

# Groton Daily Independent

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"Often you will end up loving the new things you try, and even if you don't love it, you've given yourself a new experience."

Alli Simpson

Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

## Groton Community Calendar

### Monday, Nov. 21

Senior Menu: Baked chicken, rice pilaf, cauliflower and pea salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken stir fry, rice.

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

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

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. John's Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

JH GBB at Langford (7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade game)

### Tuesday, Nov. 22

Senior Menu: Potato soup, ham salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, pineapple tidbits.

School Breakfast: Egg Omelets.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

UMC: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

St. John's Quilting, 9 a.m.

### Wednesday, Nov. 23

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, beets, peaches, dinner roll.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

Emmanuel Lutheran: No confirmation; League, 6:30 p.m.

UMC: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.

St. John's Thanksgiving Eve Service, 7 p.m.

NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving break

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

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## Wolves Women Lead from Start to Finish in Route of Hardrockers

Aberdeen, S.D. – It only took 14 seconds for Northern State to jump out to the lead and they would never look back, cruising to a 34-point victory over South Dakota Mines by a score of 87-53. The Wolves saw three starters score in double figures as Kailee Oliverson and Laurie Rogers each scored a game-high 16 points and Alayna Benike scored a career-high 14 points.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 87, SDSMT 53

Records: NSU 3-1 (1-0 NSIC), SDSMT 0-4 (0-0 RMAC)

Attendance: 1,507

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Shooting 11-16 (68.8%) from the field to start the game, Northern State out-scored South Dakota Mines 27-10 in the first quarter; the Wolves shot a perfect 3-3 from 3-point range in the opening period with all three makes by Alayna Benike

The Hardrockers were able to trim the lead down to 13 points with 1:49 remaining in the second quarter, however Northern used a 7-0 run to enter the halftime break with a 45-25 advantage

A layup by Rianna Fillipi off a Laurie Rogers assist opened the scoring for the Wolves in the third quarter and started a 10-3 run to open the half

A pair of free throws by Madelyn Bragg gave the Wolves a 37-point lead, their largest of the game, by a score of 82-45 with 6:43 remaining in the game

Northern State entered the game shooting only 16.7 percent from beyond the arc with only eight made three-pointers on the season; NSU matched their season total with eight made three-pointers in the game against South Dakota Mines, shooting 57.1 percent against the Hardrockers

Alayna Benike (4-4), Abbey Holmes (3-3), and Morgan Fiedler (1-1) were all perfect from 3-point range in the game

Rogers earned her 17th career game of three or more blocked shots with five in the contest against the Hardrockers

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Kailee Oliverson: 16 points, 7-11 field goals, 3 rebounds

Laurie Rogers: 16 points, 7-7 field goals, 4 rebounds, 5 blocks

Alayna Benike: 14 points, 4-4 3-pointers, 5 rebounds

### UP NEXT

Northern State stays in the friendly confines of Wachs Arena to host cross-town rival Presentation on Tuesday evening. The Wolves and Saints are set for a 5:30 p.m. tip-off.

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## Weekly Vikings Recap

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

After coming off arguably the most exciting regular season win in Minnesota Vikings history, the team turned in one of the worst performances imaginable to the Dallas Cowboys, losing 40-3. The loss Sunday not only snapped the Vikings' 7-game win streak but now puts the Vikings in a tough spot to get the 1-seed in the NFC even with their 8-2 record.

I do not think a single positive thing came out of this game for the Vikings. The defense was manhandled from the start as the Cowboys were able to score either a touchdown or a field goal on their first seven possessions. The offense looked completely incompetent as Kirk Cousins was sacked a total of seven times. And to make matters worse, Christian Darrisaw left the game with a concussion, his second in two straight games. Head Coach Kevin O'Connell made it clear in the postgame press conference that Darrisaw will be out for the Thanksgiving game against the New England Patriots and might miss even more time.

For the Cowboys, Tony Pollard was the star of the game. He not only rushed for 80 yards, but he also had 109 yards receiving and two touchdowns. When the Cowboys needed a yard, he got five; when the Cowboys needed a third-down conversion, he got them a touchdown. It was by far the most dominant performance I have seen against the Vikings this year.

The second most dominant performance might just be the Cowboys' defensive line performance today. The dominance they showed from start to finish made it feel like the Vikings' offensive line had a vendetta against Kirk Cousins. Besides the fact the game was out-of-hand, the Vikings brought in backup quarterback Nick Mullens early in the fourth quarter, possibly to make sure Cousins did not decide to just retire mid-game from being hit so much.

During Mike Zimmer's tenure in Minnesota, the Vikings seemed like they were good for one blowout loss every year. With the early success of Kevin O'Connell, it felt like those blowout losses would be no more. Sadly, that is not the case and it's starting to feel like this Vikings' team might be more like those prior teams than we thought.

Nonetheless, it's time for the Vikings and their fans to put Sunday's performance behind them and remember that the team still holds an 8-2 record and a four-game lead in the NFC North. Although Sunday's game was a complete and utter disaster, it was just one game. If things like this continue for the Vikings I would worry, but right now, this team has shown us before that they are a good football team.

Now, the Vikings will have to quickly turn around and play the New England Patriots this upcoming Thanksgiving night. The Vikings have not beaten a Bill Belichick-coached Patriots team since his first year in New England in 2000. That game in 2000 did not involve Tom Brady, and Thursday's game will not either, so I like the Vikings' chances to get back on track with a victory over the Patriots.

## Harrisburg Robotics Tournament Summary

Saturday, November 19th

Groton Robotics traveled down to Harrisburg to participate in the Sioux Metro Qualifier on Saturday November 19th competing against 22 other teams from 8 towns: Mitchell (5), Harrisburg (4), Groton (2), Sioux Falls (2), Brandon (1), Box Elder (5), Vermillion (1), Spearfish (2) Groton Teams included: G-Force 9050A (6th grade- Connor Kroll, Lincoln Shilhanek, Logan Olson -not present Grant Cleveland) Galaxy 9050E (Corbin Weismantel, Logan Clocksene, Kianna Sanders, Axel Warrington, team assistant Brady Wienk, not present Brayden Barrera).

The robotist were up and at it leaving Groton at 5:15 Saturday morning, unfortunately illness hit a few kids, leaving only 2 teams traveling down to Harrisburg.

The competition started off with 33 qualifying matches, each team competing 6 times. At the end of the 33 qualifying matches G-Force-9050A was ranked 17th and Galaxy-9050E ranked 21st.

Both teams tweaked and improved their robots in the last two weeks. G-Force was able to add an arm that gave them the ability to turn and 'Own Rollers' each owned roller is 10 points; fields have 4 rollers attached. G-Force also focused on pushing disks away from their opponents, preventing them from scoring. They also worked on pushing disks out of their opponent's low goal area, each disk they removed was 1 less point their opponent would score.

Galaxy 9050E improved their roller in the last couple weeks and focused on owning their alliance color roller and preventing their opponent from turning it back to their color. A lot of pushing was seen by robots protecting their alliance color.

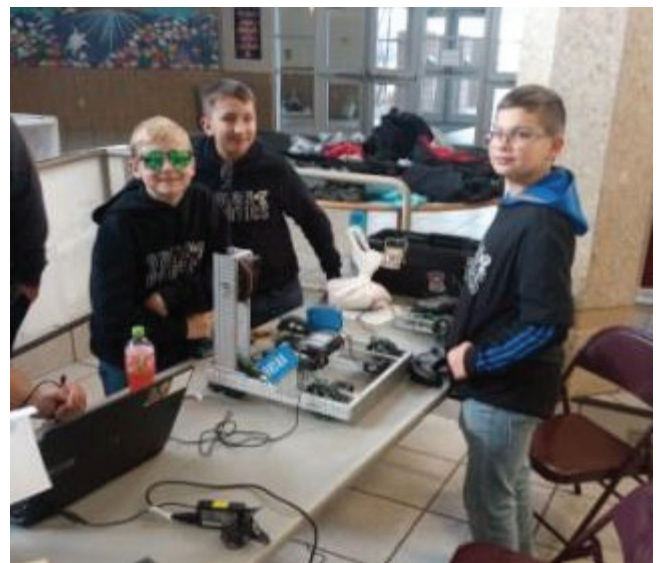
Galaxy 9050E and G-Force 9050A chose to work together as alliance partners heading into the round of 16, unfortunately their day ended here with a score of 85 to 54. Great job teams!

Tournament champions were from Harrisburg and Mitchell. Congratulations to all the robotist who participated! Groton Robotist will be headed down to Canton on Saturday, December 3rd. For more information check out the vex VRC robotics website, download the VEX via app and follow Groton Tiger Robotics on Facebook. Thanks to all who support Groton Robotics!

Submitted by Groton Robotics



**Galaxy 9050E Working on their robot between matches. (l-r) (team assistant Brady Wienk, Logan Clocksene, Corbin Weismantel, Axel Warrington, not pictured Brayden Barrera and Kiana Sanders)** (Photo courtesy Robotic parents)



**G-Force 9050A Tweaking their robot before a match. (l-r) Connor Kroll, Lincoln Shilhanek, Logan Olson -not present Grant Cleveland)**

(Photo courtesy Robotic parents)



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## “Gratitude for Grandparents”

A three-pound baby entered the world in recent days. This precious child was born after his Mom spent seven weeks in the hospital on bedrest. At home, Dad and two siblings were working, going to school, and worrying. Surrounding the family were two sets of grandparents who ensured that the pieces all fell into place. From meals and lawn care, to virtual school, from evening shifts and overnights to early mornings, these grandparents were there every step of the way. They will continue to offer support while the baby remains hospitalized and growing, and after he comes home, because that is what grandparents do, if they are able.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



**Joanie Holm, RN, CNP**

Grandparenting can be an awesome stage in life, benefitting the grandchildren, the parents, and of course the grandparents in significant ways. Grandparents are known to influence values and behaviors and provide valuable life experiences. A child who has a connection with grandparents may have increased self-esteem, with better emotional and social skills. A relationship with a grandparent can give a child strength and comfort into adulthood.

In an article titled “Why Grandparents are VIPs,” social researcher, educator and author, Susan V. Bosak writes, “The special kind of love you get from a grandparent is a love you can't get anywhere else. It is an important kind of love – in fact, a very important kind of love. Parents have to worry about who children will become in the future; their role is to be providers and disciplinarians. Grandparents can just enjoy children for who they are in the moment. The love of a grandparent is often freer, more unconditional, and far less psychologically complex than a parent's love. The love of a parent and the love of a grandparent are different, second in emotional importance only to the parent/child relationship.”

In a world of many dual-career families, the benefits of active grandparents can be lifesaving for parents. Often grandparents fill in the gap between school and the time parents get off work, driving kids to different events or helping them with homework.

Lastly, active grandparents report less depression and a higher degree of life satisfaction and a hopeful feeling for the future.

Margaret Mead, a well-known American cultural anthropologist, said the connection between generations was “essential for the mental health and stability of a nation.”

This Thanksgiving, may we celebrate the grandparent-grandchild relationship with gratitude.

Joanie S. Holm, R.N., C.N.P. is co-founder and president of Healing Words Foundation that supports Prairie Doc® programming. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairedoc.org](http://www.prairedoc.org) and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust for 21 Seasons, streaming live on Facebook and SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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## No. 17 Wolves Wrestling Took on The Daktronics Open in Final Competition Prior to Thanksgiving

Brookings, S.D. – Nine members of the No. 17 Northern State University wrestling team took on the Daktronics Open on Sunday, competing against wrestlers from both NCAA DI and NCAA DII. Northern was led by Landen Fischer and Spencer Roth who each recorded a win on the day.

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Brenden Salfrank went 0-2, while Fischer went 1-2 in the 125 pound bracket

Cory St. Martin, Izaak Hunsley, and Tyson Stoebner went 0-2 in the 141 and 157 pound brackets

Spencer Roth went 1-2 in the 165 pound bracket with a win over Jonas Anez of Moorhead

Tyler Voorhees and Tyson Lien went 0-2 at 174 pounds, while George Bolling went 0-3 in the 285 pound bracket

### FULL RESULTS

#### **Brenden Salfrank – 125 pounds**

Conor Knopick (UAT - Iowa State) won by decision over Brenden Salfrank (Northern State) (Dec 6-3)

Landen Fischer (Northern State) won by decision over Brenden Salfrank (Northern State) (Dec 3-1)

#### **Landen Fischer – 125 pounds**

Balley Roybal (South Dakota State) won by decision over Landen Fischer (Northern State) (Dec 9-5)

Landen Fischer (Northern State) won by decision over Brenden Salfrank (Northern State) (Dec 3-1)

Ethan Perryamn (Iowa State) won by major decision over Landen Fischer (Northern State) (Maj. 20-8)

#### **Cory St. Martin – 141 pounds**

Cael Happel (Northern Iowa) won by fall over Cory St. Martin (Northern State) (Fall 1:44)

Damon Huston (UAT – Iowa State) won by fall of Cory St. Martin (Northern State) (Fall 3:54)

#### **Izaak Hunsley – 157 pounds**

Derek Holschlag (Northern Iowa) won by major decision over Izaak Hunsley (Northern State) (Maj. 10-1)

Ryan Dolezal (South Dakota State) won by decision over Izaak Hunsley (Northern State) (Dec 10-4)

#### **Tyson Stoebner – 157 pounds**

Evan Yant (Northern Iowa) won by fall over Tyson Stoebner (Northern State) (Fall 1:58)

Tim Stapleton (Minnesota) won by decision over Tyson Stoebner (Northern State) (Dec 6-5)

#### **Spencer Roth – 165 pounds**

Christian Minto (UAT – Northern Iowa) won by major decision over Spencer Roth (Northern State) (Maj. 10-2)

Spencer Roth (Northern State) won by decision over Jonas Anez (MSU Moorhead) (Dec 6-0)

Brendan Howes (North Dakota State) won by major decision over Spencer Roth (Northern State) (Maj. 16-7)

#### **Tyler Voorhees – 174 pounds**

Joel Devine (UAT – Iowa State) won by fall over Tyler Voorhees (Northern State) (Fall 3:33)

Kalen Meyer (South Dakota State) won by fall over Tyler Voorhees (Northern State) (Fall 2:06)

#### **Tyson Lien – 174 pounds**

Carson Babcock (Northern Iowa) won by major decision over Tyson Lien (Northern State) (Maj. 14-6)

Caleb Helgeson (Iowa State) won by decision over Tyson Lien (Northern State) (Dec 12-7)

#### **George Bolling – 285 pounds**

Spencer Trenary (South Dakota State) won by fall over George Bolling (Northern State) (Fall 2:32)

Tyrell Gordon (Northern Iowa) won by major decision over George Bolling (Northern State) (Maj. 8-0)

Luke Rasmussen (South Dakota State) won by fall over George Bolling (Northern State) (Fall 3:28)





## Volleyball Awards

Picture L to R: Hollie Frost (Spirit of the Tiger), Lydia Meier (Most Improved), Sydney Leicht (Foxhole Most Valuable Player), Aspen Johnson (Spirit of the Tiger), Anna Fjeldheim (Most Valuable Player), Carly Guthmiller (Ace Award), Laila Roberts (Rookie of the Year). (Courtesy Photo

by Chelsea Hanson)

**'TIS THE  
SEASON TO  
SHOP LOCAL**

**GROTON**  
Chamber Of Commerce







## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### State hopes \$1.7M telemedicine program will boost rural ambulance service

Small town EMS services suffering from poor recruitment, retention of volunteers  
BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 20, 2022 1:38 PM

South Dakota Emergency Medical Service (EMS) agencies and paramedics hope a partnership between the state and a Sioux Falls-based telemedicine provider will bolster rural ambulance service.

The partnership with Avel eCare addresses questions of viability for South Dakota's 130 ambulance services.

Several EMS agencies operate in areas up to an hour's drive away from a nearby hospital, especially in West River. Given the shrinking of rural communities and a dearth of rural EMS volunteers, life-saving services in rural South Dakota are at risk of disappearing.

Gov. Kristi Noem and the state lawmakers approved three initiatives in 2022 that infused up to \$20 million into EMS. "Telemedicine in Motion" is the first of the initiatives, at a cost of \$1.7 million.

Other initiatives include upgrades to EMS agen-

cies' LIFEPAK-15 patient monitors and defibrillators and a study of South Dakota's ambulance services and potential solutions.

Brian Ring, president of the South Dakota EMS Association and a volunteer EMT with Onida Fire Department and Ambulance Service for 25 years, said each of these initiatives are paramount to ensuring the health and safety of South Dakotans.

"When somebody calls for an ambulance, they expect it to show up," Ring said. "If there aren't enough people around to command that and run a call, they have to call the next nearest ambulance, which could be from 30 miles away — and that's if they have enough staff to cover theirs and help with yours. This is a big concern."

Funding leads to better patient care

The telemedicine program will connect EMS volunteers or employees to board-certified emergency physicians and registered nurses right inside the ambulance.

"This initiative will improve the coordination of care between our EMS providers and hospitals," said Joan Adam, DOH cabinet secretary, in a news release.

Humboldt, a town of less than 600 in southeastern South Dakota, will be one of the first EMS agencies to install the video link in its ambulance. The partnership includes free installation, training, software and hardware, as well as support and a telehealth subscription for professional consulting services.

Humboldt Fire and Ambulance relies heavily on volunteers. The service has 34 members, eight of which are trained in advanced life support. Humboldt's 12 EMTs are volunteers, and most of them double as



**Humboldt, SD ambulance services will get a boost from telehealth.** (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)



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*Olive Grove's  
6th Annual*

## *Christmas Tour of Homes & Holiday Party*

**Charlie & Jenn Dirks  
Tigh & Adrienne Flihs  
Tom & Barb Paepke  
Wage Memorial Library & City Office**

**SATURDAY,  
DEC. 3, 2022**

**TOUR OF  
HOMES  
4-7 P.M.**

**HOLIDAY  
PARTY  
4-CLOSE**

**Silent Basket Items  
Bidding closes at 8:30 p.m.  
Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.**

**Coffee, Apple Cider and Goodies at the Club House  
A variety of snacks served.**

**\$15 tickets available at  
Lori's Pharmacy, Groton  
Groton Ford**

**Hair & Company, Aberdeen  
Olive Grove Golf Clubhouse**

**Come on out for a fun evening!  
Support your local golf course!**

volunteer firefighters, said Susan Shumaker, paramedic for Humboldt Fire and Ambulance.

The city is a half hour's drive from the nearest Sioux Falls hospital, but the drive is 45-60 minutes when the volunteers travel to Salem or Bridgewater to intercept or back up those community ambulances.

"(This initiative) is not replacing a person in the back," Shumaker said, "but that person can get some help or advice on how to treat that patient better. Some volunteers don't do this very often, so this tool will help make them feel more confident in their treatment."

Rural ambulance sustainability requires improved recruitment

Shumaker hopes the partnership will help with recruitment. The Humboldt department is faring well, but Shumaker said the crew is smaller than it used to be.

"If people want to continue to live in these smaller towns, we need to find some recruitment and support to keep these services, or we're going to lose them," Shumaker said. "The population of firefighters and EMTs is getting older. This might be some way to help keep volunteers from feeling like they're thrown out to the wolves, which might make recruitment easier."

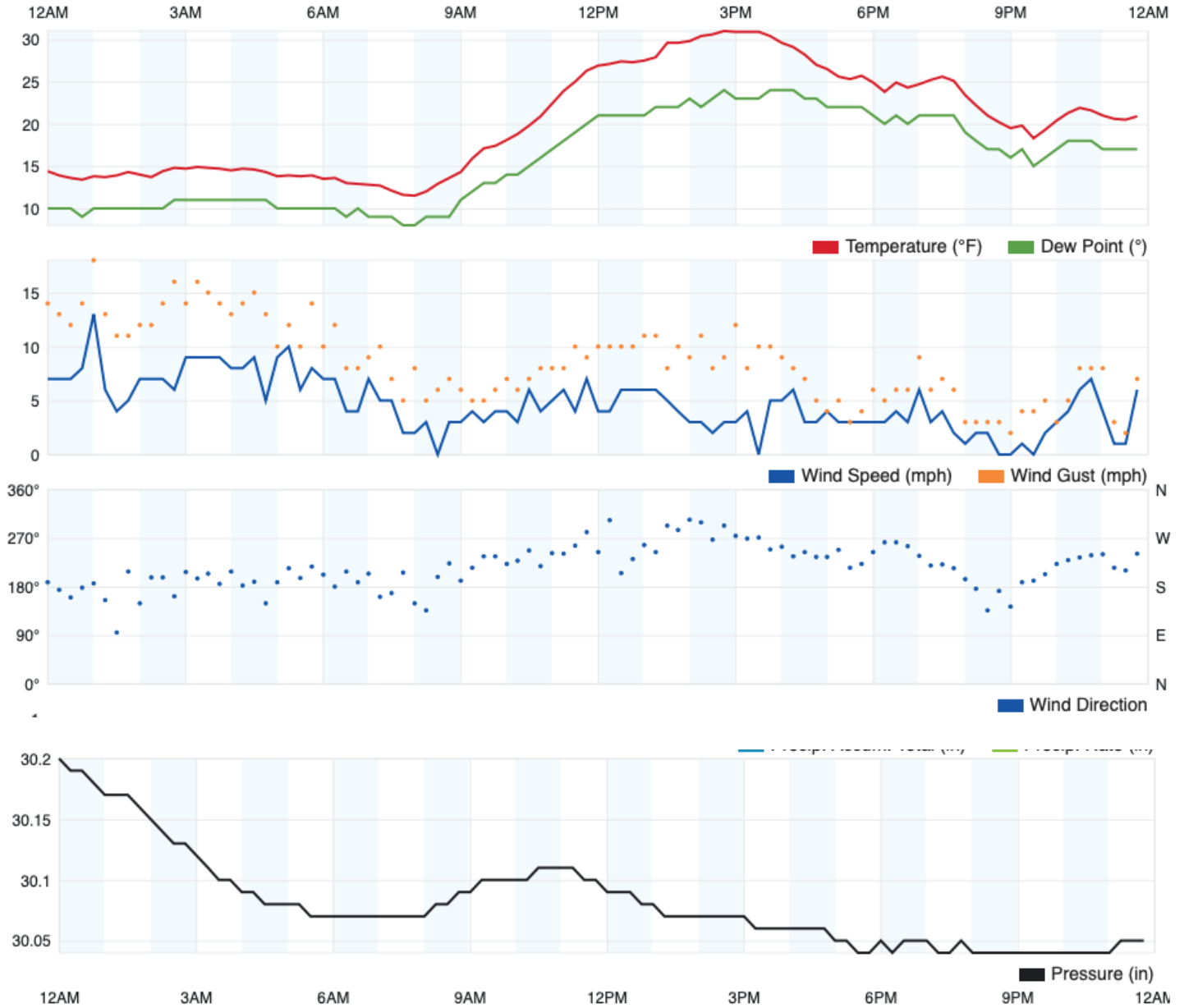
Officials plan to support 60 EMS agencies through "Telemedicine in Motion" by spring 2023. The news release did not state how long the telehealth subscription lasts. Even so, Ring believes the investment will benefit South Dakotans.

"If it gets utilized and is worthwhile, as I expect it will be, I think it'll be a very good deal for ambulance services in South Dakota," Ring said. "Time will tell."

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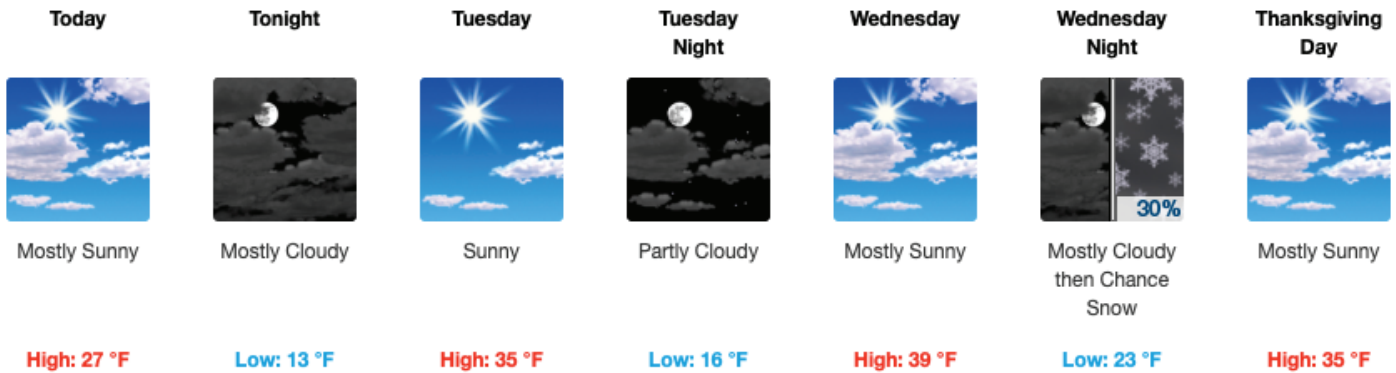
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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## Maximum Temperature Forecast

	11/21	11/22	11/23	11/24	11/25	11/26	11/27	Maximum
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
<b>Aberdeen</b>	28	35	40	36	44	42	40	44
<b>Britton</b>	25	32	37	33	39	38	35	39
<b>Eagle Butte</b>	34	39	42	39	51	45	42	51
<b>Eureka</b>	28	32	37	34	40	38	37	40
<b>Gettysburg</b>	33	36	38	37	48	43	41	48
<b>Kennebec</b>	38	44	47	44	55	50	45	55
<b>McIntosh</b>	30	34	37	34	42	40	37	42
<b>Milbank</b>	28	35	41	35	42	42	39	42
<b>Miller</b>	34	39	46	40	50	48	45	50
<b>Mobridge</b>	35	40	44	41	49	45	43	49
<b>Murdo</b>	38	44	45	44	56	50	48	56
<b>Pierre</b>	37	44	45	44	51	50	44	51
<b>Redfield</b>	31	38	44	38	48	45	43	48
<b>Sisseton</b>	28	34	40	35	41	41	38	41
<b>Watertown</b>	29	34	40	33	41	40	39	41
<b>Webster</b>	25	30	37	32	38	37	35	38
<b>Wheaton</b>	25	31	37	33	38	39	35	39

The onset of mild temperatures today (Sunday) is the first in several days of warmer temperatures that are expected to persist through the week. By the middle and end of the upcoming week, several areas are forecast to see 40s and 50s for high temperatures. Mostly dry conditions are expected this week as well. Those areas that don't have much snow on the ground will see it eventually melt away over the next several days, along with some of the ice that's still around the region.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 31.0 °F at 2:45 PM**

**Low Temp: 11.5 °F at 8:00 AM**

**Wind: 18 mph at 1:00 AM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 9 hours, 20 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 65 in 1960

Record Low: -18 in 1964

Average High: 40°F

Average Low: 17°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.56

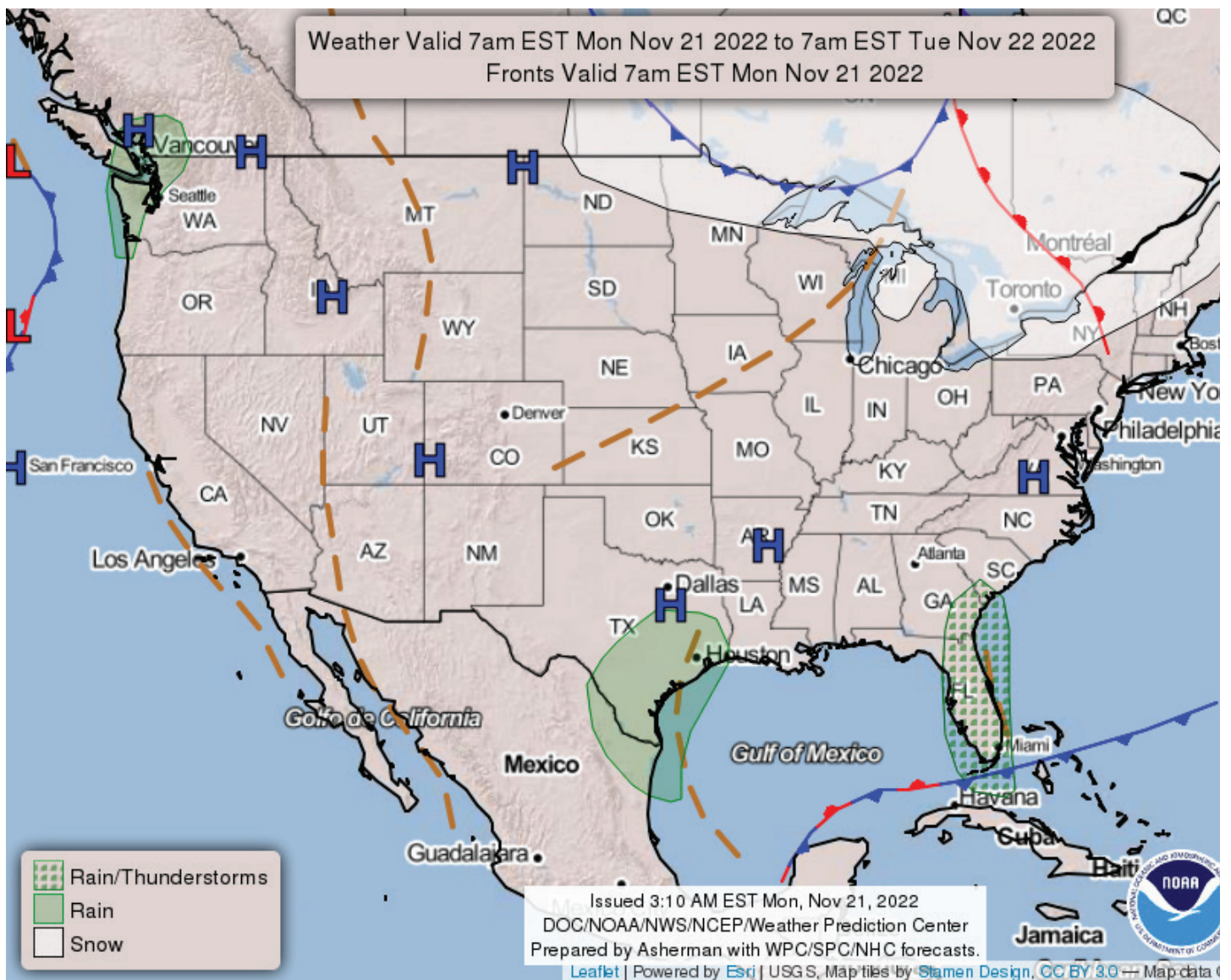
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.03

Precip Year to Date: 16.50

Sunset Tonight: 4-18 in 1964

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:39:22 AM



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## Today in Weather History

November 21, 1985: Winds gusting to over 40 mph caused blizzard conditions over the western and central parts of South Dakota on the 21st and 22nd. In addition to the existing snow cover, 1-2 inches of new snow fell and when blown by the wind, reduced visibilities to zero at times. Many roads were drifted shut by the blowing and drifting snow in the western part of the state.

November 21, 2003: Heavy snow of 6 to 10 inches fell from the late afternoon to the late evening hours of the 21st and into the early morning hours on the 22nd. Some snowfall amounts included 4 inches in Browns Valley, 2S Ashton, and Britton; 5 inches at Timber Lake, Blunt, 6 SE McIntosh, and Pollock; 6 inches at Clark, McLaughlin, 14 NNE Isabel, 17 WSW Fort Pierre and Miller; 7 inches at Castlewood, 1 W Highmore, and 4 NW Onida; and 8 inches north of Goodwin, at Ree Heights, at Eagle Butte, and near Troy. Thirteen inches of snow fell in Watertown.

1798 - A four day storm was in progress in the northeastern U.S. The storm dropped a foot of snow on New York City and New Haven, and as much as three feet in Maine and New Hampshire. The snowstorm ushered in a long and severe winter, in some places the ground remained covered with snow until the following May. (David Ludlum)

1967 - Excessive rains in southern California caused the most severe flooding and the most damaging mud slides in 33 years. Downtown Los Angeles received eight inches of rain, and 14 inches fell in the mountains. (David Ludlum)

1985 - Hurricane Kate made landfall during the evening hours near Mexico Beach, FL. Wind gusts to 100 mph were reported at Cape San Blas FL. It was the latest known hurricane to hit the U.S. so far north. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Squalls in the Lower Great Lakes Region and the Upper Ohio Valley produced 14 inches of snow at Snowshoe WV, and nearly eight inches at Syracuse NY. Eleven cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Record lows included 21 degrees at Pinson AL, 9 degrees at Syracuse NY, and 8 degrees at Binghamton NY. Gale force winds lash the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast, and the strong northwesterly winds produced wind chill readings as cold as 30 degrees below zero. Winds gusting to 60 mph at Trumansburg NY toppled a chimney onto a nearby truck. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - High winds accompanied rain and snow in the northeastern U.S. Caribou ME received eight inches of snow in six hours, and Fort Kent ME was blanketed with a total of fourteen inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - The storm which produced thunderstorms and high winds in the northeastern U.S. the previous day, produced snow and high winds in New England, with blizzard conditions reported in Maine. Winds gusted to 55 mph at Boston MA, and reached 58 mph at Augusta ME, and hurricane force winds were reported off the coast of Maine. Snowfall totals ranged up to 18 inches at Vanceboro ME, with 17 inches at South Lincoln VT. There were thirty-five storm-related injuries in Maine. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: The November 21st – 23rd tornado outbreak was the 3rd largest outbreak in recorded history and one of the longest continuous outbreaks ever recorded. There was no break in tornado activity from 1:30 pm on the 21st when the tornadoes started in Texas until 7:30 am on the 23rd when the last tornadoes lifted in North Carolina. On this date, severe thunderstorms spawned six tornadoes within 70 minutes in the Houston metro area in Texas. At one time, there were three on the ground in Harris County. The strongest, an F4, tracked 20 miles through the eastern suburbs of Houston destroying 200 homes and damaging 1,000 more. In total, 23 tornadoes struck Mississippi and Alabama. An F4 tornado killed 12 people on a 128-mile track through 7 Mississippi counties. The deadliest tornado of 1992, an F4 tornado killed 12 people on a 128-mile path through 7 counties in Mississippi, one of the bodies was blown a quarter mile into a tree.



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### FORTIFIED BY FAITH

If we knew what was going to happen, we would not need faith. We could plan for tomorrow and the next day and the next with confidence. But only God knows what tomorrow will bring into our lives. So, we need faith.

Faith enables us to live courageously, live life with confidence, and know that with God beside us, His Son within us and the Holy Spirit to empower us, we can be more than conquerors.

Unfortunately, not all Christians walk by faith. Some squeak through life by sight. But, the two principles of action are exclusive of each other and contradictory.

Sight is concerned with things that are material and visible. Faith is concerned with things that are invisible and spiritual. Each principle struggles to master the other. As Christians, we must choose which one will be our master.

If we walk by sight, we will encounter many things that will frighten us. We see this in the lives of the people of Israel. When they left Israel, they were followed by the best fighters that Egypt had.

When they came to the Red Sea and saw the enemy about to destroy them, they were frightened. But despite their lack of faith, the Lord saved them. He caused the sea to divide and provided a dry road for their escape.

"Then," states the Psalmist, "they believed His words." When? After they saw His miracle. It was not necessary for them to experience such despair and the fear of destruction. Their lack of faith in the presence and power of God caused them to doubt His promises. "Lord, help our unbelief!" said one disciple. What about you?

Prayer: Lord, help us to take You at Your Word and trust in You for everything. Please increase our faith now. Teach us to see challenges and threats as faith builders. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then they believed his promises and sang his praise. Psalm 106:12



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  
11/13/2022: Snow Queen Contest  
11/19/2022: Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course  
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm  
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center  
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)  
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)  
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)  
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)  
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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## News from the Associated Press

### **South Dakota State awarded top seed in 24-team FCS playoffs**

By HANK KURZ Jr. AP Sports Writer

South Dakota State and Sacramento State earned the top two seeds in the Football Championship Sub-division playoffs when the 24-team field was announced Sunday.

South Dakota State (10-1) will be making its 11th consecutive appearance in the postseason. The Jackrabbits, who lost to Sam Houston in the 2020 championship game, earned an automatic bid as winners of the Missouri Valley Football Conference. Sacramento State (11-0) won the Big Sky Conference's automatic bid. Neither the Jackrabbits nor the Hornets has ever won the FCS championship.

The top eight seeds, which all earn a bye for the playoffs that begin Saturday, also include No. 3 North Dakota State (9-2), No. 4 Montana State (10-1), No. 5 William & Mary (10-1), No. 6 Samford (10-1), No. 7 Incarnate Word (10-1) and No. 8 Holy Cross (11-0).

North Dakota State, the defending national champion and winners of nine of the last 11 titles, made the field for the 13th consecutive season. The Bison have won 41 playoff games, the most of all time. They defeated Montana State 38-10 for last season's title.

Montana State won a share of the Big Sky Conference title and will be making its 12th playoff appearance and fourth in the last five years. The Bobcats won the title in 1984.

William & Mary will be making its 11th playoff appearance. The Tribe won the Colonial Athletic Association title Saturday, beating at-large entry Richmond 37-26. Samford, making its sixth appearance, won the Southern Conference.

Incarnate Word earned an at-large bid as co-champions, with Southeastern Louisiana, in the Southland Conference. Southeastern Louisiana will host Idaho (7-4) on Saturday.

Holy Cross earned the automatic bid from the Patriot League for a fourth consecutive postseason appearance.

The playoffs conclude with the national championship on Jan. 8 in Frisco, Texas.

#### HUMBLED

Montana made the field despite a 55-21 loss to fourth-seeded Montana State in the 121st installment of the Brawl of the Wild. ... Delaware made it despite losing three of its last four games, including a 29-26 loss to Villanova on Saturday.

#### LONG TIME NO SEE

Idaho's appearance is its first since 1995. The Vandals are one of four at-large teams from the Big Sky Conference to make the field. That ties the CAA for the most teams in the field. Eastern Kentucky made it for the first time since 2014, Fordham and William & Mary for the first time since 2015 and St. Francis for the first time since 2016.

#### ROOKIES

Gardner-Webb (6-5) is the only team in the field that will be making its first appearance in the playoffs. The Runnin' Bulldogs clinched their first Big South Conference title since 2003 with a 38-17 victory against North Carolina A&T. They'll make their debut at Eastern Kentucky (7-4).

#### THE BEGINNINGS

Other first-round games include Saint Francis, Pa. (9-2) at Delaware (7-4), Fordham (9-2) at New Hampshire (8-3), North Dakota (7-4) at Weber State (9-2), Southeast Missouri State (9-2) at Montana (7-4), Elon (8-3) at Furman (9-2) and Davidson (8-3) at Richmond (8-3).

### **European teams abandon plan to wear armbands at World Cup**

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — The captains of seven European nations will not wear anti-discrimination armbands in World Cup games after threats from FIFA to show yellow cards to the players.

"As national federations we can't put our players in a position where they could face sporting sanctions,



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including bookings," the seven soccer federations said Monday in a joint statement.

The climbdown after threats from FIFA came hours before England's Harry Kane, the Netherlands' Virgil van Dijk and Wales' Gareth Bale were due to wear the One Love armbands in Monday's games. The captains of Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Denmark were also expected to wear the armbands in the coming days.

"Our number one priority at the World Cup is to win the games," the Dutch soccer federation said in a separate statement. "Then you don't want the captain to start the match with a yellow card."

The One Love campaign was started in the Netherlands and its symbol is a heart-shaped multi-colored logo aimed at promoting inclusion and diversity in soccer and society.

## Disney taps ex-CEO Bob Iger to return, set strategy

BURBANK, Calif. (AP) — The Walt Disney Company has tapped its former CEO Bob Iger to return to head the company for two years, firing his successor Bob Chapek in a move that stunned the entertainment industry.

Chapek is leaving after the company posted lower than expected earnings in the last quarter. Hollywood's creative community had grumbled about Chapek's cost-cutting measures and sometimes blunt approach to talent, while theme park regulars had been unhappy with price hikes.

So, it's back to Iger.

"The Board has concluded that as Disney embarks on an increasingly complex period of industry transformation, Bob Iger is uniquely situated to lead the company through this pivotal period," Susan Arnold, Disney's chairman, said in a statement.

Arnold thanked Chapek for leading the company through the pandemic, while enthusing over Iger's stature within the company, which he led for 15 years before his ouster in early 2020.

Iger has the "deep respect of Disney's senior leadership team," she said. She added that he was "greatly admired by Disney employees worldwide."

"The company's robust pipeline of content is a testament to his leadership and vision," the company's statement said.

Iger said in the statement that he was "thrilled" to return and "extremely optimistic" about Disney's future.

"I am deeply honored to be asked to again lead this remarkable team, with a clear mission focused on creative excellence to inspire generations through unrivaled, bold storytelling," said Iger, who is 71.

He replaced Michael Eisner as CEO in 2005 and the former TV weather man won over Wall Street and Hollywood with bold acquisitions and public displays of respect for the creative community and the company's storied history.

During his 15 years at the helm, Disney absorbed Pixar, Lucasfilm, Marvel and Fox's entertainment businesses, then launched its Disney+ streaming service.

After Chapek became CEO in 2020, Iger remained as chairman through 2021.

Chapek is stepping down in what has been a tough year for Disney. He faced blowback earlier this year for not using the company's vast influence in Florida to help quash a Republican bill that would prevent teachers from instructing early grades on LGBTQ issues. The bill sparked a spat between Disney and Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis.

He also was criticized for his handling of Scarlett Johansson's lawsuit last year over her pay for "Black Widow," an unusually public conflict between the studio and a top Hollywood star. The 2021 Marvel film was released simultaneously in theaters and through Disney+ for a \$30 rental.

There are reports of plans for major layoffs as the company maneuvers to improve its profitability.

Currently, Disney+ now is ad-free, but in December it will launch a new tiered service in December for U.S. subscribers. The basic Disney+ service that costs \$7.99 per month will run ads. A subscriber who wants no ads will have to upgrade to a premium service that starts at \$10.99 per month, a 38% increase over current prices.

Disney said it ended its fiscal year with more than 235 million subscribers to its streaming services. That

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was above analysts' expectations of 231.5 million.

Disney's share price is at about the level it was at when Iger stepped down as CEO in early 2020, closing at \$91.80 pm Friday. That's about half its peak of just over \$200 a share in March 2021.

## Earthquake shakes Indonesia's Java island; at least 46 dead

By EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — An earthquake shook Indonesia's main island of Java on Monday, killing at least 46 people, damaging dozens of buildings and sending residents into the capital's streets for safety.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude 5.6 quake was centered in the Cianjur region in West Java province at a depth of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles).

"There are 46 dead people at the Cianjur regional hospital and around 700 injured people. Many were hurt because they were hit by collapsed buildings," National Disaster Mitigation Agency chief Suharyanto said.

Several landslides were reported around Cianjur. Dozens of buildings were damaged, including an Islamic boarding school, a hospital and other public facilities, the agency said.

Information was still being collected about the extent of casualties and damage, it said in a statement.

The quake was felt strongly in the greater Jakarta area. High rises in the capital swayed and some were evacuated.

"The quake felt so strong. My colleagues and I decided to get out of our office on the ninth floor using the emergency stairs," said Vidi Primadhania, an employee in South Jakarta.

Earthquakes occur frequently across the sprawling archipelago nation, but it is uncommon for them to be felt in Jakarta.

The country of more than 270 million people is frequently struck by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis because of its location on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

In February, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed at least 25 people and injured more than 460 in West Sumatra province. In January 2021, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed more than 100 people and injured nearly 6,500 in West Sulawesi province.

A powerful Indian Ocean quake and tsunami in 2004 killed nearly 230,000 people in a dozen countries, most of them in Indonesia.

## Elton John rockets toward retirement at Dodger Stadium

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Forty seven years after he took the stage at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles in a sequined-studded baseball uniform as the world's biggest pop star, Elton John walked on to the same stage on Sunday night wearing a bedazzled Dodgers bathrobe, a uniform more fitting for a 75-year-old man on the verge of retirement.

The crowd of more than 50,000 roared at the moment that came in the final minutes of the final North American concert of a tour John says will be his last.

"I want to spend time with my family because I'll be 76 next year, he said. "I want to bring them out and show you why I'm retiring."

He embraced and kissed his husband, David Furnish, while his two sons, 11-year-old Zachary and 9-year-old Elijah, wearing matching Dodgers jackets that read "Elton" on the back, waved gleefully at the crowd.

John then broke into "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," the inevitable final song that gave the "Farewell Yellow Brick Road" tour its name.

The crowd full of rocket men and rocket women, of blue jean babies and LA ladies, many John's age but plenty in their 20s and 30s and 40s, swayed and sang along as they had throughout the two-hour show during songs like "Rocket Man" and "Tiny Dancer." Some wiped away tears.

Many were wearing their own sequins and spangles, sparkling spectacles, top hats, feather boas, and in a few cases, Donald Duck suits, representing stages of John's 55-year career.

"Thank you all for dressing up," John said, "it makes me so happy when you wear the most fantastic

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costumes.”

When that last song ended, John shed the robe and exposed another retirement outfit, a green-and-red tracksuit, and climbed into a small, clear elevator that lifted him into an opening in the backdrop. He could then be seen on a giant video screen walking down a yellow brick road into the distance.

Many others joined John for the occasion.

Kiki Dee took the stage to sing their duet “Don’t Go Breaking My Heart.”

“In 1975, this woman was here with me, and we sang this song,” John said as he brought out Dee. “I asked her to come and recreate that incredible moment.”

John jumped from his usual keyboard spot, grabbed a mic and sang and danced with Dee as his rehearsal piano player Adam Chester pounded the keys in his place.

John played “Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on Me” in tribute to the four bandmates who have died during his career, and after the first verse brought on another guest, shouting, “ladies and gentleman, Brandi Carlile!”

The moment was an unspoken tribute to another late collaborator, George Michael, who dueted with John in the same way on the song in 1991.

Carlile, who was central to Joni Mitchell’s recent return to the stage, was wearing her own Dodger-themed spangled suit. She belted out her verses and made a “can you believe this?!” face to the crowd as John put his arm around her and she soaked in the applause.

A drum machine pounded as Dua Lipa, in a black dress that contrasted with the sparkles on everyone else, came out for the first of the encores, “Cold Heart,” her 2021 hit with John.

“I can’t tell you how it feels to be 75 years old and to have the No. 1 record around the world,” John said after. “And this was my very first hit, 52 years ago.”

He started playing piano chords and sang, “It’s a little bit funny, this feeling inside,” the opening line to 1970’s “Your Song.”

“That was your song, Los Angeles!” he shouted after.

About two hours earlier, after taking the stage in a tuxedo with sequins that flared into a flame design and opening the concert with “Benny and the Jets,” he explained the significance of the city to his music.

“All right, this is a very special night for me, a very emotional night for me, and it’s been a long journey, and I first came here to America in 1970 to the City of Angels, Los Angeles, and I played a club called the Troubadour.”

The concert, which streamed live on Disney+, was the last of a three-night stand at the stadium (and his 103rd show in the LA area, he told the crowd). The Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour began in September 2018 with the first of the 300-plus scheduled dates. It was suspended in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic and resumed in 2021.

In January, John heads to Australia and New Zealand, then moves on to Britain and Europe. He’s set to conclude in Sweden in July, though he’s made it clear he is only done traveling, not making music.

Many of those backing him up have been in his band from the start, or very near it, including Nigel Olson, his drummer since 1969, and Davey Johnstone, his guitarist since 1971, who at age 71 stood at the front of the stage and led the band through a ripping version of “Saturday Night’s Alright for Fighting.”

John also provided a rare on-stage glimpse of an even more long-running collaborator, the man who wrote most of the words the crowd sang along with all night, lyricist Bernie Taupin.

“We’ve been writing together now since 1967,” John said as he hugged Taupin, who could not have contrasted with his writing partner more with his bald head and plain, earth-toned coat. “We still love each other more than we’ve ever done before.”

## Patrons in gay club shooting hit gunman with his own weapon

By THOMAS PEIPERT and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — As bullets tore through a gay nightclub in Colorado Springs, killing five people and wounding many more, one patron who’d been partying moments before rushed into ac-



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tion, grabbing a handgun from the suspect, hitting him with it and pinning him down until police arrived just minutes later.

He was one of at least two customers who police and city officials credit with stopping the gunman and limiting the bloodshed in Saturday night's shooting at Club Q. The violence pierced the cozy confines of an entertainment venue that has long been a cherished safe spot for the LGBTQ community in the conservative-leaning city.

"Had that individual not intervened this could have been exponentially more tragic," Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers told The Associated Press.

Police identified the alleged gunman as 22-year-old Anderson Lee Aldrich, who was in custody and being treated for injuries.

A law enforcement official said the suspect used an AR-15-style semiautomatic weapon in the attack, but a handgun and additional ammunition magazines also were recovered. The official could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Club Q on its Facebook page thanked the "quick reactions of heroic customers that subdued the gunman and ended this hate attack." Investigators were still determining a motive and whether to prosecute it as a hate crime, said El Paso County District Attorney Michael Allen. Charges against the suspect will likely include first-degree murder, he said.

Already questions were being raised about why authorities didn't seek to take Aldrich's guns away from him in 2021, when he was arrested after his mother reported he threatened her with a homemade bomb and other weapons. Though authorities at the time said no explosives were found, gun control advocates are asking why police didn't try to trigger Colorado's "red flag" law, which would have allowed authorities to seize the weapons his mother says he had. There's also no public record prosecutors ever moved forward with felony kidnapping and menacing charges against Aldrich.

Of the 25 injured at Club Q, at least seven were in critical condition, authorities said. Some were hurt trying to flee, and it was unclear if all of them were shot, a police spokesperson said. Suthers said there was "reason to hope" all of those hospitalized would recover.

The shooting rekindled memories of the 2016 massacre at the Pulse gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, that killed 49 people. Colorado has experienced several mass killings, including at Columbine High School in 1999, a movie theater in suburban Denver in 2012 and at a Boulder supermarket last year.

It was the sixth mass killing this month and came in a year when the nation was shaken by the deaths of 21 in a school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

Authorities were called to Club Q at 11:57 p.m. Saturday with a report of a shooting, and the first officer arrived at midnight.

Joshua Thurman said he was in the club with about two dozen other people and was dancing when the shots began. He initially thought it was part of the music, until he heard another shot and said he saw the flash of a gun muzzle.

Thurman, 34, said he ran with another person to a dressing room where someone already was hiding. They locked the door, turned off the lights and got on the floor but could hear the violence unfolding, including the gunman getting beaten up, he added.

"I could have lost my life — over what? What was the purpose?" he said as tears ran down his cheeks. "We were just enjoying ourselves. We weren't out harming anyone. We were in our space, our community, our home, enjoying ourselves like everybody else does."

Detectives were examining whether anyone had helped the suspect before the attack, Police Chief Adrian Vasquez said. He said patrons who intervened during the attack were "heroic" and prevented more deaths.

Club Q is a gay and lesbian nightclub that features a drag show on Saturdays, according to its website. Club Q's Facebook page said planned entertainment included a "punk and alternative show" preceding a birthday dance party, with a Sunday all-ages drag brunch.

Drag events have become a focus of anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and protests recently as opponents, including politicians, have proposed banning children from them, falsely claiming they're used to "groom" children.

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To substantiate a hate-crime charge against Aldrich, prosecutors would have to prove he was motivated by the victims' actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. So far, the suspect has not been cooperative in interviews with investigators and has not given them clear insight yet about the motivation for the attack, according to the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

President Joe Biden said that while the motive for the shootings was not yet clear, "we know that the LGBTQI+ community has been subjected to horrific hate violence in recent years."

"Places that are supposed to be safe spaces of acceptance and celebration should never be turned into places of terror and violence," he said. "We cannot and must not tolerate hate."

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, who became the first openly gay man to be elected a U.S. governor in 2018, called the shooting "sickening."

"My heart breaks for the family and friends of those lost, injured and traumatized," Polis said.

A makeshift memorial sprang up Sunday near the club, with flowers, a stuffed animal, candles and a sign saying "Love over hate" next to a rainbow-colored heart.

Seth Stang was buying flowers for the memorial when he was told that two of the dead were his friends. The 34-year-old transgender man said it was like having "a bucket of hot water getting dumped on you. ... I'm just tired of running out of places where we can exist safely."

Ryan Johnson, who lives near the club and was there last month, said it was one of only two nightspots for the LGBTQ community in Colorado Springs. "It's kind of the go-to for pride," the 26-year-old said of the club.

Colorado Springs, a city of about 480,000 located 70 miles (112 kilometers) south of Denver, is home to the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Olympic Training Center, as well as Focus on the Family, a prominent evangelical Christian ministry that lobbies against LGBTQ rights. The group condemned the shooting and said it "exposes the evil and wickedness inside the human heart."

In November 2015, three people were killed and eight wounded at a Planned Parenthood clinic in the city when authorities say a gunman targeted the clinic because it performed abortions.

The shooting came during Transgender Awareness Week and just at the start of Sunday's International Transgender Day of Remembrance, when events around the world are held to mourn and remember transgender people lost to violence.

Since 2006, there have been 523 mass killings and 2,727 deaths as of Nov. 19, according to The Associated Press/USA Today database on mass killings in the U.S.

## China's Guangzhou locks down millions in 'zero-COVID' fight

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — The southern Chinese metropolis of Guangzhou locked down its largest district Monday as it tries to tamp down a major COVID-19 outbreak, suspending public transit and requiring residents to present a negative test if they want to leave their homes.

The outbreak is testing China's attempt to bring a more targeted approach to its zero-COVID policies while facing multiple outbreaks driven by fast-spreading omicron variants. China is the only major country in the world still trying to curb virus transmissions through strict lockdown measures and mass testing.

Baiyun district, home to 3.7 million people in Guangzhou, also suspended in-person classes for schools and sealed off universities. The measures are meant to last until Friday, the city announced.

Meanwhile in Beijing, the capital reported two more COVID-19-related deaths. On Sunday, the city reported China's first COVID-19 death in over six months.

While critics have questioned China's COVID-19 numbers, and specifically its death toll, its intensive approach to trying to contain infections has prevented massive outbreaks and kept new daily cases lower than in many other countries.

Earlier this month, China announced that it was relaxing some of its "zero-COVID" policies, such as suspending flights from airlines that had brought a certain number of passengers who tested positive. It also cut down the time required in centralized quarantine for international arrivals from seven to five days.

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The relaxation of some measures was an attempt to make the policies more "scientific and precise," Lei Haichao, the deputy director of the National Health Commission, said.

Larger cities are still holding on to some of the tested measures, though in a more fragmented manner than shutting down an entire city, which they had previously done.

Shijiazhuang, a city in northern Hebei province, is testing all residents in six districts. In Beijing's Haidian district, home to the city's tech hub and top universities, authorities announced Sunday night that in-person classes were being canceled at elementary and secondary schools.

Guangdong province, home to Guangzhou, reported the largest number of new cases Monday with 9,085 out of a total of 27,095 cases nationwide.

## Cold and dark: Kyiv readies for 'worst winter of our lives'

By YURAS KARMANAU and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — When the power is out, as it so often is, the high-rise apartment overlooking Ukraine's war-torn capital feels like a deathtrap. No lights, no water, no way to cook food. And no elevator by which to escape from the 21st floor should a Russian missile strike. Even when electricity comes back, it's never on for long.

"Russian strikes are plunging Ukraine into the Stone Age," says Anastasia Pyrozhenko. In a recent 24-hour spell, her 26-story high-rise only had power for half an hour. She says the "military living conditions" have driven her and husband from their apartment.

"Our building is the highest in the area and is a great target for Russian missiles, so we left our apartment for our parents' place and are preparing for the worst winter of our lives," said the 25-year-old.

The situation in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, and other major cities has deteriorated drastically following the largest missile attack on the country's power grid on Tuesday. Ukrainian state-owned grid operator Ukren-ergo reported that 40% of Ukrainians were experiencing difficulties, due to damage to at least 15 major energy hubs across the country.

Warning that electricity outages could last anywhere from several hours to several days, the network said that "resilience and courage are what we need this winter."

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko, too, stressed the need to be ready and resilient in the face of a potential blackout: "Worst case scenario. Actually, I don't like to talk about that, but I have to be prepared if we (do not) have electricity, blackout, no water, no heating, no services and no communication," Klitschko told the AP on Friday.

Ukrenergo said in a statement that "thousands of kilometers of key high-voltage lines are not working," affecting the entire country.

It published a picture of a transformer station that was destroyed by a Russian missile, leaving around 400,000 people without power. According to the report, "there are dozens of such transformers in the power system now. This equipment cannot be replaced quickly."

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said after last week's strikes that more than 10 million Ukrainians were left without electricity; by Sunday, he said some areas had seen improvements.

"The restoration of networks and technical supply capabilities, the de-mining of power transmission lines, repairs — everything goes on round the clock," Zelenskyy said in his nightly address.

Blackouts were scheduled Sunday night in 15 regions and the city of Kyiv, he said. Ukrenergo said there would be scheduled outages in every region on Monday.

A sharp cold snap and the first snow have significantly complicated the situation in Kyiv, where temperatures are often below freezing in winter months. The cold forces people to turn on their heaters, which drastically increases the load on the grid and makes power outages longer. In light of the dropping temperatures, the Kyiv authorities announced they were setting up communal heating points.

In the city of 3 million people, 528 emergency points have been identified. Here, residents will be able to keep warm, drink tea, recharge their phones and get any necessary help. The heating points will be equipped with autonomous power sources, as well as special boiler rooms.



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Mayor Klitschko, too, spoke of measures taken to prepare for energy outages with the onset of colder temperatures: "We prepared and we (asked for) electric generators (from) our partners, which they send to us. For this case, we have a reserve of diesel, (of) oil. We have a lot of warm stuff. We have medication."

Many residents in Kyiv have begun to leave boxes of food, flashlights and power banks in elevators, in case anyone gets stuck in one for a long time. Due to the lack of electricity, public transport is disrupted, many small shops cannot operate, and some medical institutions can only work to a limited capacity.

Dentist Viktor Turakevich said that he was forced to postpone his patients' appointments "for an indefinite time" because without electricity his central Kyiv clinic cannot function even during the day, and the generator will only arrive in a few weeks.

"We cannot accept patients even with acute toothache, people have to suffer and wait a long time, but the light comes on only for a few hours a day," Turakevich said. "Generator prices have skyrocketed, but even with money, they are not easy to come by."

Most hospitals in Kyiv have already received generators and there are no power outages there yet. The Oleksandrivska hospital, the largest and oldest one in the center of Kyiv, reported that it had not canceled elective surgeries because the hospital had received electric generators from France. Generators have also been supplied to educational institutions and social services.

"Such facilities are a priority for us, and most of them are equipped with autonomous energy sources," Ukrenergo head Volodymyr Kudrytskyi said on Friday. However, many schools in Kyiv have endured significant disruption to the learning process, with a lack of electricity meaning internet outages that make remote learning near impossible.

Yaroslav, age 8, stopped attending his school in the Vynohradar district of Kyiv after a rocket attack blew out all the windows of the school and damaged a shelter there.

"Most of the children studied remotely, but now it is no longer possible to do this," said Yaroslav's mother, Olena, who asked for her last name to be withheld for safety reasons, in a phone interview. "We are trying to protect children from the horrors of war, but the cold and the lack of power greatly hinder this."

Analysts say that Russian rocket attacks on the energy industry do not affect the successful advance of the Ukrainian army in the south and the situation on the battlefield in general.

"The Russians cannot win on the battlefield, and therefore they use cold and darkness as a weapon against the civilian population, trying to sow panic, depression and demoralize Ukrainians," Volodymyr Fesenko, an analyst at the Penta Center think tank in Kyiv, told the AP.

Russian President Vladimir Putin "is suffering military defeats and is in dire need of a military pause, which is why he is forcing Zelenskyy into negotiations in such a wild way," he said.

The analyst believes the Kremlin is also trying to put pressure on Western support for Ukraine, as the EU and the U.S. will be forced to expand aid packages to a freezing Kyiv amid growing domestic troubles.

"Putin is trying to make the price of supporting Ukraine too high — this applies both to money and to a possible new flow of refugees to Europe from a freezing country," Fesenko said.

Pyrozhenko, having left her high-rise, moved in with her mother in a small apartment in Kyiv, now home to five people. The family has a wooden house in a village near Kyiv and has already prepared firewood in case of a forced evacuation.

"We understand that winter can be long, cold and dark, but we are ready to endure," Pyrozhenko said. "We are ready to live without light, but not with the Russians."

## Red Cross: Afghans will struggle for their lives this winter

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — More Afghans will be struggling for survival as living conditions deteriorate in the year ahead, a top official of the International Committee of the Red Cross said in an interview, as the country braces for its second winter under Taliban rule.

The religious group's seizure of power in August 2021 sent the economy into a tailspin and fundamentally transformed Afghanistan, driving millions into poverty and hunger as foreign aid stopped almost overnight.

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"The economic hardship is there. It's very serious and people will struggle for their lives," Martin Schuepp, director of operations at the Red Cross, said in an interview late Sunday.

Sanctions on Taliban rulers, a halt on bank transfers and frozen billions in Afghanistan's currency reserves have already restricted access to global institutions and the outside money that supported the country's aid-dependent economy before the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces.

The onset of winter will compound the acute humanitarian needs that half the country is already facing, Schuepp pointed out.

"Prices are spiking due to a whole set of reasons, but also the issue of sanctions has led to massive consequences," he said. "We see more and more Afghans who are having to sell their belongings to make ends meet, where they have to buy materials for heating while at the same time have to face increasing costs for food and other essential items."

Sanctions are a challenge in getting aid and the necessary supplies to the country in a timely fashion, and it is key that all sanctions have humanitarian exemptions so organizations like the ICRC could continue their work, he said.

The Red Cross is already paying the salaries of 10,500 medical staff every month to ensure basic health-care services stay afloat, he added.

"We are very conscious that it's not our primary role to pay for salaries of medical staff. As a humanitarian organization, we are not best placed to do that. We have done so exceptionally to ensure that services continue to be provided."

Schuepp, who was making his first visit to Afghanistan as director of operations since the Taliban takeover, said the agency was feeding most of the country's prison population. He was unable to immediately say how many prisoners there were in Afghanistan.

"We have stepped up our support to prisons and prisoners, ensuring that food is being provided in the prisons throughout the country," he said. "Today, about 80% of the prison population benefits from such food support."

He described the Red Cross' role as a "stop-gap measure" that had become necessary following the collapse of the U.S.-backed Afghan government once Washington began its final withdrawal of troops in August 2021.

The Red Cross has tried "to make sure that basic services continue" in prisons under Taliban rule, he said.

No country in the world has recognized the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, as the Taliban call their administration, leaving them internationally isolated. The religious group previously ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s and was overthrown by a U.S. invasion in 2001.

## **GOP's lackluster fundraising spurs post-election infighting**

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and AARON KESSLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Trailing badly in his Arizona Senate race as votes poured in, Republican Blake Masters went on Tucker Carlson's Fox News program and assigned blame to one person: Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

"You know what else is incompetent, Tucker? The establishment. The people who control the purse strings," Masters said before accusing the long-serving GOP leader and the super PAC aligned with him of not spending enough on TV advertising. "Had he chosen to spend money in Arizona, this race would be over. We'd be celebrating a Senate majority right now."

Masters not only lost his race against Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly. He trailed every other Republican running for statewide office in Arizona. But there's another problem Masters didn't acknowledge: He failed to raise significant money on his own.

He was hardly alone.

As both parties sift through the results of Democrats' stronger-than-expected showing in the midterm elections, Republicans are engaged in a round of finger-pointing, including a failed attempt by Florida

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Sen. Rick Scott, who led the Senate GOP's campaign arm, to challenge McConnell for his leadership post.

But the recriminations obscure a much deeper dilemma for the party. Many of their nominees — a significant number of whom were first-time candidates who adopted far-right positions — failed to raise the money needed to mount competitive campaigns. That forced party leaders, particularly in the Senate, to make hard choices and triage resources to races where they thought they had the best chance at winning, often paying exorbitant rates to TV stations that, by law, would have been required to sell the same advertising time to candidates for far less.

The lackluster fundraising allowed Democrats to get their message out to voters early and unchallenged, while GOP contenders lacked the resources to do the same.

"This has become an existential and systemic problem for our party and it's something that needs to get addressed if we hope to be competitive," said Steven Law, a former McConnell chief of staff who now leads Senate Leadership Fund, a super PAC that spent at least \$232 million on advertising to elect Republicans to the Senate this year.

"Our (donors) have grown increasingly alarmed that they are being put in the position of subsidizing weak fundraising performances by candidates in critical races. And something has got to give. It's just not sustainable," Law said.

In key Senate and House battlegrounds, Democratic candidates outraised their Republican counterparts by a factor of nearly 2-to-1, according to an Associated Press analysis of campaign finance data.

Consider the handful of races that helped Democrats retain their Senate majority.

In Arizona, Masters was outraised nearly 8-to-1 by Kelly, who poured at least \$32 million into TV advertising from August until Election Day, records show. Masters spent a little over \$3 million on advertising during the same period after Senate Leadership Fund pulled out of the race.

Meanwhile, in Nevada, Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto raised \$52.8 million compared to Republican Adam Laxalt's \$15.5 million. And in Pennsylvania, Democratic Sen.-elect John Fetterman took in \$16 million more than his GOP opponent, Dr. Mehmet Oz. That's despite the celebrity TV doctor lending \$22 million to his campaign, records show.

Similar disparities emerged in crucial House races, including in Nevada, Pennsylvania and Virginia, helping to limit House Republicans to a surprisingly narrow majority.

When it came to purchasing TV ad time, Democrats' fundraising advantage yielded considerable upside. Ad sellers are required, by law, to offer candidates the cheapest rate. That same advantage doesn't apply to super PACs, which Republican candidates relied on to close their fundraising gap — often at a premium.

In Las Vegas, for example, a candidate could buy a unit of TV advertising for \$598, according to advertising figures provided to the AP. That same segment cost a super PAC \$4,500. In North Carolina's Raleigh-Durham media market, a \$342 spot cost a super PAC \$1,270. And a \$580 candidate segment in the Philadelphia area cost a super PAC nearly \$2,000, the advertising figures show.

Republicans also found themselves playing defense in states that weren't ultimately competitive.

J.D. Vance, who won his Ohio Senate race by more than 6 percentage points, was outraised nearly 4-to-1 by Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan. To shore him up, Senate Leadership Fund poured \$28 million into the state. The group's advertising ultimately accounted for about 70% of all Republican media spending from August until Election Day.

A similar situation played out in North Carolina, where the McConnell-aligned super PAC was responsible for 82% of the Republican advertising spending during the same period. GOP Rep. Ted Budd won by over 3% of the vote.

But money woes weren't the only complicating factor.

Donald Trump elevated a series of untested, first-time candidates. They included Masters, Vance and former NFL star Herschel Walker, whose complicated backstory includes threats of violence against his ex-wife, false claims of business success and allegations that he twice pressured a girlfriend to get an abortion, which Walker denies. Then there was Oz, who moved to Pennsylvania to seek the seat and also secured Trump's endorsement, but was pilloried by Democrats as an out-of-touch carpetbagger.

The former president gave them his endorsement, but he was parsimonious when it came to sharing



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some of the more than \$100 million he's amassed in a committee designed to help other candidates. He ended up spending about \$15 million on ads across five Senate races, records show.

Meanwhile, the National Republican Senatorial Committee, led by Scott, often worked at cross-purposes with McConnell's political operation.

Early on, Scott ruled out getting involved in primaries, which he saw as inappropriate meddling. McConnell's allies, meanwhile, moved to fend off candidates they saw as poor general-election contenders, like Don Bolduc, a far-right conservative who lost his New Hampshire race last week by nearly 10 percentage points. McConnell forces also defended Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a GOP moderate, against a conservative challenger.

"Senate races are just different," McConnell said in August. "Candidate quality has a lot to do with the outcome."

In response, Scott took a shot at McConnell without mentioning him by name, suggesting in an opinion article published in the Washington Examiner that any "trash-talking" of Republican candidates was an "act of cowardice" that was "treasonous to the conservative cause."

But his committee also struggled after making a series of bad bets, including a costly investment to boost the committee's online fundraising.

An internal document obtained by the AP, which was previously reported by The New York Times, shows the committee invested \$23.3 million to build out their digital fundraising program between June and January of 2021. But the NRSC raised just \$6.1 million during that time — a deficit. Then, as inflation soared, the stream of cash from online donors slowed to a trickle.

That prevented the NRSC from spending as much on TV ads as in years past, even as Scott made bullish predictions of picking up as many as five Senate seats. The digital fundraising effort was a boon, however, for consultants, who collected at least \$31 million in payments, disclosures show.

Some Republican senators are now clamoring for an audit of the committee. In an at-times heated Senate GOP lunch at the Capitol last week, Maine Sen. Susan Collins questioned Scott's management of the NRSC.

Scott's aides dismissed suggestions of financial impropriety and instead have accused McConnell of undercutting the committee.

During a Senate GOP lunch in August, Scott asked senators for donations to the NRSC, which is now at least \$20 million in debt. Then McConnell addressed the room and told the senators to instead prioritize giving to Senate Leadership Fund, according to two people familiar with the discussion; they requested anonymity to describe it.

The interaction was part of a broader pattern by McConnell to sabotage the NRSC, said committee spokesman Chris Hartline.

"There was a very clear implication to donors that they should not give to the NRSC," Hartline said. "And the result is it hurt our ability to boost our candidates and get their message out."

McConnell allies, however, believe it was Scott who was using his post to burnish his own image at the expense of the party, potentially working to set himself up for a presidential bid, according to senior Republicans strategists. They were not authorized to discuss the McConnell allies' conclusions and did so on condition of anonymity.

The gambit failed, as did Scott's challenge of McConnell's leadership position last week.

Faced with the prospect of solidifying their majority with another seat during a December runoff election in Georgia, Democrats were happy to offer unsolicited guidance to Republicans.

"My advice is to keep on doing what they are doing," said Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, who led Senate Democrats' campaign arm this year.

## Gay club shooting suspect evaded Colorado's red flag gun law

By BERNARD CONDON and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A year and a half before he was arrested in the Colorado Springs gay nightclub shooting that left five people dead, Anderson Lee Aldrich allegedly threatened his mother with a homemade

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bomb, forcing neighbors in surrounding homes to evacuate while the bomb squad and crisis negotiators talked him into surrendering.

Yet despite that scare, there's no public record that prosecutors moved forward with felony kidnapping and menacing charges against Aldrich, or that police or relatives tried to trigger Colorado's "red flag" law that would have allowed authorities to seize the weapons and ammo the man's mother says he had with him.

Gun control advocates say Aldrich's June 2021 threat is an example of a red flag law ignored, with potentially deadly consequences. While it's not clear the law could have prevented Saturday night's attack — such gun seizures can be in effect for as little as 14 days and be extended by a judge in six-month increments — they say it could have at least slowed Aldrich and raised his profile with law enforcement.

"We need heroes beforehand — parents, co-workers, friends who are seeing someone go down this path," said Colorado state Rep. Tom Sullivan, whose son was killed in the Aurora theater shooting and sponsored the state's red flag law passed in 2019. "This should have alerted them, put him on their radar."

But the law that allows guns to be removed from people deemed dangerous to themselves or others has seldom been used in the state, particularly in El Paso County, home to Colorado Springs, where the 22-year-old Aldrich allegedly went into Club Q with a long gun at just before midnight and opened fire before he was subdued by patrons.

An Associated Press analysis found Colorado has one of the lowest rates of red flag usage despite widespread gun ownership and several high-profile mass shootings.

Courts issued 151 gun surrender orders from when the law took effect in April 2019 through 2021, three surrender orders for every 100,000 adults in the state. That's a third of the ratio of orders issued for the 19 states and District of Columbia with surrender laws on their books.

El Paso County appears especially hostile to the law. It joined nearly 2,000 counties nationwide in declaring themselves "Second Amendment Sanctuaries" that protect the constitutional right to bear arms, passing a 2019 resolution that says the red flag law "infringes upon the inalienable rights of law-abiding citizens" by ordering police to "forcibly enter premises and seize a citizen's property with no evidence of a crime."

County Sheriff Bill Elder has said his office would wait for family members to ask a court for surrender orders and not petition for them on its own accord, unless there were "exigent circumstances" and "probable cause" of a crime.

El Paso County, with a population of 730,000, had 13 temporary firearm removals through the end of last year, four of which turned into longer ones of at least six months.

The county sheriff's office declined to answer what happened after Aldrich's arrest last year, including whether anyone asked to have his weapons removed. The press release issued by the sheriff's office at the time said no explosives were found but did not mention anything about whether any weapons were recovered.

Spokesperson Lt. Deborah Mynatt referred further questions about the case to the district attorney's office.

An online court records search did not turn up any formal charges filed against Aldrich in last year's case. And in an update on a story on the bomb threat, The Gazette newspaper of Colorado Springs reported that prosecutors did not pursue any charges in the case and that records were sealed.

The Gazette also reported Sunday that it got a call from Aldrich in August asking that it remove a story about the incident.

"There is absolutely nothing there, the case was dropped, and I'm asking you either remove or update the story," Aldrich said in a voice message to an editor. "The entire case was dismissed."

A spokesperson for the district attorney's office, Howard Black, declined to comment on whether any charges were pursued. He said the shooting investigation will also include a study of the bomb threat.

"There will be no additional information released at this time," Black said. "These are still investigative questions."

AP's study of 19 states and the District of Columbia with red flag laws on their books found they have

been used about 15,000 times since 2020, less than 10 times for every 100,000 adults in each state. Experts called that woefully low and hardly enough to make a dent in gun killings.

Just this year, authorities in Highland Park, Illinois, were criticized for not trying to take guns away from the 21-year-old accused of a Fourth of July parade shooting that left seven dead. Police had been alerted about him in 2019 after he threatened to "kill everyone" in his home.

Duke University sociologist Jeffrey Swanson, an expert in red flag laws, said the Colorado Springs case could be yet another missed warning sign.

"This seems like a no brainer, if the mom knew he had guns," he said. "If you removed firearms from the situation, you could have had a different ending to the story."

## **Police: Gunman kills 5 at gay club, is subdued by patrons**

By THOMAS PEIPERT and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — A 22-year-old gunman opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle inside a gay nightclub in Colorado Springs, killing five people and leaving 25 injured before he was subdued by "heroic" patrons and arrested by police who arrived within minutes, authorities said Sunday.

The suspect in the Saturday night shooting at Club Q used an AR-15-style semiautomatic weapon, a law enforcement official said. A handgun and additional ammunition magazines also were recovered, according to the official, who could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The attack ended when a patron grabbed a handgun from the suspect and hit him with it, Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers told The Associated Press. The person who hit the gunman had him pinned down when police arrived, Suthers said.

"Had that individual not intervened this could have been exponentially more tragic," Suthers said.

On its Facebook page, the club called it a "hate attack." Investigators were still determining a motive and whether to prosecute it as a hate crime, said El Paso County District Attorney Michael Allen. Charges against the suspect will likely include first-degree murder, he said.

Police identified the alleged gunman as Anderson Lee Aldrich, who was in custody and being treated for injuries.

Aldrich was arrested in 2021 after his mother reported he threatened her with a homemade bomb and other weapons, authorities said. They declined to elaborate on that arrest. No explosives were found, authorities said at the time, and The Gazette in Colorado Springs reported that prosecutors did not pursue any charges and that records were sealed.

Of the 25 injured, at least seven were in critical condition, authorities said. Some were hurt trying to flee, and it was unclear if all of the victims were shot, a police spokesperson said.

Suthers said there was "reason to hope" that all of those hospitalized would recover.

The shooting rekindled memories of the 2016 massacre at the Pulse gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, that killed 49 people. Colorado has experienced several mass killings, including at Columbine High School in 1999, a movie theater in suburban Denver in 2012 and at a Boulder supermarket last year.

It was the sixth mass killing this month and came in a year when the nation was shaken by the deaths of 21 in a school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

Authorities were called to Club Q at 11:57 p.m. Saturday with a report of a shooting, and the first officer arrived at midnight.

Joshua Thurman said he was in the club with about two dozen other people and was dancing when the shots began. He initially thought it was part of the music, until he heard another shot and said he saw the flash of a gun muzzle.

Thurman, 34, said he ran with another person to a dressing room where someone already was hiding. They locked the door, turned off the lights and got on the floor but could hear the violence unfolding, including the gunman getting beaten up, he added.

"I could have lost my life — over what? What was the purpose?" he said as tears ran down his cheeks.



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"We were just enjoying ourselves. We weren't out harming anyone. We were in our space, our community, our home, enjoying ourselves like everybody else does."

Detectives also were examining whether anyone had helped Aldrich before the attack, Police Chief Adrian Vasquez said. He said patrons who intervened during the attack were "heroic" and owed a debt of gratitude for preventing more deaths.

Club Q is a gay and lesbian nightclub that features a drag show on Saturdays, according to its website. Club Q's Facebook page said planned entertainment included a "punk and alternative show" preceding a birthday dance party, with a Sunday all-ages drag brunch.

Suthers noted that the club had operated for 21 years and had not reported any threats before Saturday's attack.

Drag events have become a focus of anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and protests recently as opponents, including politicians, have proposed banning children from them, falsely claiming they're used to "groom" children.

Attorney General Merrick Garland was briefed on the shooting and the FBI was assisting police with the investigation.

To substantiate a hate-crime charge against Aldrich, prosecutors would have to prove he was motivated by the victims' actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. So far, the suspect has not been cooperative in interviews with investigators and has not given them clear insight yet about the motivation for the attack, according to the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

President Joe Biden said that while the motive for the shootings was not yet clear, "we know that the LGBTQI+ community has been subjected to horrific hate violence in recent years."

"Places that are supposed to be safe spaces of acceptance and celebration should never be turned into places of terror and violence," he said. "We cannot and must not tolerate hate."

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, who became the first openly gay man in the United States to be elected governor in 2018, called the shooting "sickening."

"My heart breaks for the family and friends of those lost, injured and traumatized," Polis said. "Colorado stands with our LGTBQ community and everyone impacted by this tragedy as we mourn."

A makeshift memorial sprang up Sunday near the club, with flowers, a stuffed animal and candles and a sign saying "Love over hate" next to a rainbow-colored heart.

Seth Stang was buying flowers for the memorial when he was told that two of the dead were his friends. The 34-year-old transgender man said it was like having "a bucket of hot water getting dumped on you. ... I'm just tired of running out of places where we can exist safely."

Ryan Johnson, who lives near the club and was there last month, said it was one of only two nightspots for the LGBTQ community in conservative-leaning Colorado Springs. "It's kind of the go-to for pride," the 26-year-old said of the club, which is tucked behind other businesses, including a bowling alley and a sandwich shop.

Colorado Springs, a city of about 480,000 located 70 miles (112 kilometers) south of Denver, is home to the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Olympic Training Center, as well as Focus on the Family, a prominent evangelical Christian ministry that lobbies against LGBTQ rights. The group condemned the shooting and said it "exposes the evil and wickedness inside the human heart."

In November 2015, three people were killed and eight wounded at a Planned Parenthood clinic in the city when authorities say a gunman targeted the clinic because it performed abortions.

"Club Q is devastated by the senseless attack on our community," the club posted on Facebook. "We thank the quick reactions of heroic customers that subdued the gunman and ended this hate attack."

The CEO of a national LGBTQ-rights organization, Kevin Jennings of Lambda Legal, pleaded for tighter restrictions on guns.

"America's toxic mix of bigotry and absurdly easy access to firearms means that such events are all too common and LGBTQ+ people, BIPOC communities, the Jewish community and other vulnerable populations pay the price again and again for our political leadership's failure to act," he said in a statement.

The shooting came during Transgender Awareness Week and just at the start of Sunday's International Transgender Day of Remembrance, when events around the world are held to mourn and remember

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transgender people lost to violence.

In June, 31 members of the neo-Nazi group Patriot Front were arrested in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and charged with conspiracy to riot at a Pride event. Experts warned that extremist groups could see anti-gay rhetoric as a call to action.

The previous month, a fundamentalist Idaho pastor told his small Boise congregation that gay, lesbian and transgender people should be executed by the government, which lined up with similar sermons from a Texas fundamentalist pastor.

Since 2006, there have been 523 mass killings and 2,727 deaths as of Nov. 19, according to The Associated Press/USA Today database on mass killings in the U.S.

## Lawmakers urge action after report of other high court leak

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee said his panel is reviewing "serious allegations" in a report that a former anti-abortion leader knew in advance the outcome of a 2014 Supreme Court case involving health care coverage of contraception.

The report Saturday in The New York Times followed the stunning leak earlier this year of a draft opinion in the case in which the high court overturned Roe v. Wade, ending constitutional protections for abortion. That decision was written by Justice Samuel Alito, who is also the author of the majority opinion in the 2014 case at the center of the new report.

In the Times story, Rev. Rob Schenck said he learned the outcome of the *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores* case weeks before the decision was made public. In a 5-4 decision, Alito wrote that some companies with religious objections can avoid the contraceptives requirement in President Barack Obama's health care legislation.

Schenck, who previously headed the group Faith and Action, has said in other recent stories in Politico and Rolling Stone that he was part of a concerted effort to forge social and ministry relationships with conservative justices.

In the Times story, Schenck said the information about the Hobby Lobby decision came from Gail Wright, a donor to his organization who was part of the outreach effort to the justices and who had dined with Alito and his wife. Wright herself denied obtaining or sharing any information in an interview with the Times.

The New York Times also published a letter Schenck said he wrote Chief Justice John Roberts in July alerting him to the alleged breach years ago. Schenck wrote that he thought the information might be relevant as part of a probe into the leak of the abortion decision.

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said in a statement Saturday that the committee is "reviewing these serious allegations," and he called on fellow members of Congress to pass a bill that would require the high court to adopt a code of ethics.

Two fellow Democrats, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island and Rep. Hank Johnson of Georgia, who chair courts subcommittees, issued a statement calling the Times report "another black mark on the Supreme Court's increasingly marred ethical record" and said they "intend to get to the bottom of these serious allegations." They too urged passage of a code of ethics.

The Times' story included an emphatic denial by Alito that he'd disclosed the outcome of the case. The court released Alito's full statement to The Associated Press:

"The allegation that the Wrights were told the outcome of the decision in the Hobby Lobby case, or the authorship of the opinion of the Court, by me or my wife is completely false. My wife and I became acquainted with the Wrights some years ago because of their strong support for the Supreme Court Historical Society, and since then, we have had a casual and purely social relationship.

"I never detected any effort on the part of the Wrights to obtain confidential information or to influence anything that I did in either an official or private capacity, and I would have strongly objected if they had done so. I have no knowledge of any project that they allegedly undertook for 'Faith and Action,' 'Faith and Liberty,' or any similar group, and I would be shocked and offended if those allegations are true," it said.

Schenck's Faith and Action group became Faith & Liberty after becoming part of the Liberty Counsel

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in 2018.

Alito was appointed to the high court in 2006 by President George W. Bush.

## **EXPLAINER: How will UN climate deal on loss and damage work?**

By DANA BELTAJI and PETER PRENGAMAN Associated Press

SHARM el-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — The decision Sunday by nations around the world to establish a fund to help poor countries hit hard by a warming planet was one of the most significant since U.N. climate talks began 30 years ago.

It was an unequivocal confirmation that poor countries, with limited resources, are being most impacted by extreme weather events like floods, heat waves and storms and, at least at some level, industrialized nations that have done the most to contribute to climate change have a responsibility to help.

While government leaders, environmentalists and activists celebrated plans for such a fund, there are many outstanding questions, ranging from how it will work to long-term repercussions. Here is a look at the development of the idea of "loss and damage," the term it's given in climate negotiations, and what we know about the fund.

### HISTORY

In the early 1990s, the Alliance of Small Island States, a group of low-lying coastal and small island countries, began calling for the establishment of a loss and damage fund as the United Nations was creating a framework to deal with climate change on an international level.

Since then, the idea has always been a part of annual U.N. climate summits. However, it was often talked about on the margins of negotiations, something developing nations and activists would push for while many rich nations used their weight to squash the idea. For the first time, at this year's COP27 it was included in the agenda and became the centerpiece of discussions.

### WHO WILL FUND IT?

The fund will initially draw on contributions from developed countries and other private and public sources, such as international financial institutions, with an option for other major economies to join down the line.

The final text points to "identifying and expanding sources of funding," something the EU, the U.S. and others had pushed for during negotiations, suggesting that nations that are both high-polluting and considered developing under the criteria, should also pay into the fund.

During the talks, China said money for the new fund should come from developed countries, not them. But there's precedence for China to voluntarily pay into climate funds, if the U.S. does too.

When the Obama administration pledged \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund in 2014, China also paid \$3.1 billion for the fund.

More details of who pays will be decided by a committee that plans to get the fund going within a year.

### WHO WILL GET MONEY?

The deal says the fund will assist "developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change," though there will be room for middle-income countries that are severely affected by climate disasters to also get paid.

Pakistan, which was devastated by flooding that put a third of the country underwater, or Cuba, recently battered by Hurricane Ian, could be eligible.

How the loss and damage fund will fit in with "other institutions, agencies that are out there doing humanitarian work, helping people rebuild, dealing with migration and refugee crises, dealing with food security, water security" will need to be worked out, said David Waskow, the World Resources Institute international climate director.

Those details will also be hammered out by the committee in the coming year.

### REBUILDING TRUST

Beyond just financial help, setting up the fund is seen as a huge step forward, but how it's ultimately viewed will depend in part on how fast it can be set up.

In the closing session Sunday, Antigua's Lia Nicholson said the transitional committee should be set up



immediately and given clear mandates.

"This loss and damage fund must become the lifeboat that we need it to be," she said.

There is a credibility gap because of past broken promises.

In 2009, rich nations agreed to provide \$100 billion a year to help developing countries transition to green energy systems and adapt to climate change. However, to date, that initiative has never been fully funded.

## REPERCUSSIONS

One of the main reasons that rich nations long opposed such a loss and damage fund was the fear that it would open then up to long-term liability. Despite passage, that concern is very much still at play, as evidence by how negotiators made sure the language of the fund didn't say "liability" and that contributions were voluntary.

Despite those caveats, the establishment of such a fund could have repercussions, both legal and symbolic, in climate circles and beyond. For example, several Pacific Island nations have been pushing for the International Court of Justice to consider climate change. They argue that international laws must be strengthened to protect their rights in the case that their lands are engulfed by rising seas. The establishment of a loss and damage fund could bolster those arguments.

## Shells hit near nuclear plant; Blackouts roll across Ukraine

By JOHN LEICESTER and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Powerful explosions from shelling shook Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, the site of Europe's largest nuclear power plant, the global nuclear watchdog said Sunday, calling for "urgent measures to help prevent a nuclear accident" in the Russian-occupied facility.

A heavy barrage of Russian military strikes — almost 400 on Sunday alone — also hit Ukraine's eastern regions, and fierce ground battles shook the eastern Donetsk province, Ukraine's president said in his evening update.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said multiple explosions near the plant — on Saturday evening and again on Sunday morning — abruptly ended a period of relative calm around the nuclear facility that has been the site of fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces since Russia invaded on Feb. 24.

The fighting has raised the specter of a nuclear catastrophe ever since Russian troops occupied the plant during the early days of the war.

In renewed shelling both close to and at the site, IAEA experts at the Zaporizhzhia facility reported hearing more than a dozen blasts within a short period Sunday morning and could see some explosions from their windows, the agency said.

Later in the day, the IAEA said the shelling had stopped and that its experts would assess the situation on Monday.

"There has been damage to parts of the site, but no radiation release or loss of power," the agency said.

Still, Grossi called the shelling "extremely disturbing," and appealed to both sides to urgently implement a nuclear safety and security zone around the facility.

"Whoever is behind this, it must stop immediately," he said. "As I have said many times before, you're playing with fire!"

Russia has been pounding Ukraine's power grid and other infrastructure from the air, causing widespread blackouts and leaving millions of Ukrainians without heat, power or water as frigid cold and snow blankets the capital, Kyiv, and other cities.

Ukraine's state nuclear power operator, Energoatom, said Russian forces were behind the shelling of the Zaporizhzhia plant, and that the equipment targeted was consistent with the Kremlin's intent "to damage or destroy as much of Ukraine's energy infrastructure as possible" as winter sets in.

The weekend strikes damaged the system that would enable the plant's power units 5 and 6 to start producing electricity again for Ukraine, the power operator said. The State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine hopes to bring the two units to a minimally controlled power level to obtain steam, which

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is critical in winter for ensuring the safety of the plant and the surrounding area, Energoatom said.

Moscow, meanwhile, blamed Ukrainian forces for the damage. Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov accused the Ukrainians of shelling the power plant twice on Sunday and said two shells hit near power lines supplying the plant with electricity.

Elsewhere in the Zaporizhzhia region, Russian forces shelled civilian infrastructure in about a dozen communities, destroying 30 homes, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office said Sunday. Twenty buildings were damaged in shelling at Nikopol, a city across the river from the Zaporizhzhia plant, it said.

In his evening address, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces were making small gains in the eastern Luhansk region and were holding their ground in battles in the south.

Blackouts were scheduled Sunday night in 15 regions of Ukraine and the city of Kyiv, Zelenskyy said. The country's power utility, meanwhile, said there would be scheduled outages in every region on Monday.

"The restoration of networks and technical supply capabilities, the de-mining of power transmission lines, repairs — everything goes on round the clock," Zelenskyy said.

Three districts in the northern Kharkiv region — Kupyansk, Chuguiv and Izyum — also came under Russian artillery fire.

The situation in the southern Kherson region "remains difficult," the president's office said, citing Ukraine's armed forces. Russian forces fired tank shells, rockets and other artillery on the city of Kherson and several nearby settlements that were recently liberated by Ukrainian forces.

Shelling late Saturday struck an oil depot in Kherson, igniting a huge fire that sent billowing smoke into the air. Russian troops also shelled people lining up to get bread in Bilozerkha, a town in the Kherson province, wounding five, the report said.

In the city of Kherson — which still has little power, heat or water — more than 80 tons of humanitarian aid have been sent, said local official Yaroslav Yanushevych, including a UNICEF shipment of 1,500 winter outfits for children, two 35-40-kilowatt generators and drinking water.

Also on Sunday, a funeral was held in eastern Poland for the second of two men killed in a missile explosion Tuesday. The other man was buried Saturday. Poland and the head of NATO have both said the missile strike appeared to be unintentional, and was probably launched by Ukraine as it tried to shoot down Russia missiles.

## **Qatar opens World Cup with lavish half-hour ceremony**

By JENNA FRYER AP National Writer

AL KHOR, Qatar (AP) — Oscar-winning actor Morgan Freeman extended one yellow-gloved hand to a FIFA World Cup ambassador suffering from a rare spinal disorder in an image meant to represent inclusion in a country facing international criticism over its human rights record.

It wasn't the biggest moment of Sunday's seven-act World Cup opening ceremony ahead of the match between host country Qatar and Ecuador. The largest cheers were reserved for the Mideast and African leaders watching from their luxury suites in Bedouin-tent inspired Al Bayt Stadium.

In fact, it was Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani who drew a thunderous applause in a short speech delivered in Arabic from the suite.

"We have worked hard, along with many people, to make it one of the most successful tournaments," he said. "We have exerted all efforts and invested for the good of all humanity."

He was seated between FIFA president Gianni Infantino and his father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who secured the World Cup for the tiny gulf nation 12 years ago.

"How beautiful it is for people to put aside what divides them in order to celebrate their diversity and what brings them together at the same time," Sheikh Tamim said, his words translated into English on a video screen inside the stadium.

"I wish all the participating teams a magnificent football performance, high sportsmanship, and a time full of joy, excitement and delight for you all," he continued. "And let there be days that are inspiring with goodness and hope."

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He then said, "I welcome you and good luck to all," in his only words spoken in English.

Sheikh Hamad, viewed as the modernizer of Qatar during his 18 years as ruler, further delighted the crowd by autographing an official World Cup shirt handed to him by his son. He then held the shirt up to the crowd.

Qatar, home to 3 million people, most of them migrant workers, has spent more than \$200 billion on preparation for the World Cup. Seven new stadiums were built, including the 60,000-seat Al Bayt Stadium north of Doha.

The opening ceremony was meant to introduce Qatar to the world through its culture with a theme of "bridging distances." Creative director Ahmad Al Baker wanted the ceremony to signify "a gathering for all mankind, an invitation to come together as one, bridging all differences with humanity, respect and inclusion."

"Finally, we have reached the opening day, the day you have been eagerly waiting for," Sheikh Tamim said. "We will follow, and with us the whole world, God willing, the great football festival, in this spacious ambience for human and civilized communication.

"People of different races, nationalities, faiths and orientations will gather here in Qatar, and around screens on all continents to share the same exciting moments."

His words hit the mark as Sheikh Tamim was joined in the stadium suite by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, two leaders who had boycotted Qatar for years. Not present were the leaders of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, the two other nations involved in the boycott.

There were no major Western leaders in attendance, as Qatar is under intense scrutiny for its treatment of the migrant workers who prepped the nation for the World Cup, as well as the LGBTQ community. Gay and lesbian sex is criminalized in Qatar.

But among those who did attend the opening match were U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Senegalese President Macky Sall, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

Kuwait's crown prince came, along with the director-general of the World Health Organization and Djibouti's president. Also present was Jordan's King Abdullah II.

They listened as BTS' Jung Kook, while Qatari singer and producer Fahad Al Kubaisi debuted the single "Dreamers," produced specifically for the World Cup.

Then came remarks from Infantino, who spoke in Arabic, Spanish and finally English to officially open the tournament.

"Dear friends, welcome, welcome, to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022," Infantino said in English. "Welcome to celebrate football because football unites the world. And now let's welcome the teams and let the show begin."

As "The Business" by Tiesto blasted over the speakers, Qatar and Ecuador took to the field and the World Cup officially began.

## World Cup dismay for Qatar as Ecuador wins opening game

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

AL KHOR, Qatar (AP) — The large swathes of empty seats in the second half summed up the Qatar soccer team's disappointing start to its first ever World Cup.

The night started with more than 67,000 mostly Qatari fans filling the cavernous Al Bayt Stadium, enjoying an opening ceremony that showcased the tiny Arab emirate to a global audience 12 years after winning the right to host soccer's biggest event.

It ended with Qatar's overmatched team trudging off the field, its unwanted place in soccer history secure and with many of its dismayed fans having long disappeared.

The controversy-laced tournament opened Sunday with the 2019 Asian Cup champions getting outplayed in a 2-0 loss to Ecuador, ensuring a host team lost its opening game for the first time at a World Cup.



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"I would say we felt bad (for our supporters)," Qatar coach Felix Sanchez said. "I hope in the next game they will be prouder."

Ecuador captain Enner Valencia scored both of his team's goals in the first half of a one-sided game that wound up being a damage-limitation exercise for Qatar on one of the biggest nights in the nation's history.

The match took place after a colorful 30-minute opening ceremony — fronted by Oscar-winning actor Morgan Freeman and attended by powerful dignitaries including Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — that promoted inclusivity and mankind living "under one tent."

For many, that would jar with this World Cup being hosting by an emirate where homosexual acts are illegal, one that has come under strong criticism for how migrant workers have been treated building stadiums and tournament infrastructure since Qatar won the scandal-shrouded vote in 2010.

The yearslong scrutiny was never going to stop just because play on the field finally entered the narrative of a tournament dogged by human-rights controversies, yet a win for the host nation would have at least put a favorable light on Qatar, soccer-wise.

Instead, Qatar's players, fresh from spending seven months together in a pre-tournament training camp under Sanchez, froze in front of an expectant crowd and a disciplined Ecuador team that might just pose a danger to more high-profile opponents over the next few weeks.

"This is just the start of the World Cup," said the 33-year-old Valencia, who has now scored Ecuador's last five goals at the World Cup, including three in 2014. "We have to keep dreaming."

In what might go down as one of the worst displays by a host nation to open a tournament, Qatar had five shots in the match and none of them were on target. The team had only two touches inside the opposition penalty area.

Put simply, Ecuador was just too good for a team only playing at the World Cup because it is the host. "I wouldn't say we were naïve," Sanchez said. "I would say this was about nervousness ... maybe we had too many doubts."

Valencia thought he had scored in the third minute when he headed in from close range following an acrobatic cross from Felix Torres. After a video review of about two minutes, Ecuadorian celebrations were cut short when the goal was ruled out for a marginal offside.

Ecuador did take the lead, however, in the 16th minute when Valencia — running onto a through-ball — was tripped by Saad Alsheeb after rounding the goalkeeper, who was booked for the challenge. Valencia was nonchalant as he trotted up and converted the spot kick into the bottom corner.

The 33-year-old striker then added his second in the 33rd by heading in a right-wing cross from Angelo Preciado.

With Qatar's passes often going astray and its defensive raggedness repeatedly exposed, Ecuador had no problem holding onto its lead as Sanchez stood helpless in his technical area and the home fans fell quiet.

Many didn't return for the second half. And heading into the final quarter of the game, thousands of seats were empty.

It marked a huge contrast to a few hours earlier.

In a party-like atmosphere, camels and Arabian horses lined the entrance to the stadium, a Bedouin tent-inspired venue located in the rather isolated surrounds of the rural town of Al Khor, north of Doha.

And the seven-act opening ceremony lived up to its billing, the highlight being when Freeman extended one yellow-gloved hand to a FIFA World Cup ambassador suffering from a rare spinal disorder in an image representing inclusion in a country facing international criticism over its human-rights record.

Looking on from the luxury seats were FIFA president Gianni Infantino alongside leaders from the Middle East and Africa. Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, drew a thunderous applause in a short speech delivered in Arabic from the suite, with Infantino and the monarch's father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, on either side of him.

"I welcome you and good luck to all," the emir said in his only words spoken in English.

After this display, Qatar will need more than just luck to avoid joining South Africa as being the only host nation to fail to get out of the group stage at the World Cup.

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"We have to forget about the pressure and be more competitive," Sanchez said. "We can do it."

## BEER CHANT

The first half was winding down when a chant came from a large section of vocal, yellow-clad Ecuador fans: "We want beer." It was a humorous intervention two days after Qatar decided to ban beer sales at the stadiums during the World Cup. It was a late change by the conservative Islamic nation where access to alcohol is strictly limited. Only alcohol-free Bud Zero was sold at the game.

## VALENCIA INJURY

In a concern for Ecuador, Valencia — the national team's top scorer — was substituted in the 77th minute and said after the game he had discomfort in his knee and ankle. "I hope I can be ready," he said about the team's next game, against the Netherlands on Friday. Ecuador coach Gustavo Alfaro was under no illusions, though, saying: "Enner, he will play."

## UP NEXT

Qatar will look to bounce back against Senegal, also on Friday.

## 'Amazing': Mom hears late daughter's transplanted heart

CHICAGO (AP) — An Indiana woman heard the heartbeat of her late daughter inside the chest of a 68-year-old Illinois man who received it in a transplant operation.

Amber Morgan and Tom Johnson met for the first time Saturday, four years after he received a heart transplanted from the body of Andreona Williams, who was 20 when she died from asthma complications.

The Indiana Donor Network arranged the rare meeting at a Chicago hotel, the Chicago Tribune reported.

Morgan listened through a stethoscope that was pressed to Johnson's chest.

"It's almost like I got to hug my daughter again," the South Bend, Indiana, woman said.

"As a mother, you listen to your child's heartbeat when you carry them, and I don't think you ever ask to hear it again," Morgan said. "It's amazing."

Johnson of Kankakee, Illinois, said he sent a letter to Morgan in 2019, a year after the transplant at Loyola University Medical Center in suburban Chicago. He wanted to express his gratitude for the family's decision to donate the heart.

He sent a second letter, too, but did not get a response until recently when Morgan said she would like to meet, especially after her own heart problems.

Johnson had dealt with a weak heart since childhood. Doctors tried a pacemaker and defibrillator before telling him that a transplant was the best solution.

"It opened up a whole new world of possibilities," Johnson said. "It's just unbelievable. I mean, I can work out in the garden, ride the bike. My sons can't believe how quick I can go."

Johnson's wife, Sharon, said Williams' heart is special.

"He takes very special care of her," she said. "He never misses his heart medication. Never."

## European World Cup teams to defy FIFA in armband standoff

By GRAHAM DUNBAR AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — In a tense meeting at the World Cup on Sunday, FIFA tried to end a standoff with European teams about wearing unauthorized captain armbands for an anti-discrimination campaign that draws attention to Qatar.

It didn't work.

FIFA wanted seven European soccer federations to back down from allowing their captains to wear "One Love" armbands — a heart-shaped multi-colored logo aimed at exposing the host country's record on human rights.

FIFA failed to persuade the Europeans with a counter-proposal announced Saturday, and backed by United Nations agencies, of armbands with socially aware, though generic, slogans.

The urgency of the meeting at a luxury hotel in Doha was because England, the Netherlands and Wales all play Monday in their respective World Cup opening games.

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"I think we've made it clear that we want to wear it," England captain Harry Kane said Sunday evening in Doha ahead of playing Iran.

Wales coach Robert Page said it will be "no different for us" at the late game on Monday against the United States.

It sets up the prospect of viewers worldwide seeing in back-to-back-to-back games a symbol of disapproval with the host country and defiance of FIFA on the arms of Kane, Wales captain Gareth Bale and Netherlands captain Virgil van Dijk.

"We will stay with the European position," German soccer federation president Bernd Neundorf said a day after team captain Manuel Neuer had promised to wear the "One Love" armband against Japan on Wednesday.

"FIFA came up with their own armband idea just two days ago. That was not acceptable for us," Neundorf told German broadcaster ZDF.

Other officials declined to comment when leaving the meeting, but some noted the heated tone of exchanges.

FIFA also declined to comment, but on Saturday said it was "committed to using the power of football to effect positive change around the world."

The armband dispute flared two months ago and is still not resolved on the opening day of the tournament despite being a clear breach of FIFA regulations.

"For FIFA final competitions, the captain of each team must wear the captain's armband provided by FIFA," the soccer body's equipment regulations state.

A similar rule is written into tournament rules for this year's World Cup.

FIFA would typically open disciplinary cases if teams breached the rule, but its scope for punishment is likely limited to imposing fines of about 10,000 Swiss francs (\$10,500) on some of its wealthiest member federations.

The "One Love" campaign promotes diversity and inclusion in soccer and was started in the Netherlands. Last year, Georginio Wijnaldum wore the armband at a European Championship game in Hungary with the consent of UEFA, the governing body of European soccer.

In September, 10 European teams said their captains would wear the armband in upcoming UEFA-organized games. Eight of those had qualified to play in Qatar and said they would also ask FIFA for permission. France has since withdrawn support citing a wish to show respect for Qatar.

FIFA had not publicly responded to the requests before president Gianni Infantino announced an in-house alternative in Doha.

The FIFA choice of slogans for group games include "SaveThePlanet," "ProtectChildren" and "ShareTheMeal." The slogan "NoDiscrimination" — the only one aligned with the European teams' wish — will appear at the quarterfinal stage.

## Nigerian teens create fashion from trash to fight pollution

By DAN IKPOYI and CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — Teenage climate activists in Nigeria's largest city are recycling trash into runway outfits for a "Trashion Show."

Chinedu Mogbo, founder of Greenfingers Wildlife Initiative, a conservation group working with the activists, said the show was designed to raise awareness about environmental pollution.

Lagos, one of Africa's most populous cities with more than 15 million people, generates at least 12,000 metric tons of waste daily, authorities say. And implementation of environmental laws is poor: The World Bank estimates that pollution kills at least 30,000 people in this city every year.

This year's show came just as world leaders wrapped up two weeks of U.N. climate talks in Egypt.

In collaboration with young activists and models, the Greenfingers Wildlife Initiative says it's out to recycle as many plastics as possible, one community at a time.

It organizes regular trash clean-ups across communities, at drainage ditches and beaches. The plastic



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litter is then used to create fabrics for the fashion show.

Draped in red plastic spoons and fabric, 16-year-old Nethaniel Edegwa said she joined this year's edition as a model "to make a change."

"We can see that we are all being affected by the climate change, so I really want to make a difference," Edegwa said.

## AP Top 25: USC moves into top 5 for 1st time in 5 years

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Southern California moved into the top five of The Associated Press college football poll Sunday for the first time in five years.

Georgia received 62 of the 63 first-place votes in the AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank as the top four teams held their places after playing varying degrees of close games Saturday.

No. 2 Ohio State received the other first-place vote. Michigan was No. 3 again, followed by TCU.

The fifth-ranked Trojans edged up two spots after a thrilling victory against rival UCLA. The last time USC was ranked in the top five was September of 2017, when it started at No. 4 but spent most of the season ranked in the teens before finishing 12th.

Lincoln Riley's first season as USC coach has produced one of the best turnarounds in the country, with the Trojans going from four wins to 10, and the regular-season finale against No. 13 Notre Dame and a Pac-12 championship game still to go.

"If you would have told me at the end of last season I would be here now with this group of guys and being able to play for a championship, I would have called you a dead liar. Just being completely honest," USC fourth-year receiver Kyle Ford told reporters after the UCLA game. "I'm just so thankful for everyone on this team."

LSU stayed at No. 6. Clemson moved up two spots to No. 7. Alabama held at eighth and Tennessee dropped four spots to No. 9 after getting upset in a blowout at South Carolina.

In their 63-38 victory, the Gamecocks scored more points against a top-five team as an unranked team than any in the history of the AP poll.

Oregon rounded out the top 10 after the Ducks beat Utah in the Pac-12's other marquee game on Saturday night.

### POLL POINTS

Georgia set a school record with its 10th appearance at No. 1 this season. Last year the Bulldogs had nine No. 1s, the most in school history.

Georgia has been at No. 1 a total of 34 times, tying Michigan for 12th most in the history of the AP poll, which dates to 1936.

Southern California is a top-five team for the 283rd time in poll history. That's seventh most, 13 behind Nebraska.

The top five at being top five: Alabama (451), Oklahoma (430), Ohio State (418), Notre Dame (318) and Michigan (306).

### IN

Texas, again.

The 24th-ranked Longhorns, who started the season unranked, have moved into the Top 25 four times. They haven't managed to stay there for more than two weeks.

A blowout victory against Kansas pushed the Longhorns back into the rankings as they head toward a season finale against Baylor.

### OUT

Oklahoma State lost its rivalry game against Oklahoma to drop to 7-4 and out of the rankings again.

### CONFERENCE CALL

Pac-12 — 6 (Nos. 5, 10, 12, 14, 17, 22).

SEC — 5 (Nos. 1, 6, 8, 9, 20).

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ACC — 3 (Nos. 7, 16, 18).

American — 3 (Nos. 19, 21, 25).

Big Ten — 3 (Nos. 2, 3, 11).

Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 4, 15, 24).

Sun Belt — 1 (No. 23).

Independent — 1 (No. 13).

RANKED vs. RANKED

Rivalry weekend's highest stakes games:

— No. 19 Tulane at No. 21 Cincinnati, Friday. The winner hosts the AAC championship game.

— No. 10 Oregon at No. 22 Oregon State. First time since 2012 both are ranked.

— No. 3 Michigan at No. 2 Ohio State. The best combined ranking between the two were also 2-3 heading into the 2016, decided in overtime by a fourth-down spot.

— No. 13 Notre Dame at No. 5 USC. First time both have been ranked since 2017.

## EXPLAINER: Islam's ban on alcohol and how it's applied

By MARIAM FAM Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Just two days before the World Cup opener, host nation Qatar banned the sale of beer at stadiums in a sudden U-turn that was criticized by some and welcomed by others.

Qatari officials have long said they were eager to welcome soccer fans from around the world to the tournament but that visitors should also respect their culture and traditions. Alcohol consumption, impermissible in Islam, is one of the areas where the country has been attempting to strike a delicate balance.

Here's a look at some of the issues related to alcohol and Muslim beliefs.

WHAT DOES THE QURAN SAY ABOUT ALCOHOL?

Drinking alcohol is considered haram, or forbidden, in Islam. As proof of the prohibition, Islamic scholars and Muslim religious authorities typically point to a verse in the Quran, the Muslim holy book, that calls intoxicants "the work of Satan" and tells believers to avoid them. Additionally, they cite sayings of Prophet Muhammad and the negative effects that alcohol can have.

Beyond abstaining from drinking, some Muslims also seek religious edicts on a variety of related day-to-day questions or dilemmas. These include whether or not to consume food mixed with alcohol; if it's considered a sin to work at a restaurant that serves alcohol in a Western country; if perfumes containing alcohol are allowed; and whether to attend ceremonies or events where booze is served.

MUSLIM ATTITUDES ON ALCOHOL

While the prohibition on alcohol in Islam is believed to be widely heeded, not all Muslims abstain from drinking. Some drink, whether privately or publicly. In a Pew Research Center survey of Muslims around the globe, most people surveyed said that drinking alcohol was morally wrong. More than half in all countries where Muslims were surveyed held this view, including more than nine-in-ten in Thailand, Ghana, Malaysia, the Palestinian territories, Indonesia, Niger and Pakistan, according to the Pew report, which was published in 2013 and included 38,000 interviews. Still, in 11 of the 37 countries where this question was asked, at least one-in-ten said that drinking alcohol is morally acceptable and in some countries, sizable percentages said consuming alcohol is not a moral issue, the report added.

HOW IS THE BAN ON ALCOHOL APPLIED?

Alcohol is available in some Islamic nations though regulations vary widely and there can be intricate rules and restrictions on its sale or where it can be consumed. Some countries, like Saudi Arabia, outlaw alcohol altogether. Drinking there can be punished by flogging, fines, imprisonment and, for foreigners, deportation. The kingdom has in recent years been opening up entertainment options, which has spurred speculation about whether exceptions for alcohol consumption may be made in the future.

Other places have a more relaxed approach, such as Dubai, a top travel destination in the United Arab Emirates that is known to many for its glitz and love for superlatives. Dubai boasts a variety of bars, nightclubs and lounges that attract many visitors and well-to-do expatriate residents. In recent years, the city has also been increasingly loosening laws governing alcohol sales and possession of liquor. As in some

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other places, alcohol sales there provide a lucrative tax revenue source.

Alcohol is sold freely in liquor stores in Jordan and served in bars and restaurants throughout the capital of Amman. It is also available in Muslim-majority Egypt, which is traditionally popular with tourists and is home to a Christian minority. There, the young and rich can sip on cocktails or wines in beach clubs or bars, many with foreign names, while swaying to music. Wine, beer and spirits can also be ordered online among other options. Still, drinking is rejected by most; in the Pew study, 79% of surveyed Muslims in Egypt said they viewed alcohol as morally wrong.

## BREAKING THE RULES

In dry countries, some have gone to great lengths to obtain alcohol, at times risking arrest, or worse. In Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest sites, there have been reports of efforts to skirt the ban, including liquor runs by some to neighboring Bahrain. Attempts to sneak booze into the kingdom have over the years included bottles of whisky hidden in socks and cans of beer disguised as Pepsi. Some endeavors, however, end in tragedy. In 2002, 19 people in Saudi Arabia died and others were hospitalized after drinking cologne containing methanol. In Iran, some have also died from methanol poisoning after they drank toxic homemade brews.

## DRINKING IN QATAR

Qatar, which like Saudi Arabia follows an ultraconservative version of Islam known as Wahhabism, has strict limits on the purchase and consumption of alcohol, though its sale has been permitted in hotel bars for years. During the World Cup, beer was originally supposed to be sold also at stadiums and at fan zones in the evenings. That changed Friday when it was announced that only non-alcoholic beer would be available at the stadiums, except for in the luxury hospitality areas where champagne, wine, whiskey and other alcohol is served. The vast majority of ticket holders don't have access to those areas.

The World Cup in Qatar is not the first to spur debate over whether alcohol sales should be allowed in matches. For the 2014 tournament, Brazil was forced to change a law to allow alcohol sales in stadiums — but the same cultural issues were not at play. Brazil had banned alcohol sales at soccer matches in a bid to curb fan violence. Some of those who were pushing for the ban's lifting said at the time that in-stadium beer sales were a key part of World Cup tradition.

## Trump's growing GOP challengers revive fears of 2016 repeat

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Memories of the tumultuous 2016 Republican primary hung over the Las Vegas ballroom this weekend during the first major gathering of the party's potential contenders for the 2024 nomination.

No fewer than 10 White House prospects stepped onto the stage to pitch their plans to fix the nation — and their party. The details varied, but within most speeches was an extraordinary sense of defiance rarely seen since former President Donald Trump seized control of the Republican Party six years ago.

Their central message: Trump can and should be beaten.

Nikki Haley, the former ambassador to the United Nations under Trump, pledged in April that she wouldn't challenge the former president if he ran again. But Saturday night, facing hundreds of cheering Republicans, she vowed to give "1,000%" to a White House bid if she decided to get in.

"I've never lost an election, and I'm not going to start now," she said as the crowd roared.

But as the donors and activists who gathered for the Republican Jewish Coalition's two-day leadership conference applauded, perhaps no one was cheering louder than Trump himself from his Florida estate.

Trump's team believes, as do a growing number of anxious donors and Republican operatives, that the GOP's emboldened 2024 class may already be unintentionally re-creating the conditions that enabled Trump's success in 2016. That year, a crowded Republican field splintered the primary electorate and allowed Trump to become the party's presidential nominee despite winning just 35% or less of the vote in each of the three opening primary contests.

In the earliest days of the 2024 season, the 2016 parallels are eerie.

As then, Trump is viewed with suspicion within his party, his standing weakened considerably after sev-



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eral loyalists lost winnable races in this month's midterm elections. And most of all, a parade of ambitious Republicans is lining up to take him on.

A small, but growing group of Republican operatives is warning Trump's critics that the only way to defeat him is to rally behind a much smaller group of alternatives.

Eric Levine, a New York-based donor who attended the weekend gathering, called on his party to embrace no more than two or three candidates — and to move with real urgency.

"I don't think we have the luxury of waiting," said Levine, who has raised millions of dollars for Republicans in recent years and began speaking out against Trump only after the midterms. "If he becomes the Republican brand, the party is going to be destroyed."

For now, at least, Trump's rivals don't appear to be heeding his warning.

The most popular alternative to Trump, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, isn't likely to enter the race until the late spring, his allies say. But in his keynote address Saturday night, he left little doubt that 2024 was on his mind.

"In times like these, there is no substitute for victory," DeSantis said, citing over and over his overwhelming midterm success in Florida. "We've got a lot more to do, and I have only begun to fight."

And in a series of interviews, several other would-be Republican candidates and their aides indicated they would likely wait until next spring or summer to enter the race should they decide to run. That's even after Trump formally launched his 2024 campaign this past week.

New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, who isn't ruling out a 2024 run, said Trump's early announcement has created no sense of urgency; it simply highlighted his weakened political standing.

"I think all of us understand how little of a factor he's going to be," Sununu said in an interview. "He's not scaring anybody out. Anyone who wants to run is going to run. It'll be fun. It'll be a wide-open race."

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan said it's much too early to worry about winnowing the field.

"I think more voices, more potential choices," said Hogan, who is openly weighing a 2024 bid after his term ends in January. "Trump needs to be tested. People need to go out there and be willing to stand up to him."

Hogan continued: "I don't think anyone's going to listen to narrowing the field. Everybody's going to say, 'I should be the guy, I should be the guy, we should all be the guy.'"

Christie, a failed 2016 presidential contender who then went on to lead Trump's White House transition that year, said he ultimately expects seven or eight major candidates to enter the race, "which is manageable" compared with the 16 who ran against Trump in 2016.

"A lot of those people are fishing out of the Trump pond," Christie said, suggesting that prospects such as DeSantis and Mike Pompeo are "MAGA guys" who would steal support from Trump's base in a way that creates opportunities for others — like him.

Christie dismissed any talk of winnowing the field so soon.

"We should all rally behind someone? Okay, who? I don't think there's any obvious choice," Christie said.

Trump advisers initially hoped that he might clear the field with his early announcement. They now believe a crowded field will help him by splitting the anti-Trump vote — just as was the case in 2016. Trump won the New Hampshire and South Carolina primary elections that year with just 35% and 32% of the vote, respectively. Seven others divided the overwhelming majority of the vote.

Trump's team notes that his loyalists in key 2022 primary elections from Arizona to New Hampshire to Pennsylvania won their GOP nominations with between 30% and 40% of the vote — a base of support it believes continues to be his floor in the 2024 primary.

Former New Hampshire GOP Chair Jennifer Horn, who led the state party in 2016, said the growing number of likely 2024 candidates "should know better" this time around.

"They are feeding exactly the kind of environment that Trump needs to win," Horn warned. "If past is prologue, we've all got reason to be concerned."

And while there was evidence of Trump fatigue at the weekend conference, Trump received a warm reception when he appeared via teleconference on Saturday. The crowd cheered loudly when he noted

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his success in moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

But there was notable silence when he repeated his baseless claims about his 2020 election loss.

"The election was rigged. And it's too bad it was, and Israel lost a lot," Trump told the packed ballroom. "You better hope that a certain person wins the election in 2024."

And with Trump already a declared candidate, some operatives worry it's much later than his challengers think.

The first presidential primary debate could be just nine months away, using the 2016 presidential primary as a guide. By the summer of 2015, there were already 17 candidates in the race.

One of them was Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who is considering another run in 2024.

Speaking to reporters in Las Vegas, Cruz said Trump and his loyalists deserved some of the blame for the weaker-than-expected results in the midterms. "I'm frustrated when my party fields candidates with no realistic chance of success," Cruz said.

But when asked about the 2024 presidential contest, Cruz said only there were several candidates "clearly positioning to run" against Trump. "I believe that voters can and should sort that out."

Pompeo, Trump's former secretary of state, who is among those positioning themselves to run, slapped at the former president repeatedly on stage this weekend without mentioning his name directly. Instead, Pompeo said conservatives deserve leaders "who fight for them, not ourselves or our own egos."

And he acknowledged the looming 2024 primary.

"Who knows, the next time we're together we could be on stage, multiple podiums," Pompeo said. "Who knows who else might be there and what nicknames we'll have?"

## Tenn. inmate's mutilation highlights prison mental care woes

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tennessee death row inmate Henry Hodges' fellow prisoner Jon Hall warned long ago that he was at risk due to severe neglect by prison authorities, having spent three decades in solitary confinement with very little human contact or interaction.

In a federal lawsuit Hall filed in 2019 complaining that he too had been in solitary for nearly six years with no viable way to leave, he said of Hodges: "He's suffered the most adverse unnecessary (sic) & wanton neglect, deprivals, & mistreatment I've seen on death row. It's a miracle he's not committed suicide."

The warning went unheeded, and last month Hodges cut off his own penis during what his lawyer called a "psychiatric disturbance."

Hodges' self-mutilation was an extreme incident but not without precedent in U.S. penitentiaries: Texas inmate Andre Thomas plucked out one of his eyes five days after his 2004 arrest for murdering his wife and children, and while on death row in 2009, he removed his remaining eye and told prison officials he ate it.

Although most cases fall short of those grisly examples, they underscore the significant, growing and unaddressed mental health care needs of prisoners.

A study released last year from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics that compiled data from 2016 found 41% of federal and state prisoners reported a history of mental illness, and 13% had experienced serious psychological distress over the previous 30 days. Among the latter group, only 41% of state prisoners said they were currently receiving any kind of mental health treatment. The treatment rate for federal prisoners was even lower, at just 26%.

"Our prisons are not set up to provide mental health care, and they don't do it very well," said Craig Haney, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who has studied the effects of solitary confinement for decades.

Without enough resources to care for mentally ill prisoners, the sickest are sometimes treated with punitive measures, like solitary confinement, that only exacerbate the problem.

In Tennessee, Hall's lawsuit pointed to the vicious cycle he faced.

"To get out of solitary confinement he must be psychologically healthy, but the conditions of his confinement cause him psychological damage, and the lack of psychological treatment means he cannot recover

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sufficiently to get out of solitary confinement," Hall's attorneys wrote.

The annual report from the Tennessee Department of Correction shows the number of inmates categorized as having a "serious and persistent mental illness" rose from around 5% of the population in 2002 to nearly 23% in 2022. Nearly 19% more are listed as having other mental illnesses.

Questions abound as to whether the state is doing enough to confront the crisis.

Centurion of Tennessee, which won a five-year, \$123 million contract in 2020 to administer state-run prisons' mental health services, has been accused by rival Corizon of colluding with penitentiary officials to rig the bid. A lawsuit was settled out of court, and the Department of Correction said in May 2021 that it would rebid the contract. As of last week, one had not been awarded.

Meanwhile, a state comptroller's audit in January 2020 found both Centurion — which has administered medical services since 2013 — and Corizon were unable to consistently meet contractually required staffing levels. The audit also found problems with medical documentation.

"We could not locate mental health evaluations for all inmates with documented mental health conditions in our sample; medical staff did not always include physician's orders in patient files; we could not locate mental health treatment plans for all inmates with documented mental health conditions in our sample," the audit reads.

The Correction Department blamed the record-keeping problems on a cumbersome paper-based records system. The department called transitioning to electronic health records a "top priority" in 2020, but last week said it's still developing a request for proposals and hasn't determined when it will go out.

The department said the staffing vacancies did not affect inmate care because the shifts were generally filled by other staffers.

Haney, the psychology professor, said it likely wouldn't matter for Hodges if Tennessee prisons had the best mental health care in the world as long as he remained in lockdown. It is well established that even short periods of solitary confinement are detrimental to a person's mental health, he said.

"What's a therapist going to be able to do if, at the end of an hour, you are put back in an empty cell where you are going to stay 23 hours a day?" he said.

When inmates are isolated for weeks, they can become "out of touch with reality and do things that are inexplicable in any other context," Haney continued. "We're dependent as human beings on connections to and contact with other people. When you take that away, it becomes very destabilizing."

Hodges was sentenced to die in 1992 for the murder of a telephone repairman and immediately put in solitary confinement. Before he mutilated himself on Oct. 7, his behavior escalated over several days. Hodges went from smearing feces on his cell wall to slitting one of his wrists with a razor, according to court filings. When he was taken to the infirmary, he asked to go on suicide watch. But within a couple of hours he was back in a cell where he again used a razor, this time to cut off his penis.

After being released from the hospital, Hodges was returned to the infirmary. There he was kept naked and restrained by his arms and legs on a thin mattress over a concrete slab in a room that was lit 24 hours a day, with no mental stimulation such as a radio or television, his attorney said in a lawsuit filed Oct. 28. She compared his treatment to torture and said it violated constitutional protections against cruel and unusual punishment.

Lawyers for the state defended Hodges' treatment at a hearing the same day, with Deputy Attorney General Scott Sutherland arguing that he was receiving "around-the-clock care."

Nashville Chancellor I'Ashea Myles ordered the Correction Department to provide better care, including providing Hodges with clothing and mental stimuli.

Hodges' attorney is trying to get him transferred to the Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. A preliminary injunction hearing in his case is scheduled for Nov. 28.

Meanwhile his fellow inmates continue to be concerned. Hall filed a grievance on his behalf Oct. 13 requesting that Hodges receive special relief from prolonged solitary confinement. "After thirty years of sensory deprivation seclusions you have deprived that man of his sanity," Hall wrote.

The grievance was rejected as inappropriate, with the unit manager writing that Hall was not an official

inmate advocate.

## UN climate deal: Calamity cash, but no new emissions cuts

By SETH BORENSTEIN, SAMY MAGDY and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — For the first time, the nations of the world decided to help pay for the damage an overheating world is inflicting on poor countries, but they finished marathon climate talks on Sunday without further addressing the root cause of those disasters — the burning of fossil fuels.

The deal, gaveled around dawn in this Egyptian Red Sea resort city, established a fund for what negotiators call loss and damage.

It was a big win for poorer nations which have long called for money — sometimes viewed as reparations — because they are often the victims of climate-worsened floods, droughts, heat waves, famines and storms despite having contributed little to the pollution that heats up the globe.

It has also long been called an issue of equity for nations hit by weather extremes and small island states that face an existential threat from rising seas.

“Three long decades and we have finally delivered climate justice,” said Seve Paeniu, the finance minister of Tuvalu. “We have finally responded to the call of hundreds of millions of people across the world to help them address loss and damage.”

Pakistan’s environment minister, Sherry Rehman, said the establishment of the fund “is not about dispensing charity.”

“It is clearly a down payment on the longer investment in our joint futures,” she said, speaking for a coalition of the world’s poorest nations.

Antigua and Barbuda’s Molwyn Joseph, who chairs the organization of small island states, described the agreement as a “win for our entire world.”

“We have shown those who have felt neglected that we hear you, we see you, and we are giving you the respect and care you deserve,” he said.

The deal followed a game of chicken, with nations that supported the fund also signaling they would walk away if there was any backsliding on language on the need to slash greenhouse gas emissions.

Early Sunday morning, delegates approved the compensation fund but had not dealt with the contentious issues of an overall temperature goal, emissions cutting and the desire to target all fossil fuels for phase down. Through the wee hours of the night, the European Union and other nations fought back what they considered backsliding in the Egyptian presidency’s overarching cover agreement and threatened to scuttle the rest of the process.

The package was revised again, removing most of the elements Europeans had objected to but adding none of the heightened ambition they were hoping for.

“What we have in front of us is not enough of a step forward for people and planet,” a disappointed Frans Timmermans, executive vice president of the European Union, told his fellow negotiators. “It does not bring enough added efforts from major emitters to increase and accelerate their emissions cuts.

“We have all fallen short in actions to avoid and minimize loss and damage,” Timmermans said. “We should have done much more.”

Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock likewise voiced frustration.

“It is more than frustrating to see overdue steps on mitigation and the phase-out of fossil energies being stonewalled by a number of large emitters and oil producers,” she said.

The agreement includes a veiled reference to the benefits of natural gas as low emission energy, despite many nations calling for a phase down of natural gas, which does contribute to climate change.

While the new agreement doesn’t ratchet up calls for reducing emissions, it does retain language to keep alive the global goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). The Egyptian presidency kept offering proposals that harkened back to 2015 Paris language which also mentioned a looser goal of 2 degrees. The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times.



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Nor did the final deal expand on last year's call to phase down global use of "unabated coal" even though India and other countries pushed to include oil and natural gas in language from Glasgow. That too was the subject of last minute debate, especially upsetting Europeans.

Last year's climate talks president chided the summit leadership for knocking down his efforts to do more to cut emissions with a forceful listing of what was not done.

"We joined with many parties to propose a number of measures that would have contributed to this emissions peaking before 2025, as the science tells us is necessary. Not in this text," the United Kingdom's Alok Sharma said emphasizing the last part. "Clear follow through on the phase down of coal. Not in this text. A clear commitment to phase out all fossil fuels. Not in this text. And the energy text weakened in the final minutes."

And in his remarks to negotiators, U.N. climate chief Simon Stiell, who hails from Grenada, called on the world "to move away from fossil fuels, including coal oil and gas."

However, that fight was overshadowed by the historic compensation fund.

"Quite a few positives to celebrate amidst the gloom and doom" of not cutting emissions fast enough to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, said climate scientist Maarten van Aalst of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Center, which responds to climate disasters.

It's a reflection of what can be done when the poorest nations remain unified, said Alex Scott, a climate diplomacy expert at the think tank E3G.

"I think this is huge to have governments coming together to actually work out at least the first step of ... how to deal with the issue of loss and damage," Scott said. But like all climate financials, it is one thing to create a fund, it's another to get money flowing in and out, she said. The developed world still has not kept its 2009 pledge to spend \$100 billion a year in other climate aid — designed to help poor nations develop green energy and adapt to future warming.

Next year's talks will also see further negotiations to work out details of the new loss and damage fund, as well as review the world's efforts to meet the goals of the Paris accord, which scientists say are slipping out of reach.

According to the agreement, the fund would initially draw on contributions from developed countries and other private and public sources such as international financial institutions. While major emerging economies such as China wouldn't automatically have to contribute, that option remains on the table. This is a key demand by the European Union and the United States, who argue that China and other large polluters currently classified as developing countries have the financial clout and responsibility to pay their way.

The fund would be largely aimed at the most vulnerable nations, though there would be room for middle-income countries that are severely battered by climate disasters to get aid.

Martin Kaiser, the head of Greenpeace Germany, described the agreement on a loss and damage as a "small plaster on a huge, gaping wound."

"It's a scandal that the Egyptian COP presidency gave petrostates such as Saudi Arabia space to torpedo effective climate protection," he said.

Many climate campaigners are concerned that pushing for strong action to end fossil fuel use will be even harder at next year's meeting, which will be hosted in Dubai, located in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates.

## As British voters cool on Brexit, UK softens tone towards EU

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government on Sunday denied a report that it is seeking a "Swiss-style" relationship with the European Union that would remove many of the economic barriers erected by Brexit — even as it tries to improve ties with the bloc after years of acrimony.

Health Secretary Steve Barclay told Sky News "I don't recognize" the Sunday Times report, insisting the U.K. was still determined to "use the Brexit freedoms we have" by diverging from the EU's rules in key areas.

Switzerland has a close economic relationship with the 27-nation EU in return for accepting the bloc's rules and paying into its coffers.

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The U.K. government said "Brexit means we will never again have to accept a relationship with Europe that would see a return to freedom of movement, unnecessary payments to the European Union or jeopardize the full benefit of trade deals we are now able to strike around the world."

But despite the denials, the new Conservative government led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak wants to restore relations with the EU, acknowledging that Brexit has brought an economic cost for Britain. Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt last week expressed optimism that trade barriers between the U.K. and the EU would be removed in the coming years.

The shift comes as public opposition grows to the hard form of Brexit pursued by successive Conservative governments since British voters opted by a 52%-48% margin to leave the bloc in a 2016 referendum.

Now, according to polling expert John Curtice, 57% of people would vote to rejoin the bloc and 43% to stay out.

When the U.K. was negotiating its divorce from the EU, Conservative governments under Prime Ministers Theresa May and her successor Boris Johnson ruled out remaining inside the EU's borderless single market or its tariff-free customs union. Politicians who wanted closer ties were ignored or pushed aside.

The divorce deal struck by the two sides in 2020 has brought customs checks and other border hurdles for goods, and passport checks and other annoyances for travelers. Britons can no longer live and work freely across Europe, and EU citizens can't move to the U.K. at will.

The British government's fiscal watchdog, the Office for Budget Responsibility, said last week that leaving the EU has had "a significant adverse effect on U.K. trade."

Yet only recently have members of the government begun acknowledging Brexit's downsides. Hunt, who last week announced a 55 billion-pound (\$65 billion) package of tax increases and spending cuts to shore up an economy battered by soaring inflation, acknowledged Brexit had caused "trade barriers" with the U.K.'s nearest neighbors.

"Unfettered trade with our neighbors is very beneficial to growth," he told the BBC, and predicted that the "vast majority" of barriers would be removed – although it would take years.

Any move to rebuild ties with the EU will face opposition from the powerful euroskeptic wing of the Conservative Party. Even the opposition Labour Party — reluctant to reopen a debate that split the country in half and poisoned politics — says it won't seek to rejoin the bloc, or even the EU's single market, if it takes power after the next election.

Sunak, who took office last month, is a long-time Brexit supporter, but also a pragmatist who has made repairing the economy his top priority. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has rocked European security and sent energy prices soaring, has put Brexit squabbles into perspective for politicians on both sides of the English Channel.

Sunak wants to solve a festering feud with the EU over trade rules that have caused a political crisis in Northern Ireland, the only part of the U.K. that shares a border with an EU member nation. When Britain left the bloc, the two sides agreed to keep the Irish border free of customs posts and other checks because an open border is a key pillar of the peace process that ended 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland.

Instead, there are checks on some goods entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. That angered pro-British unionist politicians, who say the new checks undermine Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom. They are boycotting Belfast's power-sharing government, leaving Northern Ireland without a functioning administration.

The U.K. government is pinning its hopes on striking a deal with the EU that would ease the checks and coax Northern Ireland's unionists back into the government.

Months of talks when Johnson was in office proved fruitless, but the mood has improved since Sunak took over, though as yet there has been no breakthrough. \_\_\_\_\_

Follow AP's coverage of Brexit at <https://apnews.com/hub/brexit> and of British politics at <https://apnews.com/hub/british-politics>

**VP Harris to visit front-line Philippine island in sea feud**

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By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris will underscore America's commitment to defending treaty ally the Philippines with a visit that started Sunday and involves flying to an island province facing the disputed South China Sea, where Washington has accused China of bullying smaller claimant nations.

After attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Thailand, Harris flew Sunday night to a red-carpet welcome in Manila. On Monday, she meets President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for talks aimed at reinforcing Washington's oldest treaty alliance in Asia and strengthening economic ties, said a senior U.S. administration official, who was not identified according to practice, in an online briefing ahead of the visit.

Harris said her trip to Thailand was "quite successful" as she reiterated the U.S. commitment to the region Sunday afternoon at a roundtable discussion on climate change.

The panel of climate activists, civil society members and business leaders focused on clean energy and the threat climate change is posing to the Mekong River, which more than 60 million people in Southeast Asia use for food, water and transport. Harris announced the U.S. plans to provide up to \$20 million in funding for clean energy in the region via the Japan-U.S. Mekong Power Partnership.

Before her flight out, she stopped by a local market and perused a maze of shops, struck up conversations with shopkeepers and purchased Thai green curry paste.

On Tuesday she'll fly to Palawan province, which lies along the South China Sea, to meet fishermen, villagers, officials and the coast guard. Once there, she'll be the highest-ranking U.S. leader to visit the frontier island at the forefront of the long-seething territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

The Philippine coast guard is scheduled to welcome Harris on board one of its biggest patrol ships, the BRP Teresa Magbanua, in Palawan, where she is scheduled to deliver a speech, according to coast guard spokesperson Commodore Armand Balilo.

Harris will underscore the importance of international law, unimpeded commerce and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, the U.S. official said.

China can view the visit the way it wants, the official added in response to a question, but Washington's message is that the U.S., as a member of the Indo-Pacific, is engaged and committed to the security of its allies in the region.

Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Manuel Romualdez said Harris's trip to Palawan shows the level of America's support to an ally and concern over China's actions in the disputed sea.

"That's as obvious as you can get, that the message they're trying to impart to the Chinese is that 'we support our allies like the Philippines on these disputed islands,'" Romualdez told The Associated Press. "This visit is a significant step in showing how serious the United States views this situation now."

Washington and Beijing have long been on a collision course in the contested waters. While the U.S. lays no claims to the strategic waterway, where an estimated \$5 trillion in global trade transits each year, it has said that freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea is in America's national interest.

China opposes U.S. Navy and Air Force patrols in the busy waterway, which Beijing claims virtually in its entirety. It has warned Washington not to meddle in what it says is a purely Asian territorial conflict — which has become a delicate front-line in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region and has long been feared as a potential flashpoint.

In July, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on China to comply with a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated Beijing's vast territorial claims in the South China Sea and warned that Washington is obligated to defend treaty ally Philippines if its forces, vessels or aircraft come under attack in the disputed waters.

China has rejected the 2016 decision by an arbitration tribunal set up in The Hague under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea after the Philippine government complained in 2013 about China's increasingly aggressive actions in the disputed waters. Beijing did not participate in the arbitration, rejected its ruling as a sham and continues to defy it.

Harris' visit is the latest sign of the growing rapport between Washington and Manila under Marcos Jr.,

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who took office in June after a landslide electoral victory.

America's relations with the Philippines entered a difficult period under Marcos' predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who threatened to sever ties with Washington and expel visiting American forces, and once attempted to abrogate a major defense pact with the U.S. while nurturing cozy ties with China and Russia.

When President Joe Biden met Marcos Jr. for the first time in September in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, he stressed the depth by which the U.S. regards its relations with the Philippines despite some headwinds.

"We've had some rocky times, but the fact is it's a critical, critical relationship, from our perspective. I hope you feel the same way," Biden said then. Marcos Jr. told him, "We are your partners. We are your allies. We are your friends."

The rapprochement came at a crucial time when the U.S. needed to build a deterrent presence amid growing security threats in the region, Romualdez said.

Philippine military chief of staff Lt. Gen. Bartolome Bacarro said last week that the U.S. wanted to construct military facilities in five more areas in the northern Philippines under a 2014 defense cooperation pact, which allows American forces to build warehouses and temporary living quarters within Philippine military camps.

The Philippines Constitution prohibits foreign military bases but at least two defense pacts allow temporary visits by American forces with their aircraft and Navy ships for joint military exercises, combat training and bracing to respond to natural disasters.

The northern Philippines is strategically located across a strait from Taiwan and could serve as a crucial outpost in case tensions worsen between China and the self-governed island.

Harris spoke briefly with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Saturday while heading into a closed-door meeting at APEC. When asked Sunday whether they discussed Taiwan or North Korea, she reiterated they talked about "keeping open lines of communication."

While aiming to deepen ties, the Biden administration has to contend with concerns by human rights groups over Marcos Jr. The Philippine leader has steadfastly defended the legacy of his father, a dictator who was ousted in a 1986 pro-democracy uprising amid human rights atrocities and plunder.

Harris also plans to meet Vice President Sara Duterte, daughter of Marcos' predecessor, who oversaw a deadly anti-drugs crackdown that left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead and sparked an International Criminal Court investigation as a possible crime against humanity. The vice president has defended her father's presidency.

Given the Biden administration's high-profile advocacy for democracy and human rights, its officials have said human rights were at the top of the agenda in each of their engagements with Marcos Jr. and his officials.

After her meeting Monday with Marcos Jr., Harris plans to meet civil society activists to demonstrate U.S. commitment and continued support for human rights and democratic resilience, the U.S. official said.

## Honorary Oscar awards celebrate Fox, Weir, Warren and Palcy

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Four standing ovations in one night might seem a little over-the-top, even by Hollywood standards. But at the Governors Awards Saturday night, where Michael J. Fox, Euzhan Palcy, Peter Weir and Diane Warren were celebrated with honorary Oscar statuettes, each moment felt worthy.

After several pandemic-adjusted years, the annual event put on by the Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was back in full form at the Fairmont Century Plaza Hotel on Saturday.

The ballroom was teeming with stars including Tom Hanks, Viola Davis, Colin Farrell, Angela Bassett, Margot Robbie, Jennifer Lawrence, Michelle Yeoh, Robert Downey Jr., Michelle Williams, Cher, Austin Butler, Florence Pugh, Rooney Mara, Jessica Chastain, Damien Chazelle, Jordan Peele, Janelle Monáe and Ron Howard, to name just a few.

The Governors Awards is a celebration of the honorees and a chance for many of the filmmakers and



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actors hoping to win awards to mingle with potential voters before everyone takes leave for the holidays with an armful of screeners to watch and consider.

"It's a really special night," Butler said. "I just had a really special moment with Robert Downey Jr."

This was the first Governors Awards for the "Elvis" star, who was accompanied by director Baz Luhrmann and Priscilla Presley.

The room at the Governors Awards brings many unexpected star pairings, as everyone clamors to meet someone they admire. Near one table, Hanks could be seen sharing a laugh with Yeoh. In another part of the room, Chastain chatted with Billy Eichner, while Jude Law caught up with director Daniel Kwan and Ke Huy Quan posed for a photo with Elizabeth Banks and Rian Johnson.

But the main event brought everyone to their seats: The presentation of the honorary Oscars.

Fox, who was given the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for his contributions to Parkinson's disease research, was up first and received a colorful introduction from his friend Woody Harrelson.

"He's a genuinely great guy," Harrelson said. "What can I say? He's Canadian."

The 61-year-old "Back to the Future" and "Family Ties" star was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1991 at age 29 and in 2000 started a foundation to fund further research into the condition. To date, the foundation has raised more than \$1.5 billion.

"My optimism is fueled by my gratitude," Fox said.

Fox gave a sharp, funny, thoughtful speech to accept the award. He recounted how he dropped out of high school to give acting a shot and a teacher told him, "Fox, you're not going to be cute forever."

"I didn't know how to respond and I said, 'Maybe just long enough,'" Fox said.

He has had a particularly challenging year with injuries, including a broken cheek, hand, shoulder, arm and elbow, and the loss of his mother, who died in September, all of which he spoke about in-depth in a recent People Magazine cover story. Tracy Pollan, Fox's wife with whom he has four children, was there to support him and he called her on stage to close his speech.

"I can't walk and carry this thing (the Oscar) so I once again ask Tracy to carry the weight," Fox said.

Cher was on hand to introduce Warren, the prolific songwriter and 13-time Oscar nominee. She laughed that Warren will often call her to say she's written her best song yet, to which Cher responds, "You always say that."

When Warren took the stage, she said the words she's been waiting to say for 34 years, since she got her first Oscar nomination: "I'd like to thank the Academy."

"Mom, I finally found a man," Warren said, looking at the golden statuette. "I know you wanted him to be a nice Jewish boy but it's really hard to tell."

Jeff Bridges came out to celebrate Weir, the Australian filmmaker who directed him in the 1993 film "Fearless." He said it was Robin Williams who brought them together.

Weir, too, reflected about Williams, with whom he worked on "Dead Poets Society" and marveled about how Williams was when no one was around and inspiration would strike.

Weir, 78, was a leading voice in the Australian New Wave movement, with pictures like "Picnic at Hanging Rock," "The Last Wave" and "Gallipoli," before successfully transferring to Hollywood filmmaking where he traversed genres with ease directing films like "Dead Poets Society" and "The Truman Show" to "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World." The Australian auteur received many Oscar nominations over the years, but hasn't made a feature since "The Way Back," from 2010.

"I had a wonderful 20 years of making studio pictures," Weir said. "I love craft I think that's what it's all about. Don't you love something that's well made whether it's a chair a table or a statue?"

Davis helped close out the night celebrating Palcy, who was first Black woman to direct a film produced by a major studio (MGM with "A Dry White Season.")

"I am always defending my womanhood and my blackness," Davis said. "You said, 'I ain't gonna do that, I'm going to wait for the work that is worthy of my talent.' You used it as warrior fuel."

Palcy also retreated from Hollywood moviemaking in the past decade, but unlike Weir, the 64-year-old Martinique native is ready to come back and make films again.

"Black is bankable. Female is bankable," Palcy said. "My stories are not Black, they are not white, they

are universal.”

## Reality TV stars Todd and Julie Chrisley to be sentenced

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Todd and Julie Chrisley were driven by greed as they engaged in an extensive bank fraud scheme and then hid their wealth from tax authorities while flaunting their lavish lifestyle, federal prosecutors said, arguing the reality television stars should receive lengthy prison sentences.

The Chrisleys gained fame with their show “Chrisley Knows Best,” which follows their tight-knit, boisterous family. They were found guilty on federal charges in June and are set to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Eleanor Ross in a hearing that begins Monday and is likely to extend into Tuesday.

Using a process to calculate a sentencing guideline range based on several factors, federal prosecutors determined the upper end of that range is nearly 22 years for Todd Chrisley and about 12 and a half years for Julie Chrisley. The couple should also be ordered to pay restitution, prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

“The Chrisleys have built an empire based on the lie that their wealth came from dedication and hard work,” prosecutors wrote. “The jury’s unanimous verdict sets the record straight: Todd and Julie Chrisley are career swindlers who have made a living by jumping from one fraud scheme to another, lying to banks, stiffing vendors, and evading taxes at every corner.”

The Chrisleys disagree with the government’s guideline calculations. Todd Chrisley’s lawyers wrote in a filing that he should not face more than nine years in prison and that the judge should sentence him below the lower end of the guidelines. Julie Chrisley’s lawyers wrote that a reasonable sentence for her would be probation with special conditions and no prison time.

The Chrisleys were convicted in June on charges of bank fraud, tax evasion and conspiring to defraud the IRS. Julie Chrisley was also convicted of wire fraud and obstruction of justice.

Peter Tarantino, an accountant hired by the couple, was found guilty of conspiracy to defraud the IRS and willfully filing false tax returns. He is set to be sentenced along with the Chrisleys.

Prosecutors have said the couple submitted fake documents to banks and managed to secure more than \$30 million in fraudulent loans. Once that scheme fell apart, they walked away from their responsibility to repay the loans when Todd Chrisley declared bankruptcy. While in bankruptcy, they started their reality show and “flaunted their wealth and lifestyle to the American public,” prosecutors wrote. When they began making millions from their show, they hid the money from the IRS to avoid paying taxes.

The Chrisleys submitted a false document to a grand jury that was investigating their crimes and then convinced friends and family members to tell lies while testifying under oath during their trial, prosecutors wrote. Neither of them has shown any remorse and they have, instead, blamed others for their own criminal conduct, prosecutors wrote.

“The Chrisleys are unique given the varied and wide-ranging scope of their fraudulent conduct and the extent to which they engaged in fraud and obstructive behavior for a prolonged period of time,” prosecutors wrote.

Todd Chrisley’s lawyers wrote in a court filing that the government never produced any evidence that he meant to defraud any of the banks and that the loss amount calculated by the government is incorrect. They also noted that the offenses of which he was convicted were committed a long time ago. He has no serious criminal history and has medical conditions that “would make imprisonment disproportionately harsh,” they wrote.

His lawyers submitted letters from friends and business associates that show “a history of good deeds and striving to help others.” People who rely on Chrisley — including his mother and the “scores of people” employed by his television shows — will be harmed while he’s in prison, his lawyers wrote.

They urged the judge to give him a prison sentence below the guideline range followed by supervised release and restitution.

Julie Chrisley’s lawyers wrote in a filing that she had a minimal role in the conspiracy and was not involved when the loans discussed in sentencing documents were obtained. She has no prior convictions,

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is an asset to her community and has "extraordinary family obligations," her lawyers wrote, as they asked for a sentence of probation, restitution and community service.

The Chrisleys have three children together, including one who is 16, and also have full custody of the 10-year-old daughter of Todd Chrisley's son from a prior marriage. Julie Chrisley is the primary caregiver to her ailing mother-in-law, the filing says. Her lawyers submitted letters from family and friends that show she is "hard-working, unfailingly selfless, devoted to her family and friend, highly respected by all who know her, and strong of character."

If the judge does sentence both Chrisleys to prison, Julie Chrisley's lawyers asked that their prison terms be staggered so she can remain on supervised release until her husband is done serving his sentence or until their granddaughter turns 18.

## Lyft drivers spread the Gospel with ride-hailing ministries

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One is an ordained pastor in Brooklyn, the other a single mother and children's book author in New Jersey. Both drive for Lyft. Both share the word of God as roving preachers.

Pastor Kenneth Drayton and Tomika Reid try to inspire passengers through spiritual guidance on the road as part of what they see as mobile Christian ministries.

"You don't always have to go to a church or sanctuary to experience the restoration and the power of God," said Drayton, 61, a minister who also preaches at Mantels of Promise Ministries in Brooklyn.

He began to drive for Uber in 2015 after retiring from a career in the insurance industry. Listening to passengers who shared their stories on the road, he understood that his car could become an extension of the church.

"The car is such an ideal place to do this because it's personal," said Drayton, who now drives for Lyft. "I can share my faith and it's so important because that's what I live for."

On a recent day, he began by praying in his impeccably clean 2017 Toyota Camry, and reciting Psalm 23 ("The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want..."). On a break from driving in Manhattan, he reflected on how he reaches out to passengers.

He always plays classical music on his car stereo (his favorite is Mozart) to encourage a calm, pleasant mood. He begins with a greeting and a kind word. His priority, he says, is to introduce passengers to Christ, but he's respectful if they're not receptive. They're often Christian, but he has also spoken to atheists, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and Muslims. Instead of trying to preach, he says he focuses his message on the love of God and tends to avoid doctrine.

"That's been the conflict, the repellent for healing and transformation," said Drayton. "It's discussion and debates that have caused holy wars."

Reid also stays away from doctrine and focuses more on sharing her personal story, hoping it can help others deal with their challenges. Like Drayton, she feels that the church goes beyond the brick and mortar.

"This is something that God put me in a position to do," she said. "And I love it because I just love inspiring people and encouraging them to never give up."

Losses have marked her life, including the death of her mother, sister and the fathers of her two daughters. She often retells her story to passengers.

"I wanted to give up, but because of my faith in God, I'm still here standing" said the 40-year-old single mother. "And I just want to use my story to encourage others never to give up, no matter what you go through."

In 2017, she began driving for Lyft to support her daughters, who are now 14 and 20. In the backseat pocket of her 2019 Nissan Altima, she keeps the five books that she has written, including one for children on how to cope with the loss of a loved one.

Passengers often buy her books or tip her generously and she proudly keeps a five-out-of-five-star rating. She usually plays George Michael on weekdays and gospel music on Sundays when she's working and can't make it to church.

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"When I hear people say, 'You made my day,' I know I can make an impact on people's life," Reid said. "It brings joy to me. It's like I've turned my pain into a purpose to inspire others."

Evangelism experts say ride-hailing can be conducive to talking about faith. Lyft's guidelines do not expressly prohibit evangelism nor conversations about religion, but they do promote inclusion and forbid discrimination, including on race, gender, and religious grounds.

"It doesn't come as a great surprise to me because thinking about Christianity, there's a long tradition of using technology to spread the word of God," said Robert Geraci, professor of religious studies at Manhattan College.

He cited examples, including how — shortly after space flight became possible — there were people talking about how to use satellites to spread the Gospel and how preachers have used TV for decades.

"Uber, Lyft becomes a mode of religious communication and not just a transportation strategy," he said. "It's also a religious strategy."

People in customer-facing professions, such as driving for ride-hailing apps, often strike up conversations about life and its challenges, said Ed Stetzer, executive director of the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center.

"In a world where interpersonal interaction is less common— our bank tellers are now all ATMs— faith sharing is less common. So people are finding creative ways," said Stetzer, who is also dean of the school of Mission, Ministry, and Leadership.

"That's what Christians have done for centuries, long before ride-share apps."

## Despite dangerous pregnancy complications, abortions denied

By LAURA UNGAR and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

Weeks after Roe v. Wade was overturned, Dr. Grace Ferguson treated a woman whose water had broken halfway through pregnancy. The baby would never survive, and the patient's chance of developing a potentially life-threatening infection grew with every hour.

By the time she made it to Pittsburgh to see Ferguson, the woman had spent two days in a West Virginia hospital, unable to have an abortion because of a state ban. The law makes an exception for medical emergencies, but the patient's life wasn't in danger at that moment.

"She was just kind of standing on the edge of the cliff," Ferguson said, "waiting for an emergency to happen or for the baby to pass away."

In Pennsylvania, at the hospital a four-hour drive away, Ferguson was able to induce labor to end the pregnancy.

A growing number of physicians and families tell similar stories as a post-Roe fear comes to pass: Pregnant women with dangerous medical conditions are showing up in hospitals and doctors' offices only to be denied the abortions that could help treat them. Some doctors in states with restrictive abortion laws say they've referred or suggested more patients go elsewhere than ever. Some women are facing harmful, potentially deadly delays.

Doctors say they're forced to balance medical judgment with potential punishments, including prison time. Although even the strictest laws allow abortion to save a mother's life, a weighty question lingers: How close to death must the patient be?

"You don't automatically go from living to dead," Ferguson said. "You slowly get sicker and sicker."

It's impossible to say when that line is crossed, said Dr. Alison Haddock, who's on the board of the American College of Emergency Physicians. "There's just no moment where I'm standing in front of a critically ill patient where I know: OK, before their health was just in danger. But now, their life is in danger," she said.

Experts say it's hard to pinpoint data on abortion denials when serious complications arise. Employers often discourage health care workers from speaking about them, though The Associated Press reached more than a dozen doctors and patients who shared stories of such denials.

And many doctors and researchers agree that evidence, even if largely anecdotal, shows a widespread problem. In Texas, for example, a doctors' association sent a letter to the state's medical board saying some hospitals refused to treat patients with major complications because of the state's abortion ban.

And at the University of California, San Francisco, researchers who invited health care workers nation-



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wide to anonymously send examples of poor-quality care caused by abortion restrictions say they were surprised by the initial volume of responses. Twenty-five submissions came in the first six weeks. Among them were descriptions of patients sent home after their water broke in the second trimester who later returned with serious infections. One told of an ectopic pregnancy that was allowed to grow on a scar left by a previous cesarean section – which can cause uterine rupture, hemorrhage and death.

“The legislators are playing with fire,” said Dr. Dan Grossman, the project’s leader.

Dr. Cara Heuser, a maternal-fetal specialist in Utah, recalled one patient denied an abortion in Idaho despite developing a serious heart condition midway through pregnancy. The woman had to be transported to Utah for the procedure.

Dr. Lauren Miller, a maternal-fetal specialist in Boise, said she regularly sees patients whose water breaks at 15 through 19 weeks’ gestation, and all doctors can do is help them make the tough decision: “Do they stay here for their care and just wait until something bad happens, or do we facilitate them finding care out of state?”

Dr. David Eisenberg, an associate professor at Washington University in St. Louis, said Missouri doctors and hospitals are regularly “punting that responsibility for care” when people show up with serious complications. They wind up at the university-affiliated medical center where he works — one of the few in Missouri that performs abortions in such cases.

He said patients in crisis are told: “I’ve got to call the lawyer for the hospital before I can figure out what I can do.

“That’s just totally insane and totally inappropriate and really unfortunate.”

The stories are similar when pregnancy is complicated by cancer — diagnosed in about 1 in 1,000 pregnant women each year.

Dr. Karen Knudsen, CEO of the American Cancer Society, said some oncologists are confused about treating pregnant cancer patients, particularly when therapies may induce miscarriage. Dr. Kristina Tocce, medical director for Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, said she’s seen patients with life-threatening diagnoses forced to drive 10 hours or more, or fly out of state, to get abortions so they can begin chemotherapy or radiation treatment.

Tocce said she recently treated a Texas woman whose cancer had gone into remission but came back aggressively after she became pregnant with her second child. She sought an abortion to resume the cancer treatment that promised to keep her alive for her toddler. During the visit, she thanked Tocce repeatedly.

“I finally told the patient: “You can’t thank us anymore. We are doing our jobs,”” Tocce said. “I said, ‘I am so disturbed that you had to travel so far with your family and the hurdles you have had to overcome.’”

Some abortion opponents say doctors may be unnecessarily denying abortions in life-threatening situations out of fear. Dr. Patti Giebink, a former abortion doctor who described changing her views in her book “Unexpected Choice: An Abortion Doctor’s Journey to Pro-Life,” said it comes down to intent. If you intend to save the mother and not end the life of the fetus, she said, “you’re doing good medicine.”

“We’re sort of in a period of time where all these questions come up,” she said. “The legislatures are going to be working to solve some of these problems.”

Dr. Paul LaRose, a member of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said he thinks the issue is overstated and those raising concerns are exaggerating.

“Or they may be they misinformed,” he said. “Most pro-life physicians would take care of the mother and do what’s necessary without purposely taking the life of the unborn baby.”

But some women say restrictive abortion laws have put them in danger.

Kristina Cruickshank of Rosenberg, Texas, thought her life was in jeopardy after a diagnosis of a nonviable “partial molar pregnancy,” in which the fetus has too many chromosomes and develops incompletely. Cruickshank, 35, had thyroid problems and massive cysts around both ovaries. She was vomiting, bleeding and in pain.

It was early June, shortly before Roe fell, when Texas banned nearly all abortions after roughly six weeks of pregnancy. She endured three days of agony in one hospital before her doctor could find another that

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agreed to the termination procedure. She thought: "What am I supposed to do, just lay here and die?" Mylissa Farmer of Joplin, Missouri, faced similar delays in August. Her water broke at 17 1/2 weeks' gestation, sending her to the emergency room. Tests showed she'd lost all her amniotic fluid. The fetus she and her boyfriend had named Maeve wasn't expected to survive.

Despite risks of infection and blood loss, she couldn't get an abortion. The fetus still had a heartbeat. Doctors told her Missouri law superseded their judgment, medical records show.

She tried for days to get an out-of-state abortion, but many hospitals said they couldn't take her. Ultimately, an abortion helpline connected Farmer with a clinic in Granite City, Illinois. She drove 4 1/2 hours from home — while in labor — and had the procedure.

After news outlets covered Farmer's story and she appeared in a political ad, the Missouri health department started an investigation into whether the Joplin hospital, which declined to comment on the case, violated federal law. The state has shared its preliminary findings with the federal government.

Farmer said the experience was so traumatic that she took a permanent step to ensure nothing like this happens to her again.

She got her tubes tied.

## No more mad cow worries, banned blood donors can give again

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

U.S. Army veteran Matt Schermerhorn couldn't give blood for years because he was stationed in Europe during a deadly mad cow disease scare there. Now, he's proud to be back in the donor's chair.

Schermerhorn, 58, is among thousands of people, including current and former military members, who have returned to blood donation centers across the country after federal health officials lifted a ban that stood for more than two decades.

"It's a responsibility. It's a civic duty," said Schermerhorn, who donated on Veterans Day at the ImpactLife center in Davenport, Iowa. "You really don't have to go out of your way too much to help your fellow man."

Blood collectors nationwide are tracking down people like Schermerhorn, U.S. citizens who lived, worked or vacationed in the United Kingdom, France, Ireland or served at military bases in Europe during various periods between 1980 and 2001, as well as anyone who received blood transfusions in those three countries anytime since 1980.

Since 1999, those people have been banned from giving blood in the U.S. for fear that they'd been exposed to mad cow disease. Outbreaks of the cattle-borne infection swept through Europe, eventually killing at least 232 people, mostly in the U.K. Four cases have been reported in the U.S., all in people who likely acquired the infections abroad, health officials said.

The rare disease is caused by an abnormal form of a protein called a prion, which triggers damaging changes to the brain and central nervous system. It's spread from sick cattle to people who eat contaminated beef, but it can also be transmitted through blood transfusions. But after decades of research and reassessment, the federal Food and Drug Administration has determined that the risk of the disease has abated, thanks in large part to changes in the way cattle are raised and the treatment of donated blood. The agency eased the restrictions over the past two years and fully lifted them in May.

That means hundreds of thousands of former donors can once again roll up their sleeves, perhaps bolstering U.S. blood collections, which lagged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The most important thing is for individuals that believe they may now be eligible to call their local blood center," said Kate Fry, chief executive of America's Blood Centers, which represents more than 600 blood collection sites providing nearly 60% of the U.S. blood supply.

The American Red Cross, which provides about 40% of the U.S. supply, last month began accepting donors previously deferred because of the risk of mad cow disease, formally known as variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, or vCJD.

Invariably fatal, with an incubation period that can last years or even decades, the emergence of vCJD in humans in the late 1990s alarmed officials responsible for the safety of the blood supply, said Dr. Rita

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Reik, chief medical officer for OneBlood, a collection center in Florida.

"It was a scary new disease," Reik said. "Which is why it required such a length of time to study this disease to get a level of comfort to get to the deferral."

In the U.K., five cases of vCJD were transmitted by blood transfusions, according to the National Health Service. Today, the risk of being infected via blood transfusion is "essentially negligible," Reik said.

Tracking down lost donors has been a challenge, said Dr. John Armitage, chief executive of the Oklahoma Blood Institute. His staff has used emails, postcards and phones to contact more than 6,300 donors who were turned away since 1999. So far, about 350 have returned to donate.

"We feel good about that as a first effort," Armitage said. "We know there are folks that we haven't reached yet."

Bans remain in place for people who are suspected of having vCJD or related diseases, those who have a blood relative with a related disease and those who received pituitary human growth hormone or a certain type of brain tissue transplant from cadavers.

The now-lifted military ban included Schermerhorn, a retired Army lieutenant colonel who was stationed in Germany from 1988 to 1992.

Schermerhorn stayed away for years -- until he saw a local news story about the recent change. He's donated his rare type O-negative blood eight times since last year.

For Schermerhorn, giving blood is one way to repay past donors who stepped up when his older brother was badly injured in a boating accident.

"My brother had taken nine pints of blood from complete strangers," he said. "They were part of the lifeline that kept him alive." \_\_\_\_\_

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## Today in History: November 21, deadly Las Vegas hotel fire

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Nov. 21, the 325th day of 2022. There are 40 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 21, 1980, 87 people died in a fire at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

On this date:

In 1789, North Carolina became the 12th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1920, the Irish Republican Army killed 12 British intelligence officers and two auxiliary policemen in the Dublin area; British forces responded by raiding a soccer match, killing 14 civilians.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Air Quality Act.

In 1969, the Senate voted down the Supreme Court nomination of Clement F. Haynsworth, 55-45, the first such rejection since 1930.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon's attorney, J. Fred Buzhardt, revealed the existence of an 18-1/2-minute gap in one of the White House tape recordings related to Watergate.

In 1979, a mob attacked the U-S Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, killing two Americans.

In 1980, an estimated 83 million TV viewers tuned in to the CBS prime-time soap opera "Dallas" to find out "who shot J.R." (The shooter turned out to be J.R. Ewing's sister-in-law, Kristin Shepard.)

In 1985, U.S. Navy intelligence analyst Jonathan Jay Pollard was arrested and accused of spying for Israel. (Pollard later pleaded guilty to espionage and was sentenced to life in prison; he was released on parole on Nov. 20, 2015, and moved to Israel five years later.)

In 1990, junk-bond financier Michael R. Milken, who had pleaded guilty to six felony counts, was sentenced by a federal judge in New York to 10 years in prison. (Milken served two.)

In 1995, Balkan leaders meeting in Dayton, Ohio, initialed a peace plan to end 3 1/2 years of ethnic fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BAHZ'-nee-ah HEHR'-tsuh-goh-vee-nah).

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In 2001, Otilie (AH'tih-lee) Lundgren, a 94-year-old resident of Oxford, Connecticut, died of inhalation anthrax; she was the apparent last victim of a series of anthrax attacks carried out through the mail system.

In 2020, a federal judge in Pennsylvania tossed out a Trump campaign lawsuit seeking to prevent certification of Joe Biden's victory in the state; in a scathing order, the judge said Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani presented only "speculative accusations." The Trump campaign requested a recount of votes in the Georgia presidential race, a day after state officials certified results showing that Democrat Joe Biden won the state. (After the recount, the state's top elections official recertified Biden's victory.)

Ten years ago: Two weeks after he was re-elected to a ninth full term in Congress, Democratic Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. of Illinois quietly resigned in a letter in which he acknowledged an ongoing federal investigation. (Jackson would eventually be sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for illegally spending campaign money.) Israel and the Hamas militant group in Gaza agreed to a cease-fire to end eight days of the fiercest fighting in nearly four years.

Five years ago: Zimbabwe's 93-year-old president Robert Mugabe resigned; he was facing impeachment proceedings and had been placed under house arrest by the military. Former teen pop idol David Cassidy, star of the 1970s sitcom "The Partridge Family," died at the age of 67; he'd announced earlier in the year that he had been diagnosed with dementia.

One year ago: A man drove an SUV into a suburban Milwaukee Christmas parade, leaving six people dead and more than 60 injured. (Darrell Brooks Jr. was convicted of 76 counts, including six counts of first-degree intentional homicide; he would be sentenced to life in prison with no chance of release.) Sudan's deposed prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, signed a deal with the military to reinstate him, almost a month after a military coup put him under house arrest. (Hamdok would resign in January 2022 after failing to bridge a gap between the military and pro-democracy protesters.) South Korean superstars BTS were crowned artist of the year at the American Music Awards, brushing aside challenges from Taylor Swift, Drake and The Weeknd.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Laurence Luckinbill is 88. Actor Marlo Thomas is 85. Actor Rick Lenz is 83. Actor Juliet Mills is 81. Basketball Hall of Famer Earl Monroe is 78. Television producer Marcy Carsey is 78. Actor Goldie Hawn is 77. Movie director Andrew Davis is 76. Rock musician Lonnie Jordan (War) is 74. Singer Livingston Taylor is 72. Actor-singer Lorna Luft is 70. Actor Cherry Jones is 66. Rock musician Brian Ritchie (The Violent Femmes) is 62. Gospel singer Steven Curtis Chapman is 60. Actor Nicollette Sheridan is 59. Singer-actor Bjork (byork) is 57. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Troy Aikman is 56. R&B singer Chauncey Hannibal (BLACKstreet) is 54. Rock musician Alex James (Blur) is 54. Baseball Hall of Famer Ken Griffey Jr. is 53. TV personality Rib Hillis is 52. Football player-turned-TV personality Michael Strahan (STRAY'-han) is 51. Actor Rain Phoenix is 50. Actor Marina de Távira is 49. Country singer Kelsi Osborn (SHeDAISY) is 48. Actor Jimmi Simpson is 47. Singer-actor Lindsey Haun is 38. Actor Jena Malone is 38. Pop singer Carly Rae Jepsen is 37. Actor-singer Sam Palladio is 36.