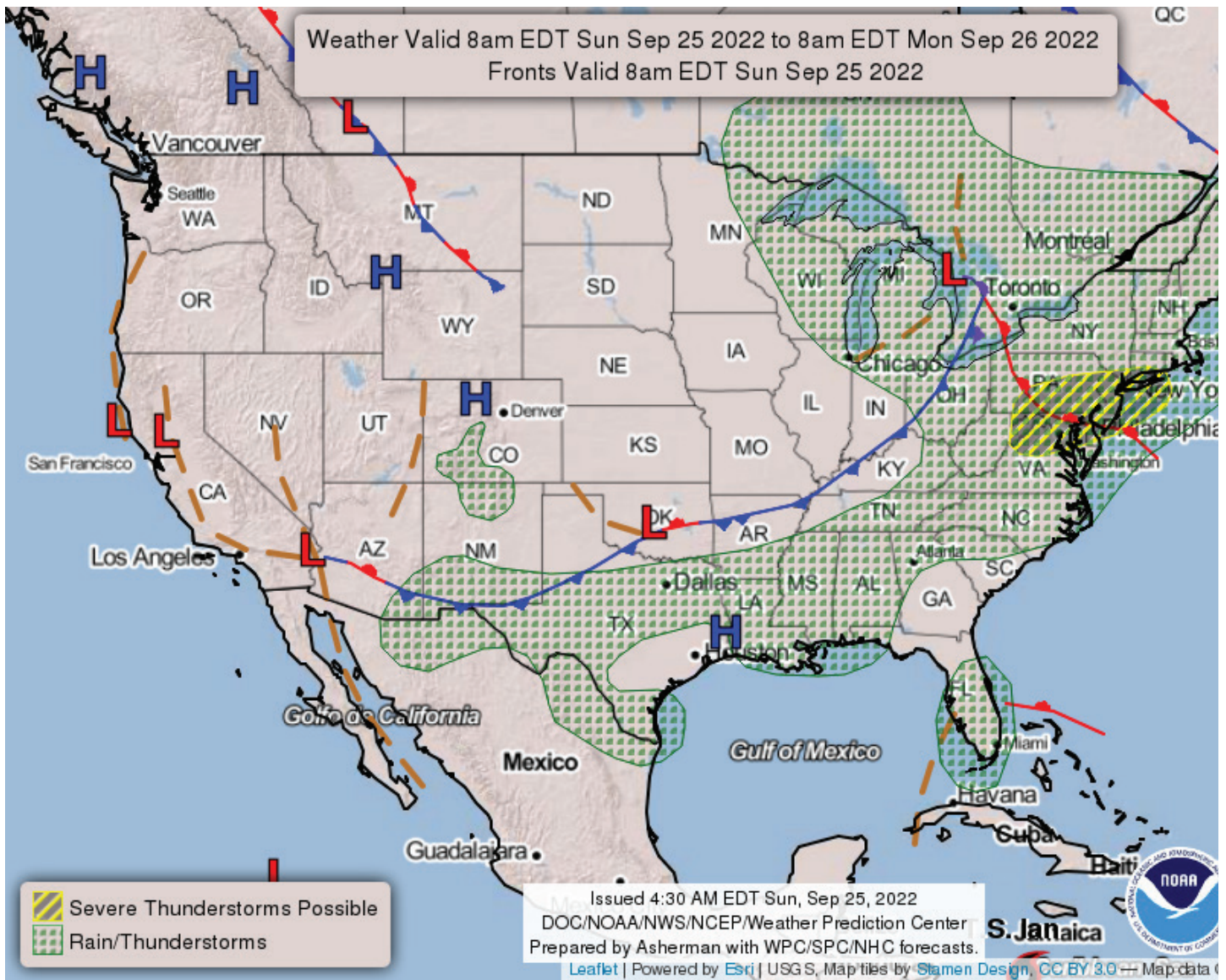
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.07

Average Precip to date: 18.00

Precip Year to Date: 16.05

Sunset Tonight: 7:25:54 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:23:16 AM



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Today in Weather History

September 25, 1981: A late September tornado touched down briefly 14 miles west of Pierre during the early evening hours with no damage occurring.

September 25, 1996: An early fall storm over the Black Hills of northeast Wyoming and western South Dakota re-acquainted area residents with their winter driving techniques. Snow totals ranged from 4 to 8 inches. U.S. Highway 385, south of Deadwood South Dakota, was temporarily closed after a semi-truck jack-knifed on Strawberry Hill. Numerous minor accidents were reported in the Black Hills due to slick roads. Heavy wet snow closed the Needles Highway and Iron Mountain Road in the central/southern Black Hills until snowplows could clear the streets.

1848: The Great Gale of 1848 was the most severe hurricane to affect Tampa Bay, Florida and is one of two major hurricanes to make landfall in the area. This storm produced the highest storm tide ever experienced in Tampa Bay when the water rose 15 feet in six to eight hours.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1942: From September 24th through the 26th, 1942, an early-season winter storm moved through the Northern Plains, Upper Mississippi River Valley, and Great Lakes, dropping measurable snow as it went. In many places across Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and northern Illinois, this was their earliest measurable snow on record.

1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Wisconsin and northern Illinois to New England, with 103 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin produced hail three inches in diameter near Oshkosh, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)

1998: Four hurricanes were spinning simultaneously in the Atlantic basin: Georges, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl. That was the first time this had happened since 1893.

2015: Fairbanks, Alaska received 4–9 inches of snow. Another storm on September 27-30 produced 14.2 inches, including 11.2 inches on the 29th. September 2015 would end up being Fairbanks's second snowiest September on record with 20.9 inches.

2015: An EF2 tornado tracked nearly seven miles across Johns Island in South Carolina. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the NWS Office in Charleston, South Carolina.

2017: A large waterspout was seen over the Ionian Sea, off the coast of Gallipoli, Italy. Click [HERE](#) for a tweet from Severe-Weather.EU

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

"THE WAY"

"Yes, we do look forward to the day when we will meet in the sweet by and by," said the aging evangelist with the volume of his voice rising, "but right now we live in the nasty now and now!" I wonder what he would say today - some fifty years later.

Wherever we look today "nasty" seems to be more and more predominate and the "sweet by and by" more enticing. Evil and wickedness, immorality and indecency confront us constantly. What once made most people blush and gasp rarely causes them to turn their eyes from lewd scenes or pictures. Advertisements and marketing strategies are now designed to exploit what was once pure and sacred, beautiful and honorable. What once was unimaginable is now commonplace and common. But God's laws have not changed.

"In the way of righteousness there is life, along that path is immortality," wrote Solomon. He was not writing of heaven as we now understand it from the New Testament. It was a "hint" of things to be revealed as God unfolded His message through the risen Christ.

There is no doubt about the fact that "the way" of the righteous points to the "path of immortality." Clearly it looks beyond this world and into the next. It reflects the insight of David when he wrote, "And I - in righteousness will see your face, when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness." We also have the words of Job: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth (and) in my flesh I will see God; with my own eyes - I and not another. My heart yearns..." Heaven awaits those who accept Christ!

Prayer: How blest we are, Father, to know that "the way" is Your way and will lead us into Your presence. We are so blest to have eternal life through You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: In the way of righteousness there is life, along that path is immortality. Proverbs 12:28



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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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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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

12-13-16-20-30

(twelve, thirteen, sixteen, twenty, thirty)

Estimated jackpot: \$73,000

Lotto America

03-20-33-34-42, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 4

(three, twenty, thirty-three, thirty-four, forty-two; Star Ball: six; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$23,940,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 325,000,000

Powerball

03-09-21-24-29, Powerball: 14, Power Play: 2

(three, nine, twenty-one, twenty-four, twenty-nine; Powerball: fourteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$285,000,000

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Dell Rapids def. Hamlin, 25-10, 23-25, 25-14

Pine Ridge def. Crow Creek, 25-22, 26-24, 23-25, 19-25, 15-7

Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-19, 25-13, 25-22

Belle Fourche Tournament=

Pool A=

Belle Fourche def. Wall, 25-10, 25-20

Wall def. Lakota Tech, 25-18, 27-25

CSDC Tournament=

Highmore-Harrold def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-19, 25-17

Miller def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-7, 25-10

Miller def. Mobridge-Pollock, 26-24, 21-25, 25-13

Miller def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-21, 25-15

Mobridge-Pollock def. Potter County, 25-18, 25-17

Potter County def. Faulkton, 12-25, 25-16, 25-21

Sully Buttes def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-23, 23-25, 25-21

Wolsey-Wessington def. Potter County, 25-22, 25-18

Wolsey-Wessington def. Sully Buttes, 25-18, 26-28, 25-7

LMC Tournament=

Faith def. Bison, 25-15, 25-22

Faith def. Timber Lake, 26-24, 25-19

Newell def. Faith, 19-25, 26-24, 25-23

Timber Lake def. Faith, 22-25, 26-24, 25-17

Pentagon Tournament=

Arlington def. Sioux Valley, 25-21, 25-23

Canistota def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-20, 13-25, 25-16

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Deubrook def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-11, 25-15, 25-20
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Colman-Egan, 25-20, 25-10
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Parkston, 25-16, 25-9
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Platte-Geddes, 25-22, 25-18
Florence/Henry def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-16, 25-6
Freeman def. Ethan, 18-25, 25-16, 25-19
Freeman def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 13-25, 25-22, 25-19
Gayville-Volin def. Freeman, 25-22, 17-25, 25-22
Howard def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-8, 17-25, 25-13
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Warner, 25-12, 25-14
Sioux Valley def. Freeman, 25-21, 21-25, 25-21
Sioux Valley def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-16, 25-13
Sioux Valley def. Parker, 25-20, 25-17
Warner def. Brandon Valley, 21-25, 25-11, 25-11
Warner def. Tea Area, 25-15, 25-17
Winner def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 29-27, 25-14
Spartan Invite=
Jones County def. Colome, 25-17, 25-13
Jones County def. Lower Brule, 25-15, 25-14
Jones County def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-20, 25-21
Jones County def. Wessington Springs, 25-15, 25-14
Wessington Springs def. Colome, 25-6, 25-14
Wessington Springs def. Lower Brule, 25-14, 25-15
Wessington Springs def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-11, 24-26, 25-15
Tournament=
Deubrook def. James Valley Christian, 25-23, 23-25, 25-13, 25-11

PREP FOOTBALL=

Crow Creek 50, Marty Indian 0
Great Plains Lutheran 41, North Central Co-Op 8
Ipswich 50, Leola/Frederick 30
Sioux Falls Washington 41, Rapid City Central 21
St. Francis Indian 42, Flandreau Indian 6

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

Gronowski throws 4 TD passes in South Dakota State win

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP) — Mark Gronowski threw a career-high four touchdown passes and South Dakota State defeated Missouri State 28-14 on Saturday in a Missouri Valley Football Conference opener matching top-five FCS teams.

Gronowski threw touchdown passes of 21 yards to Zach Heins and 40 yards to Jadon Janke to snap a fourth-quarter tie. Gronowski's first-quarter TD pass to Jadon Janke was good for a 7-0 halftime lead that he extended with a 13-yard toss to Jaxon Janke — Jadon's brother — in the third quarter. It's the sixth time the brothers have each caught TD passes in the same game.

The Bears (2-2, 1-0) rallied with Jacardia Wright's 15-yard run and Jason Shelley's 67-yard pass to Raylen Sharpe in the third quarter.

Gronowski was 22-of-29 passing with Heins finishing with 127 yards receiving and Jadon Janke 102 for the Jackrabbits (3-1, 1-0).

Shelley threw for 357 yards in a 38-27 loss to 10th-ranked Arkansas last week and went over 6,000 for

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his career on Saturday after a 19-of-29 passing day for 185 yards with two interceptions.

North Dakota State rallies to beat South Dakota 34-17

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Hunter Luepke rushed for 146 yards and two touchdowns and top-ranked North Dakota State rallied in the second half to beat South Dakota 34-17 on Saturday.

Luepke, with 20 carries, had a pair of short TD runs in the second half when the Bison outscored the Coyotes 24-0 to erase a first-half deficit.

The Bison (3-1, 1-0) opened their Missouri Valley Football Conference season with a victory after losing at Arizona 31-28 last week. North Dakota State hasn't lost consecutive games since 2009.

Carson Camp threw 28 yards to Wesley Eliodor in the final minute of the first half for a 17-10 halftime lead for South Dakota (2-2, 0-1).

Cam Miller's 13-yard TD run tied the game and Luepke added the first of his two TDs to put the Bison out front.

There were seven turnovers in the game, four by the Coyotes. Dawson Weber had two forced fumbles for North Dakota State.

Winter's approach sets clock ticking for Ukraine, Russia

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The onset of autumnal weather, with rains making fields too muddy for tanks, is beginning to cloud Ukraine's efforts to take back more Russian-held territory before winter freezes the battlefields, a Washington-based think tank said Sunday.

Russia, meanwhile, pressed on with its call-up of hundreds of thousands of men to throw into the seven-month war, seeking to reverse its recent losses. It also deployed suicide drones Sunday against the Ukrainian port city of Odesa, Ukrainian authorities said. No casualties were immediately reported.

The Russian mobilization — its first such call-up since World War II — is sparking protests in Russian cities, with fresh demonstrations Sunday.

It is also opening splits in Europe about whether fighting-age Russian men fleeing in droves should be welcomed or turned away.

For Ukrainian and Russian military planners, the clock is ticking, with the approach of winter expected to make fighting more complicated. Already, rainy weather is bringing muddy conditions that are starting to limit the mobility of tanks and other heavy weaponry, according to the Institute for the Study of War.

But the think tank said Ukrainian forces are still gaining ground in their counteroffensive, launched in late August, that has spectacularly rolled back the Russian occupation across large areas of the northeast and which also prompted Russian President Vladimir Putin's new drive for reinforcements.

The partial mobilization has triggered an exodus of men seeking to avoid the draft — and sharp differences of opinion in Europe about how to deal with them.

Lithuania, a European Union member-country that borders Kaliningrad, a Russian Baltic Sea exclave, said it won't grant them asylum. "Russians should stay and fight. Against Putin," Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis tweeted.

His counterpart in Latvia, also an EU member and bordering Russia, said the exodus poses "considerable security risks" for the 27-nation bloc and that those fleeing can't be considered conscientious objectors against the invasion.

Many "were fine with killing Ukrainians, they did not protest then," the Latvian foreign minister, Edgars Rinkevics, tweeted. He added that they have "plenty of countries outside EU to go."

Officials in other EU nations, however, say Europe has a duty to help, and fear that turning away Russians could play into Putin's hands, feeding his narrative that the West has always hated Russians and that the war is being waged to safeguard their country against Western hostility.

"Closing our frontiers would fit neither with our values nor our interests," a 40-strong group of senators in France said in a statement. They urged the EU to grant refugee status to Russians fleeing mobilization

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and said turning them away would be “a mistake by Europe in the war of communication and influence that is playing out.”

The mobilization is also running hand-in-hand with Kremlin-orchestrated votes in four occupied regions of Ukraine that could pave the way for their imminent annexation by Russia.

Ukraine and its Western allies say the referendums in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south and the eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions have no legal force. The votes are set to wrap up Tuesday but are being dismissed in Ukraine and the West as a sham, with footage showing armed Russian troops going door to door to pressure Ukrainians into voting.

Ukraine’s Reintegration Ministry said Russia has brought people from Belarus, Brazil, Egypt, South Africa, Syria, Togo, Uruguay and Venezuela to act as supposed outside observers. The ministry warned that they “will be punished,” without specifying how.

In cities across Russia, police have arrested hundreds of protesters against the mobilization order. Women opposed to the call-up protested Sunday in the Siberian city of Yakutsk. Videos shared by local media showed a crowd of a few hundred people, mostly women, holding hands and marching in a circle around a group of police. Police later dragged some away or forced them into police vans. News website SakhaDay said the women chanted pacifist slogans and songs.

At least 2,000 people have been arrested in recent days for similar demonstrations around the country. Many of those taken away immediately received call-up summons.

Other Russians are reporting for duty. Putin and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu have said the order applies to reservists who recently served or have special skills, but almost every man is considered a reservist until age 65 and Putin’s decree kept the door open for a broader call-up.

The Kremlin said its initial aim is to add about 300,000 troops to its forces in Ukraine, struggling with equipment losses, mounting casualties and weakening morale. The mobilization marks a sharp shift from Putin’s previous efforts to portray the war as a limited military operation that wouldn’t interfere with most Russians’ lives.

The call-up is being accompanied by tougher punishments for Russian soldiers who disobey officers’ orders, desert or surrender to the enemy. Putin signed those measures into law on Saturday.

The Ukrainian government stopped allowing most men ages 18-60 to leave the country immediately after Russia’s Feb. 24 invasion under a general mobilization order intended to build a 1 million-strong military.

Powerful typhoon prompts evacuations in northern Philippines

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A powerful typhoon shifted and abruptly gained strength Sunday as it blew closer to the northeastern Philippines, prompting evacuations from high-risk villages and the capital, which could be sideswiped by the storm, officials said.

Typhoon Noru was swirling at sea about 115 kilometers (71 miles) east of Infanta town in Quezon province with sustained winds of 195 kilometers (121 miles per hour) and gusts of up to 240 kph (149 mph) at midafternoon. Forecasters expect it to smash into the coast later Sunday.

While barreling toward the archipelago, Noru changed track southward, pushed down by a high-pressure area to its north. It gained considerable strength, transforming from a storm with sustained winds of 85 kph (53 mph) Saturday into a super typhoon just 24 hours later in an “explosive intensification” at sea, Vicente Malano, who heads the country’s weather agency, told The Associated Press.

Thousands of villagers were evacuated — some forcibly — from the typhoon’s path, as well as from mountainside villages prone to landslides and flash floods and in coastal communities that could be hit by tidal surges as high as 3 meters (about 10 feet) in Quezon province, including Polillo island and nearby Aurora province.

“The combined effects of storm surge and high waves breaking along the coast may cause life-threatening and damaging inundation or flooding,” the weather agency warned.

In Manila’s seaside slum district of Tondo, some residents left their homes with bags of belongings and

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hurriedly walked to a nearby evacuation center as the sky darkened and rains started to fall.

"The typhoon is strong and we live by the sea," said 50-year-old Marilen Yubatan, who left their shanty with her two young daughters. "If we fall into the water, I don't know where I will end up with my children."

Melchor Avenilla Jr., who heads Quezon's disaster-response office, said law enforcers were under orders to forcibly move people who refuse to leave their homes. "But so far we've been able to do this by just appealing to people," Avenilla told AP by phone.

Several provinces and cities, including the densely populated capital Manila, suspended classes and government work Sunday and Monday. The typhoon's eye could pass about 40 to 50 kilometers (25 to 30 miles) from metropolitan Manila, "which is nearly a direct hit," Malano said.

Fishing boats and inter-island and cargo ferries were restricted to port as a precaution, the coast guard said, stranding cargo trucks and more than 2,500 passengers. More than 30 flights at Manila's airport, mostly bound for domestic destinations, were canceled.

The typhoon is forecast to sweep through the main Luzon Island overnight and into the South China Sea on Monday. It's on track to hit Vietnam later in the week still maintaining its powerful winds.

About 20 storms and typhoons batter the Philippines each year. The archipelago also lies in the "Pacific Ring of Fire," a region along most of the Pacific Ocean rim where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur, making the Southeast Asian nation one of the world's most disaster-prone.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones in the world, left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened entire villages, swept ships inland and displaced more than 5 million in the central Philippines — well to the south of Noru's path.

Italians vote in election that could take far-right to power

By FRANCES D'EMILIO and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italians voted Sunday in an election that could move the country's politics sharply toward the right during a critical time for Europe, with war in Ukraine fueling skyrocketing energy bills and testing the West's resolve to stand united against Russian aggression.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0500GMT) and by noon turnout was equal to or slightly less than at the same time during Italy's last general election in 2018. The counting of paper ballots was expected to begin shortly after they close at 11 p.m. (2100 GMT), with projections based on partial results coming early Monday morning.

Publication of opinion polls is banned in the two weeks leading up to the election, but polls before that showed far-right leader Giorgia Meloni and her Brothers of Italy party, with its neo-fascist roots, the most popular. That suggested Italians were poised to vote their first far-right government into power since World War II. Close behind was former Premier Enrico Letta and his center-left Democratic Party.

"Today you can help write history," Meloni tweeted Sunday morning.

Letta, for his part, tweeted a photo of himself at the ballot box. "Have a good vote!" he wrote.

Meloni is part of a right-wing alliance with anti-migrant League leader Matteo Salvini and Silvio Berlusconi, the three-time premier who heads the Forza Italia party he created three decades ago. Italy's complex electoral law rewards campaign coalitions, meaning the Democrats are disadvantaged since they failed to secure a similarly broad alliance with left-leaning populists and centrists.

If Meloni becomes premier, she will be the first woman in Italy to hold the office. But assembling a viable, ruling coalition could take weeks.

Nearly 51 million Italians were eligible to vote. Pollsters, though, predicted turnout could be even lower than the record-setting low of 73% in the last general election in 2018. They say despite Europe's many crises, many voters feel alienated from politics, since Italy has had three coalition governments since the last election — each led by someone who hadn't run for office.

Early voters in Rome expressed concerns about Italian politics as a whole.

"I hope we'll see honest people, and this is very difficult nowadays," said Adriana Gherdo, at a polling station in the city.

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In Milan, voter Alberto Veltroni said he thought the outcome was still anyone's guess.

"I expect that these will be difficult elections to read, to understand, with unexpected votes as opposed to the polls ahead of elections," he said.

The election in the eurozone's third-largest economy is being closely watched in Europe, given Meloni's criticism of "Brussels bureaucrats" and her ties to other right-wing leaders — she recently defended Hungary's Viktor Orban after the European Commission recommended suspending billions of euros in funding to Hungary over concerns about democratic backsliding and the possible mismanagement of EU money.

Elections are being held six months early after Mario Draghi's pandemic unity government collapsed in late July. Italy's president, Sergio Mattarella, saw no alternative but to have voters elect a new Parliament.

Opinion polls found Draghi, a former European Central Bank chief, hugely popular. But the three populist parties in the coalition boycotted a confidence vote tied to an energy relief measure. Their leaders, Salvini, Berlusconi and 5-Star Movement leader Giuseppe Conte, a former premier whose party is the largest in the outgoing Parliament, saw Meloni's popularity growing while theirs slipped.

Meloni kept her Brothers of Italy in the opposition, refusing to join Draghi's unity government or Conte's two coalitions that governed after the 2018 vote.

She further distanced herself from Salvini and Berlusconi with unflinching support for Ukraine, including sending weapons so Kyiv could defend itself against Russia. Her nationalist party champions sovereignty.

Before Russia's invasion, Salvini and Berlusconi had gushed admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin. In the final days of the election campaign, Salvini criticized Russian atrocities in Ukraine but Berlusconi raised eyebrows by saying Putin merely wanted to put "decent" people in government in Kyiv after pro-Moscow separatists in Donbas complained they were being harmed by Ukraine.

Many factories in Italy face cutbacks — some already have reduced production — and other business might close as they struggle with gas and electricity bills reaching 10 times higher than a year ago. The major candidates, despite their political leanings, agreed on the urgency for a EU-wide price cap on energy prices, or failing that, a national one.

Draghi, who remains in a caretaker role until a new government is sworn in, had for months already pressed EU authorities in Brussels for the same remedy.

Pope urges Italians to have more children, welcome migrants

MATERA, Italy (AP) — Pope Francis traveled to southern Italy on Sunday to close out an Italian church congress that coincided with Italy's national election, and delivered a message that hit on key domestic campaign issues including immigration.

Neither Francis nor his hosts referred to the vote during the open-air Mass, though Italy's bishops conference had earlier urged Italians to cast ballots in the eagerly watched election that could bring Italy its first far-right government since World War II.

At the end of the outdoor Mass in Matera, Francis spoke off the cuff asking Italians to have more children. "I'd like to ask Italy: More births, more children," Francis said.

Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world and Francis has frequently lamented its "demographic winter."

Far-right leader Giorgia Meloni, who campaigned on a "God, family and homeland" mantra, has also called for Italy to reverse its demographic trends by proposing bigger financial incentives for couples to have children.

Francis also weighed in on a perennial issue in Italy, recalling that Sunday coincided with the Catholic Church's World Day of Migrants and Refugees. Francis called for a future in which "God's plan" is implemented, with migrants and victims of human trafficking living in peace and dignity, and for a more "inclusive and fraternal future."

He added: "Immigrants are to be welcomed, accompanied, promoted and integrated."

Meloni and her center-right alliance have vowed to resume a strict crackdown on migrants coming to Italy via Libyan-based smugglers. The center-left Democratic Party has among other things called for an

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easier path to citizenship for children of newcomers.

The Mass was celebrated by a protege of Francis, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, who is head of the Italian bishops' conference and has a long affiliation with the Sant'Egidio Community, a Rome-based charity known for its outreach to migrants and the poor.

The 85-year-old Francis appeared tired during the visit, which was scheduled before Italy's snap elections were called and came a day after he made a separate day trip to the Umbrian hilltop town of Assisi. Francis has been using a cane and wheelchair this year, due to strained knee ligaments that make walking and standing difficult.

His trip to Matera, the southern Basilicata city known for its cave dwellings, underwent a slight, last-minute change due to storms that belted much of the Italian peninsula overnight: Originally scheduled to fly by helicopter Sunday morning from the Vatican's helipad, Francis instead flew to Matera by jet from Rome's Ciampino airport.

Poverty and inflation: Egypt's economy hit by global turmoil

By AYA BATRAWY AP Business Writer

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Stores are selling winter clothes from last season in the middle of summer. Repair shops lack spare parts for appliances. There's a waiting list to buy a new car.

Egypt, a country of more than 103 million people, is running low on foreign currency needed to buy essentials like grain and fuel. To keep U.S. dollars in the country, the government has tightened imports, meaning fewer new cars and summer dresses.

For the nearly third of Egyptians living in poverty, and the millions more in poor conditions, the country's economic woes mean life is much harder than off-season shopping — they're finding it harder to put food on the table. A decade after deadly protests and political upheaval rocked the Middle East's most populous nation, the economy is still staggering and has taken new hits.

Fatima, a 32-year-old cleaner in Cairo, says her family stopped buying red meat five months ago. Chicken also has become a luxury. She's borrowing from relatives to make ends meet.

She's worried about the impact of high prices on Egypt's social fabric. Asking to be identified only by her first name for fear of reprisal, she worries that crime and theft will increase "because people won't have enough money to feed themselves."

For decades, most Egyptians have depended on the government to keep basic goods affordable, but that social contract is under pressure due to the impact from Russia's war in Ukraine. Egypt has sought loans to pay for grain imports for state-subsidized bread. It's also grappling with surging consumer prices as the currency drops in value. The threat of food insecurity in the world's largest importer of wheat, 80% of which comes from the war-torn Black Sea region, has raised concerns.

"In terms of, like, bread in exchange for freedom, that contract got violated a long time ago," said Timothy Kaldas, an economic expert at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy.

Annual inflation climbed to 15.3% in August, compared with just over 6% in the same month last year. The Egyptian pound recently hit a record low against a strengthening U.S. dollar, selling at 19.5 pounds to \$1. That has widened trade and budget deficits as foreign reserves needed to buy grain and fuel plunged by nearly 10% in March, shortly after Russia's invasion sent commodity prices soaring and investors pulled billions of dollars from Egypt.

Egypt has few options to deal with the hole in its finances. As with previous crises, it's turned to Gulf Arab allies and the International Monetary Fund for a bailout.

A new IMF loan would buoy Egypt's dwindling foreign reserves, which have fallen to \$33 billion from \$41 billion in February. A new loan, however, will add to Egypt's ballooning foreign debt, which climbed from \$37 billion in 2010 — before the Arab Spring uprisings — to \$158 billion as of March, according to Egyptian central bank figures.

Leaders blame the challenges on the coronavirus pandemic, which hurt the vital tourism industry, and price shocks sparked by the war in Ukraine. They've also faulted revolutionaries and those who may have

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backed the Muslim Brotherhood.

"Why don't you want to pay the cost of what you did in 2011 and 2013?" President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi said in televised remarks this month. "What you did — didn't that negatively impact the economy?"

He was referring to protests, which toppled Egypt's longtime president, ushered in a divisive Muslim Brotherhood presidency, and resulted in a populist-backed power grab by the military and el-Sissi's ascension to the presidency.

The former military general said the fallout from those years cost Egypt \$450 billion — a price, he said, everyone must bear.

"We solve the matter together. I am saying this to all Egyptians ... we are going to finish this matter together and pay its price together," he said.

Critics, however, argue the government has squandered chances to make real reforms and is overspending on superfluous mega-projects as it builds a new administrative capital. The government has touted the construction boom as a job producer and economic engine.

The state's hold over the economy and the "outsized role of military-related enterprises" have historically crowded out foreign investors and the private sector, said Hasnain Malik, who heads equity research at Tellimer, an emerging-markets investment analysis firm. The government's plans to sell off minority stakes in some state-owned enterprises "does not necessarily fix this problem," he said.

Egypt's elite can withstand rising costs, living comfortably in Nile-view apartments and gated communities beyond the hustle of Cairo. Life for middle-class Egyptians is deteriorating, said Maha, a 38-year-old tech company employee and mother of two who asked to only be identified by her first name to speak freely.

"I think we will eventually move down the social ladder and end up below the poverty line," she said.

The government took out a \$500 million loan from the World Bank this summer and \$221 million from the African Development Bank to help buy wheat. That covers around six weeks of a bread subsidy program supporting 70 million low-income Egyptians.

China assisted with a \$2.8 billion currency swap. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar stepped in with pledges of \$22 billion in short-term deposits and investments.

"Having what they define as stability in Egypt is in their strategic interests. They really don't want to go through a repeat of 2011 and its aftermath," said David Butter, an associate fellow at international affairs think tank Chatham House. Gulf Arab states are also making strategic investments in Egypt for the short and long-term, he said.

The government announced an "extraordinary" social protection program to roll out this month, targeting 9 million families with extended cash transfers and food coupons. This is on top of other assistance programs, including pop-up stands selling subsidized food staples. Officials point to how they managed the supply crunch brought on by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, saying there is enough wheat and other basic food items for six months.

For some, leaving has promised more hope. Egyptians rank behind only Afghans as the top nationality of "irregular arrivals" to Europe so far this year, according to the International Organization for Migration's flow chart. Most arrive by sea.

As pressure mounts on the Egyptian pound, the government could devalue the currency again.

"It's going to hurt. It's going to increase inflation," said Kaldas, the Tahrir Institute economic expert. "Subsidies on bread is only one line-item in a family's budget. So, for a lot of families, this is still going to be a lot of pain."

Florida monitors a growing Tropical Storm Ian in Caribbean

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Authorities and residents in Florida were keeping a cautious eye on Tropical Storm Ian as it rumbled through the Caribbean on Sunday, expected to continue gaining strength and become a major hurricane in the coming days on a forecast track toward the state.

Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency for all of Florida the previous day, expanding an initial

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order that had covered two dozen counties. He urged residents to prepare for a storm that could lash large swaths of the state with heavy rains, high winds and rising seas.

"We encourage all Floridians to make their preparations," DeSantis said in a statement.

President Joe Biden also declared an emergency, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, to coordinate disaster relief and provide assistance to protect lives and property. The president postponed a scheduled Sept. 27 trip to Florida due to the storm.

The National Hurricane Center said Ian was expected to strengthen before moving over western Cuba and toward the west coast of Florida and the Florida Panhandle by the middle of the week. The agency advised Floridians to have hurricane plans in place and monitor updates of the storm's evolving path.

Ian was forecast to become a hurricane Sunday and a major storm as soon as late Monday. Ian had maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph) Saturday night as it swirled about 395 miles (630 kilometers) southeast of Grand Cayman, in the Cayman Islands.

A hurricane warning was in effect for the island, and hurricane watches were issued for western Cuba.

"Ian forecast to begin rapidly intensifying," the hurricane center reported.

John Cangialosi, a senior hurricane specialist at the Miami-based center, said it was not yet clear exactly where Ian will hit hardest. He said Floridians should begin preparations, including gathering supplies for potential power outages.

"At this point really the right message for those living in Florida is that you have to watch forecasts and get ready and prepare yourself for potential impact from this tropical system," he said.

In Pinellas Park, near Tampa, people were waiting in line at a Home Depot when it opened at 6 a.m. Saturday, the Tampa Bay Times reported. Manager Wendy Macrini said the store had sold 600 cases of water by early afternoon and ran out of generators.

People also were buying up plywood to shore up their windows: "Better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it," Matt Beaver, of Pinellas Park, told the Times.

Elsewhere, powerful post-tropical cyclone Fiona crashed ashore Saturday in Nova Scotia in the Atlantic Canada region, washing houses into the sea, tearing off rooftops and knocking out power to more than 500,000 customers in two provinces.

Flashes of bold UN talk on feminism, masculinity, patriarchy

By SALLY HO Associated Press

Few men in power have delved deeply into gender equality on the main stage of the United Nations this month, but the ones who did went there boldly: claiming feminist credibility, selling "positive masculinity" and resolutely demanding an end to The Patriarchy.

On the first day of the General Assembly gathering of world leaders, Bolivian President Luis Arce touted 2022 as "The Year of the Cultural Revolution for Depatriarchalization" for his country, and urged the United Nations to adopt a decade-long effort to do the same.

Arce said his country wanted to promote policies to "transform this regrettable reality that is caused by patriarchy as the most ancient system of oppression, and that is also linked to colonialism and capitalism."

Gender equality, as one of the United Nations' primary goals, has long been a safe talking point for world leaders, and there were many brief and polite mentions of progress made toward female empowerment, including promoting women into prominent roles, ensuring equal educational opportunities for girls, and supporting women's autonomy over their own bodies.

There were also some leaders who did not say the words "women" or "girls" at all during their time on stage — the king of Jordan, the president of Cyprus, the prime minister of Japan.

At other times, "feminism" — considered an f-word by many for generations — was used proudly.

Liberian President George Weah declared himself "feminist-in-chief." Andorran Prime Minister Xavier Espot Zamora acknowledged that "feminism is one of the great challenges of the present moment." Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez trumpeted "the feminist agenda and the struggle for gender equality."

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"We are living in times in which demanding basic rights is still a revolutionary act," Sánchez said in his U.N. address. "The global threats to women's sexual and reproductive freedom are yet another example of how painfully slowly the world is moving towards guaranteeing full equality. Worse still, is the fragility of our past social gains, which have fallen victim to backsliding in certain advanced democracies — something quite inexplicable at this stage of the 21st century."

It was an impassioned jab, apparently directed at the event's host country, where a recent Supreme Court ruling ended the constitutional right to abortion. In contrast, U.S. President Joe Biden offered only a passing mention of abortion rights — even as the court decision continues to ripple across the nation.

"The future will be won by those countries that unleash the full potential of their populations, where women and girls can exercise equal rights, including basic reproductive rights," Biden said in his speech.

The contrast was a stark reminder that words matter, said Sylvia Maier, a global gender studies professor at New York University, who said the unabashed use of progressive language by some world leaders on this prominent stage was new, unusual and surprising. The largest gathering of world leaders remains a forum that is dominated by men.

"It's about time we stop using euphemisms and beating around the bush," Maier said. "It's about time that we start talking about what we're facing in no uncertain terms. ... We cannot resolve these issues — which are all interlinked — without really calling it what it is."

Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi said in his speech that he was a "champion for positive masculinity," claiming a need for "radical change" while highlighting an African Union men's conference to tackle a surge in violence against women. "Because equality is not a gift given to women," Tshisekedi said.

The United Nations has defined positive masculinity as "an innovative approach to engaging and involving men, and making them allies in gender equality and peacebuilding efforts in conflict and post-conflict settings."

Maier said it's important to model the so-called idea of "what a good and honorable man should do" — from resisting violence and speaking up as a bystander, to understanding consent, believing survivors of gender violence and creating services to help those in crisis.

"It's hard work changing social norms, which are really gender stereotypes," Maier said. "Positive masculinity really means a reinforcement of positive character traits but all of these character traits, they shouldn't even have a gender."

The issue is especially acute for Congo. One of the poorest and least developed nations in the world, the country has long struggled with high rates of sexual violence, domestic abuse and child marriage.

"The problem is not masculinity," said Ousseina Alidou, a professor who leads the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University and serves as president of the African Studies Association. "Who we are is not the problem, but what we embrace as an ideology."

Alidou said it is commendable that Africa is taking the issue seriously as part of the continent's healing from its painful history of colonization.

"Patriarchy has been the framework for which colonialism has manifested itself, in the most inhumane way on the African continent," Alidou said. "Patriarchy is not a monopoly of only one region of the world. It is a world phenomenon."

Canadian military to help clean up Fiona's devastation

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canadian troops are being sent to assist the recovery from the devastation of storm Fiona, which swept away houses, stripped off roofs and knocked out power across the country's Atlantic provinces.

After surging north from the Caribbean as a hurricane, Fiona came ashore before dawn Saturday as a post-tropical cyclone, battering Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Quebec with hurricane-strength winds, heavy rains and huge waves.

Defense Minister Anita Anand said Saturday that troops would help remove fallen trees and other debris,

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restore transportation links and do whatever else is required for as long as it takes. She didn't specify how many troops would be deployed.

Fiona was blamed for at least five deaths in the Caribbean, but there was no confirmation of any fatalities or serious injuries in Canada. Police said a woman who might have been swept away was listed as missing in the town of Channel-Port Aux Basques on the southern coast of Newfoundland.

Raging surf pounded Port Aux Basques and entire structures were washed into the sea.

"I'm seeing homes in the ocean. I'm seeing rubble floating all over the place. It's complete and utter destruction. There's an apartment that is gone," René J. Roy, chief editor at Wreckhouse Press and a resident of the town, said in a phone interview.

Roy estimated between eight to 12 houses and buildings had washed into the sea. "It's quite terrifying," he said.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the town of 4,000 people was in a state of emergency with multiple electrical fires and residential flooding.

As the extent of damage became clear, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau canceled his trip to Japan for the funeral for assassinated former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

"We are seeing devastating images coming out of Port aux Basques. PEI (Prince Edward Island) has experienced storm damage like they've never seen. Cape Breton is being hit hard, too," Trudeau said.

"There are people who see their houses destroyed, people who are very worried — we will be there for you," Trudeau added.

Mike Savage, mayor of Halifax, said the roof of an apartment building collapsed in Nova Scotia's biggest city and officials had moved 100 people to an evacuation center. He said no one was seriously hurt.

Provincial officials said other apartment buildings sustained significant damage.

More than 415,000 Nova Scotia Power customers — about 80% of the province of almost 1 million people — were affected by outages Saturday. Over 82,000 customers in the province of Prince Edward Island, about 95%, also lost power, while NB Power in New Brunswick reported 44,329 were without electricity.

Peter Gregg, president and CEO of Nova Scotia Power, said unprecedented peak winds inflicted severe damage and the bad weather kept repair crews from going out at first. He said about 380,000 customers remained without power Saturday afternoon as a weakening Fiona moved away over the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The Canadian Hurricane Centre tweeted that Fiona had the lowest pressure ever recorded for a storm making landfall in Canada. Forecasters had warned it could be the one of the most powerful storms to hit the country.

"We're getting more severe storms more frequently," Trudeau said.

He said more resilient infrastructure is needed to withstand extreme weather events, saying that what was once a one-in-100 year storm might now arrive every few years because of climate change.

"Things are only getting worse," Trudeau said.

A state of local emergency was declared in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

"There are homes that have been significantly damaged due to downed trees, big old trees falling down and causing significant damage," Mayor Amanda McDougall told The Associated Press. "We're also seeing houses that their roofs have completely torn off, windows breaking in. There is a huge amount of debris in the roadways."

Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston said roads were washed out, including his own, and said an "incredible" amount of trees had been blown over.

"It is pretty devastating," Houston said.

Prince Edward Island Premier Dennis King said few communities were spared damage, with the devastation looking to be beyond anything they had seen previously in the province.

Federal Minister of Emergency Preparedness Bill Blair said there was very extensive damage at the airport in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He said other airports also were hit, but that damage at the Halifax facility, Nova Scotia's largest airport, was minor.

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In Sydney, Nova Scotia, the largest city on Cape Breton, about 20 people took refuge at the Centre 200 sports and entertainment facility, said Christina Lamey, a spokeswoman for the region. Lamey said hundreds of people had been displaced in the province.

Arlene and Robert Grafilo fled to Centre 200 with their children, ages 3 and 10, after a big tree toppled on their duplex apartment.

"We were trapped and we couldn't open the doors and the windows, so that's when we decided to call 911," Arlene Grafilo said. She said firefighters eventually rescued them.

Peter MacKay, a former foreign minister and defense minister who lives in Nova Scotia, said he had never seen anything to match Fiona even though he has "lived through some crazy weather."

He said that he and his family had a long night and that the winds had raged into the afternoon.

"We had put everything we could out of harm's way, but the house got hammered pretty hard. Lost lots of shingles, heavy water damage in ceilings, walls, our deck is destroyed. A garage that I was building blew away," MacKay said in an email to AP.

South Korea says North Korea test-fired missile toward sea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile Sunday toward its eastern seas, extending a provocative streak in weapons testing as a U.S. aircraft carrier visits South Korea for joint military exercises in response to the North's growing nuclear threat.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile launched from the western inland town of Taechon flew 600 kilometers (370 miles) cross-country on a maximum altitude of 60 kilometers (37 miles) before landing in waters off North Korea's eastern coast.

South Korea's presidential office said National Security Director Kim Sung-han called an emergency National Security Council meeting where members denounced the launch as a clear violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and accused the North of raising tensions in the region.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the launch did not pose an "immediate threat to U.S. personnel or territory, or to our allies," but still highlighted the destabilizing impact of North Korea's illicit nuclear weapons and missile programs.

The launch came as the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group arrived in South Korea for the two countries' joint military exercises that aim to show their strength against growing North Korean threats.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said its nuclear envoy Kim Gunn held telephone calls with Sung Kim, U.S. President Joe Biden's special representative for North Korea, and Funakoshi Takehiro, director-general for Asian and Oceanian affairs at Japan's Foreign Ministry, to discuss trilateral cooperation in face of North Korean threats.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said in a statement Tokyo is "doing its utmost" to gather information on North Korea's launch and confirm the safety of ships and aircraft, although there were no immediate reports of damages.

The North Korean threat is also expected to be a key agenda when U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris visits South Korea next week after attending the state funeral in Tokyo of slain former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

North Korea has dialed up its testing activities to a record pace in 2022, testing more than 30 ballistic weapons, including its first intercontinental ballistic missiles since 2017. North Korea is exploiting a divide in the United Nations Security Council that deepened over Russia's war on Ukraine to speed up arms development.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has punctuated his weapons tests with repeated threats that the North would proactively use its nuclear weapons when threatened, increasing security concerns for its conventionally armed rival South Korea.

The flight details announced by Seoul's military suggest that North Korea could have tested a nuclear-

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capable short-range weapon modeled after Russia's Iskander missiles, which travel at relatively low altitudes and are designed to be maneuverable in flight, making them harder to be intercepted by missile defenses.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said it was notable that the missile flew 600 kilometers (370 miles) from its Taechon launch point — roughly the distance to South Korea's southern port Busan, where the Reagan arrived Friday.

The Iskander-like missiles are part of a growing arsenal of short-range, solid-fuel systems North Korea has been developing since 2019. The North describes some of those weapons as "tactical," which experts say communicate a threat to arm them with small battlefield nukes and proactively use them during conflicts to blunt the stronger conventional forces of South Korea and the United States, which stations about 28,500 troops in the South.

North Korea has so far rejected U.S. and South Korean calls to return to nuclear diplomacy, which have been stalled since 2019 over disagreements in exchanging the release of U.S.-led sanctions against the North and the North's disarmament steps.

The USS Reagan's arrival in South Korea came after Kim told Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament this month that he would never abandon his nuclear weapons and missiles he needs to counter what he perceives as U.S. hostility.

Kim's speech came as North Korean legislators passed a law that enshrined its status as a nuclear power and authorized the preemptive use of nuclear weapons over a broad range of scenarios where the country or its leadership comes under threat, spelling out an escalatory nuclear doctrine.

Speaking to U.S. and South Korean troops Saturday aboard the Reagan, South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup said the dispatching of U.S. strategic assets to the region shows unwavering U.S. commitment to defend South Korea. He said the North would be met with an overwhelming response if it attempts to use nuclear weapons, according to a statement by his ministry.

Sunday's test could soon be followed with a more provocative weapons demonstration as South Korean officials said they detected signs that North Korea was preparing to test a missile system designed to be launched from submarines. The office of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said Saturday that he was briefed on such developments before his flight back home from a visit to Canada.

On Wednesday, 38 North, a North Korea-focused website, said its analysis of commercial satellite imagery shows multiple barges and other vessels gathered at the eastern port of Sinpo, where North Korea has a major shipyard building submarines. The report said the North was possibly preparing to launch a new submarine capable of firing ballistic missiles.

North Korea has been pushing hard to be able to fire nuclear-armed missiles from submarines. Such weapons in theory would bolster North Korea's deterrent by ensuring retaliation after absorbing a nuclear attack on land.

Ballistic missile submarines would also add a new maritime threat to the North's growing collection of solid-fuel weapons fired from land vehicles, which are being developed with an apparent aim to overwhelm missile defense systems in South Korea and Japan.

Still, experts say the heavily sanctioned nation would need considerably more time, resources and major technological improvements to build at least several submarines that could travel quietly in seas and reliably execute strikes.

Fiona sweeps away houses, knocks out power in eastern Canada

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Fiona washed houses into the sea, tore the roofs off others and knocked out power to the vast majority of two Canadian provinces as it made landfall before dawn Saturday as a big, powerful post-tropical cyclone.

Fiona transformed from a hurricane into a post-tropical storm late Friday, but it still had hurricane-strength winds and brought drenching rains and huge waves. There was no confirmation of fatalities or injuries.

Ocean waves pounded the town of Channel-Port Aux Basques on the southern coast of Newfoundland,

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where entire structures were washed into the sea. Mayor Brian Button said Saturday over social media that people were being evacuated to high ground as winds knocked down power lines.

"I'm seeing homes in the ocean. I'm seeing rubble floating all over the place. It's complete and utter destruction. There's an apartment that is gone," René J. Roy, a resident of Channel-Port Aux Basques and chief editor at Wreckhouse Press, said in a phone interview.

Roy estimated between eight to 12 houses and buildings have washed into the sea. "It's quite terrifying," he said.

Jolene Garland, a spokeswoman for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Newfoundland and Labrador, said a woman was safe and in "good health" after being "tossed into the water as her home collapsed" in the Channel-Port Aux Basques area. Garland said that an individual who might have been swept away was still reported as missing and that high winds were preventing an aerial search.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the town of 4,000 people was in a state of emergency as authorities dealt with multiple electrical fires and residential flooding.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau canceled his trip to Japan for the funeral for assassinated former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Trudeau said the federal government would deploy the Canadian Armed Forces to assist.

"We are seeing devastating images coming out of Port aux Basques. PEI (Prince Edward Island) has experienced storm damage like they've never seen. Cape Breton is being hit hard, too," Trudeau said.

"Canadians are thinking of all those affected by Hurricane Fiona, which is having devastating effects in the Atlantic provinces and eastern Quebec, particularly in the Magdalen Islands. There are people who see their houses destroyed, people who are very worried — we will be there for you."

Halifax Mayor Mike Savage said the roof of an apartment building collapsed and they moved 100 people to an evacuation center. He said no one was seriously hurt or killed. Provincial officials said there are other apartment buildings that are also significantly damaged. Halifax has about 160 people displaced from two apartments, officials said.

More than 415,000 Nova Scotia Power customers — about 80% of the province of almost 1 million — were affected by outages Saturday morning. Over 82,000 customers in the province of Prince Edward Island, about 95%, were also without power, while NB Power in New Brunswick reported 44,329 were without electricity.

The Canadian Hurricane Centre tweeted early Saturday that Fiona had the lowest pressure ever recorded for a storm making landfall in Canada. Forecasters had warned it could be the one of the most powerful storms to hit the country.

"We're getting more severe storms more frequently," Trudeau said Saturday.

He said more resilient infrastructure is needed to be able withstand extreme weather events, saying a one in a 100 year storm might start to hit every few years because of climate change.

"Things are only getting worse," Trudeau said.

A state of local emergency was also declared by the mayor and council of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

"There are homes that have been significantly damaged due to downed trees, big old trees falling down and causing significant damage. We're also seeing houses that their roofs have completely torn off, windows breaking in. There is a huge amount of debris in the roadways," Amanda McDougall, mayor of Cape Breton Regional Municipality, told The Associated Press

"There is a lot of damage to belongings and structures but no injuries to people as of this point. Again we're still in the midst of this," she said. "It's still terrifying. I'm just sitting here in my living room and it feels like the patio doors are going to break in with those big gusts."

Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston said roads were washed out, including his own, and said an "incredible" amount of trees were down.

"It is pretty devastating. The sad reality is the people who need information are unable to hear it. Their phones are not working, they don't have power or access to the internet," Houston said.

Peter Gregg, President and CEO of Nova Scotia Power, said unprecedented peak winds caused severe

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damage. "In many areas, weather conditions are still too dangerous for our crews to get up in our bucket trucks," Gregg said. He said about 380,000 customers remain without power as of Saturday afternoon.

Prince Edward Island Premier Dennis King said they had no reports of any significant injuries or deaths. But he said few communities were spared damage, with the devastation looking to be beyond anything they had seen previously in the province. He said over 95% of islanders remained without power.

Federal Minister of Emergency Preparedness Bill Blair said there was very extensive damage at the airport in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He said other airports also were hit, but that damage at the Halifax facility, Nova Scotia's largest airport, was minor.

Fiona had weakened to tropical storm strength late Saturday afternoon as it moved across the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In its final report on Fiona, the U.S. hurricane center said it had maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 kph). It was centered about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Port aux Basques and moving northeast at 8 mph (13 kph).

Tropical storm-force winds extended outward up to 550 miles (890 kilometers).

Hurricanes in Canada are somewhat rare, in part because once the storms reach colder waters, they lose their main source of energy. But post-tropical cyclones still can have hurricane-strength winds, although they have a cold core and no visible eye. They also often lose their symmetric form and more resemble a comma.

In Sydney, Nova Scotia, the largest city in Cape Breton, about 20 people took refuge at the Centre 200 sports and entertainment facility, said Christina Lamey, a spokeswoman for the region. Lamey said there were hundreds of people displaced in the province.

Arlene and Robert Grafilo fled to Centre 200 with their children, ages 3 and 10, after a huge tree fell on their duplex apartment.

"We were trapped and we couldn't open the doors and the windows, so that's when we decided to call 911," Arlene Grafilo said. She said firefighters eventually rescued them.

Peter MacKay, a former foreign minister and defense minister who lives in Nova Scotia, said he and his family had a long night and said the winds were still raging in the afternoon.

"We had put everything we could out of harm's way, but the house got hammered pretty hard. Lost lots of shingles, heavy water damage in ceilings, walls, our deck is destroyed. A garage that I was building blew away," MacKay said in an email to The Associated Press.

"Never seen anything like it. Lived through some crazy weather," he added.

He called the images from Newfoundland heartbreaking.

Fiona so far has been blamed for at least five deaths — two in Puerto Rico, two in the Dominican Republic and one in the French island of Guadeloupe.

In the Caribbean, Tropical Storm Ian was predicted to rapidly strengthen in the coming days. The U.S. National Hurricane Center said it could move over western Cuba and toward the west coast of Florida or the Florida Panhandle by the middle of next week.

Ian was centered about 685 miles (1,105 kilometers) southeast of the western tip of Cuba, late Saturday. It had maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph) and was moving west at 13 mph (20 kph). A hurricane watch was issued for the Cayman Islands.

US spy satellite launched into orbit from California

VANDENBERG SPACE FORCE BASE, Calif. (AP) — A classified satellite for the U.S. National Reconnaissance Office launched into orbit aboard a United Launch Alliance Delta 4 Heavy rocket on Saturday.

The NROL-91 spy satellite lifted off at 3:25 p.m. from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California's Santa Barbara County.

It was the last launch of a Delta 4 from the West Coast. Additional launches are planned from Florida before the Deltas are replaced by ULA's next-generation Vulcan Centaur rockets.

The Delta IV Heavy configuration first launched in December 2004. This was the 387th flight of a Delta rocket since 1960 and the 95th and final launch from Vandenberg.

The National Reconnaissance Office is the government agency in charge of developing, building, launching and maintaining U.S. spy satellites that provide intelligence data to policymakers, the intelligence community and Defense Department.

GOP quiet as Arizona Democrats condemn abortion ruling

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona Democrats vowed Saturday to fight for women's rights after a court reinstated a law first enacted during the Civil War that bans abortion in nearly all circumstances, looking to capitalize on an issue they hope will have a major impact on the midterm elections.

Republican candidates were silent a day after the ruling, which said the state can prosecute doctors and others who assist with an abortion unless it's necessary to save the mother's life. Kari Lake, the GOP candidate for governor, and Blake Masters, the Senate candidate, did not comment.

Katie Hobbs and Kris Mayes, the Democratic nominees for governor and attorney general, implored women not to sit on the sidelines this year, saying the ruling sets them back more than a century to an era when only men had the right to vote.

"We cannot let (Lake) hold public office and have the power to enact extreme anti-choice policies that she's spent her entire campaign touting," Hobbs said during a news conference outside the attorney general's office. "As Arizona's governor I will do everything in my power and use every tool at my disposal to restore abortion rights in Arizona."

The ruling presents a new hurdle for Republicans who were already struggling to navigate abortion politics. It fires up Democrats and distracts attention from the GOP's attacks on President Joe Biden and his record on border security and inflation less than three weeks before the start of early and mail-in voting, which are overwhelmingly popular in Arizona.

Abortion rights are particularly salient among suburban women, who play a decisive role in close elections in Arizona.

"In Arizona, with a draconian abortion law in effect today, I think you will see suburban women take a real look at Democratic candidates who promise to do something even if it's not in their power," said Barrett Marson, a Republican consultant.

Democrats have poured tens of millions of dollars into television advertising focused on abortion rights, and women have been registering to vote in greater numbers than men across the country.

The old law was first enacted among a set of laws known as the "Howell Code" adopted by the 1st Arizona Territorial Legislature in 1864. Legislative researchers said it remained in the penal code in 1901 and was readopted in subsequent rewrites, including in the 1970s.

Lake has spoken positively of Arizona's territorial ban on abortion, which she called "a great law that's already on the books." She has called abortion "the ultimate sin" and has also said abortion pills should be illegal.

Masters called abortion "demonic" during the GOP primary and called for a federal personhood law that would give fetuses the rights of people. He's toned down his rhetoric more recently, deleting references to a personhood law from his campaign website and dropping language describing himself as "100% pro-life."

More recently, Masters has said he would support a bill proposed by Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., that would ban abortions nationwide after 15 weeks of pregnancy, except in cases of rape, incest or risk to the physical health of the mother. He has also said he supports a different Arizona law that seeks to ban abortions at 15 weeks.

Neither the Lake nor Masters campaign responded to requests for comment.

"Their silence speaks volumes," said Mayes, the Democratic attorney general candidate. "They know how absolutely unpopular this 1901 law is. They know how indefensible it is. And they know that when Nov. 8 comes the people of Arizona are going to resoundingly reject this extreme abortion ban this attack on the people of Arizona by voting them down."

If elected, Mayes said, she would not enforce the abortion law and would direct county prosecutors to

do the same. She said she believes it violates the privacy rights guaranteed by the state constitution.

Hobbs said she'd push lawmakers on her first day in office to repeal the abortion ban, a long shot for a Legislature that is widely expected to be controlled by Republicans. Failing that, she said she'd support a ballot measure giving the voters the chance to decide in the 2024 election.

Hobbs also said she'd veto any legislation that further restricts abortion.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre condemned the ruling, which she said would have "catastrophic, dangerous and unacceptable" consequences.

"Make no mistake: this backwards decision exemplifies the disturbing trend across the country of Republican officials at the local and national level dead-set on stripping women of their rights," Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

Saudi Arabia's triumphant week reclaims the West's embrace

By AYA BATRAWY AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Saudi Arabia appears to be leaving behind the stream of negative coverage that the killing of Jamal Khashoggi elicited since 2018. The kingdom is once again being enthusiastically welcomed back into polite and powerful society, and it is no longer as frowned upon to seek Saudi investments or accept their favor.

Saudi Arabia's busy week of triumphs included brokering a prisoner swap between Ukraine and Russia, holding a highbrow summit on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, marking the country's national day with pomp and pageantry, hosting the German chancellor and discussing energy supply with top White House officials.

The kingdom is able to draw focus back to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's ambitious rebranding of Saudi Arabia and his goals to build both the world's largest sovereign wealth fund and pull the kingdom up from the G-20 to the more exclusive G-7 nations representing the biggest economies.

It's a mission that's often characterized as waking up a sleeping giant. Except it's happening even as human rights reforms remain off the agenda.

As the crown prince embarks on sensitive social and economic reforms, he's simultaneously overseen a far-reaching crackdown on dissent that his supporters say is necessary to ensure stability during this period. Among those detained or banned from leaving the country are women's rights activists, moderate preachers, conservative clerics, economists and progressive writers. Even top princes and Saudi billionaires have not been spared. Many were rounded up and held in the capital's Ritz-Carlton in a purported anti-corruption sweep that netted over a \$100 billion in assets.

The clampdown, however, drew its strongest international rebuke following the killing of Khashoggi by Saudi agents inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul four years ago.

And just last month, staggeringly long prison terms were handed down against two women for their Twitter and social media activity. A Saudi court sentenced a woman to 45 years in prison in August for allegedly damaging the country through her social media activity. It came on the heels of a 34-year-long prison sentence for another Saudi woman convicted of spreading "rumors" and retweeting dissidents. Both women were handed down the unusually long sentences on appeal.

The Associated Press asked Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Farhan bin Faisal about these sentences. "Those cases are still in process. They are not yet at the final appeal," he said, adding that the cases lie with the judiciary, which he said operates independently. He spoke at the exclusive Yale Club during an event in New York this week. He would not discuss the cases further.

Saudi Arabia's strength lies not only in its top position as the world's biggest oil exporter, but also as the home of Islam's holiest site and its birthplace.

The prince's efforts to shed the yoke of decades of ultraconservative Wahhabi control over every aspect of life are popular among young Saudis. From movie theaters and concerts, to women driving and curtailing the morality police's authority, the face of Saudi Arabia is changing. The latter stands in stark contrast to the protests in rival Iran's cities this week over the death of a woman in the custody of that

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country's morality police.

At the other end of these changes is a reorienting of Saudi Arabia's identity from a chiefly religious focus to one of cultural and national pride.

At a swanky daylong forum this week at one of New York's premier Upper East Side addresses, the kingdom's \$620 billion wealth fund drew some of the city's Who's Who to mingle and network on the sidelines of the United Nations' annual gathering of world leaders. While the kingdom never stopped drawing investors or forging partnerships in the years since Khashoggi's death, or amid its ongoing war in Yemen, those ties were less forward-facing among U.S. elites.

The Public Investment Fund has significant stakes in Uber, Lucid Motors, the cruise operator Carnival, Live Nation, Nintendo, Microsoft and a range of other companies. The aim of these investments is to grow Saudi Arabia's oil wealth and use it to establish world-class tourism, entertainment and luxury industries in the country. In doing so, the kingdom is creating a resilient economy as the world looks to a future powered by green energy rather than fossil fuels.

The PIF's biggest undertaking is Neom, a futuristic megaproject along the kingdom's northwestern Red Sea coast that envisions flying cars and a 105 mile-long (170 kilometer) zero carbon emissions city that's entirely enclosed and powered by Artificial Intelligence.

The crown prince oversees the PIF, but the man who runs its day-to-day investments is Yasir al-Rumayyan. He spoke at the so-called "Priority Summit" to a monied elite that included Jared Kushner, a former White House advisor and Donald Trump's son-in-law. Kushner recently secured a \$2 billion investment from the PIF to jump start his new private equity firm.

The fund is key to the 37-year-old prince's race against time to create at least 1.8 million jobs for young Saudis coming of age and entering the workforce.

"It's not only the figures that we are looking at, but the quality of these jobs, the quality of our offering to our society — and at the same time, making money while we're doing it," al-Rumayyan said.

The PIF's wealth is fueled by the kingdom's oil earnings. Al-Rumayyan is also chairman of Saudi Aramco. The state-owned oil and gas company had a record second-quarter this year with profits that topped \$48 billion — a figure more than Apple, Alphabet, Microsoft, Meta and Amazon's same-quarter earnings combined.

The summit, organized by the PIF's Foreign Investment Initiative Institute that puts on the annual "Davos in the Desert" in Riyadh, drew more than just people seeking opportunities and a morsel of Saudi Arabia's offerings. It also attracted intellectuals and artists — the kind of soft power that money can't always buy.

Despite a shift in tone in the West, the shadow of Khashoggi's killing still looms.

The crown prince was notably absent from Queen Elizabeth II's funeral, which drew royals from around the globe to London this month. Sources close to Prince Mohammed said he would not attend the funeral, the optics of which would have been a distraction. But they did say he would fly to London to offer condolences to the new King Charles III. That never transpired.

And after the crown prince helped negotiate the prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine, a move that drew international praise, the headline of the New York Post read: "White House thanks killer crown prince."

Fernando Javier Sulichin, an Argentine film producer who's collaborated on projects with Oliver Stone, said he was drawn to the PIF's event because he wanted to hear new ideas and brainstorm.

"Instead of being cynical and just reading the newspapers, it's like, what's going on in the world?," he said, adding that none of the sessions and discussions "are edited by any editorial board." He likened it to sourcing water from the river rather than the tap.

No longer pulled by the tide, the kingdom is riding its own wave.

CIA unveils model of al-Qaida leader al-Zawahri's hideout

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

McLEAN, Virginia (AP) — The CIA has revealed a model of Ayman al-Zawahri's safe house, used to brief

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President Joe Biden about the al-Qaida leader's whereabouts before the agency killed him in a drone strike in Afghanistan.

Shortly after al-Zawahri's death, White House officials released a photo showing Biden talking to CIA Director William Burns with a closed wooden box on the table in front of them. Now, the contents of the box — a model depicting a white-walled home with at least five stories and three partially obscured balconies — are on display at the CIA Museum inside the agency's Virginia headquarters.

The museum is closed to the public and access is generally limited to the agency's employees and guests. The CIA allowed journalists to tour the museum, newly refurbished in time for the agency's 75th anniversary, as part of a broader effort to showcase its history and achievements.

Most of the exhibits took years or decades to declassify. The al-Zawahri model home is the rare artifact that had been used by intelligence officers just weeks beforehand.

Al-Zawahri was killed in late July, nearly a year after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan ending a two-decade war in which the CIA had a central role. The agency sent the first American forces two weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Two decades later, it pulled out intelligence assets and assisted in the chaotic evacuation of thousands of Americans and Afghan allies.

The Biden administration has said the strike shows it retains what it calls an "over-the-horizon" counterterrorism capacity in Afghanistan. Opponents of the administration and some analysts question whether al-Zawahri's presence in a Kabul neighborhood suggests extremist groups like al-Qaida or the Islamic State are growing stronger under the Taliban, who now rule the country.

The strike was particularly meaningful for the CIA, which lost seven employees in trying to find al-Zawahri, a key plotter of the Sept. 11 attacks who was then al-Qaida's second-in-command.

They were killed when a Jordanian doctor who pretended to have information about al-Zawahri carried out a 2009 suicide bombing at a base in Khost, Afghanistan. The doctor was working for al-Qaida.

On display near the model of al-Zawahri's home are seven stars honoring the CIA employees slain at Khost. The stars were previously part of a memorial in Afghanistan that was taken down as the U.S. withdrew.

Other newly revealed artifacts include concept drawings for the fake film created as part of a 1980 operation to rescue American diplomats from Iran, the subject of the 2012 movie "Argo" starring Ben Affleck. There are also crew uniforms and other items from the Glomar Explorer, the Howard Hughes-built ship that served as cover for a 1970s mission to surface a sunken Soviet submarine carrying nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. (The story on the front page of the Los Angeles Times exposing the operation is reproduced on a nearby museum wall.)

The museum also includes some information on the agency's darker moments, including its role in the ultimately false assertions that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction prior to the 2003 U.S. invasion, as well as the exposure and execution of several key spies the U.S. had in the Soviet Union.

Janelle Neises, the museum's deputy director, says a running agency joke about the collection is that for most people, it's "the greatest museum you'll never see."

The CIA wants to use its history to engage more with the public, albeit on the narrow terms one might expect of an intelligence service. The number of annual visitors to the museum, for example, is classified. Among the known guests are U.S. lawmakers, officers from other law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and foreign officials.

But CIA employees post about some of the museum's roughly 600 exhibits on social media. The agency also recently started a podcast with Burns, the CIA director, as its first guest.

A primary goal of the museum is to reinforce lessons from the agency's successes and failures for the current workforce, Neises said. Some CIA veterans who served in the missions depicted in the museum donated artifacts to the collection. But the agency is now hiring officers in their twenties who are too young to remember the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"The idea here is as you're going to lunch or as you're going to a meeting, leave 10 minutes early, leave 20 minutes early, and just take the time to look at one section and really learn about your history," Neises said.

'We got our miracle': Freed Americans back home in Alabama

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Two U.S. military veterans who disappeared three months ago while fighting with Ukrainian forces against Russia arrived home to Alabama on Saturday, greeted by hugs, cheers and tears of joy at the state's main airport.

Alex Druke, 40, and Andy Huynh, 27, had gone missing June 9 in the Kharkiv region of northeastern Ukraine near the Russian border. The Alabama residents were released as part of a prisoner exchange. The pair had traveled to Ukraine on their own and bonded over their shared home state.

"It's them!" a family member shouted as the pair appeared at the top of an escalator at the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport in Birmingham, one of Alabama's largest cities.

Smiling but looking tired, the two were pulled into long emotional hugs by family members after their connecting flight home. Then they were whisked to a waiting car.

"Surreal. I still have chill bumps. I always imagined this day. I always held not just hope but belief in this day. But I thought it was going to be two or three years from now at best," said Druke's aunt, Dianna Shaw.

"There are prisoners of war who have been held for months and years. There are people who have been detained wrongfully for years and for this to come about in three months is, just, unimaginable to me," she added. "Even though I'm living it, it feels unimaginable, and I don't want people to forget all the Ukrainians who are still being held."

The families of the two men announced their release on Wednesday. The men were among 10 prisoners released by Russian-backed separatists as part of a prisoner exchange mediated by Saudi Arabia. The Saudi embassy said five British nationals and others from Morocco, Sweden and Croatia also were freed.

Darla Black, whose daughter is engaged to Huynh, said she thought, "there he is. There he is" as Huynh came into view.

"I had to get my hands on him to actually believe it. I'm just overwhelmed with gratitude. We got our miracle," Black said.

The men had arrived Friday at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

"We're looking forward to spending time with family and we'll be in touch with the media soon," Druke said shortly after arriving in New York with Huynh. "Happy to be home."

Biden administration launches environmental justice office

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press/Report for America

WARRENTON, N.C. (AP) — President Joe Biden's top environment official visited what is widely considered the birthplace of the environmental justice movement Saturday to unveil a national office that will distribute \$3 billion in block grants to underserved communities burdened by pollution.

Forty years after a predominantly Black community in Warren County, North Carolina, rallied against hosting a hazardous waste landfill, Michael Regan, the first Black man to serve as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, announced he is dedicating a new senior level of leadership to the environmental justice movement they ignited.

The Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights — comprised of more than 200 current staff members in 10 U.S. regions — will merge three existing EPA programs to oversee a portion of Democrats' \$60 billion investment in environmental justice initiatives created by the Inflation Reduction Act. The president will nominate an assistant administrator to lead the new office, pending Senate confirmation.

"In the past, many of our communities have had to compete for very small grants because EPA's pot of money was extremely small," Regan said in an interview. "We're going from tens of thousands of dollars to developing and designing a program that will distribute billions. But we're also going to be sure that this money goes to those who need it the most and those who've never had a seat at the table."

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Biden has championed environmental justice as a centerpiece of his climate agenda since his first week in office, when he signed an executive order pledging 40% of the overall benefits from certain federal clean energy investments to disadvantaged communities overwhelmed by pollution.

Now, Regan said, this new office intertwines environmental justice with the central fabric of the EPA, equating it to other top offices like air and water, and cementing its principles in a way that will outlive the administration.

North Carolina in 1978 designated Warren County, a small, predominantly Black farming community along the Virginia border, as a disposal site for truckloads of soil laced with highly carcinogenic chemical compounds that later contaminated the water supply.

As the first trucks rolled into town in 1982, hundreds of residents flooded the streets, blocking their path to the landfill. Though they were unable to shut down the operation after six weeks of nonviolent protests and more than 500 arrests, their efforts have been lauded by civil rights leaders as the impetus for a global uprising against environmental racism in minority communities.

Wayne Moseley, 73, was one of the initial protesters arrested on the first day of the demonstration. The Raleigh resident commuted to Warren County to march on behalf of his mother, whose health prevented her from participating. He called Saturday's ceremony "a homecoming" for himself and many other protesters he hadn't seen for 40 years.

"We became a family, no Black or white, no rich or poor — we were all one," Moseley said. "The state was hell-bent on putting that dump site here. I knew we couldn't stop it, but we could elevate the consciousness of not only the state but the nation."

Dollie Burwell, a protest leader known in the community as "the mother of the movement," honored the bravery of her late daughter Kimberly Burwell, who was only 8 years old when she joined her mother on the frontlines.

"She stood up and led so many children in the protests," Burwell said of her daughter during the ceremony. "She was not afraid of being arrested. But she was afraid of her family and friends getting cancer" from carcinogenic compounds in the soil.

Government officials have routinely targeted low-income communities of color like Warren County to host hazardous waste facilities since the early 1900s. And the neglect of critical infrastructure in predominantly Black communities, ranging from Flint, Michigan, to Jackson, Mississippi, has led to problems still seen today.

An April study by the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University found that the majority of Black and Latino neighborhoods that received low scores in a discriminatory federal housing program known as redlining were home to twice as many oil wells as majority white communities. According to the Clean Air Task Force, Black Americans are 75% more likely than white Americans to live near a factory or plant and nearly four times as likely to die from exposure to pollutants.

The Rev. Dr. William Barber II, a prominent social activist and leader of the Poor People's campaign, said he sees Regan's announcement as "a great starting point" and will continue to demand more of the Biden administration.

"Our votes are not support. Our votes are our demands," Barber said in an interview. "This is not about right versus left, it's about right versus wrong. This is about a lifestyle versus disability because when you poison the land and the water, you hurt people's everyday life."

Regan, who is from Goldsboro, North Carolina, said he grew up listening to local civil rights leaders like Barber and Burwell — the early inspirations for his work at the EPA.

"I'm taking all of these experiences (from my childhood) and matching that with the vision of the president," Regan said. "We're using this opportunity to not only honor those who came before us, but we're building on the work that they started. We're standing on their shoulders and trying to reach higher heights."

Just 45 days out from the midterm election, Regan is among several Cabinet members visiting North Carolina this month to promote the president's achievements, including the visits of Vice President Kamala Harris on Sept. 1 and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen next Tuesday in Durham. Democrats have set their sights on the Southern swing state as a potential pickup in the narrowly divided U.S. Senate and other key offices.

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No. 5 Clemson hangs on, tops No. 21 Wake Forest 51-45 in 2OT

By AARON BEARD AP Sports Writer

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (AP) — DJ Uiagalelei kept delivering the ball on target downfield for No. 5 Clemson in a shootout with No. 21 Wake Forest.

That offered enough cover for a defense that struggled for stops — right up until finally coming up with the winning play to cap a double-overtime classic.

Nate Wiggins broke up Sam Hartman's fourth-down pass in the end zone to help the Tigers hold off the Demon Deacons 51-45 on Saturday. That marked their 14th straight win in the series, this one coming in a tense road game pairing two of the Atlantic Coast Conference's top teams.

Uiagalelei threw for 375 yards and five touchdowns to lead Clemson (4-0, 2-0 ACC), including the go-ahead score over the middle to Davis Allen to start the second overtime.

"Honestly, man, that was a crazy game," Uiagalelei said, adding: "You could just see the heart of our team — the heart of the offense, the heart of the defense. When plays had to be made, we made the plays. That just shows a great sign of a good football team."

Or, at the least, plenty of perseverance — particularly for Wiggins.

He had been targeted frequently by Hartman and the Wake Forest receivers but came through to knock away Hartman's final ball for A.T. Perry. He fell to the end zone turf, then sprung up to join his team in celebration after a wild shootout between the reigning Atlantic Division champion Demon Deacons and the preseason league favorite Tigers.

Before that stop, Wiggins had thrice been flagged for pass interference in an injury-battered secondary and was beaten on Donavon Greene's 25-yard TD haul.

"The only good thing about the game (defensively) is we gave up six touchdown passes — we didn't give up seven," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said with a chuckle. "That's the only good thing I can say. And they never quit and they kept battling and they played one more play — and Nate came up with it right there at the end."

Hartman threw for 337 yards and the six TDs to set a program record for Wake Forest (3-1, 0-1), including two each to Greene and Jahmal Banks. But the Demon Deacons stalled out near midfield on a potential winning drive to end regulation, then couldn't stop the Tigers in the first OT after starting off with Hartman's TD throw to Perry.

"That locker room right now is hurting," Wake Forest coach Dave Clawson said. "It's a football team that has invested a lot and they care a lot and expected to win this game."

THE TAKEAWAY

Clemson: This was the start of a two-week stretch that could give the Tigers control of the league's Atlantic Division race. The Tigers took early control by scoring touchdowns on their first two drives to take a 14-0 lead, only to see the Demon Deacons' high-scoring offense get rolling by pushing the ball downfield. On this day, the Uiagalelei-led offense had to keep coming up with big plays to stay on pace — and did.

Wake Forest: The Demon Deacons have accomplished plenty under Clawson, highlighted by last year's push to tie the program record with 11 wins to reach the ACC championship game. But Clemson continues to bedevil them, with Wake Forest last winning in 2008 and only one of the previous 13 straight losses coming by fewer than 14 points. Wake Forest also fell to 1-65 all-time against teams ranked in the top 10 of The Associated Press college football poll, with the only win coming against No. 4 Tennessee in 1946.

A BIG STOP

Wake Forest appeared on the verge of ending its long skid in the series when it pushed near midfield on a potentially winning drive late in regulation. But 300-pound lineman Tyler Davis stuffed Justice Ellison on a run then teamed with linemate Myles Murphy to sack Hartman and eventually force the Demon Deacons to punt for OT.

"We battled and felt like we were in that game until the end," Hartman said. "But at the end it's a play here, a play there."

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BRESEE'S RETURN

Clemson defensive tackle Bryan Bresee returned after missing last week's win against Louisiana Tech while being home with his family following the death of his 15-year-old sister, Ella, to brain cancer. He had two tackles and batted Hartman's second-down pass at the line in the second OT.

"I just never lost confidence in us," he said.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

The Tigers are near the top of the AP Top 25 with little room to climb despite a tough road win. The Demon Deacons aren't likely to slide much, if at all, after giving the Tigers all they could handle.

THEY SAID IT

"You hate for anybody to lose a game like that. That was an unbelievable college football game — two teams that fought with every ounce of everything they had. That's what (top-25) matchup should look like, especially on the road." — Swinney.

UP NEXT

Clemson: The Tigers host No. 12 North Carolina State next Saturday in another critical division game.

Wake Forest: The Demon Deacons travel to Florida State next Saturday.

Kim Kardashian culls Dolce&Gabbana archives for Milan show

By COLLEEN BARRY AP Fashion Week

MILAN (AP) — Kim Kardashian took Milan by storm on Saturday, curating a new collection for Dolce&Gabbana that took inspiration from 20 years of archival looks.

It was a day of debuts in Milan, including Maximilian Davis, a 27-year-old British designer with Afro-Caribbean roots, at the creative helm of Salvatore Ferragamo and Filipino American designer Rhuigi Vil-lasenor at Bally, as the brand returns to the runway for the first time in 20 years.

Some highlights from the fourth day of Milan Fashion Week previews of mostly womenswear for next spring and summer:

KIM KARDASHIAN AND DOLCE & GABBANA: THE BACKSTORY

Kim Kardashian's love of Dolce & Gabbana goes way back, and the affection showed in her curation of their latest collection, drawing on archival looks from 1987-2007.

She remembers growing up watching her mother dress in Dolce & Gabbana for date nights with her stepfather, recalling "she always looked so smart and so strong." One year, Kardashian's borrowed one of her mom's black Dolce & Gabbana dresses with a built-in bra and choker to wear for a family Christmas card, a look, she said, "I will never forget."

When Kardashian and her sisters owned a store, she borrowed her father's credit card to buy a bunch of D&G dresses, jeans and belts before her paycheck came in.

Even the family dogs were named Dolce and Gabbana. Gabbana was a black labrador, Dolce a tiny chihuahua.

"It is very close to reality," Stefano Gabbana quipped in a presentation for the new collection.

But no matter how hard she tried, even deploying her mother, Kris Jenner, to help make her case, the designers refused to open their archives. "The past is the past," Domenico Dolce explained. "We try to go ahead with the new generation."

That is, until Kardashian proved she had the right stuff.

When Kourtney Kardashian married Travis Barker in Italy, social media swarmed with the vintage Dolce & Gabbana dresses she and her sisters wore. They were all from Kim Kardashian's private collection, which she accrued with the help of a book of more than 100 desired Dolce & Gabbana looks she and her stylist compiled years before.

"Everything looked insane. It was so fun," Kardashian said of the wedding looks. "I think (the designers) were surprised I came with all my own stuff and I had been collecting it for years."

Dolce said the wedding photos persuaded them to dig into the archives, and he approached Kardashian about the project.

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"We were afraid that the vintage dresses would look old. Instead, they were still contemporary," Dolce said.

And so the new Spring-Summer 2023 collection was born, with the designers selecting looks from the past that they loved, many with memories attached working with models like Linda Evangelista and Monica Bellucci. Kardashian curated from there.

"After all these years, this is all of the stuff we would wear today," Kardashian said. "As a designer, I would just think that is so cool, to see everyone trying to emulate the looks. And why not do a full collection, obviously with some new pieces in there, but just reimaged in a way that we would wear it today, which is so similar to how it was shot and worn back then."

HASHTAG CIAO, KIM AT DOLCE & GABBANA

Designers Dolce and Gabbana presented their Spring-Summer 2023 collection curated by Kim Kardashian against the backdrop of a film showing Kardashian, styled as a starlet, sensually eating a plate of pasta.

And indeed, Kardashian's curation showed her full embrace of Dolce & Gabbana's Italian roots.

"You just don't take shit from anyone when you are here and wearing Dolce & Gabbana," Kardashian told reporters. "You feel powerful, and strong and sexy at the same time."

Lingerie strongly inspired the collection. There were corsets, incorporated bras and bodysuits, employing all of the designer's best tricks, from rigid bones for structural elements, to pretty lace and eye-catching crystals. They were worn with gartered stockings and long gloves, or under beautiful wraps.

Kardashian adhered to a mostly neutral palette: black, gray and beige, with some burgundy. And she drew the line at prints, completely rejecting the brand's fruits and florals, causing Gabbana to lament: "She killed me. I said 'Nooooo!'"

But she went all in on the leopard.

"I would say the boys brought out the leopard in me," Kardashian said. "I think you will see that for me, color is the crystals."

The collection was designed with women of all ages and shapes in mind, Kardashian said, with the goal of simplifying designs to help some of the more ornate pieces feel less intimidating.

"If you simplify it, more people can feel confident wearing it. And I think we really achieved that in the show," she said.

Kardashian's mom, three of her children and sister Khloe sat in the front row. Proud mamma Kris Jenner filming the entire show on her phone.

JIL SANDER'S TRANQUILITY

Jil Sander created a tranquil island in Milan's chaotic fashion week, filling a temporary show space in a distant field with a thicket of wildflowers and grasses, along with soothing pastels and forgiving silhouettes.

The collection lends itself to easy layering and defies all gender stereotypes. Creative directors Lucie and Luke Maier continued to dabble in embellishments, adding sequins, feathers and metallic accents to the brand's minimalist silhouette.

Sleeveless suiting worked across genders, and men wore long pastel kilts with button-down shirts. Knitwear was distressed, with rough edges and slits, in both tops and dresses. The designers chose a single print, featuring blurry points of light.

Models carried umbrellas to protect the looks from the seasonal rainfall -- inconvenient for an outdoor show but welcome in Italy after months of drought.

FERRAGAMO'S NEW DAWN

Maximilian Davis created a vermilion red background for his Salvatore Ferragamo debut in the courtyard of a 17th century baroque and neoclassical palace -- all the better to highlight the fashion house's new direction.

The 27-year-old British designer worked strong silhouettes and simple elements, like tank tops and leggings, or full-on bodysuits, all the better to highlight the bag of the season, oversized cutout bags in highly polished leather with a canvas interior. Dresses were slinky in solid colors or flowing chiffon in dégradé prints; a red trouser and skin-tight top combo popped with crystals. Strappy sandals featured a distinctive

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circular heel.

The male silhouette was challenged with an off-shoulder, sheer ombre dyed top, the colors an homage to the California sunset. Davis tapped Ferragamo's leather heritage with boyishly short leather shorts paired with a leather blazer. Any male divo can make a red-carpet entrance with a silver sheer off-shoulder top that flows dramatically into a trailing scarf.

Models trod across red sand that covered the entire courtyard, a reference to Ferragamo's Hollywood origins near the California beaches, and Davis' own Caribbean heritage.

The sea and the sand mean for him "a place where you can go to reflect, and feel at one," he said. "I wanted to show that perspective, but now through the Ferragamo lens."

Super model Naomi Campbell turned out for the debut.

BALLY REBOOTED

Filipino American designer Rhuigi Villasenor, best known for his U.S. streetwear brand, is seeking to drive a transition at the storied Swiss brand Bally, founded in 1851.

His debut collection paid tribute to the brand's heritage of quiet elegance, while introducing an edge. A plunging V-neck swimsuit was worn with snakeskin boots, while a long beaded skirt featured a waist-high slit and was paired casually with a denim top. For him, a flashy reptile leather jacket was worn with a mesh top and jeans, but there was also a dark blue double-breasted suit for more formal business occasions.

Villasenor said he was inspired by "the brand's codes around art, graphic design, architecture and nature."

BOTTEGA VENETA'S TROMP L'OEUIL

To the uninitiated, Kate Moss looked downright dressed down on the Bottega Veneta runway, in a pair of loose jeans and a plaid shirt. But that is the genius of designer Matthieu Blazy, who replayed a trick from his first season, showing leather pants that replicate the look of jeans.

Every piece in Blazy's sophomore collection was strong: from the intarsia knitwear that have ice blue and red vying for the starring role, to the leather shift dresses and jackets with unexpected folds, to the shredded leather skirts and dresses, and sheer dresses embellished with velvety floral appliques.

At Bottega Veneta, leather is king. Bags include beautifully crafted fishing bags that fit neatly on the body, either in flat leather or a basket weave, to bucket-bags worn flung over the shoulder.

Blazy collaborated with Italian architect and designer Gaetano Pesce on the sculptural resin runway and 400 unique chairs, some with hand drawings, used for guests at the show and destined for Design Miami.

Kremlin stages votes in Ukraine, sees protests in Russia

By KARL RITTER and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces launched new strikes on Ukrainian cities Saturday as Kremlin-orchestrated votes took place in four occupied regions to create a pretext for their annexation by Moscow.

In cities across Russia, police arrested hundreds of people who tried to protest a mobilization order aimed at beefing up the country's troops in Ukraine. Other Russians reported for duty, while the foreign minister told the U.N. General Assembly his country had "no choice" but to take military action against its neighbor.

Ukraine's presidential office said the latest Russian shelling killed at least three people and wounded 19. Oleksandr Starukh, the Ukrainian governor of Zaporizhzhia, one of the regions where Moscow-installed officials organized referendums on joining Russia, said a Russian missile hit an apartment building in the regional capital, killing one person and injuring seven others.

Ukraine and its Western allies say the referendums underway in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south and the eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions have no legal force. They alleged the votes were an illegitimate attempt by Moscow to seize Ukrainian territory stretching from the Russian border to the Crimean Peninsula.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said the voting "looked more like an opinion survey under the gun barrels," adding that Moscow-backed local authorities sent armed escorts to accompany election officials and to take down the names of individuals who voted against joining Russia.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukrainians in occupied regions to undermine the referendums and to share information about the people conducting "this farce." He also called on Russian recruits

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to sabotage and desert the military if they are called up under the partial troop mobilization President Vladimir Putin announced Wednesday.

"If you get into the Russian army, sabotage any activity of the enemy, hinder any Russian operations, provide us with any important information about the occupiers – their bases, headquarters, warehouses with ammunition," Zelenskyy said.

Putin on Saturday signed a hastily approved bill that toughens the punishment for soldiers who disobey officers' orders, desert or surrender to the enemy.

To carry out the referendums that started Friday, election officials accompanied by police officers carried ballots to homes and set up mobile polling stations, citing safety reasons. The votes are set to wrap up Tuesday.

"Half of the population fled the Donetsk region because of Russian terror and constant shelling, voting against Russia with their feet, and the second half has been cheated and scared," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

In the Ukrainian capital, about 100 people from the Russia-occupied city of Mariupol, which is part of the Donetsk region, gathered to protest the referendum, covering themselves in Ukrainian flags and carrying posters "Mariupol is Ukraine."

"They ruined the city, killed thousands of people, and now they are doing some kind of profanation over there," said Vladyslav Kildishov who helped organize the rally.

Elina Sytkova, 21, a demonstrator who has many relatives left in Mariupol even though the city spent months under bombardment, said the vote was "an illusion of choice when there isn't any."

It's "like a joke, because it's the same as it was in Crimea, meaning it's fake and not real," she said, referring to a 2014 referendum that took place in Crimea before Moscow annexed the peninsula in a move that most of the world considered illegal.

The mobilization ordered by Putin marked a sharp shift from his effort to cast the seven-month war as a "special military operation" that doesn't interfere with the lives of most Russians.

Russian police moved quickly to break up demonstrations against the mobilization that were held in several cities across Russia on Saturday, arresting over 700 people. More than 1,300 protesters were arrested during a previous wave of protests on Wednesday, and many of them immediately received call-up summons.

The Russian leader and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said the order applied to reservists who had recently served or had special skills, but almost every man is considered a reservist until age 65 and Putin's decree kept the door open for a broader call-up.

The Russian Ministry said that the partial mobilization initially aimed to add about 300,000 troops to beef up its outnumbered volunteer forces in Ukraine. The Ukrainian government stopped allowing most men ages 18-60 to leave the country immediately after Russia's Feb. 24 invasion under a general mobilization order intended to build a 1 million-strong military.

Across Russia's 11 time zones, men hugged their weeping family members before being rounded up for service amid fears that a wider call-up might follow. Some media reports claimed Russian authorities planned to mobilize more than 1 million recruits, which the Kremlin denied.

Moving to assuage public fears over the call-up that could erode Putin's grip on power, authorities announced that many Russians working in high tech, communications or finance would be exempt.

After some of the pilots of the Russian flag carrier Aeroflot and other airlines reportedly received call-up notices, pilots and traffic controllers unions moved quickly to secure a government promise that they, too, would be excluded from the mobilization.

Many Russian men bought up scarce and exorbitantly priced airline tickets out of the country as rumors swirled about a pending border closure. Thousands others fled by car, creating lines of traffic hours or even days long at some borders. The massive exodus underlined the unpopularity of the war and fueled public outrage.

In a sign the Kremlin was starting to worry about a backlash, the head of a top state-controlled TV

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station harshly criticized military authorities for hastily sweeping up random people to meet mobilization targets instead of calling up people with specific skills and recent military service, as Putin promised.

RT chief Margarita Simonyan lashed out at military conscription offices for "driving people mad" by rounding up those who weren't supposed to be drafted. "It's as if they were tasked by Kyiv to do that," she said.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the Kremlin-backed regional leader of Chechnya who sent his forces to fight in Ukraine and repeatedly called for tougher action, suggested that Moscow should more broadly engage personnel from law-enforcement agencies in the fighting.

He denounced those fleeing the mobilization as cowards and argued that police and various paramilitary agencies that number a total of 5 million personnel together with the military would make a much better-trained and motivated fighting force.

"If we leave 50 percent of the personnel to fulfil their duties, 2.5 million others will blow any Western army away and we won't need any reservists," Kadyrov said.

Putin's mobilization order followed a swift Ukrainian counteroffensive that forced Moscow's retreat from broad swaths of the northeastern Kharkiv region, a humiliating defeat that highlighted blunders in Moscow's military planning.

The Defense Ministry on Saturday announced the dismissal of Gen. Dmitry Bulgakov from the post of deputy defense minister in charge of logistics. It didn't mention the cause for his ouster, but the move was widely seen as a punishment for the flaws in supporting operations in Ukraine.

As Ukraine worries UN, some leaders rue what's pushed aside

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — In speech after speech, world leaders dwelled on the topic consuming this year's U.N. General Assembly meeting: Russia's war in Ukraine.

A few, like Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, prodded the world not to forget everything else.

He, too, was quick to bring up the biggest military confrontation in Europe since World War II. But he wasn't there to discuss the conflict itself, nor its disruption of food, fuel and fertilizer markets.

"The ongoing war in Ukraine is making it more difficult," Buhari lamented, "to tackle the perennial issues that feature each year in the deliberations of this assembly."

He went on to name a few: inequality, nuclear disarmament, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the more than 1 million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar who have been living in limbo for years in Bangladesh.

In an environment where words are parsed, confrontations are calibrated and worry is acute that the war and its wider effects could worsen, no one dismissed the importance of the conflict. But comments such as Buhari's quietly spoke to a certain unease, sometimes bordering on frustration, about the international community's absorption in Ukraine.

Those murmurs are audible enough that the United States' U.N. ambassador, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, made a point of previewing Washington's plans to address climate change, food insecurity, health and other issues during the diplomatic community's premier annual gathering.

"Other countries have expressed a concern that as we focus on Ukraine, we are not paying attention to what is happening in other crises around the world," she said, vowing that it wasn't so. Still, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken complained at a Security Council meeting days later that Russia's invasion is distracting the U.N. from working on other important matters.

In many years at the assembly, there's a hot spot or news development that takes up a lot of diplomatic oxygen. As former U.N. official Jan Egeland puts it, "the world manages to focus on one crisis at a time."

"But I cannot, in these many years as a humanitarian worker or a diplomat, remember any time when the focus was so strongly on one conflict only while the world was falling apart elsewhere," Egeland, now secretary-general of an international aid group called the Norwegian Refugee Council, said in a phone interview.

Certainly, no one was surprised by the attention devoted to a conflict with Cold War echoes, oblique nuclear threats from Russian President Vladimir Putin, shelling that has endangered the continent's largest

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atomic power plant, and far-reaching economic effects. The urgency only intensified during the weeklong meeting as Russia mobilized some of its military reserves.

President Andrzej Duda of Poland — on Ukraine's doorstep — stressed in his speech that "we mustn't show any 'war fatigue'" regarding the conflict. But he also noted that a recent trip to Africa left him pondering how the West has treated other conflicts.

"Were we equally resolute during the tragedies of Syria, Libya, Yemen?" he asked himself, and the assembly. And didn't the West return to "business as usual" after wars in Congo and the Horn of Africa?

"While condemning the invasion of Ukraine," Duda added, "do we give equal weight to fighting mercenaries who seek to destabilize the Sahel and threaten many other states in Africa?"

He isn't the only one asking.

Over seven months of war, there have been pointed observations from some quarters about how quickly and extensively wealthy and powerful nations mobilized money, military aid, and General Assembly votes to support Ukraine and offer refuge to its residents, compared to the global response to some other conflicts.

Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg's assembly speech acknowledged grumblings about European "double standards — that we only react so strongly to Russia's invasion because of geographic and cultural proximity or because Ukrainians 'look like us.'"

He vigorously rebuffed that notion, arguing that Russia's attack ripped up international rules that undergird every country's security.

Still, South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor raised the specter of unequal treatment.

Calling for more attention to the disputed Western Sahara region in northern Africa, she admonished the global community to "treat all conflicts across the globe with equal indignation, no matter what the color or creed of the people affected."

And while other countries may be wrapped up in Ukraine, Pandor offered a her nation's own list of the biggest global challenges: "poverty, inequality, joblessness and a feeling of being entirely ignored and excluded."

Tuvalu's prime minister, Kausea Natano, said in an interview on the assembly's sidelines that the war shouldn't "be an excuse" for countries to ignore their financial commitments to a top priority for his island nation: fighting climate change. Part of Bolivian President Luis Arce's speech compared the untold billions of dollars spent on fighting in Ukraine in a matter of months to the \$11 billion committed to the U.N.-sponsored Green Climate Fund over more than a decade.

To be sure, most leaders made time for issues beyond Ukraine in their allotted, if not always enforced, 15 minutes at the mic. And some mentioned the war only in passing, or not at all.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro devoted his time to lambasting capitalism, consumerism and the U.S.-led war on drugs, particularly its focus on coca plant eradication. Krygyz President Sadyr Zhaparov, whose country has close ties to Russia, homed in on his homeland's border dispute with Tajikistan. Jordan's King Abdullah II briefly mentioned the war's effects on food supplies, then moved on to sustainable economic growth, Syrian refugees and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ukraine is undeniably a dominant concern for the European Union. But foreign policy chief Josep Borrell insisted the bloc hasn't lost sight of other problems.

"It's not a question of choosing between Ukraine and the others. We can do all at the same time," he said on the eve of the assembly.

Yet diplomatic attention and time are precious, sought-after resources. So, too, the will and money to help.

U.N. humanitarian office figures show that governments and private organizations have put up about \$3.7 billion to aid Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees this year. About \$2 billion has been raised for war-torn Yemen, where the U.N. says over 17 million people are struggling with acute hunger.

And those are big campaigns. Just \$428 million has been raised for Myanmar and for the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

Egeland's organization helps uprooted people around the world, including in Ukraine. But he feels an "urgent need to get attention to absolute freefalls elsewhere."

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"It didn't get better in Congo or in Yemen or in Myanmar or in Venezuela because it got so much worse in Europe, in and around Ukraine," Egeland said. "We need to fight for those who are starving in the shadows of this horrific war in Ukraine."

China on Taiwan: 'External interference' won't be tolerated

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — China underscored its commitment Saturday to its claim on Taiwan, telling assembled world leaders that anyone who gets in the way of its determination to reunify with the self-governing island would be "crushed by the wheels of history."

The language was forceful but, for Chinese leadership, well within the realm of normal.

"Only when China is fully reunified can there be true peace across the Taiwan Strait," Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, said at the U.N. General Assembly. He said Beijing would "take the most forceful steps to oppose external interference."

China regularly and vehemently defends its claim to Taiwan, which separated from the mainland after a 1949 civil war and now functions with its own government. A visit last month by the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, markedly ratcheted up tensions between Washington and Beijing.

The language, while pointed, reflected China's typical intensity about the island; its claim seldom goes unmentioned in major international speeches. Taiwan is a core issue of China policy, and Wang's appearance at the leaders' meeting — instead of his boss, Chinese leader Xi Jinping — was a signal that the speech was not necessarily a significant one.

"The PRC government is the sole government representing all of China," Wang said, referring to China's formal name, the People's Republic of China. "The one-China principle has become a basic norm in international relations."

He added: "Any move to obstruct China's reunification is bound to be crushed by the wheels of history."

China exercises regular pressure worldwide on any entity — country, corporation, mapmaker — that even implies Taiwan might be a separate nation. At the Olympics, for example, Taiwan must compete as "Chinese Taipei." The mainland government's muscle has isolated the island's government, though a few U.N. members continue to have diplomatic relations with Taipei rather than Beijing.

On Saturday at the U.N. meeting, just a few speakers before Wang, the prime minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph Gonsalves, spoke forcefully about allowing Taiwan to raise its profile in international organizations, including the World Health Organization.

"How can we stand askeance, in relative silence and contented inaction, in disregard of Taiwan's legitimate right to exist in accord with the wishes and will of the Taiwanese people?" he asked.

Wang's appearance at the 2022 in-person edition of the U.N. General Assembly came after two years of remote, pandemic-era speeches by China's top leader. Xi did not attend this year's event, which Russian President Vladimir Putin also skipped. U.S. President Joe Biden spoke on Wednesday.

The United States and China have an uneasy diplomacy and are at odds over many core issues. They have sparred for decades over human rights, most recently the mistreatment of ethnic Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region of western China. Beijing views U.S. criticism as hypocritical and an act of interference in its internal affairs.

This is always reflected in remarks from China's leadership. Wang's speech used lightly coded phrases and references that critiqued Washington without coming out and saying so. For example, Wang said, "We stand firmly against attempts to politicize human rights," and "We must uphold equity and oppose bullying" — both references to longtime irritations it has with U.S. policy.

While Taiwan and human rights perennially stand in the way of China-U.S. relations, Wang and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken did meet in person on the General Assembly's sidelines Friday.

U.S. officials said Blinken ramped up the Biden administration's efforts to press China to end provocative actions against Taiwan. China's Foreign Ministry, in a summary of the meeting, said Wang told his counterpart that "the current China-U.S. relations are facing grave impacts, and there are lessons that

the U.S. side needs to learn from.”

It said the two discussed “the U.S. side’s recent erroneous acts on the Taiwan question.” However, it also said: “Both sides believe that the meeting was candid, constructive and important, and agreed to maintain communication.”

After the takeover of China by Mao Zedong’s Communist forces in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists decamped to Taiwan and kept their separate government going. It was recognized by the United States until 1979, when Washington established relations with Beijing.

Soldier who went missing during Korean War accounted for

By MARK PRATT Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A soldier from Massachusetts who went missing during the Korean War and was later reported to have died in a prisoner of war camp has been accounted for using modern scientific techniques, military officials said.

Army Cpl. Joseph J. Puopolo, 19, of East Boston, was accounted for in August, according to a statement Friday from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

It was the news his family — including his now 99-year-old sister Elizabeth Fiorentini — has been awaiting for decades, Fiorentini’s grandson and Puopolo’s grandnephew, Richard Graham, said in a telephone interview Saturday.

“We have all heard about him, and we all knew of him, and we all knew he was a war hero. We always hoped we’d find him,” he said. “But I never thought my grandmother would be here for it.”

Fiorentini had not seen her brother since she was in her 20s, and had mixed reactions on hearing the news that his remains had been identified.

“In her mind it was like he died again,” Graham said.

Puopolo, an artilleryman with the 8th Army, was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, after his unit attempted to withdraw from Kunu-ri, North Korea, following the Battle of Ch’ongch’on, according to the military. Four former POWs reported in 1953 that Puopolo had died at a POW camp in February 1951.

After the war, the sides exchanged remains, but not all could be identified and those were buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, the agency said.

A set of previously unidentified remains were disinterred in December 2019, and identified as being those of Puopolo through dental and anthropological analysis, mitochondrial DNA analysis and circumstantial evidence, the agency said.

The family hopes to hold a burial service for Puopolo in another month or so either in a family plot in Malden or the veterans’ cemetery in Bourne, Graham said. Puopolo was one of six children, all of whom had large families of their own, and as many as 60 or 70 relatives might show.

“He has not been forgotten,” Graham said.

West works to deepen sanctions after Putin heightens threats

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and LORNE COOK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — How do American leaders and their allies intend to respond if President Vladimir Putin seeks to escalate his way out of a bad situation on Ukraine’s battlefields, and makes good on renewed threats of annexing territory or even using nuclear weapons?

At least to start with, by trying to double down on the same tactics that have helped put Russia in a corner in Ukraine, U.S. and European leaders have made clear: more financial penalties and international isolation for Russia, more arms and other backing for Ukraine.

That won’t necessarily be easy. It’s been tough enough staying the current course of persuading all of dozens of allies to stick with sanctions and isolation for Putin, and persuading more ambivalent countries to join in. Global financial and energy disruptions from Russia’s war in Ukraine already promise to make the coming winter a tough one for countries that have depended on Russia for their energy needs.

And there’s no sign of U.S. or NATO officials matching Putin’s renewed nuclear threats with the same

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nuclear bluster, which in itself might raise the risks of escalating the conflict to an unimaginable level. Even if Putin should act on his nuclear threat, President Joe Biden and others point, without details, to an ascending scale of carefully calibrated responses, based on how far Russia goes.

To start with, "they'll become more of a pariah in the world than they ever have been," Biden told CBS' "60 Minutes" just before Putin's new wartime measures and renewed nuclear threat.

"What they do will determine what response would occur," Biden said on the nuclear side, adding that the U.S. responses in that case would be "consequential."

"I do not believe the United States would take an escalatory step" in the event of a one-off, limited nuclear detonation by Russia aimed at trying to scare Ukraine and its supporters off, said Rose Gottemoeller, former deputy NATO secretary-general and former U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control. "Certainly, it would not respond with nuclear weapons."

Putin this week pledged to use "all available means" to stave off any challenges as Russia moves to summarily claim more Ukrainian territory despite heavy losses on the battlefield to NATO-armed Ukrainian forces. In case NATO missed the point, another senior Russian political figure specified the next day that included nuclear weapons. Putin also mobilized Russian fighters to throw into the seven-month invasion of Ukraine, and announced votes in parts of Ukraine that the West says are meant to provide political cover for illegally absorbing those regions into Russia.

U.S. and European Union officials say new sanctions are in the works in response to Putin's latest moves. "Russia, its political leadership, and all those involved in organizing these 'referenda' as well as in other violations of international law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine will be held accountable," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell pledged this week, on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

But political declarations are the easy part. It's unclear what type of measures can be agreed upon, as the financial punishments against Russia are also increasingly inflicting pain on other European economies weighed down by high electricity and natural gas prices and spiraling inflation. Hungary has led resistance to sanctions that might hit supplies from Russia, but it isn't alone in hesitating.

New sanctions may come only after much debate and hand-wringing among the 27 EU member countries in coming weeks, probably only after Russia has held its referendums.

The last round of sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine was announced May 4, but only agreed on four weeks later, as concerns over oil divided member countries. Rather than a new set of sanctions, a "maintenance and alignment" package was sealed in July, mostly to close loopholes on measures already agreed upon.

Pressed by reporters in New York for details about what might be coming, Borrell said the sanctions would target "new areas of the Russian economy, especially — if I can be a little more concrete — the technological ones."

Ursula von der Leyen, who heads the EU's executive branch — the European Commission — which has been responsible for drawing up most of the sanctions, also appeared resolute, but she was hardly more forthcoming.

"We stand ready to impose further economic costs on Russia and on individuals and entities inside and outside of Russia who support (the war), politically or economically. Plus we will propose additional export controls on civilian technology as Russia moves to a full war economy," she told CNN.

Beyond the economic sanctions, the EU since Russia's February invasion of Ukraine has slapped asset freezes and travel bans on more than 1,200 Russians, including Putin, Russia's foreign minister and other senior officials.

Militarily, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said this month that NATO is working with the defense industry to explore ways to boost arms production to better meet Ukraine's needs and replenish the arsenals of allies who have been providing weapons and defense systems.

"We saw that during the COVID crisis, the industry was able to ramp up production of vaccines and now we need to have, to some extent, the same approach: ramp up quickly production of weapons and

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ammunition," he told The Associated Press.

The U.S. as a matter of policy maintains ambiguity about how it would respond to any use of nuclear weapons in the conflict. Such a use would return the world to nuclear war for the first time since the U.S. dropped bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and risk escalation on a scale the world has never seen.

But U.S. officials' public comments on the matter this month are in line with expectations from arms experts that Washington's response would be a graduated one based on the gravity of Russia's nuclear use. A one-off and comparatively limited Russian nuclear use would deepen Russia's isolation internationally, but might not necessarily draw an immediate Western nuclear use in kind.

It's difficult to fathom Putin launching any central strategic nuclear strike at the United States or its NATO allies, which would be "to commit suicide," said Gottemoeller, the former deputy NATO secretary-general.

Gottemoeller describes instead a scenario of Putin carrying out a single demonstration strike over the Black Sea or against a Ukrainian military target, in hopes of spiking pressure on Ukraine's Western-allied government to capitulate.

Internationally, "There would be a very firm response that ... would amount to, again redoubling efforts to help the Ukrainians," and "also in terms of huge condemnation in the international community," she said.

That condemnation would be sure to draw in countries that so far have declined to break with Russia or stop doing business with it, including China, India and countries of the global south, she said.

For Putin, actual nuclear use would give up all the benefits of simply threatening it, and pile on untold risks for Putin after that, said Lawrence Freedman, emeritus professor of war studies at King's College London.

"The Chinese and the Indians and others that have not been marked in their condemnation of Russia ... would have to speak. The last thing they want is for the precedent of nuclear use to be made," Freedman said.

He said it is easy to be scared by Putin's rhetoric. "But I think ... it's best to recognize he does have a purpose, which is working, to stop the West intervening directly," he said. "To start using nuclear weapons against the West, you have to expect" at least the risk of "nuclear weapons coming back in your direction."

Interview: New UN climate chief takes the fight personally

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — For the United Nations' new climate chief, the fight is personal.

As a former engineer who says he knows "how to make things work and get things done," it wasn't just what Simon Stiell did before he became a top U.N. official, it was where.

Stiell was the environment and climate resilience minister on the small island nation of Grenada until he started his job as the executive secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change a few weeks ago. It's now his job to make sure the world cuts about half emissions of heat-trapping gases — which are helping trigger unprecedented frequent weather disasters — in just eight years, or as he puts it, two World Cups or two Olympics away.

"Living half my life in a climate-vulnerable nation gives me a deep appreciation," Stiell, 53, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I've lived through two hurricanes (Ivan in 2004 and Emily in 2005). I've seen my country flattened through hurricanes. I've seen sea level rise around my ankles. ... And I've also been in government finding solutions and responsible as the lead policymaker in how we build a more resilient nation with the limited resources that we have."

And Grenada, which had losses that doubled its annual gross domestic product, is far from alone. In Pakistan, for example, a third of the country is under water.

"Billions of dollars in damages, lives lost, millions displaced. How do they recover from that?" Stiell asked from the 10th floor of the U.N. headquarters, overlooking the East River. Rich polluting countries will have to pay to help poorer countries that are climate victims, like his, he said.

Polluters paying for what their emissions have done is just as important as cutting what comes out of smokestacks and tailpipes, Stiell said. High-emitting countries reimbursing poorer, vulnerable nations — called "loss and damage" in the world of climate negotiations — is now so important it is one of four pillars

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of the fight against climate change. The others are cutting emissions, adapting to a warmer and wilder world, and rich nations financially aiding poor nations to develop green energy and adapt.

"Loss and damage has to be addressed," Stiell said. "It's a very difficult conversation, but it's a conversation that has to be had. Positions have softened over the years from nonacceptance and refusal to discuss this to a point now where these are agenda items in the negotiations. So that is a step forward."

Rich nations pledged several years ago to spend \$100 billion a year in aid to poor nations to help them adapt to climate change and develop cleaner energy systems, though not as compensation for damage. Even those pledges, however, especially from the United States, have not been fulfilled. Stiell hopes they are getting close.

Coming from a country hit hard by climate gives him "a deep understanding," but Stiell says his new job means "I also have to factor in the positions of some of those richer nations" and bring everyone together.

Poorer countries see an ally.

"It's a huge job, and it's good to see someone from a climate vulnerable country taking the helm. As someone from Grenada, he doesn't need reminding what is at stake," said Mohamed Adow of think tank Power Shift Africa. "For too long the perspectives of the global north have held sway at the climate talks and led to foot dragging and inaction. We're starting to see this change, but it really needs to be accelerated."

Since 2015, small island nations with little economic and political power have been using their moral authority to get big concessions from the rest of the world, said longtime climate negotiations analyst Alden Meyer of the think tank E3G.

In Paris for the 2015 agreement, small island nations forced the rest of the world to agree to a stricter temperature goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times and a mechanism that requires nations to increase their emission cut targets every five years, Meyer said.

"They have clear moral authority and are showing they can build pressure on the bigger players," Meyer said.

Stiell is living out of a hotel in Germany, where the U.N. climate agency is based, until international climate negotiations in Egypt in November. He isn't as focused on wins from the upcoming climate talks as he is about something longer term. He said he's aiming at 2030 and the need for dramatic pollution cuts to keep temperatures from passing the 1.5 degree goal — something that's looking less likely because it is only a few tenths of a degree away and approaching fast. The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times.

"We tend to look at incremental progress. And incremental progress isn't going to provide us with the transformational shifts that we need," Stiell said.

Taking that 2030 goal and "working backwards will actually increase the pressure," Stiell said. "So it is not to say let us kick the can down the road. It's the complete opposite. It's bringing the can forward right at our feet. ... We're close to running out of time."

Because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the energy crisis it triggered, countries have stepped backwards on their commitments to phase out coal, Stiell said. "But hopefully it is a temporary regression, and those countries are going to accelerate as the crisis diminishes, which it will."

The United States, the second biggest carbon polluter, took "a major step forward" and is sending a signal to the rest of the world with the Inflation Reduction Act that President Joe Biden signed this summer. China, the top carbon emitting nation, is also doing more, Stiell said.

"Is it as far as they need to go? Is it as fast as it needs to go? No. But this requires collective effort," Stiell said.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres regularly ratchets up the rhetoric. This week, he has called on nations to institute a windfall profits tax on fossil fuel companies that could then be used to help compensate climate-change victims and people facing high energy and food prices.

Stiell said Guterres' role is that of a "truth-teller" in carrot-and-stick negotiations with countries, while his new job is that of an arbiter "bringing parties together."

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"It's hard. It's frustrating," Stiehl said. "But ultimately the critical focus is achieving that goal of limiting global temperatures to 1.5 degrees. And that requires extraordinary action."

Russian police block mobilization protests, arrest hundreds

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian police moved quickly Saturday to disperse peaceful protests against President Vladimir Putin's military mobilization order, arresting hundreds, including some children, in scores of cities across the vast country.

Police detained nearly 750 people, including over 370 in Moscow and some 150 in St. Petersburg, according to OVD-Info, an independent website that monitors political arrests in Russia. Some of the arrested individuals were minors, OVD-Info said.

The demonstrations followed protests that erupted within hours Wednesday after Putin, in a move to beef up his volunteer forces fighting in Ukraine, announced a call-up of experienced and skilled army reservists.

The Defense Ministry said about 300,000 people would be summoned to active duty, but the order left a door open to many more getting called into service. Most Russian men ages 18-65 are automatically counted as reservists.

On Saturday, police deployed in force in the cities where protests were scheduled by opposition group Vesna and supporters of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny. They moved quickly to arrest demonstrators, most of them young people, before they could hold protests.

In Moscow, a heavy contingent of police roamed a downtown area where a protest was planned under pouring rain and checked the IDs of passersby. Officers rounded up those they deemed suspicious and later distributed call-up summons to the men who were arrested.

A young woman climbed on a bench and shouted "We aren't cannon fodder!" before police took her away.

Police detained a man in a park just outside Red Square and whisked him away as others shouted "Shame!"

Before being rounded up in St. Petersburg, a small group of demonstrators managed to briefly march along the main Nevsky avenue shouting "Putin into the trenches!"

In the city of Novosibirsk in eastern Siberia, over 70 people were detained after singing an innocuous Soviet-era song praising peace.

People who tried to hold individual pickets that are allowed under Russian law also were detained.

The quick police action followed the dispersal of Wednesday's protests, when over 1,300 people were detained on Wednesday in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities.

Putin on Saturday signed a hastily approved bill that toughens the punishment for soldiers who disobey officers' orders, desert or surrender to the enemy.

Georgia voting equipment breach at center of tangled tale

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The tale of breached voting equipment in one of the country's most important political battleground states involves a bail bondsman, a prominent attorney tied to former President Donald Trump's attempts to overturn the 2020 presidential election and a cast of characters from a rural county that rarely draws notice from outsiders.

How they all came together and what it could mean for the security of voting in the upcoming midterm elections are questions tangled up in a lawsuit and state investigations that have prompted calls to ditch the machines altogether.

Details of the unauthorized access of sensitive voting equipment in Coffee County, Georgia, became public last month when documents and emails revealed the involvement of high-profile Trump supporters. That's also when it caught the attention of an Atlanta-based prosecutor who is leading a separate investigation of Trump's efforts to undo his loss in the state.

Since then, revelations about what happened in the county of 43,000 people have raised questions about whether the Dominion Voting Systems machines used in Georgia have been compromised.

The public disclosure of the breach began with a rambling phone call from an Atlanta-area bail bonds-

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man to the head of an election security advocacy group involved in a long-running lawsuit targeting the state's voting machines.

According to a recording filed in court earlier this year, the bail bondsman said he'd chartered a jet and was with a computer forensics team at the Coffee County elections office when they "imaged every hard drive of every piece of equipment."

That happened on Jan. 7, 2021, a day after the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and two days after a runoff election in which Democrats swept both of Georgia's U.S. Senate seats.

The trip to Coffee County, about 200 miles south of Atlanta, to copy data and software from elections equipment was directed by attorney Sidney Powell and other Trump allies, according to deposition testimony and documents produced in response to subpoenas.

Later that month, security camera footage shows, two men who have participated in efforts to question the results of the 2020 election in several states spent days going in and out of the Coffee County elections office.

The footage also shows local election and Republican Party officials welcoming the visitors and allowing them access to the election equipment. The video seems to contradict statements some of the officials made about their apparent involvement.

The new information has made Coffee County, where Trump won nearly 70% of the vote two years ago, a focal point of concerns over the security of voting machines. While there is no evidence of widespread problems with voting equipment in 2020, some Trump supporters have spread false information about machines and the election outcome.

Election security experts and activists fear state election officials haven't acted fast enough in the face of what they see as a real threat.

The copying of the software and its availability for download means potential bad actors could build exact copies of the Dominion system to test different types of attacks, said University of California, Berkeley computer scientist Philip Stark, an expert witness for the plaintiffs in the voting machines lawsuit.

"This is like bank robbers having an exact replica of the vault that they're trying to break into," he said.

Stark said the risks could be minimized by using hand-marked paper ballots and rigorous audits. Dominion says its equipment remains secure.

Marilyn Marks, executive director of the Coalition for Good Governance, the group that sued over the state's voting machines, said the state has been slow to investigate. She was on the receiving end of the phone call from the bail bondsman.

The state, she said, has been "repeatedly looking the other way when faced with flashing red lights of serious voting system security problems."

State officials say they're confident the election system is safe. All Coffee County election equipment that wasn't already replaced will be swapped out before early voting begins next month, the secretary of state's office said Friday.

State officials also noted they were deluged by false claims after the 2020 election.

"In retrospect, you can say, well what about this, this and this," said Gabriel Sterling, a top official in the Georgia secretary of state's office. "In real time, no, there was no reason to think that."

In late January 2021, a few weeks after the computer forensics team visited, security video shows a secretary of state's office investigator arriving at the Coffee County elections office. He and the elections supervisor walk into the room that houses the election management system server. Seconds later, Jeff Lenberg, who has been identified by Michigan authorities as being part of an effort to gain access to voting machines there, is seen walking out of that room.

Asked whether Lenberg's presence in the room with sensitive election equipment raised concerns for the investigator, secretary of state's office spokesperson Mike Hassinger said the investigator was looking into an unrelated matter and didn't know who Lenberg was.

Security video also showed another man, Doug Logan, at the office in mid-January. Logan founded a company called Cyber Ninjas, which led a discredited review of the 2020 election in Maricopa County,

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Arizona. In May 2021, Coffee County's new elections supervisor raised concerns with the secretary of state's office after finding Logan's business card by a computer. The election supervisor's concerns were referred to an investigator, but he testified that no one ever contacted him.

Hassinger said the secretary of state's office responds to allegations when they are raised but that "information about unauthorized access to Coffee County's election equipment has been kept hidden" by local officials and others.

Much of what is known was uncovered through documents, security camera video and depositions produced in response to subpoenas in the lawsuit filed by individual voters and the election security advocacy group. The suit alleges Georgia's touchscreen voting machines are not secure and seeks to force the state to use hand-marked paper ballots instead.

The recently produced evidence of a breach wasn't the first sign of problems in Coffee County, which caused headaches for state election officials in the hectic weeks following the 2020 election. It's likely that turmoil helped open the door for Trump's allies.

In early December 2020, the county elections board declined to certify the results of a machine recount requested by Trump, saying the election system had produced inaccurate results. A video posted online days later showed the former county elections supervisor saying the elections software could be manipulated; as she spoke, the password to the county election management system server was visible on a note stuck to her computer.

At the end of December, Cathy Latham, the Coffee County Republican Party chair who also was a fake elector for Trump, appeared at a state legislative committee hearing and made further claims that the voting machines were unreliable.

Within days of that hearing, Latham said, she was contacted by Scott Hall, the bail bondsman, who had been a Republican observer during an election recount. Latham testified in a deposition that Hall asked her to connect him with the Coffee County elections supervisor (who later was accused of falsifying timesheets and forced to resign).

A few days later, on Jan. 7, Hall met with a computer forensics team from data solutions firm SullivanStrickler at the Coffee County elections office. The team copied the data and software on the election management system server and other voting system components, a company executive said in a deposition. The company said it believed its clients had the necessary permission.

Invoices show the data firm billed Powell \$26,000 for the day's work.

"Everything went smoothly yesterday with the Coffee County collection," the firm's chief operating officer wrote to Powell in an email. "Everyone involved was extremely helpful."

Sri Lankans describe abuse as Russian captives in Ukraine

By LORI HINNANT and KRISHAN FRANCIS Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — A group of Sri Lankans held captive by Russian forces in an agricultural factory in eastern Ukraine said Saturday that they were beaten and abused for months before escaping on foot as the Russians withdrew from the Kharkiv region this month.

Recounting their ordeal to reporters in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, one of the seven Sri Lankans said he was shot in the foot; another had his toenail ripped off and was slammed in the head with the butt of a rifle.

Ukrainian officials described their treatment as torture.

"Every day we were cleaning toilets and bathrooms," Dilukshan Robertclive, one of the former captives, said in English. "Some days Russians came and beat our people, our Sri Lanka people."

Four of the seven were medical students in the city of Kupiansk and three were working there when Russian forces poured across the border in late February and occupied large swaths of eastern and southern Ukraine.

The group said they were captured at the first checkpoint out of Kupiansk and then taken to Vovchansk, near the border with Russia, where they were held in the factory with around 20 Ukrainians.

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"They took our passports, other documents, phones, clothes, and locked us up in a room," said Sharujan Gianeswaran, speaking in Tamil to an Associated Press journalist by phone. "There were also Ukrainian people with us, and they were questioned and sent away in 10 days, 15 days or one month. With us they never spoke, because they could not understand our language."

Police said the factory housed a Russian "torture center" — one of 18 in the Kharkiv region.

"They were bound and blindfolded. After that they were captured and then taken to the city of Vovchansk," said Serhiy Bolvinov, head of the investigative department of the National Police in Kharkiv.

Six among the group said they were held in a large upstairs room. The seventh, the only woman, was kept in a dark cell by herself, her companions said. The woman wept silently and did not speak as the group told their story Saturday.

One man said he was shot in the foot by the Russian captors. Another had a toenail ripped off after the soldiers repeatedly bashed it with the butt of a rifle. The men showed their injuries to journalists.

"Most of the time we could not understand what they told us and we were beaten for that," Gianeswaran said.

It dawned upon the Sri Lankans that the battle lines were shifting only when Russian soldiers ordered them to help load trucks with food and weapons.

As the last trucks raced away, the group asked fruitlessly for their passports and papers back, knowing that to move around without them would be impossible in a country filled with checkpoints.

Russian troops captured several cities and towns in northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region early in the war. Ukrainian troops retook the area during a swift counteroffensive earlier this month.

When the Sri Lankans realized the Russians were gone, on Sept. 10, the group left the factory and started walking toward the city of Kharkiv, having no real idea how to get to the regional capital which had remained in Ukrainian hands.

"We walked on that road for two days and were exhausted and hungry. We had no food or money to buy food," Gianeswaran said.

They slept on the side of the road and walked until they reached a river. But with so many bridges in the region destroyed by one side or the other in months of fighting, they could find no way to cross.

Finally someone noticed their plight, gave them shelter and called for a ride from security forces.

Police said the group was picked up in the Chuhuiv area, about 70 kilometers (40 miles) from where they started. They are in Kharkiv now, with no idea of what the future holds. Robertclive said they are psychologically damaged by their months in captivity.

But the men smiled when asked how they felt when they realized the worst of their ordeal was at an end.

"They (Ukrainians) have given us food and clothing," Gianeswaran said. "We thought we were going to die but we are saved and are being well looked after."

NASA delays moon rocket launch due to potential hurricane

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA is skipping next week's launch attempt of its new moon rocket because of a tropical storm that's expected to become a major hurricane.

It's the third delay in the past month for the lunar-orbiting test flight featuring mannequins but no astronauts, a follow-up to NASA's Apollo moon-landing program of a half-century ago. Hydrogen fuel leaks and other technical issues caused the previous scrubs.

Currently churning in the Caribbean, Tropical Storm Ian is expected to become a hurricane by Monday and slam into Florida's Gulf coast by Thursday. The entire state, however, is in the cone showing the probable path of the storm's center — including NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

Given the forecast uncertainties, NASA decided Saturday to forgo Tuesday's planned launch attempt and instead prepare the 322-foot (98-meter) rocket for a possible return to its hangar. Managers will decide Sunday whether to haul it off the launch pad.

If the rocket remains at the pad, NASA could try for an Oct. 2 launch attempt, the last opportunity before a two-week blackout period. But a rollback late Sunday or early Monday likely would mean a lengthy

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delay for the test flight, possibly pushing it into November.

The Space Launch System rocket is the most powerful ever built by NASA. Assuming its first test flight goes well, astronauts would climb aboard for the next mission in 2024, leading to a two-person moon landing in 2025.

Today in History: September 25, Sandra Day O'Connor sworn in

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Sept. 25, the 268th day of 2022. There are 97 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 25, 1957, nine Black students who'd been forced to withdraw from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, because of unruly white crowds were escorted to class by members of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division.

On this date:

In 1513, Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and sighted the Pacific Ocean.

In 1789, the first United States Congress adopted 12 amendments to the Constitution and sent them to the states for ratification. (Ten of the amendments became the Bill of Rights.)

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson collapsed after a speech in Pueblo, Colorado, during a national speaking tour in support of the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY').

In 1956, the first trans-Atlantic telephone cable officially went into service with a three-way ceremonial call between New York, Ottawa and London.

In 1964, the situation comedy "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.," starring Jim Nabors, premiered on CBS-TV.

In 1978, 144 people were killed when a Pacific Southwest Airlines Boeing 727 and a private plane collided over San Diego.

In 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor was sworn in as the first female justice on the Supreme Court.

In 1992, NASA's Mars Observer blasted off on a \$980 million mission to the red planet (the probe disappeared just before entering Martian orbit in August 1993).

In 1994, Russian President Boris Yeltsin began a five-day swing through the United States as he arrived in New York, hoping to encourage American investment in his country's struggling economy.

In 2016, golf legend Arnold Palmer, 87, died in Pittsburgh. Jose Fernandez, 24, ace right-hander for the Miami Marlins, was killed in a boating accident with two friends off Miami Beach. Country singer Jean Shepard, a Grand Old Opry staple, died in Nashville at 82.

In 2018, Bill Cosby was sentenced to three to 10 years in state prison for drugging and molesting a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home. (After nearly three years in prison, Cosby went free in June 2021 after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned his conviction.)

In 2020, the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg lay in state at the U.S. Capitol, making history as the first woman so honored in America. Gov. Ron DeSantis lifted all restrictions on restaurants and other businesses in Florida and banned local fines against people who refused to wear masks as he sought to reopen the state's economy despite the spread of the coronavirus.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama, speaking to the U.N. General Assembly, pledged U.S. support for Syrians trying to oust President Bashar Assad, calling him "a dictator who massacres his own people." Singer and TV host Andy Williams died at his Branson, Missouri, home at the age of 84.

Five years ago: Former congressman Anthony Weiner was sentenced to 21 months behind bars for illicit online contact with a 15-year-old girl. North Korea's top diplomat said his country had the right to shoot down U.S. warplanes, after President Donald Trump's weekend tweet suggesting that the North's Kim Jong Un "won't be around much longer." Britain's Prince Harry and girlfriend Meghan Markle made their first public appearance as a couple, attending a wheelchair tennis event at the Invictus Games for wounded veterans in Toronto.

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One year ago: An Amtrak train derailed in north-central Montana killing three people and leaving seven others hospitalized.

Today's Birthdays: Former broadcast journalist Barbara Walters is 93. Folk singer Ian Tyson is 89. Polka bandleader Jimmy Sturr is 81. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates is 79. Actor Josh Taylor is 79. Actor Robert Walden is 79. Actor-producer Michael Douglas is 78. Model Cheryl Tiegs is 75. Actor Mimi Kennedy is 74. Movie director Pedro Almodovar is 73. Actor-director Anson Williams is 73. Actor Mark Hamill is 71. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob McAdoo is 71. Actor Colin Fries is 70. Actor Michael Madsen is 64. Actor Heather Locklear is 61. Actor Aida Turturro is 60. Actor Tate Donovan is 59. TV personality Keely Shaye Smith is 59. Actor Maria Doyle Kennedy is 58. Basketball Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen is 57. Actor Jason Flemyng is 56. Actor Will Smith is 54. Actor Hal Sparks is 53. Actor Catherine Zeta-Jones is 53. Rock musician Mike Luce (Drowning Pool) is 51. Actor Bridgette Wilson-Sampras is 49. Actor Clea DuVall is 45. Actor Robbie Jones is 45. Actor Joel David Moore is 45. Actor Chris Owen is 42. Rapper T. I. is 42. Actor Van Hansis is 41. Actor Lee Norris is 41. Actor/rapper Donald Glover (AKA Childish Gambino) is 39. Actor Zach Woods is 38. Actor Jordan Gavaris is 33. Olympic silver medal figure skater Mao Asada is 32. Actor Emmy Clarke is 31.