

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, July 9

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
United Methodist: Conde worship at 8:30 a.m., coffee hour 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship at 10:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.
Groton Summer Fest/Car Show, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., City Park
Amateurs at Northville, 5 p.m.

Monday, July 10

Senior Menu: Lasagna rotini, spinach salad with dressing, ambrosia fruit salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Food Pantry open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Groton Community Center

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

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



Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.
Legion host Claremont, DH, 6 p.m.
U10 W/B at Columbia, DH, 6:30 p.m.
Softball hosts Claremont (U8 at 5:30 p.m., U10 at 7 p.m.); hosts Warner, DH
T-Ball at Columbia, 5:30 p.m.
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, July 11

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, oriental blend vegetables, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread, fruit.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 7 p.m.
Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Groton Community Center
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Olive Grove: Bridge, Ladies League at 6 p.m.
Legion at Aberdeen Smitty's, 1 game, 6 p.m.
Jr. Teener Regional Tournament, TBD
U10 R/B hosts Milbank, DH, 5:30 p.m.
Softball U12 hosts Clark, 6 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23



Photo from KSFY featuring Charla Imrie who was deployed to help out after Hurricane Harvey hit in 2017.

Fruit of the Spirit

Ladies Luncheon & Program

Wednesday, July 12 at Noon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Silent Auction 10:30 - 11:30

Door Prizes

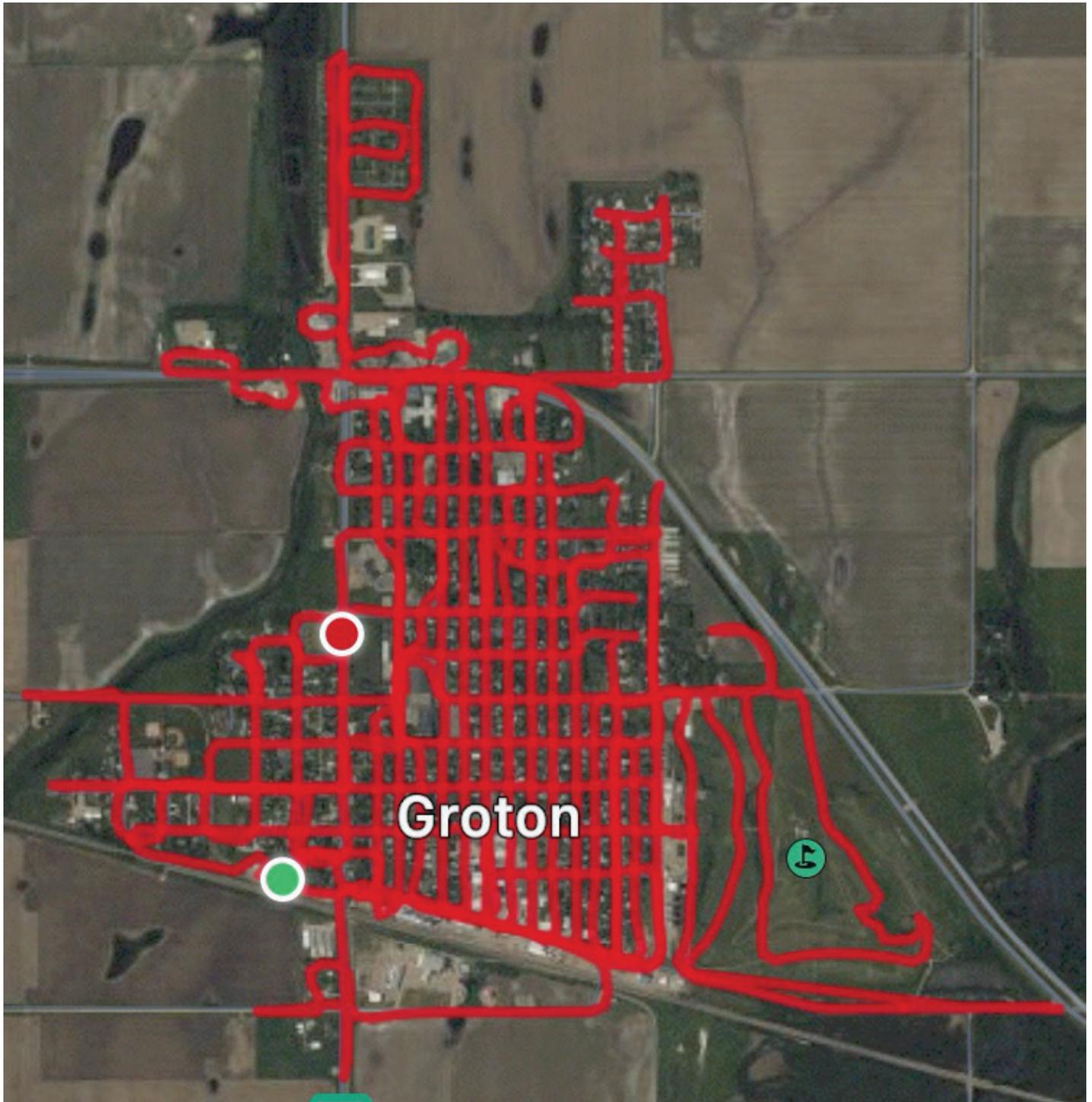
Charla Imrie from The American Red Cross
will be the guest speaker

Advance tickets required \$15.00

Call Kay Espeland 605-492-3507 or
Jane Goehring 605-290-1420

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Adult mosquito control was conducted Saturday night in Groton. A total of 34.15 miles was driven in three hours with 10 gallons of Evolver 4x4 being used. The temperature was in the low to mid 60s with the wind out of the SSW at 5 mph.

Groton Legion Goes Down On Final Play Against Gregory Legion

A walk-off left Groton Legion Post 39 on the wrong end of a 6-5 defeat to Gregory Legion on Saturday at the Clark Tournament. The game was tied at five in the bottom of the seventh when Tate Larson induced Brogan Glover to hit into a fielder's choice, but one run scored.

Groton Legion Post 39 lost despite out-hitting Gregory Legion 10 to nine. Brevin Flihs, Ryan Groeblichhoff, and Logan Ringgingberg each collected two hits for Groton Legion Post 39.

Gregory Legion were the first to get on the board in the first when Rylan Peck singled, scoring one run.

Gregory Legion added one run in the third. Kade Braun singled, making the score 2-0.

Groton Legion Post 39 tied the game up in the top of the seventh thanks to two singles. Groton Legion Post 39 tied the game at five on a single by Flihs.

Brogan Glover earned the win for Gregory Legion. They surrendered 10 hits and five runs over seven innings, striking out three and walking two. Larson took the loss for Groton Legion Post 39. The starting pitcher went six and one-third innings, giving up six runs (five earned) on nine hits, striking out two and walking five.

Groton Legion Post 39 piled up 10 hits in the game. Flihs led Groton Legion Post 39 with two runs batted in. The leadoff hitter went 2-for-3 on the day. Groton Legion Post 39 turned one double play in the game. Groton Legion Post 39 were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Braxton Imrie made the most plays with six.

Gregory Legion amassed nine hits in the game. Kade Braun and Colt Keiser each collected two hits for Gregory Legion. Kade Braun provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Gregory Legion with two runs batted in. The number three hitter went 2-for-4 on the day. Brogan Glover stole two bases. Gregory Legion stole five bases in the game. Gregory Legion turned two double plays in the game.

Groton Legion Post 39 welcome Claremont on Monday for their next game.

County dumpsters continue to be abused; continued misuse could result in them being removed



The above and below photos shows what was left at the site on Friday.

According to Mike Scott, manager of the Brown County Landfill who also oversees the county dumpster sites throughout the county, "The garbage truck can't dump lumber as it jams up the blade inside as well as it breaks the cab window when sticking out of the can. Maybe someone knows who put this lumber in the can. They can call me at 605-380-0111. Or let them know it is illegal. With that much lumber someone had to see them put it there. It had to take a while to unload." The dumpsters are located just east of Groton along old Highway 12.



Scott said: "Rule of thumb. These sites are meant for bagged household trash. Just as you would put at the curb for the garbage man. No difference.

"A new sign will be made soon and remote camera coming soon as well. If people don't stop abusing it I will have to remove these cans."

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

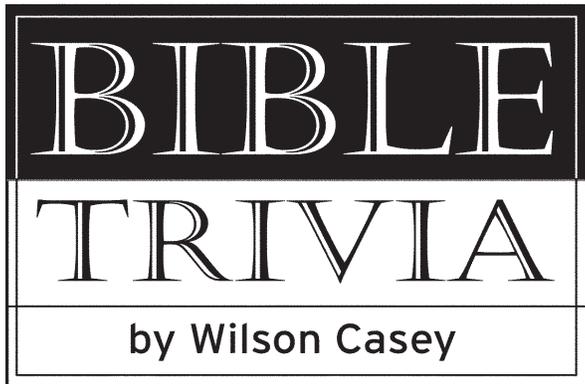
COLOSSIANS 4:2-4 



Detail of "Yaroslavna's Lament" by Jacques Hnizdovsky (1950)

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1. Is the book of Colossians (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Song of Solomon and which other book specifically mention the “apple tree”? *Genesis, Ezra, Joel, Nahum*

3. What chapter of Psalms has four verses (8, 15, 21, 31) that are alike? *4, 58, 107, 133*

4. From Genesis 4:26, who was Adam’s youngest son? *Ishmael, Cain, Abel, Seth*

5. In John 11:16, who was also called Didymus? *Simon Peter, Thomas, Silas, Judas*

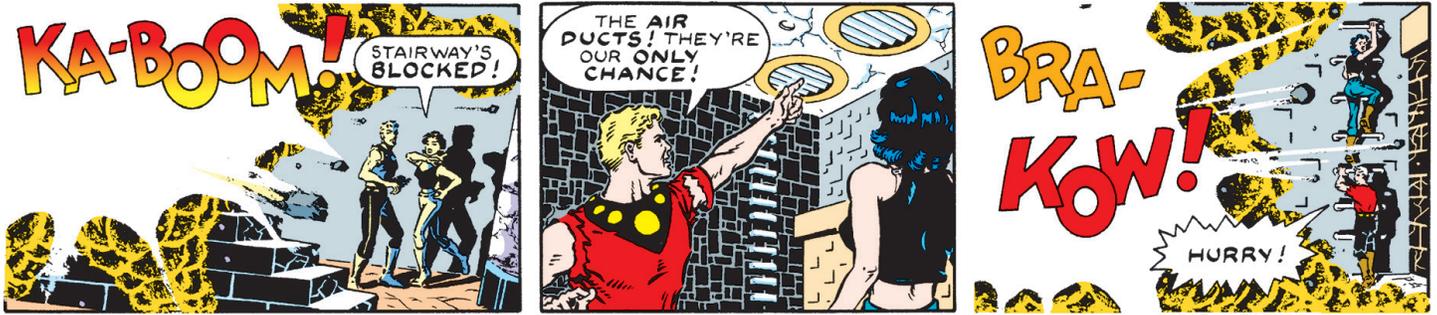
6. Which book has the longest verse in the Bible? *Psalms, Proverbs, Esther, Revelation*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Joel 1:12 (Song of Solomon 2:3, 8:5), 3) 107, 4) Seth, 5) Thomas, 6) Esther 8:9

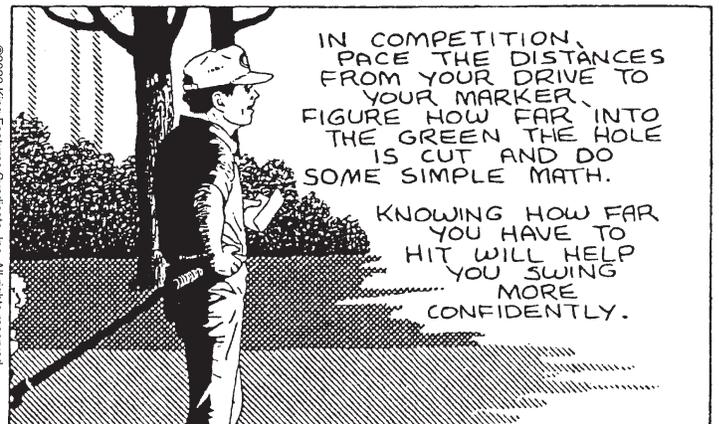
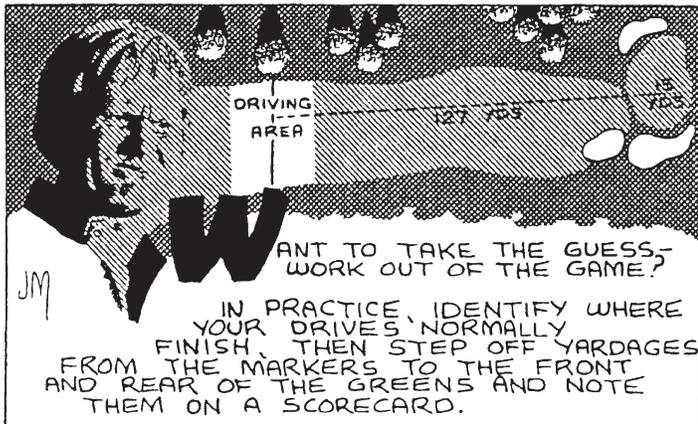
Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson’s Casey’s latest book, “Test Your Bible Knowledge,” now available in bookstores and online.

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Hemorrhoid Surgery Doesn't Deserve Its Bad Reputation

DEAR DR. ROACH: My 30-year-old, and otherwise healthy, grandson has been suffering from, and treating, hemorrhoids for two years. He is anemic due to his loss of blood. He's had several bandings; they couldn't complete the last one because he was in too much pain. They said they couldn't anesthetize the area because his lack of feeling would prevent them from knowing if they were near a nerve. So, now they say he should have surgery, although it is said to be quite painful and difficult.

Do you agree that they can't anesthetize the area for banding, and is the surgery as horrible to deal with as they say? Under what conditions would you say it is advisable to have the surgery? — A.P.

ANSWER: Most people with a banding procedure do not need anesthesia, and nerve blocks are not used in hemorrhoidal banding because a feeling of pain is a useful indication that the band is not in the best position. When home treatments and office procedures (like banding, scleral therapy or infrared coagulation) are ineffective or can't be used, it is time to consider surgical treatment.

The surgery's reputation of being "horrific" is undeserved. I have had several patients in the last few years undergo this surgical procedure, and although they have certainly had a few days of pain after the procedure, all have been happy with the outcomes. Surgeons often use long-acting local anesthetics, and the pain is greatly

better surgical procedures, compared to older surgical techniques and anesthesia.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My sister's dog ran through a swampy area while we were on a walk and ended up with a lot of ticks. We picked off about 10 that day.

The interesting part was that the dog had just gotten his flea and tick medication. So, aside from the first couple of ticks we picked off, the rest were dead, showing the effectiveness of the medicine!

Is there a reason that people, especially those who work or live in areas prone to ticks, cannot be treated in a similar way in order to ward off Lyme and other tick-borne diseases? (I am not suggesting using veterinary medicine on people; I'm just asking why there isn't a similar medical treatment for people when there's such an apparently effective preventative for dogs.) — J.D.

ANSWER: I'm, of course, not a veterinarian, but I did look up the toxicity for three of the most frequently prescribed oral flea and tick medicines for dogs. All of them have the potential for toxicity in humans, and none have been studied extensively. I hypothesize that the cost of conducting studies on humans is so great, and the expected demand for such a product is so low that drug companies have not thought it worth the costs to proceed.

In the meantime, there are topical treatments humans can spray on the skin to repel ticks, which — in combination with protective clothing and daily tick checks — is a moderately effective way of preventing tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis and babesiosis. There currently isn't an available vaccine for Lyme disease, but at least one is undergoing clinical trials at this moment.

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

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"The Out-Laws" (R) -- During the week leading up to their wedding, newly engaged Owen (Adam DeVine) and Parker (Nina Dobrev) receive news that Parker's parents, who've been off-grid for the entirety of their relationship, will be attending their nuptials. Shortly after they arrive, the bank Owen manages gets robbed at gunpoint by two masked bandits, leaving Owen suspicious of his mysterious in-laws. Parker denies his suspicions, only to get subsequently kidnapped and held for ransom by a scorned enemy of her parents. Owen is then left with no choice but to work with his criminal in-laws to save his fiancée. Pierce Brosnan and Ellen Barkin star as "The Out-Laws" in this comedy-action film out now. (Netflix)



From left, Pierce Brosnan, Adam DeVine, Ellen Barkin and Nina Dobrev star in "The Out-Laws." Courtesy of Netflix

"A Little White Lie" (R) -- In this indie comedy, Michael Shannon ("The Flash") plays a handyman named Shriver, who mistakenly receives an invitation from a college literary festival meant for a famous writer with the same name. Shriver still accepts the invitation with the intention of posing as the writer and, once there, is amazed by all of the perks and attention that suddenly flock to him by professors and students alike. That is, until the real Shriver shows up to call him out as an imposter. Kate Hudson, Don Johnson and Zach Braff co-star in the film, which has a release date of July 14. (Hulu)

"The Horror of Dolores Roach" (TV-MA) -- Are you in for a kooky ride? Based on the scripted fiction horror podcast series that originally starred Daphne Rubin-Vega and Bobby Cannavale, this black-comedy TV series follows Dolores Roach (Justina Machado) as she is released from prison following an unjust 16-year sentence. Returning home to Washington Heights, New York, without much to her name, Dolores must scrap to restart her life. She settles on a room with her old friend, Luis, and begins offering massages for cash in his basement. But as the pressure of life starts to weigh on Dolores, her "magic masseuse hands" turn fatal for several of her customers. Unsure of how to dispose of their bodies, Dolores finds that Luis -- or, more specifically, his empanada business -- has her back. All eight episodes are out now. (Amazon Prime Video)

"God's Own Country" (R) -- Josh O'Connor's stunning performance in "The Crown" earned him an Emmy and a Golden Globe, no doubt securing lead roles for him in films like Luca Guadagnino's upcoming sports film "Challengers," co-starring Zendaya and Mike Faist. But before he ever suited up to play a young Charles III, O'Connor starred in a small British drama called "God's Own Country," playing a young and lost sheep farmer named Johnny. When extra help arrives from Romania in the form of a man named Gheorghe, Johnny's usually reclusive manner of life gets put to the test. As Gheorghe teaches him how to be vulnerable, Johnny learns how to find true happiness. Out now. (AppleTV+)

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1. Which band released "Take It Easy" as their debut song?
2. Name the band that released "The Joker."
3. Who released "Save the Last Dance for Me"?
4. What kind of music did The Highwaymen play in the 1960s?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "Even though it's been so long, My love for you keeps going strong."

Answers

1. The Eagles, in 1972. The song's reference to Winslow, Arizona, was taken from the time a band member had his car break down in the town. In 2016 the town installed a statue in honor of the song's lyrics "standing on the corner in Winslow, Arizona."
2. The Steve Miller Band, in 1973, on their album of the same name.
3. The Drifters, in 1960. The song was intended to be the B-side of the single, but Dick Clark convinced them to make it the A-side. The song topped the pop charts and stayed there for three weeks.
4. Collegiate folk. The five members were only together for a few years, until they graduated from college and went on to their careers.
5. "Miss You Like Crazy," by Natalie Cole, in 1989. The song was Cole's last top 10 hit and charted around the globe.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



"I think you're over-reacting to our under-performing!"

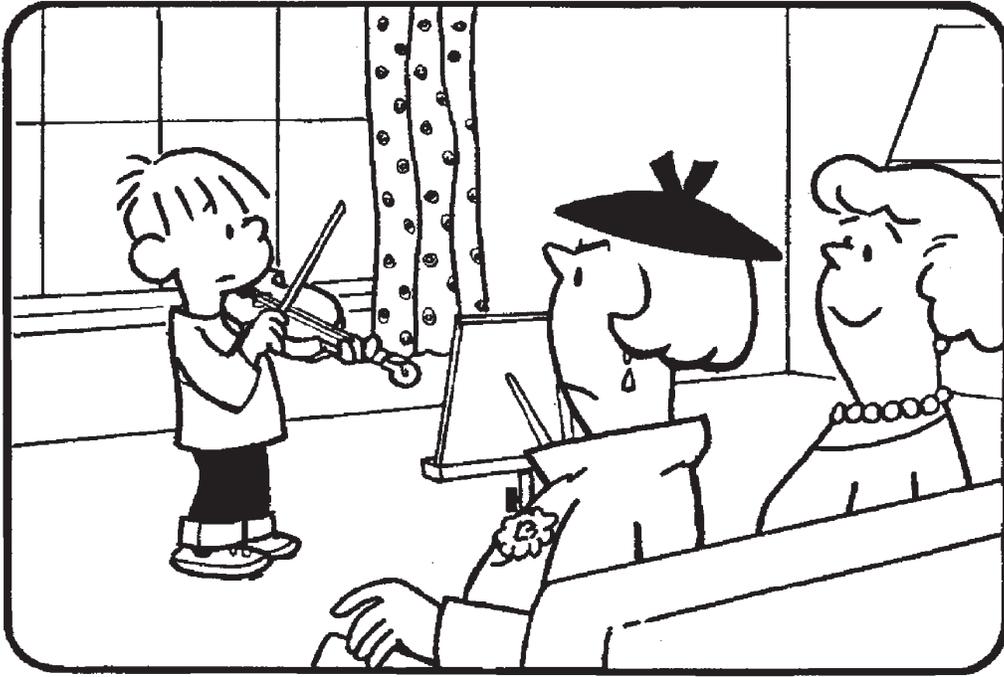
Just Like Cats & Dogs ^{by Dave T. Phipps}



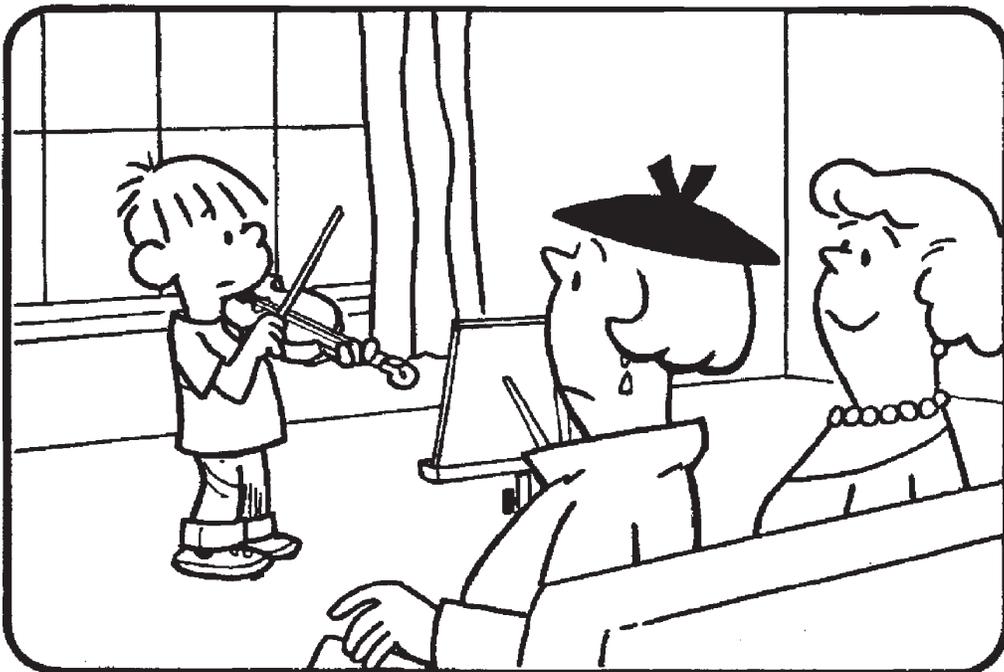
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Sleeve is shorter. 2. Pants are different. 3. Drapery is different. 4. Flower is missing. 5. Lamp is missing. 6. Neckline is lower.

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* When baking, you can slow the rising time of dough by placing it in a cool place to rise. You can even let it rise in the refrigerator! Basically, it's done rising when it's doubled in size, so use that as your guide.

* Place individual fabric softener sheets into sneakers to keep them fresh between wearings. You can use this for other shoes, too. Just be aware that the softener sheet should stay inside the shoe; it could discolor certain fabrics on the outside.

* "I have long hair, and it always jams up the shower drain. I tried one of those hair catcher things, but the drain doesn't recess enough. What I did was to cut a piece of stiff screen to fit the drain hole, and I secured it with a hair pin that dangles down. It catches everything. Nothing

slips under it, and I can clean it off easily." -- I.R. in Massachusetts

* "It used to be that my kids would do something cute and I'd scramble to dig out the camera, only for the moment to be passed. Now I keep two cameras (digital photos and video camera) charged up and ready to go in a bowl on a high shelf. I grab it and turn it on -- that's it." -- T.F. in Idaho

* When baking savory bread, try substituting vegetable broth for the water in your recipe. It adds a deeper element of flavor to the bread. Just try to use low-sodium broth so you don't add too much salt to your bread.

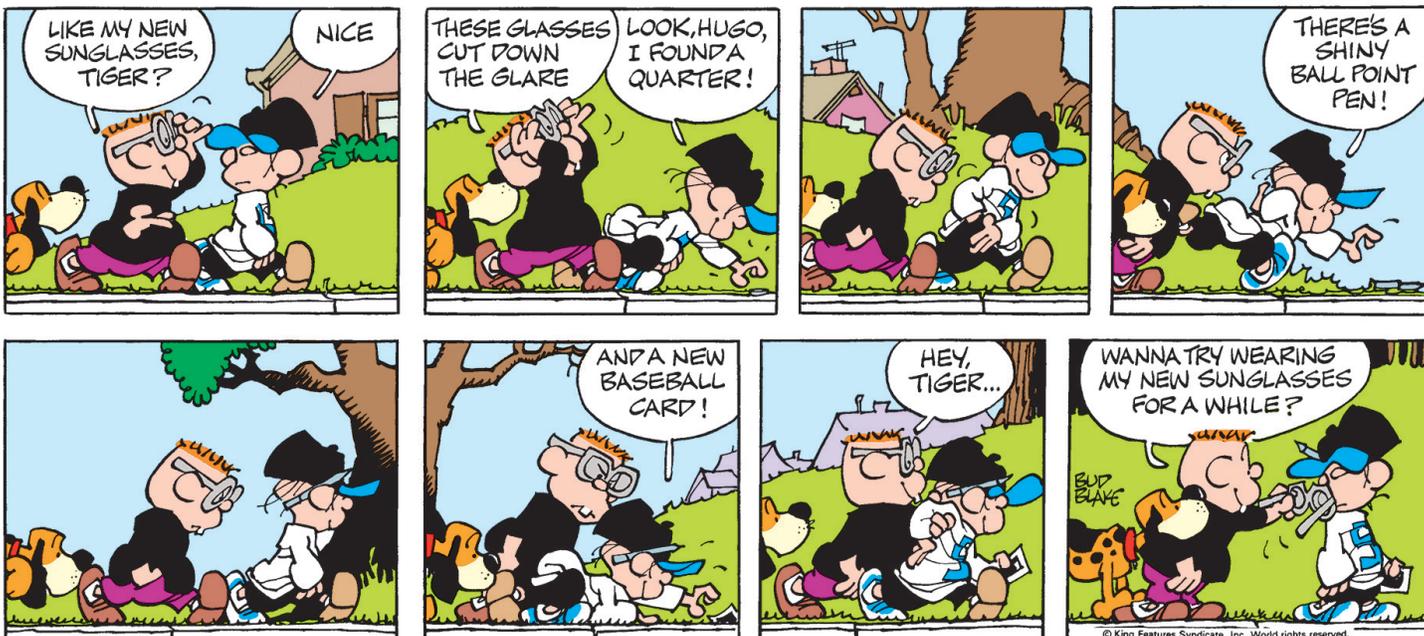
* "If you have a little one who is afraid of the bedroom because of 'monsters,' try getting your hands on some 'Monster Away Spray.' I used a can of air freshener that I decorated with paper to make a new label. Fooled the kids and eased their fears quickly." -- W.L. in Arkansas

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

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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Ego
- 5 Curved line
- 8 Easy targets
- 12 Geometric calculation
- 13 "The Matrix" hero
- 14 Conspiracy
- 15 Elephant's ancestor
- 17 Sultry Horne
- 18 Low isle
- 19 Pale yellow
- 21 Rice recipe
- 24 Colorations
- 25 Landed
- 26 Magazine staff listing
- 30 Leary's drug
- 31 Skin openings
- 32 TiVo precursor

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48					49					50		
51					52					53		

- 35 Actress Ward
- 36 — and crafts
- 37 Cancel
- 38 Where Gauguin painted
- 41 Football filler
- 42 Milky gem
- 43 Large dogs
- 48 Portrayal
- 49 Yale grad
- 50 Humdrum
- 51 Apple product
- 52 Game caller

DOWN

- 1 America's uncle
- 2 Historic time
- 3 Guitar expert Paul
- 4 Nabob
- 5 Tennis champ Murray
- 6 Old Olds
- 7 Mixed up
- 8 Swimming pool sound
- 9 "Roots" author Haley
- 10 Corn concoction
- 11 Jazz great Getz
- 16 Klutz
- 20 Reply to "Shall we?"
- 21 Tropical tree
- 22 "Casablanca" role
- 23 Pot covers
- 24 Long-eared hoppers
- 26 Philosopher Adler
- 27 Always
- 28 Rights org.
- 29 Colorless
- 31 Impudent
- 34 Shadowed
- 35 Writer
- 37 Perch
- 38 Actress Spelling
- 39 Each
- 40 Angelic light
- 41 "Dream on!"
- 44 Pub pint
- 45 Winter ailment
- 46 Distant
- 47 HBO rival

— King Crossword —

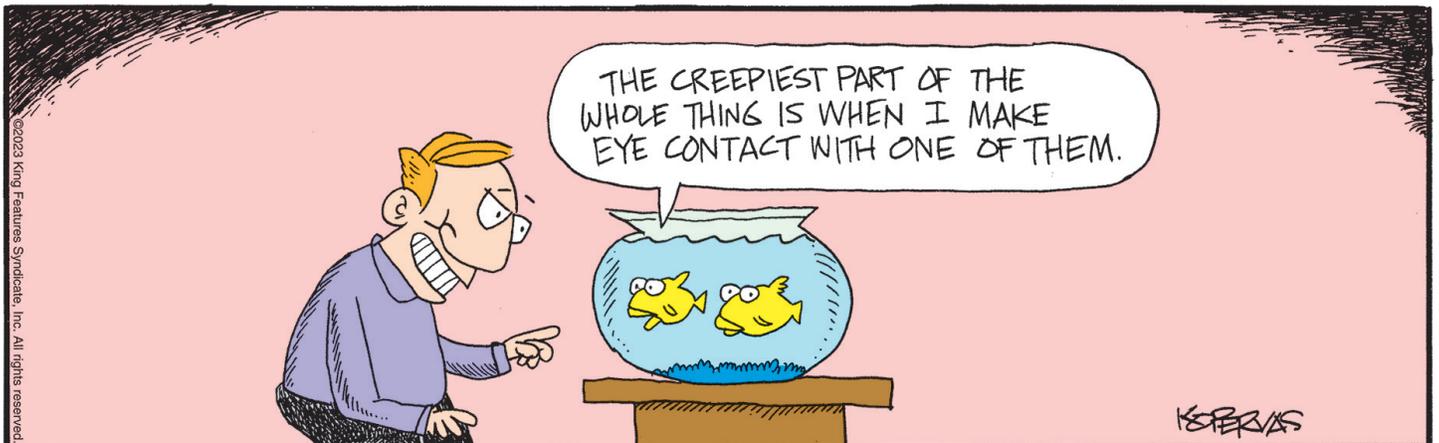
Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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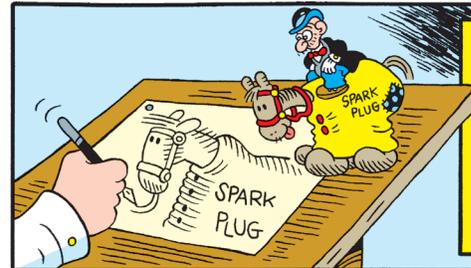
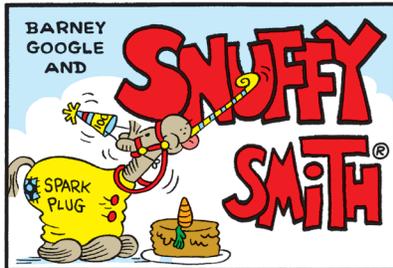
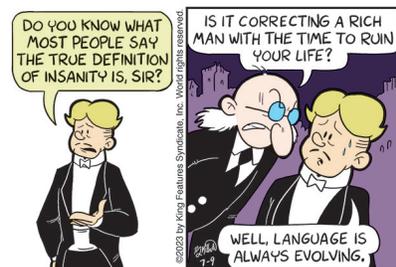
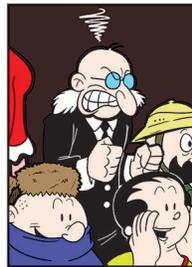
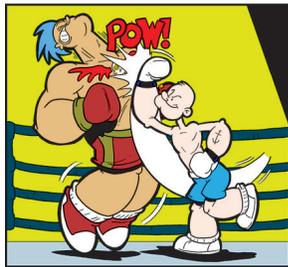
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

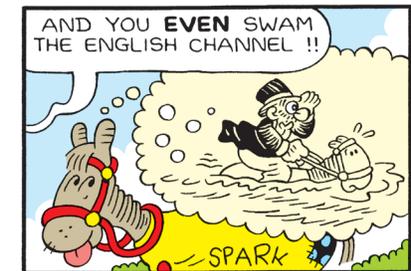
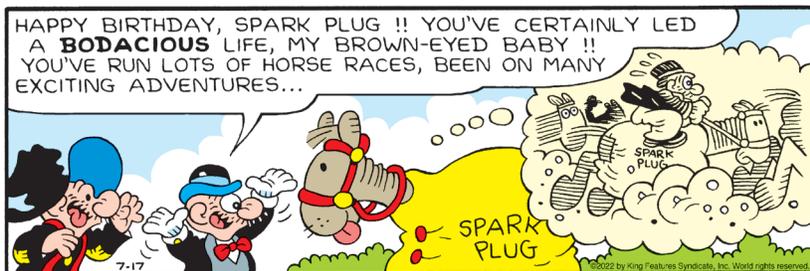


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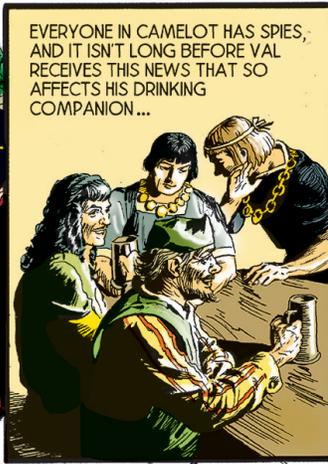


ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO TODAY, MASTER CARTOONIST BILLY DEBECK INTRODUCED BARNEY GOOGLE'S FAITHFUL HORSE SPARK PLUG TO OUR COMIC STRIP AND WE WERE OFF TO THE RACES !!

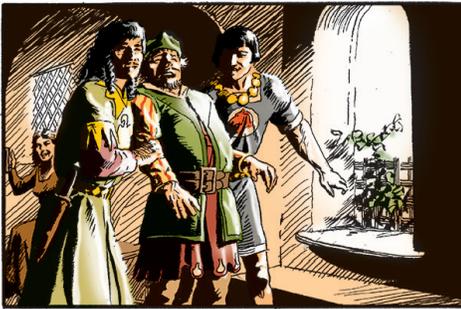


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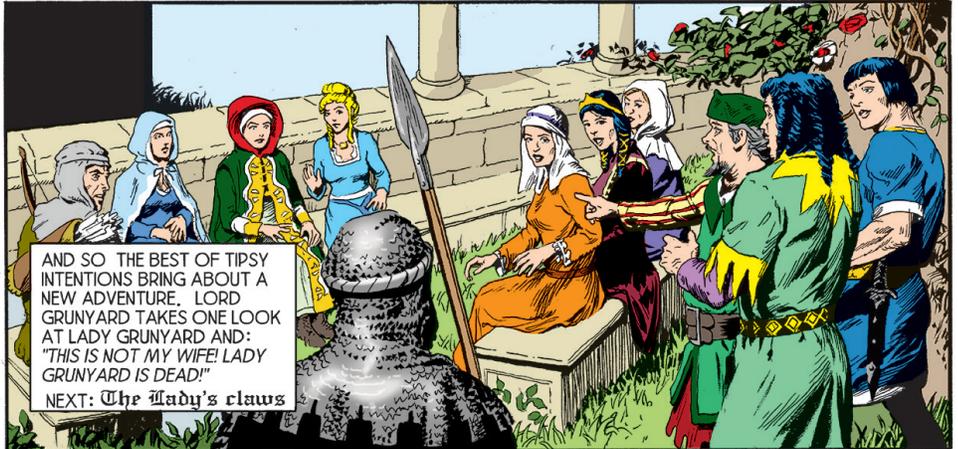
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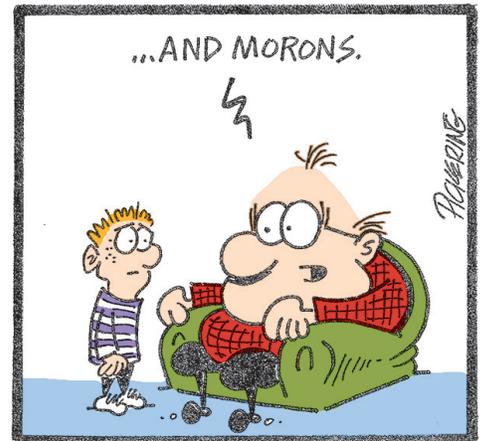
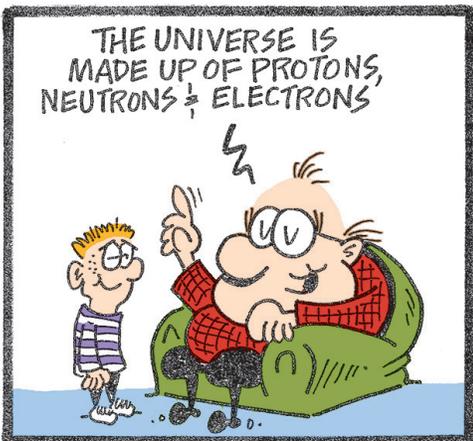


VAL AND GAWAIN, THINKING THAT THEY ARE HELPING, DO WHAT THEY CAN TO MAKE THEIR FRIEND LORD GRUNYARD PRESENTABLE TO HIS WIFE, EVEN AS HE PROTESTS: "M-MY W-W-WIFE...?"



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Staycation Ideas for Seniors

How do we go on vacation when we can't afford to travel anywhere? How can any days feel like vacation when we do what we usually do, which is stay home?

The answer lies in that made-up word: "staycation." The idea is to spend time doing something different without leaving your home area.

One of my favorite ways to unwind and decompress is to unplug the phone and read. I can get 10 free Kindle Unlimited books at a time, more than enough to keep me happy during an unplugged week while I pretend I'm on vacation. With a free-delivery Walmart+ membership (\$98 for a year), I can have groceries and snacks delivered to the door.

I've already checked the local events calendar, marking off several of interest. That doesn't mean I'll go to all of them, but the options are there: a sandwich, no-salt chips and a drink in a chilled to-go-bag and a few relaxing hours at a free local outdoor concert.

One of the events I'm looking forward to is an evening community sing where likely hundreds of people (mostly seniors, I imagine) will get together outdoors to sing the oldies.

On another day I'll spend some hours at the Louvre in Paris. I won't actually be there, but close enough with their free virtual tour (www.louvre.fr/en/online-tours). Do an online search for "museums with virtual tours," and you'll find several dozen choices. Zoos, national parks and aquariums have done the same thing.

The opportunities for staycation are many. Want to learn to paint or draw? Order supplies and spend some days hooked up to online art tutorials. Want to write a book? You can get a lot done in an unplugged week. Want to bake a pie? Spend an afternoon first at a pick-your-own fruit farm.

A big rule of staycation: Housework and cleaning are not allowed.

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1. What was the name of the 1989 direct-to-VHS short comedy starring Dick Van Patten that parodied tennis instructional videos?

2. By what name was Mahdi Abdul-Rahman known when he won an NCAA basketball championship with UCLA and was named the NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player in 1964?

3. Baseball Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew has his No. 3 jersey retired by what Major League Baseball team?

4. Formula One driver and polo player Carlos Menditeguy (1914-73) hailed from what South American country?

5. What amateur sports sponsor and enthusiast was convicted in the 1996 murder of Olympic gold-medal-winning freestyle wrestler Dave Schultz?

6. Two mounds named Miss Grainger's Bosoms can be found on the 15th hole of what golf course?

7. What lumber-wielding pro wrestler played football for the Southern Methodist University Mustangs and was signed by the Atlanta Falcons?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. "Dirty Tennis."
2. Walt Hazzard.
3. The Minnesota Twins.
4. Argentina.
5. John du Pont.
6. The Old Course at St Andrews, Scotland.
7. "Hacksaw" Jim Duggan.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Puppy Piddling Is a Real Pain

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My 6-month-old, medium-size mixed breed dog Jake has a problem I can't seem to train him out of. Whenever he gets excited, he leaves pee droplets across the floor. Jake is healthy and energetic, and he housetrained quickly. What can I do to stop the piddling? -- Pupper Dad in Ohio

DEAR PUPPER DAD: There's a very good chance that it can be resolved. It will take time and training, though.

Puppies under a year old piddle when they get excited or when they think they're in trouble. Part of it may be a smaller bladder, but another part of it is

what's called "submissive urination." Dogs piddle instinctively to signal that you are their superior. However, this isn't a wild dog pack outdoors; it's you and your dog and your beautiful hardwood floor.

Punishing or yelling at Jake when he piddles will not solve the problem. The real issue is one of confidence and of finding where he belongs in the household. Most puppies stop piddling at around one year old, especially in a home where there's a predictable structure, as they mature and settle into their place in the family.

Encourage this during Jake's first year by staying calm when he piddles. Yelling or trying to correct on the spot can make the problem worse. Clean up the urine and lead him to a different spot, and work on a basic command with him like "sit-stay."

Try not to pay attention to Jake when you come in the door from work. Ask visitors to look away from him when they come in. Later, when you and your visitors are settled on the sofa, pay attention to Jake with lots of praise. Learn more at this link: www.tuftsyourdog.com/dogtrainingandbehavior/the-three-reasons-puppies-piddle-indoors/.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Because snow is composed of ice, it can be classified as a mineral.

* In 2018, the U.S. Navy equipped its submarines with Xbox360 controllers, as the control sticks for periscopes are not only expensive but challenging to master. But the change wasn't just designed to save cash: Since many periscope operators have used Xbox controllers, the skill was easily transferred.

* Movie trailers were originally shown after the movie, hence their name.

* A lion's roar can be as loud as 114 decibels, which is roughly 25 times louder than a gas-powered lawnmower, due to the shape of its vocal cords. The roar can also be heard up to 5 miles away.

* Because there is no true black color, all "black" pigments and dyes really only look black. They're made up of a combination of other pigments in specific combinations to reflect the least amount of light possible.

* Starfish digest food outside their bodies.

* Before designer Louis Vuitton's death, he and his son Georges developed a revolutionary new lock system to better protect their customers' luggage. Several years later, after patenting the system, Georges publicly challenged illusionist and escape artist Harry Houdini to break out of a Vuitton trunk. While Houdini declined, it served as a positive ad for the new feature.

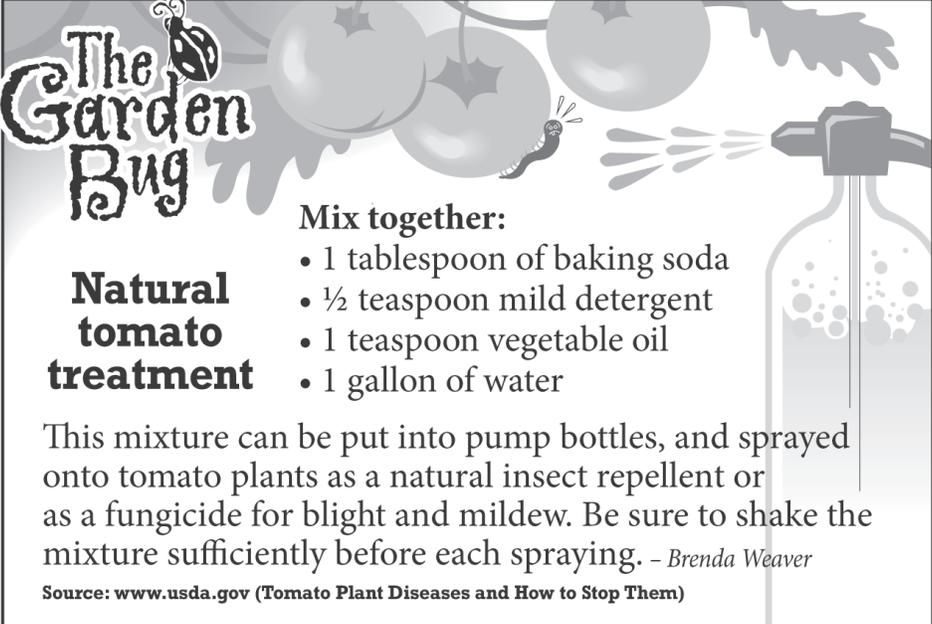
* William Hung, famous for his rendition of "She Bangs" on "American Idol," is a 73rd-generation descendant of Confucius.

* The Vatican had music that was forbidden to be copied and was only played twice per year. It remained secret for nearly 150 years until a 14-year-old Mozart heard it and transcribed it from memory.

* Though most think it's Italian, pepperoni is an American invention.

Thought for the Day: "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." -- Anne Lamott

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The Garden Bug

Natural tomato treatment

Mix together:

- 1 tablespoon of baking soda
- ½ teaspoon mild detergent
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 gallon of water

This mixture can be put into pump bottles, and sprayed onto tomato plants as a natural insect repellent or as a fungicide for blight and mildew. Be sure to shake the mixture sufficiently before each spraying. - Brenda Weaver

Source: www.usda.gov (Tomato Plant Diseases and How to Stop Them)



by Freddy Groves

Sexual Assault at VA Facilities

The Department of Veterans Affairs has just launched a special phone number to report sexual assault or harassment at VA facilities.

Veterans, their caregivers, their families and survivors can call a hotline at 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411), option 9. The hotline is in addition to other resources, such as staff, local law enforcement and the VA police, when an assault occurs.

At the hotline, which is answered 24/7, victims can confidentially report what happened and then get follow-up health care and support.

Of special interest to me was the Bystander Intervention Training (www.va.gov/STOP-HARASSMENT/bystander-intervention-techniques.asp). It teaches specific verbal and action skills if you spot a sexual assault or harassment occurring. These steps are not especially physical, but they are effective at intervening. Click on the one-minute videos with animated cartoons showing just what to do or say in each instance. (I admit, I learned several things about intervention.)

There is Direct action (speaking up), Distract (pretend you know the victim and intervene), Delegate (get someone else involved so you can find help) and Document (write down what happened).

Look at the Bystander Intervention Training for Veterans online course (www.veterantraining.va.gov/bystandertraining) to learn what to do if you see harassment or sexual assault.

Also click on the Gauging Harmful Behavior section and learn what is and isn't considered unwelcome sexual advances, disrespectful, over the line, rude, mild flirting, and what might also escalate from acceptable to sexually violent behavior. Knowing these things can make you more effective when it comes to intervening in a potential assault.

The hotline number is one to become familiar with and perhaps carry in your wallet. It's the one number you need for all kinds of VA-related things, including the crisis line, homeless veterans help (try to call them before becoming homeless), cemetery and burial information, facility locator, health care, benefits assistance, education info, caregiver support -- all things veteran. If you don't know who to call, call the hotline.

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Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. FOOD & DRINK: What kind of nut is used in a satay?
2. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who is the first president to have a telephone in the White House?
3. MOVIES: Which actress won an Oscar for her role in "Mary Poppins"?
4. ASTRONOMY: How many planets in our solar system have rings?
5. LITERATURE: The novels "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" are set in which U.S. state?
6. TELEVISION: How many seasons of "Star Trek" were produced for television?
7. GEOGRAPHY: What is the name of the highest mountain in Greece?
8. SCIENCE: Which plant produces the world's hottest pepper?
9. ANATOMY: Which hormone regulates blood sugar?
10. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a piebald?

Answers

1. Peanut.
2. Rutherford B. Hayes.
3. Julie Andrews.
4. Four: Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune.
5. Missouri.
6. Three.
7. Mount Olympus.
8. Carolina Reaper.
9. Insulin.
10. An animal with irregular patches of two colors, usually black and white.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

America: A Year-Round Celebration

I am a firm believer that our upbringing makes us who we are. I often talk about how I grew up on our family farm with my parents giving me impossible things to do. By challenging me with seemingly unachievable tasks, my mom and dad taught me that I can do anything I set my mind to.

What I didn't know as a kid was that my parents were instilling in me a traditional American work ethic. They were giving me the "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" mentality. Now, I've strived to teach my kids and my grandkids the same thing. This is the kind of work ethic that we will all need to ensure the preservation of this great American experiment in self-government and democracy.

In 1912, President Teddy Roosevelt said, "This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live in." If we are to have any hope of giving the next generation a great country, we need to remember the things that have made us great today and protect those opportunities for everyone, including future generations.

When we celebrate America, we are celebrating the Freedoms that so many have fought to protect over the last 247 years. I can think of no better symbol of America than Mount Rushmore. That's why I am continuing to fight to bring Independence Day fireworks back to our national monument. The Biden administration has consistently denied us the ability to properly commemorate the birth of our nation, but we're not giving up. My Department of Tourism and I have officially submitted our application for a special works permit for the 2024 Mount Rushmore Fireworks Celebration!

We are also preparing for future celebrations of Freedom. America's 250th birthday is less than three years away. I have created the America 250th South Dakota Commission to prepare for this momentous occasion. This event deserves a year-long celebration of our history, our people, and our Freedom. I am looking forward to throwing the biggest birthday party South Dakota has ever seen.

But it will be more than just a party. The celebrations that we are preparing for will show our children what is truly means to be an American – and that lesson won't end there. We are emphasizing our nation's true and honest history at both the K-12 level and at the Board of Regents level. We should teach our kids how lucky they are to live in the United States of America. By raising a generation of patriots, we will ensure that this great nation will live on to see many more Independence Day celebrations.

The Fourth of July may have already passed this year, but we celebrate America all year long. We are a state of Freedom-loving folks, and I am confident that we will raise many more generations of proud Americans right here in the heartland.

In South Dakota, America gets a year-round celebration.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Summer Jobs, Lifelong Values

In South Dakota, we take pride in a job well done. Our work ethic is often instilled in us from a young age – first at home and school, in sports, and eventually in our first jobs. A first job is an important rite of passage that teaches values like teamwork and diligence, as well as the freedom and responsibility that come with earning a paycheck. During the summer, it's exciting to see so many young South Dakotans working across the state.

Summers in South Dakota offer plenty of opportunities to gain work experience while earning some money. Many of the small businesses, farms, and ranches that are the backbone of our state's economy offer opportunities for young people to fill job openings, particularly during the summer months. And employers of all kinds need extra sets of hands during the busy travel season.

Growing up in Murdo, at the crossroads of Highway 83 and I-90, my four siblings and I all worked summer jobs related to the travel industry. My sister waited tables at a restaurant, two brothers worked at filling stations, another brother at the Pioneer Auto Show, and I got my start at the Star Family Restaurant, which still operates today. I spent seven summers there, starting out as a busboy, reporting for duty at 5:45 a.m. I later moved to the back of the restaurant to wash dishes before eventually becoming a cook. I value the experience I gained working at the Star Family Restaurant, and it was a great place to earn money for college and to learn lifelong skills.

As a U.S. senator, I'm able to offer young South Dakotans the opportunity to gain a different kind of valuable work experience to start their careers. My office offers paid internships for college students, and I can nominate qualified South Dakota high school juniors for the Senate Page Program. Paid internships are available throughout the year in Washington, D.C., Aberdeen, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls. Interns work closely with constituents, hone their writing, research, and communication skills, while learning firsthand about the federal government and the issues affecting South Dakota. The U.S. Senate Page Program allows high school juniors to see firsthand how the Senate operates while taking classes and assisting in the Senate's day-to-day operations. Both the internship and page programs operate four sessions throughout the year and application information for both can be found on my website or by calling any of my offices.

First jobs are not often the most glamorous or easiest work, but they instill important values and a work ethic in first-time workers that will serve them throughout their life. I hope all the young South Dakotans working their first jobs this summer have a chance to reflect on some of what they're learning from their experience and the future opportunities they might present, and I wish them all the best in their work.

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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Guest Column: Igniting a Passion for Policy

By Kiara Ehle, Ben Reifel Intern

At the start of my first day as the Ben Reifel intern for Congressman Dusty Johnson, I was convinced the biggest takeaway would be the experience. I did not imagine I would be swayed into the world of politics. The intern experience has been amazing, and I'm even more thankful Congressman Johnson has given me the opportunity to have policy exposure I would not have had otherwise. I am truly inspired, and I now have a passion for politics and tribal affairs.

The first day of my internship, I went to a hearing for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and as a civil engineering student, it was reassuring I was not completely lost while listening and taking notes. That began my understanding that maybe this field was something I could see myself a part of.

While interning in the Washington D.C. office, I have had the privilege of attending meetings with the American Council of Engineering Companies of South Dakota, Oglala Sioux Tribe President Frank Star Comes Out, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman Ryman LeBeau, and many more tribal and non-tribal affiliated organizations. With each meeting I sat in on, I became more driven to want to take a more active role in politics aside from voting.

During the last week of June, I was given the opportunity to accompany Congressman Dusty Johnson to tour Oyate Health Center and attend several events at the Pine Ridge Reservation for the Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial and Sacred Site Act. Every event inspired me as I saw how Congressman Johnson had taken an active role in strengthening his relationship with tribal members. Congressman Johnson was incredibly considerate and took the time to have conversations with individuals in attendance. The relationship Congressman Johnson and his staff have fostered is critical to paving a pathway of advocacy on behalf of his constituents.

The relationship Congressman Dusty Johnson has built is something I hope every Representative has with their tribal members and communities. The big and small actions like kneeling when talking to seated patients at Oyate Health Center or wearing a Pikachu pin gifted by a young child was very heartwarming to witness. Actions like those, and more, mean so much in terms of understanding and respecting cultural differences. Congressman Johnson and his staff exude a degree of professionalism and respect that I, and others from all communities, appreciate. As a future civil engineer, I never would have imagined a life in politics, but this experience has brought forth new passions I am eager to pursue.

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Have Giggle Will Laugh



I have many problems in my life. I have yet to recognize all of my problems, but I'm sure I will soon.

That's why it's so great to be married to someone like The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. There is no problem she cannot fix, and I have many examples to prove it.

There is one problem she hasn't been able to fix. That is, I laugh too much. At least, according to her.

If something happens or someone says something, I will start to giggle, and I know that in a short time, I will be laughing. I know how to laugh better than anybody I know. Just ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Through the years, I have tried to moderate it. I don't want to laugh at everything even though there is a giggle inside of me. Most people don't think everything is funny, while I, on the other side, can't think of anything that isn't funny.

Someone may tell me something or say something unwittingly, and I begin to giggle. I know when that starts I have no control over my giggle-itis. The only cure I have found for giggle-itis is laughter.

Someone may be telling a very serious story about their life, and I hear it wrong and think they are saying something altogether different, and it kicks in my giggle-itis.

It wouldn't be so bad if I could control it when it happens, but as history has proven, I cannot.

I do try to keep some things serious. I must confess, however, that changes from day to day. What is serious today may not be serious tomorrow, and I am the last one to know how to control that.

I've often discussed this with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, and she has tried to counsel me in this area on how to control my laughter.

I try to explain to her that it is not so much the laughter as it is the giggle. If I could control my giggles, I wouldn't have any problem with laughter. She doesn't get it and laughs at me.

You must agree, there are many things in this world that are funny. And I do not believe we should overlook or ignore those situations.

Last week I was standing in line at the post office, and at the counter was a very nice older lady. She was paying for some postage and gave the cashier a \$50 bill. Then the cashier, preparing to give her money back, said something strange. He said, "Mam, what denomination would you like?"

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I hadn't heard that in a long time and was anxious to hear how the lady would respond.

She looked at the cashier with a very serious look and said, "Sir, I'm a Baptist, so give it to me in Baptist denomination."

Little did I know she was not joking, but I laughed at her, trying to conceal it.

The cashier stared at her, not knowing what to do. I'm not sure what mone he gave her because I was laughing too much on the inside.

It's so hard for me to laugh on the inside and keep it from getting on the outside. What is inside eventually comes outside. I was laughing about that for the rest of the day. And still, when I think of it, I chuckle on the inside.

Just the other day, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came and informed me that she would be gone for the day, thrift store shopping with her daughters. Looking at me, she seriously said, "Can you get your own lunch today while I'm gone?"

That tripped the giggle button inside for some reason, and my giggle-itis had kicked in.

Looking at her while giggling, I said, "Don't worry. I'll clean the refrigerator out by the time you get home."

Then I started laughing almost uncontrollably. She, on the other hand, looked at me with her infamous scowl and said, without laughing, "I don't think so."

I could not stop laughing as she walked out the front door. Several hours later, I was still laughing, and went and looked in the refrigerator to see how much work I had on hand.

When I opened the refrigerator door, I immediately stopped laughing. There at the front was a bowl of broccoli. I know she did that on purpose, and it cured my giggle-itis for a moment. I had to devise a plan for that broccoli to make me laugh and her scowl. Now the giggle-itis is beginning to turn on.

I think a bowl of Apple Fritters would be an excellent replacement. This is one of the few items that will make the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage scowl. To see that scowl will be worth all I can offer at this time.

Just the thought of that began a giggle inside of me. Thinking more of this it developed into laughter. I just can't wait to get even.

While I was laughing, I thought of one my favorite Bible verses. "All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast" (Proverbs 15:15).

When I think of broccoli I have evil feelings, but the Apple Fritter thought brings a lot of merriment to me.

Then I remembered Proverbs 17:22. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is putting out birdhouses and/or bird feeders good or bad for the local ecosystem?

-- Mary B., Bowie, MD

While putting up a bird house or bird feeder is a great way to attract birds to your property, the jury is out as to whether such attractions help or harm local biodiversity and overall ecosystem health.

On the plus side, birdhouses provide much-needed shelter for birds, especially in areas where natural nesting sites are scarce. They can also help to attract birds to your yard, which can be a fun and educational experience for children and adults alike. Bird feeders can provide a valuable source of food for birds, especially during the winter months when natural food sources are scarce. This can help to boost bird populations and reduce the risk of starvation.

However, there are also some potential downsides to providing artificial nesting and feeding sites for birds. One concern is that it can lead to overpopulation of certain bird species. When birds have an abundance of food and nesting sites, they can reproduce more quickly, which can lead to an overpopulation of their species. This can have negative consequences for the ecosystem, such as competition for food and habitat with other species.

And while hosting a birdhouse or feeder may be fun and educational, the birds you would attract aren't the ones struggling in regard to conservation status. "The species most in trouble are seabirds, shorebirds and tropical forest dwellers," reports Emma Greig of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "This means that although feeding birds may not be harmful to the species that use feeders the most, it also isn't helpful to the species that most need our help."

Another concern is that bird feeders can attract pests and diseases. Birds can carry diseases that can be harmful to humans, such as salmonella. They can also attract rodents, such as mice and rats, which can also carry diseases. Finally, bird feeders sometimes attract predators, such as cats, raccoons and hawks, which can prey on the birds that are attracted to the feeders, which can reduce the bird population.

Overall, whether or not putting out birdhouses and bird feeders is good or bad for the local ecosystem depends on a number of factors, such as the type of birds that are being attracted, the location of the feeders, and the overall health of the ecosystem. If you are considering putting out birdhouses or bird feeders, it's important to do your research and make sure that you are doing it in a way that is beneficial to the birds and the environment.

For starters, choose the right type of birdhouse for the birds you want to attract, and place it in a safe and sheltered location. Also make sure it is somewhere you can access it safely as it can use regular cleanings to prevent the spread of disease. And be sure to not overfeed the birds, as you don't want to make them dependent on your handouts for sustenance. Monitor the bird population and remove any feeders if they are attracting pests or predators or causing other problems.



If you think you are doing Mother Nature a favor by putting up a bird feeder or bird house, think again. Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lakota is 'critically endangered.' Elder retreats preserve, build road maps to revive it.

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 9, 2023 6:00 AM

FORT YATES, North Dakota — Dozens of Native American elders from South Dakota tribal nations gathered in the Prairie Knights Casino on the Standing Rock Reservation earlier this month.

Sitting at tables armed with pens and composition notebooks, they wrote about memories from their childhoods and shared their stories orally with each other in Lakota and English.

Those conversations will be recorded, transcribed and translated by Thunder Valley Community Development, a nonprofit on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Thunder Valley will use the material to preserve elders' memories and stories for their families, and to preserve the Lakota language and build a foundation for new Lakota learning standards.

Those standards will map out what is historically important to Lakota people regarding education and spirituality, said Dallas Nelson, Thunder Valley Lakota language and education director and a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation. From there, Thunder Valley will build a curriculum, lesson plans and classroom activities for its Lakota language and education program based on those values. While the standards will be used primarily for its classrooms, it will be available for other Lakota immersion programs or private schools to use.

"We collect the information, disseminate and analyze it and then put it together in a format that openly and radically says, 'This is what we want for Lakota people and education' without any fear of hearing 'That doesn't fit into the system,'" Nelson said.

Lakota language is 'critically endangered' with 2,000 speakers

The effort started after community elders, some of whom have died, recognized the need to encourage Lakota language learning and curriculum in area schools. Those elders worked with Thunder Valley to set the work in motion.

The Lakota language is recognized as "critically endangered" by the Lakota Language Consortium. The number of first-language Lakota speakers sits at less than 2,000 – a decline of 66% in 10 years. The Lakota population is about 170,000, spread across tribal bands in western South Dakota and North Dakota, along with parts of Canada, Montana, Wyoming and Nebraska.

Ethnologue, a catalog of world languages, has redesignated the language from "threatened" to "moribund" with the special status of "reawakening" to reflect efforts to revive the language.

The elder retreat program is an urgent project, since the elders are windows into the past "that's slowly closing as they die," Nelson said.

Building Lakota curriculum, standards

The mission to create Lakota standards is not only to build a curriculum for teaching the Lakota language, but is also a response to standards prescribed by non-Lakota people and agencies for years, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs or South Dakota government.

While the State Board of Education Standards did adopt the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards in 2018, the intentions of the standards are to teach South Dakotans about the Oceti Sakowin, its people's history, beliefs and challenges — not to focus specifically on teaching and preparing Lakota students. And only 45% of teachers were teaching the Essential Understandings according to a 2021 survey by the state Department of Education.

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Native American children are consistently left behind in the state's education system. During the 2018-19 school year, less than one in four Native American students in grades three to eight and grade 11 was rated as proficient in reading and writing on state standardized tests. Roughly one in seven Native American students was proficient in math, and just one in eight was proficient in science.

The retreat staff pointedly did not ask elders about curriculum and schools, staying away from the perceived standard of education and memories of boarding schools. Instead, they asked about what their grandparents taught them, what they played with and how they learned as children.

"They wouldn't have shared intimate memories and information that they've carried with them for decades at 80 years old if I would have said 'school' or 'curriculum.' We would have never touched this philosophy that's been handed down by grandparents that they still walk with and hold," Nelson said.

The new standards Thunder Valley seeks would complement standards already in place, like math requirements, or programs used already, like Montessori for early childhood education.

"Kids learn everything they need to know – math, geology, geography – but in Lakota," Nelson said.

New standards could include horses, gardening, foraging activities

For example, horses are widely mentioned in elder recordings as important memories of learning while growing up and the activities they did as children. Yet horses aren't typically introduced to Lakota children in the educational system, though equine therapy and equine-assisted learning have been effective across the country. Some children never see a horse in person until they're older, Nelson said, though the horse is important to Lakota culture and religion.

"What if one of our standards was that in Lakota country, at 6 years old, you should have 600 hours with a horse? Why not?" Nelson said. "We have that power and knowledge and work and resources to say that growing up on a horse is a big part of who we are, that it does things for us educationally, spiritually and emotionally that we don't have in the current system. Thinking like that, you can change what education is."

Other examples elders mention include learning language through storytelling, working in gardens with their grandparents, using the country as their playground and eating snacks of chokecherries or other foraged foods.

Elders would recall their grandmothers smudging them with sage after playing outside or leaving the house for a time to "call their spirits back," Nelson said, which teachers don't do after recess or field trips today. Calling your spirit back is a spiritual ritual meant to ground yourself and be mindful of your presence and actions.

"They're just telling stories but for me as an educator, I'm asking: What are they eating and doing? Who is teaching them? They learned by playing, from horses and from the land," Nelson said. "Part of revitalizing a language isn't just speaking it and building curriculum, but knowing that language is directly connected to ceremonies and philosophy."

The elder retreat at Standing Rock was the second one held since the program started. The first retreat was held in Keystone in October 2022. Nelson hopes to have a report finalized in the next year or two to lay out what the standards should be based on the information collected from retreats.

Then Thunder Valley can build its learning centers in ways children can "proudly be Lakota in every sense" like their ancestors were.

"We can do curriculum, but what we really need is a roadmap and a guide developed from fluent speakers and their lived experience that outlines what's important to us," Nelson said. "Who better to ask how to be Lakota than Lakota people?"

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

COMMENTARY

South Dakota lacks transparency in lobbyist spending

SETH TUPPER

Lobbying is one of the least transparent political activities in South Dakota, and an interest group's inclusion of three legislators on a recent tour of the U.S.-Mexico border provides an example.

The three legislators are Sen. Casey Crabtree, R-Madison, Rep. Will Mortenson, R-Pierre, and Rep. Tony Venhuizen, R-Sioux Falls.

I'm picking on their trip because it's a handy example. They deserve some credit for speaking publicly about the trip and acknowledging it was paid for by the Americans for Prosperity Foundation. That's an offshoot of Americans for Prosperity, a national nonprofit that spends millions annually to advance conservative causes. The reason I know about the trip is because the legislators and AFP didn't keep it a secret.

But after answering a general question via email, Americans for Prosperity's South Dakota office did not respond to my follow-ups, and I have not seen a disclosure of how much the foundation spent on the legislators. South Dakota's lobbying disclosure laws do not require the foundation to disclose that information, according to prevailing interpretations of the statutes.

Compare that situation to our campaign finance laws, and consider the contrast: When the campaign committees for Crabtree, Mortenson and Venhuizen receive more than \$100 from any person – even someone they've never met – they're required to disclose the amount along with the donor's name and address. But when a major national political organization takes all three legislators to Texas for two days to influence their views on immigration policy (in other words, to lobby them), that organization is not lawfully required to disclose the costs. Meanwhile, Americans for Prosperity has also fought successfully in the courts to keep its donor information private.

South Dakota does have a state law that supposedly caps the value of lobbyists' gifts to individual lawmakers at \$115.47 per calendar year (it's not a round number because it's adjusted annually for inflation). But that cap and other portions of our lobbying laws are riddled with exemptions. One exemption is for "any cost to educate or inform the public official on matters of public policy," which arguably exempts everything a lobbyist does.

Thus, the expense reports that hundreds of lobbyists and their clients file with the Secretary of State's Office – only once a year, about three months after the annual legislative session – often disclose no expenses at all. The only thing disclosed on many of the forms is the name of the lobbyist and the client.

That's one of the reasons the Center for Public Integrity gave South Dakota an "F" and ranked its lobbying disclosure laws as the 49th worst in the country in 2015. I can vouch for the research, because I did it (and submitted it for an independent review). The center hired me as its South Dakota researcher that year for its nationwide State Integrity Investigation.

The top-ranking state for lobbying disclosure laws was Alaska. In that state, lobbyists file multiple reports each year that list their reimbursable expenses and the compensation from each of their clients. It's a novel concept: disclosures that actually disclose.

Furthermore, Alaska's reports are digital and can be manipulated on a website to display totals per lobbyist or employer, and the results are downloadable as a spreadsheet. South Dakota's lobbyist expense reports are available online, but only as individually scanned pieces of paper.

My point in making these comparisons is not to criticize the three lawmakers who accepted the trip to the border (although I can think of many in-state problems that could use their attention), or to claim there's anything inherently wrong with lobbying.

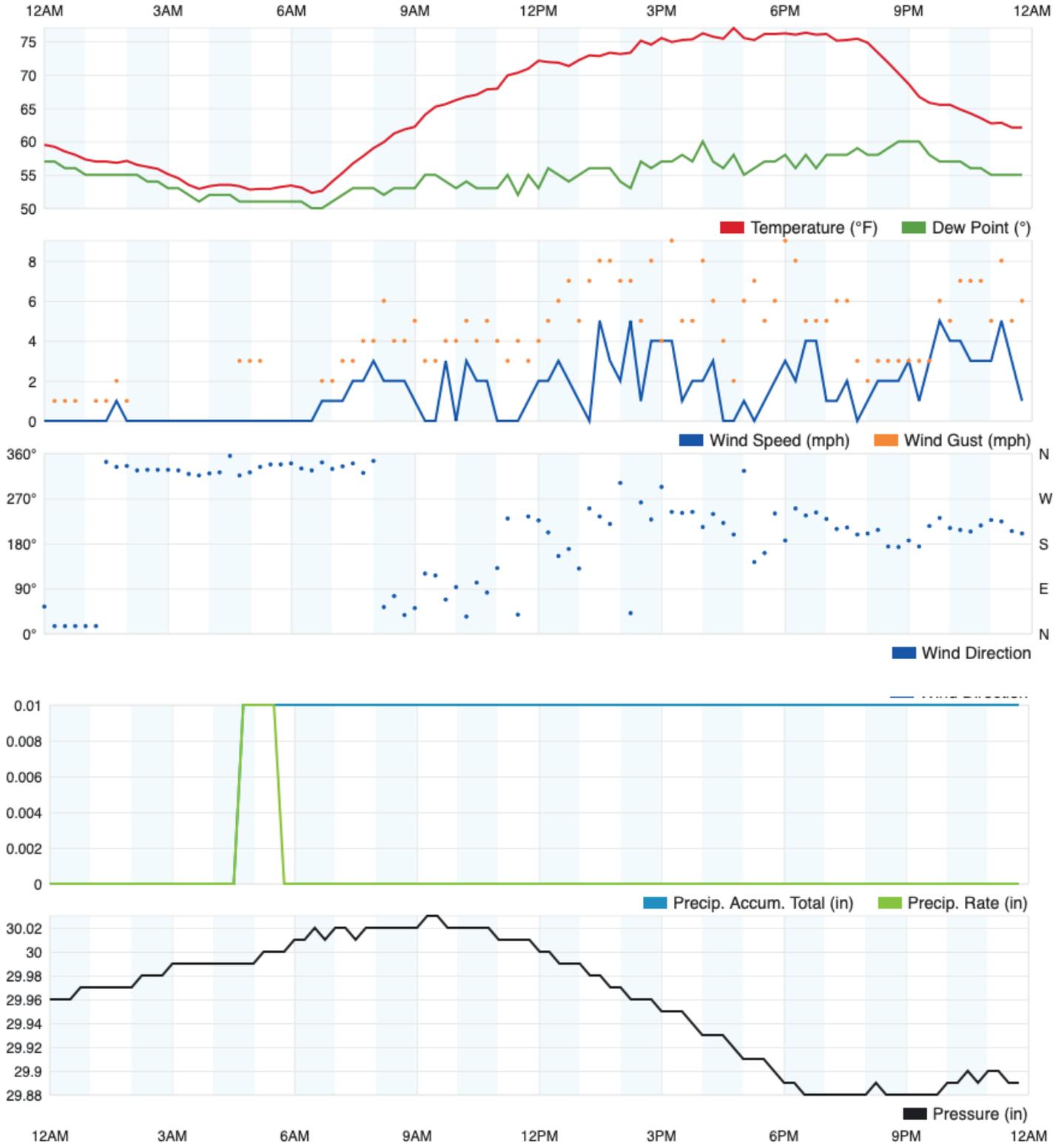
But there is something wrong with a lobbying disclosure system that yields almost no useful information. You might think it's fine that a national interest group paid for three legislators to visit the Mexican border, or you might dislike it. Either way, you should be able to access a report that discloses the trip, along with the cost and the source of the money, so you can form your own opinion about the way interest groups are seeking to influence your lawmakers.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Chance Showers	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Slight Chance Showers
High: 88 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 85 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 79 °F

Warmer & Sunny Today

Today July 9 th  82 to 90°	Monday July 10 th  82 to 94° <i>Hottest across south central SD</i>	Tuesday July 11 th  70 to 82°
---	---	--

Isolated storms possible across far northeastern SD and west central MN today (<20% chance), and again Monday mainly across north central SD (20% chance)

40-60% chance for showers and storms across the area Tuesday and Tuesday night

July 9, 2023 5:31 AM




While isolated storms are possible for some today and tomorrow, most areas will stay sunny and dry until potentially Tuesday and Tuesday night when higher chances for precipitation arrive (40-60%). Temperatures will be seasonable to slightly above normal today and Monday, but cooler air moves in behind a cold front for Tuesday.

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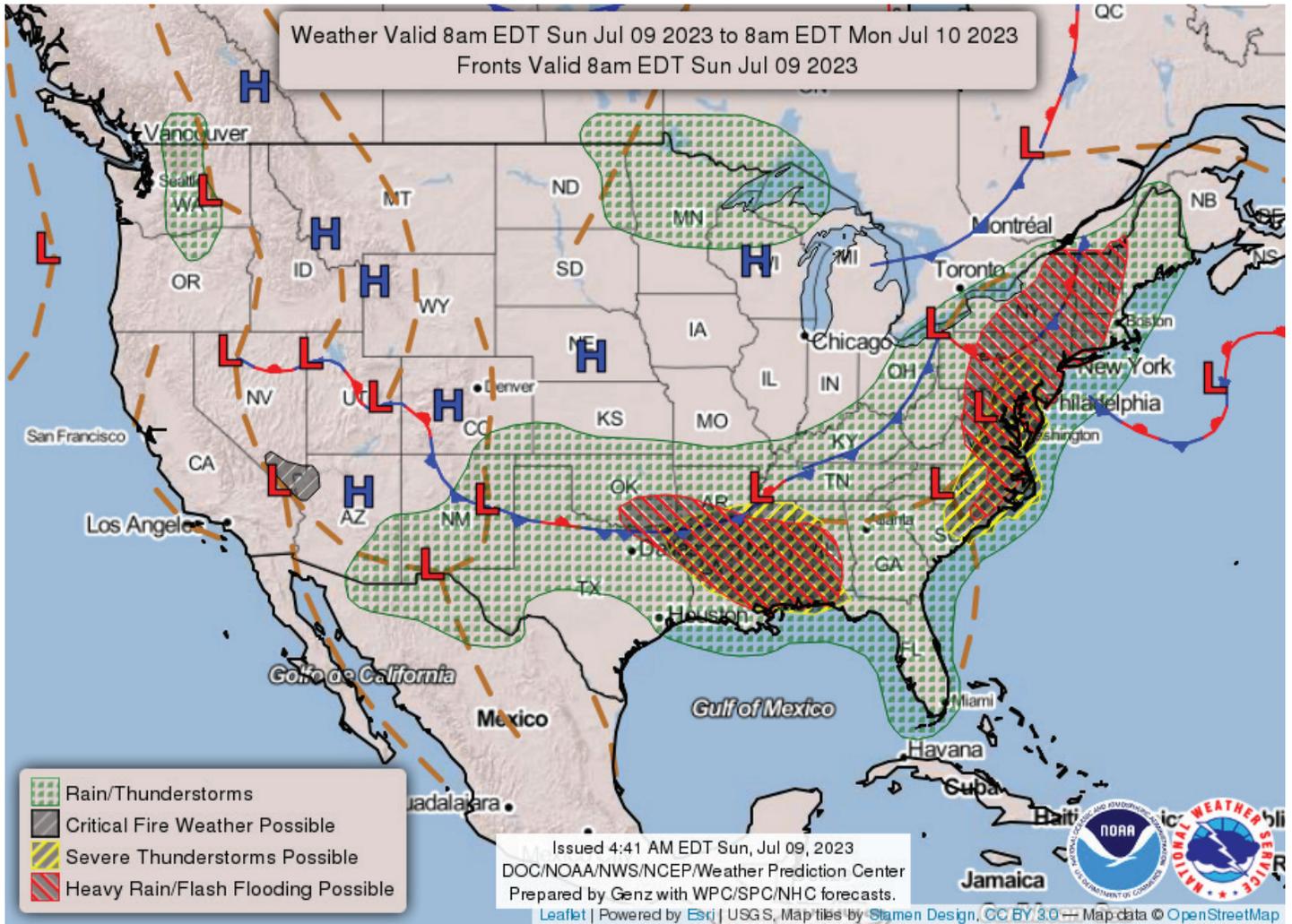
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 77 °F at 4:52 PM
Low Temp: 52 °F at 6:34 AM
Wind: 10 mph at 3:49 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 115 in 1936
Record Low: 42 in 1981
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 1.05
Precip to date in July.: 1.13
Average Precip to date: 12.06
Precip Year to Date: 12.48
Sunset Tonight: 9:23:42 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:52:25 AM

Day length: 15 hours, 32 minutes



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Today in Weather History

July 9, 1938: A deadly, estimated F4 tornado moved ESE across the eastern edge of Andover to the north of Bristol. Seventeen buildings were destroyed at Andover, and at least one home was completely swept away. Seven homes and a church also suffered damage. One person was killed at the western edge of Andover, and a couple died in a house at the southern side of town. About two hours later, another estimated F4 tornado moved ENE from 2 miles northeast of White, South Dakota in Brookings County to Hendricks, Minnesota. Only one person was injured from this storm.

July 9, 1972: Wind gusts up to 89 mph caused considerable damage in the Pierre and Oahe Dam area. A drive-in movie screen was destroyed. A camper trailer was turned over pinning seven members of a family inside. Five of them were hospitalized. Numerous trees were uprooted at the Oahe Dam campground. A tourist information building was caved in. Hail broke out car windows on ten vehicles.

July 9, 2009: Severe storms developed over Fall River County and moved eastward across southwestern and south central South Dakota. The thunderstorms produced large hail and strong wind gusts. Two tornadoes were observed in Todd County, and two tornadoes touched down in southern Tripp County. A small EF-1 tornado tracked across Dog Ear Township from 311th Avenue to near the intersection of 289th Street and 312th Avenue, or a little over a one-mile track. The storm blew down large cottonwood trees.

July 9, 2013: A pair of severe storms moved across northeastern South Dakota during the evening hours of the 9th. These storms caused extensive damage to crops, mainly west of Frederick in Brown County where beans and corn fields were destroyed. As the storms moved from Barnard, through Columbia, and into the Groton area, the hail increased to baseball size. There was also some structural damage to siding along with broken windows.

1860 - A hot blast of air in the middle of a sweltering summer pushed the mercury up to 115 degrees at Fort Scott and Lawrence, KS. (David Ludlum)

1882 - Ice formed on the streets of Cheyenne, WY, during a rare summer freeze. (David Ludlum)

1936 - The temperature hit an all-time record high of 106 degrees at the Central Park Observatory in New York City, a record which lasted until LaGuardia Airport hit 107 degrees on July 3rd in 1966. (The Weather Channel)

1968 - Columbus, MS received 15.68 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1979: Hurricane Bob was born in the Gulf of Mexico, becoming the first Atlantic Hurricane to be given a male name.

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Michigan. A tornado near Munising, MI, destroyed part of a commercial dog kennel, and one of the missing dogs was later found unharmed in a tree top half a mile away. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty-three cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Alpena, MI, and Buffalo, NY, suffered through their sixth straight day of record heat. The percentage of total area in the country in the grips of severe to extreme drought reached 43 percent, the fourth highest total of record. The record of 61 percent occurred during the summer of 1934. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms produced very heavy rain in southern Lower Michigan and northern Indiana. Up to 5.6 inches of rain was reported in Berrien County, MI. Sioux Falls SD reported a record high of 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1997: Torrential rains in the Carpathian Mountains caused severe flooding in the Czech Republic, Poland, and German. In all, 104 people died as a result of the deluge. In the aftermath, authorities from each country blamed the others for the extent of the disaster.

2007: The Argentine capital experiences its first major snowfall since June 22, 1918, as wet snow spreads a thin white mantle over the area. The storm hits on Argentina's Independence Day holiday thus adding to a festive air. Thousands of Argentines cheer the event, throwing snowballs in the streets. Local radio stations dust off an old tango song inspired by the 1918 snowfall: What a night!

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE MEMORIES OF A HOLY GOD

It almost seems contradictory when we read these words of the Psalmist: "For He remembered His holy promise." It's as if God were in a grocery store, and just as He began to walk through the parking lot to His car, He stopped and said, "Oh my. I forgot the milk! I'm glad I thought of it." But, not so.

As Psalm 105 ends, the author reminds us of the faithfulness of our God. So, he wanted to remind the readers, once again, that whether or not they were faithful to Him, He was faithful to them. He made a covenant with Abraham, and through the many generations from the day that covenant was made until that very moment, He was always with them. When they felt alone, He made His presence known. When they needed protection, He was there to guard them. When they were hungry, He provided food to nourish them. When they were weak and weary, they could rely on His power.

God has been, is and will be true to what He says. And, He is faithful to keep His word to whomever He gives it. Wherever we look in history - in times of defeat and delay - it does not mean that God has forgotten what He has promised. God is always faithful to His holy promises. His promises are holy and sacred because they come from a God who is holy and sacred. Through days that seemed unbearable and nights that had no stars, God was always with them - working out His will in His way according to His plan.

God calls us to Himself to make us like Himself. He will do whatever it takes to restore His image in us. Remember: God is a "working in us God" and always faithful.

Prayer: Give us patience and perseverance, faith and willingness, hope and trust, Lord, as we become like You. Help us to remember our promises to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. Psalm 105:42



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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2023 Community Events

- 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)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 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)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 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)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.07.23

8 10 17 55 66 3

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$480,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.08.23

29 33 38 43 49 8

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$5,450,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.08.23

17 30 33 36 44 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 30 Mins
42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.08.23

6 14 26 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$144,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.08.23

12 23 30 42 62 21

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.08.23

7 23 24 32 43 18

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$650,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Solar storm on Thursday expected to make Northern Lights visible in 17 states

By The Associated Press undefined

A solar storm forecast for Thursday is expected to give skygazers in 17 American states a chance to glimpse the Northern Lights, the colorful sky show that happens when solar wind hits the atmosphere.

Northern Lights, also known as aurora borealis, are most often seen in Alaska, Canada and Scandinavia, but an 11-year solar cycle that's expected to peak in 2024 is making the lights visible in places farther to the south. Three months ago, the light displays were visible in Arizona, marking the third severe geomagnetic storm since the current solar cycle began in 2019.

The Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks has forecast auroral activity on Thursday in Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Indiana, Maine and Maryland.

Auroral activity also has been forecast for Canada, including Vancouver.

Light displays are expected to be visible overhead in Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Helena, Montana, and low on the horizon in Salem, Oregon.; Boise, Idaho; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Annapolis, Maryland; and Indianapolis, according to the institute.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Space Weather Prediction Center said people wanting to experience an aurora should get away from city lights and that the best viewing times are between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. local time.

Northern Lights occur when a magnetic solar wind slams into the Earth's magnetic field and causes atoms in the upper atmosphere to glow. The lights appear suddenly and the intensity varies.

A geomagnetic index known as Kp ranks auroral activity on a scale from zero to nine, with zero being not very active and nine being bright and active. The Geophysical Institute has forecast Kp 6 for Thursday's storm.

Man charged after South Dakota man's decomposing body found sticking out of garment bag

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man's body was found sticking out of a garment bag earlier this week, and authorities said the rug underneath it appeared soaked with dried blood, and maggots and flies surrounded the body.

A Sioux Falls man was charged in connection with the homicide of 63-year-old Nigussie Bulti on Thursday. Court documents say 29-year-old Morningstar Jewett later admitted assaulting Bulti with a piece of wood, and stomping on his head in a fight. Jewett had been in custody in a different case since the day before Bulti's body was found Wednesday.

The attorney listed for Jewett in online court records didn't immediately respond to a message Saturday. He was initially charged with two counts of aggravated assault.

Bulti's body was found in his apartment with part of his body sticking out of the garment bag after he missed an appointment. The officers who went there said they could smell decomposition when they entered the building. Investigators believe he had been dead for about a week.

The BBC is under pressure over claims a well-known presenter paid a teenager for explicit photos

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Senior British politicians on Sunday called on the BBC to rapidly investigate claims that a leading presenter paid a teenager for explicit photos.

The government said Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer would hold urgent talks with the broadcaster's director-general over the "deeply concerning" allegations.

The publicly funded national broadcaster is under pressure after The Sun newspaper reported allegations that the male presenter gave a youth 35,000 pounds (\$45,000) starting in 2020 when the young person was 17.

Neither the star nor the youth was identified. Amid speculation on social media about the identity of the presenter, several of the BBC's best-known stars spoke up to say it wasn't them.

Though the age of sexual consent in Britain is 16, it's a crime to make or possess indecent images of anyone under 18.

The Sun said the young person's mother had complained to the BBC in May. It was unclear what if any action the broadcaster had taken.

In a statement, the BBC said "we treat any allegations very seriously and we have processes in place to proactively deal with them."

"If, at any point, new information comes to light or is provided — including via newspapers — this will be acted upon appropriately, in line with internal processes," the broadcaster said.

U.K. media reported that the presenter was not due to be on the air in the near future, but it was unclear whether he had been suspended.

Government minister Victoria Atkins said the allegations were "very serious." She told Sky News that "as public attention and concern grows, the BBC is going to have to act very swiftly to deal with these allegations and to set out what they are doing to investigate them."

Rachel Reeves, economy spokeswoman for the opposition Labour Party, said the BBC needed to "speed up their processes" and "get their house in order."

Commercial U.K. broadcaster ITV recently faced its own scandal after Phillip Schofield, a long-time host on the channel's popular morning show, quit in May, admitting he had lied about an affair with a much younger colleague.

ITV executives were summoned to Parliament to answer questions about whether the broadcaster had a "toxic" work culture and had covered up misconduct by stars.

The BBC faces greater scrutiny than other broadcasters because it is taxpayer-funded and committed to remaining impartial in its news coverage. It was engulfed in a storm over free speech and political bias in March when its leading sports presenter, former England soccer player Gary Lineker, criticized the government's immigration policy on social media.

Lineker was suspended — and then restored after other sports presenters, analysts and Premier League players boycotted the BBC airwaves in solidarity.

NATO's unity will be tested at summit in Vilnius

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, LORNE COOK and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues with no end in sight, NATO's much-celebrated unity faces fresh strains when leaders gather for their annual summit this week in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The world's biggest security alliance is struggling to reach an agreement on admitting Sweden as its 32nd member. Military spending by member nations still lags behind longstanding goals. And an inability to compromise over who should serve as NATO's next leader forced an extension of the current secretary general's term for an extra year.

Perhaps most thorny are questions over how Ukraine should be eased into the alliance. Some maintain

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admitting Ukraine to NATO would be the fulfillment of a promise made years ago and a necessary step to deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. Others are fearful it would be seen as a provocation that could spiral into an even wider conflict.

Bickering among friends is not uncommon, and the current catalogue of disputes pales in comparison to past fears that Donald Trump would turn his back on the alliance during his presidency. However, the challenges come at a moment when President Joe Biden and his counterparts are heavily invested in demonstrating harmony among members.

"Any fissure, any lack of solidarity provides an opportunity for those who would oppose the alliance," said Douglas Lute, who served as U.S. ambassador to NATO under President Barack Obama.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is eager to exploit divisions as he struggles to gain ground in Ukraine and faces political challenges at home, including the aftermath of a brief revolt by the Wagner mercenary group.

"You don't want to present any openings," Lute said. "You don't want to present any gaps or seams."

By some measures, the Ukraine conflict has reinvigorated NATO, which was created at the beginning of the Cold War as a bulwark against Moscow. Members of the alliance have poured military hardware into Ukraine to help with its ongoing counteroffensive, and Finland ended a history of nonalignment to become NATO's 31st member.

"I think it's appropriate to look at all the success," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "So I think the invasion has strengthened NATO — exactly the opposite of what Putin anticipated."

He noted Germany's shift toward a more robust defense policy as well as other countries' increase in military spending.

The U.S. announced Friday it will provide Ukraine with the controversial cluster munitions, causing unease among some NATO partners. Such a bomb poses a higher risk of civilian harm as it opens in the air releasing smaller "bomblets" across a wide area, hitting multiple targets simultaneously. Ukraine has promised to use it carefully.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni — one of Western Europe's staunchest backers of Ukraine in the war — reiterated her country's condemnation of the Russian aggression but called for the "universal application of the principles" of the international convention banning the production, transfer, and stockpiling of cluster munitions.

Spain's Defense Minister Margarita Robles said while her country respects the U.S. decision, it did not agree with it. "No to cluster bombs and yes to helping in the legitimate defense of Ukraine, which we understand should be carried out without that type of bomb," she said Saturday. Canada and the U.K. also voiced concerns while Germany, which has signed the ban treaty, said it won't provide the bombs to Ukraine, but expressed understanding for the American position.

U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "wants countries to abide by the terms of that convention and so as a result, of course, he does not want there to be continued use of cluster munitions on the battlefield."

But the ongoing war has allowed other challenges to fester or bubble to the surface.

In particular, NATO leaders said back in 2008 that Ukraine would eventually become a member, but little action has been taken toward that goal. Putin occupied parts of the country in 2014 and then attempted to capture Kyiv in 2022, leading to the current war.

"A gray zone is a green light for Putin," said Daniel Fried, a former U.S. ambassador to Poland, and now a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council.

The U.S. and Germany insist that the focus should be on supplying weapons and ammunition to help Ukraine win the current conflict, rather than taking the more provocative step of extending a formal invitation to join NATO.

However, countries on NATO's Eastern flank — Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland — want firmer assurances on future membership.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is pushing for that as well. During a visit to Prague on Thursday, he said the "ideal" result of the Vilnius summit would be an invitation for his country to join the alliance.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, described the summit as "an important moment on that pathway toward membership" and that allies need to "discuss the reforms that are still necessary for Ukraine to come up to NATO standards."

NATO could use the occasion to elevate its relationship with Ukraine, creating what would be known as the NATO-Ukraine Council and giving Kyiv a seat at the table for consultations.

Also in the spotlight in Vilnius will be Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the main obstacle blocking Sweden's attempts to join NATO alongside its neighbor Finland.

Erdogan accuses Sweden of being too lenient on anti-Islamic demonstrations and militant Kurdish groups that have waged a decades-long insurgency in Turkey.

Sweden recently changed its anti-terrorism legislation and lifted an arms embargo on Turkey. However, a man burned a Quran outside a mosque in Stockholm last week, and Erdogan signaled that this would pose another obstacle. He equated "those who permitted the crime" to those who perpetrated it.

Turkey and the U.S. are also at an impasse over the sale of F-16 fighter jets. Erdogan wants the upgraded planes, but Biden says that Sweden's NATO membership has to be dealt with first.

Sullivan said the U.S. is confident that Sweden will join NATO "in the not-too-distant future," but it's unclear if the matter will be resolved during the summit.

It's not the first time that Erdogan has used a NATO summit for Turkish gain. In 2009, he held up the nomination of Anders Fogh Rasmussen as secretary general but agreed to the move after securing some senior posts for Turkish officials at the alliance.

Max Bergmann, a former State Department official who leads the Europe Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said there's growing frustration among allies toward Erdogan, building on concerns about his ties to Putin, democratic backsliding and sanctions evasion.

"They've tried playing nice," Bergmann said. "The question is whether it's time to get much more confrontational."

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban is also delaying his country's approval of Sweden's membership. In response, Sen. Jim Risch, the top Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is blocking a \$735 million U.S. arms sale to Hungary.

"We don't want members who aren't interested in doing everything possible to strengthen the alliance rather than the pursuit of their own or individual interests," he said. "I'm just sick and tired of it."

However, Risch rejected the idea that these disagreements are a sign of weakness within NATO.

"These are kinds of things that always arise in an alliance," he said. "The fact that we've been able to deal with them and will continue to deal with them proves that this is the most successful and strongest military alliance in the history of the world."

At least one potentially flammable item has been taken off the summit agenda. Rather than seek consensus on a new NATO leader, members agreed to extend Jens Stoltenberg's tenure for a year. He's had the job since 2014, and it's the fourth time that his time in office has been extended.

Most wanted a woman to take the top job next, and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had been considered a favorite candidate. However, Poland insisted that a candidate from the Baltic states should be next because there had already been two Nordic secretaries general in a row. (Stoltenberg was a Norwegian prime minister, and Rasmussen was a Danish prime minister.)

Others are skeptical of accepting a nominee from the Baltics, whose leaders tend to be more provocative in their approach to Russia, including supporting Ukraine's desire to rapidly join NATO.

More disagreements loom over NATO's updated plans for countering any invasion that Russia might launch on allied territory. It's the biggest revision since the Cold War, and Skip Davis, a former NATO official who is now a senior fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis, said it could involve "lots of arm wrestling and card trading."

"That's an issue that will cause tension and dissent, and that's not what the Vilnius summit is all about,"

he said.

Cook reported from Brussels. Associated Press writer Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed to this report.

South Korean lawmakers berate IAEA chief over Japanese plans to release treated Fukushima wastewater

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean opposition lawmakers sharply criticized the head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog on Sunday for its approval of Japanese plans to release treated wastewater from the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant.

They met with Rafael Grossi in a tense meeting in Seoul that took place while protesters screamed outside the door.

Grossi, the International Atomic Energy Agency's director general, arrived in South Korea over the weekend to engage with government officials and critics and help reduce public concerns about food safety.

The IAEA last week approved the Japanese discharge plans, saying the process would meet international safety standards and pose negligible environmental and health impacts. South Korea's government has also endorsed the safety of the Japanese plans.

In his meeting with members of the liberal Democratic Party, which controls a majority in South Korea's parliament, Grossi said the IAEA's review of the Japanese plans was based on "transparent" and "scientific" research. He acknowledged concerns over how the Japanese plans would play out in reality and said the IAEA would establish a permanent office in Fukushima to closely monitor how the discharge process is implemented over the next three decades.

"Our conclusion has been that this plan, if it is carried out in the way it has been presented, would be in line, would be in conformity with the international safety standards," Grossi said.

The lawmakers responded by harshly criticizing IAEA's review, which they say neglected long-term environmental and health impacts of the wastewater release and threatens to set a bad precedent that may encourage other countries to dispose nuclear waste into sea. They called for Japan to scrap the discharge plans and work with neighboring countries to find safer ways to handle the wastewater, including a possible pursuit of long-term storage on land.

The party has also criticized the government of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol for putting people's health at risk while trying to improve relations with Japan.

"If you think (the treated wastewater) is safe, I wonder whether you would be willing to suggest the Japanese government use that water for drinking or for industrial and agricultural purposes, rather than dumping it in the sea," Woo Won-shik, a Democratic Party lawmaker who attended the meeting, told Grossi. The party said Woo has been on a hunger strike for the past 14 days to protest the Japanese discharge plans.

Further details from the meeting weren't immediately available after reporters were asked to leave following opening statements. Closely watched by parliamentary security staff, dozens of protesters shouted near the lobby of the National Assembly's main hall where the meeting was taking place, holding signs denouncing the IAEA and Japan.

Grossi was to fly to New Zealand later on Sunday and would then travel to the Cook Islands as he further tries to reassure countries in the region about the Japanese plans.

Hundreds of demonstrators had also marched in downtown Seoul on Saturday demanding that Japan scrap its plans.

A massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011 destroyed the Fukushima plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and release large amounts of radiation.

Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, which operates the facility, has been storing the treated water in hundreds of tanks that now cover most of the plant and are nearly full. Japanese officials say the tanks

must be removed to make room to build facilities for the plant's decommissioning and to minimize the risk of leaks in case of another major disaster. The tanks are expected to reach their capacity of 1.37 million tons in early 2024.

Japan first announced plans to discharge the treated water into the sea in 2018, saying the water will be further diluted by seawater before being released in a carefully controlled process that will take decades to complete.

The safety of Fukushima's wastewater has been a sensitive issue for years between the U.S. allies. South Korea and Japan have been working in recent months to repair relations long strained over wartime historical grievances to address shared concerns such as the North Korean nuclear threat and China's assertive foreign policy.

In a statement released by state media on Sunday, North Korea also criticized the Japanese discharge plans, warning against "fatal adverse impact on the human lives and security and ecological environment." The statement, which was attributed to an unidentified official in North Korea's Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, also criticized Washington and Seoul for backing the Japanese plans.

"What matters is the unreasonable behavior of IAEA actively patronizing and facilitating Japan's projected discharge of nuclear-polluted water, which is unimaginable," it said. "Worse still, the U.S. and (South) Korea openly express unseemly 'welcome' to Japan's discharge plan that deserves condemnation and rejection, provoking strong anger of the public."

Ukraine and the environment will top the agenda when Biden meets UK politicians and royalty

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) —

A dash of pomp and a dose of politics are on the agenda during a stopover visit to the U.K. where President Joe Biden will discuss the environment with King Charles III and the war in Ukraine with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Biden flies to London on Sunday on his way to a NATO summit in Lithuania. He is scheduled to hold talks with Sunak at 10 Downing St. on Monday before heading to Windsor Castle to meet Charles for the first time since the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II in September.

Though this is not a full state visit with military honors and palace banquet, the royal imprimatur and backdrop of the 1,000-year-old castle help underscore the importance of the trans-Atlantic "special relationship" — tested by Brexit but reinforced by unity over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Sunak and the president will hold Ukraine-focused talks before both attend this week's NATO meeting in Vilnius, which will discuss how far the military alliance should open the door to Ukraine. NATO leaders said in 2008 that Ukraine would eventually become a member, but have not set out a road map, despite impassioned entreaties from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"That is an area where the U.S. is a little bit more hesitant than a lot of other NATO allies," said Julie Norman, co-director of the Centre on U.S. Politics at University College London. "There might be some closed-door discussions about where the U.K. is on that before going into the whole (NATO) meeting."

The U.S. and the U.K. are among the strongest Western supporters of Kyiv. Norman said that "if anything, the U.K. has taken a bit of a lead on some of the military commitments," nudging the Biden administration to go further on issues including tanks and an international effort to give Ukraine F-16 fighter jets.

"I think in some ways that's worked to Biden's advantage as he's gotten increased resistance at home from some wings of the Republican Party about not over-giving aid to Ukraine," she said. "The fact that the U.K. is pushing and leading on this gives Biden a bit of a nudge and a bit of a strong ally support in moving ahead."

Biden faces unease from allies including Britain about his decision to give Ukraine cluster bombs, which are banned under a convention signed by more than 120 countries, including the U.K. Sunak said Saturday that Britain "discourages their use."

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Determined to show unity among Ukraine's allies, the U.K. has refrained from complaining about failing to secure support from Washington for Defense Secretary Ben Wallace to become the next head of NATO. Instead, the term of current Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has been extended by a year.

The transatlantic relationship has been strained in recent years by Britain's exit from the European Union, an act Biden has made clear he thinks harmed the U.K.

The president, who proudly celebrates his Irish roots, was especially concerned about the impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland's peace process. Washington was relieved when Britain and the EU struck a deal in February to settle a thorny dispute over trade rules for Northern Ireland, the only part of the U.K. that shares a border with an EU member.

Biden briefly visited Belfast in April to mark 25 years since Northern Ireland's Good Friday peace agreement, before spending several days visiting ancestral hometowns in the Republic of Ireland. He irked some in the U.K. by saying later that he'd visited Northern Ireland to make sure "the Brits didn't screw around."

While some U.K. Conservatives are sensitive about perceived slights from the Democrat president, this is Biden's sixth meeting with Sunak, who has been in office since October. The British leader visited Washington last month, coming away with an "Atlantic Declaration" promising closer economic cooperation in areas including artificial intelligence, clean energy and critical minerals.

That was some consolation for Britain's failure to get a free trade deal with the U.S., a now-buried dream of Brexit supporters.

For Sunak, standing alongside the American president provides a brief respite from his mounting domestic troubles over a stuttering economy and a fractious party. Like Biden, he faces electoral judgment next year, with a deadline of late 2024 to call a national election. U.K. inflation of 8.7% in the year to May -- double the U.S. rate -- is keeping millions of people in a cost-of-living squeeze, and the governing Conservatives lag behind Labour in opinion polls.

It's also a profile-raising moment for 74-year-old Charles. Biden attended the late queen's funeral in September, but did not come to Charles' coronation in May, sending first lady Jill Biden instead.

Charles doesn't have the star power of his mother, who met 13 American presidents and made more than 100 state visits during her 70 years on the throne. But he has built up a reputation as an environmental campaigner, fighting to protect wildlife and combat climate change long before it became popular.

"Charles is an important figure in the world of green and climate energy," said George Gross, a royal historian at King's College London. "He's a very familiar face. So I think that there's no disadvantage (for) a U.S. president being photographed next to him."

Gross said the British monarch has no real political power but "a tremendous amount of soft power" because so many world leaders want to experience the royal mystique.

"There are things the U.K. government can push through Charles, if they want to, that can be said and talked about in a way that can't be done by the prime minister in quite the same way," he said.

Yellen says Washington might 'respond to unintended consequences' for China due to tech export curbs

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Sunday said she agreed Washington will listen to Chinese complaints about security-related curbs on U.S. technology exports and might "respond to unintended consequences" as she ended a visit to Beijing aimed at reviving strained relations.

Yellen defended "targeted measures" on trade that China's leaders complain are aimed at hurting its fledgling tech industries. She said the Biden administration wants to "avoid unnecessary repercussions" but gave no indication of possible changes.

Relations between the two biggest economies are at their lowest level in decades due to disputes about technology, security and other irritants. A key Chinese complaint is limits on access to processor chips and other U.S. technology on security grounds that threaten to hamper the ruling Communist Party's development of smartphones, artificial intelligence and other industries.

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"We will open up channels so that they can express concerns about our actions, and we can explain and possibly in some situations respond to unintended consequences of our actions," Yellen said at a news conference.

Yellen talked with China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and other officials during 10 hours of meetings. She had a five-hour session Saturday with her Chinese counterpart, Vice Premier He Lifeng. Treasury officials said in advance there were no plans for her to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Yellen received a warm welcome and prominent coverage by the state press, but Chinese officials gave no sign they would change industrial or other policies that Washington and other governments say violate Beijing's free-trade commitments. On Saturday, He said Washington should "adopt a rational and pragmatic attitude" to improve relations.

On Sunday, Yellen announced no agreements on major disputes or plans for future activity but said her department and Chinese officials would have "more frequent and regular" communication.

U.S.-Chinese political strains are adding to uncertainty that is dampening the willingness of consumers and businesses to spend and invest.

China's economic growth rebounded to 4.5% in the first quarter of 2023 from last year's 3% after anti-virus controls on travel and business activity were lifted in December. But factory activity and consumer spending decelerated in the quarter ending in June.

Xi accused Washington in March of trying to hold back China's industrial development.

Beijing has been slow to retaliate for U.S. technology restrictions, possibly to avoid disrupting its own industries. But three days before Yellen's arrival, the government announced unspecified controls on exports of gallium and germanium, metals used in making semiconductors and solar panels. China is the biggest producer of both.

Yellen said she tried to reassure officials Washington doesn't want to decouple or separate its economy from China, while it tries to "de-risk" trade.

The Biden administration is pressing semiconductor makers to move production to the United States to reduce reliance on Taiwan and other Asian suppliers, which is seen as a security risk. Washington wants to develop alternatives to Chinese supplies of rare earth elements, metals used in smartphones, wind turbines and other products.

"They have expressed some concern that de-risking amounts to decoupling," Yellen said. She said she tried to "assure my Chinese counterparts that this is by no means the same thing."

"The de-risking involves attention to clearly articulated and narrowly targeted national security concerns, as well as broader concern with diversifying our supply chains, which the United States is doing in a few important sectors," she said.

Throughout her visit, Yellen appealed for "healthy economic competition," a reference to complaints Beijing violates its free-trade commitments by subsidizing and shielding politically favored industries from private and foreign competition.

Yellen said she had expressed concern to Chinese officials about "coercive activities" against U.S. companies.

That follows raids on consulting firms and the detention of staff members without explanation and what the U.S. government says is arbitrary detention or prohibitions on people leaving China that some complain are used to pressure them in business disputes.

Chinese leaders are trying to revive investor interest, but foreign companies are uneasy about their status after Xi and other officials called for economic self-reliance. The ruling party has also expanded an anti-spying law that has fueled uncertainty about what law firms or consultants can do.

On Saturday, Yellen appealed to He for cooperation on climate change, the debt burdens of developing countries and other global challenges. She said their governments shouldn't let disagreements about trade and security derail economic and financial relations.

Beijing broke off climate discussions with Washington last August in retaliation for a visit by then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the House of Representatives to Taiwan, the self-ruled island democracy claimed by China as part of its territory.

President Joe Biden's climate envoy, John Kerry, is due to become the next senior official to visit China next week. China and the United States are the world's top emitters of climate-changing carbon.

China signed an agreement last month to restructure the debt of Zambia, including billions of dollars lent under Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative to build ports and other infrastructure across Asia and Africa. Treasury officials pointed to that as successful cooperation.

Cities have long made plans for extreme heat. Are they enough in a warming world?

By MELINA WALLING and ISABELLA O'MALLEY undefined

CHICAGO (AP) — Natural disasters can be dramatic — barreling hurricanes, building-toppling tornadoes — but heat is more deadly.

Chicago learned that the hard way in 1995.

That July, a weeklong heat wave that hit 106 degrees Fahrenheit (41 degrees Celsius) killed more than 700 people. Most of the deaths occurred in poor and majority Black neighborhoods, where many elderly or isolated people suffered without proper ventilation or air conditioning. Power outages from an overwhelmed grid made it all worse.

Initially slow to react, Chicago has since developed emergency heat response plans that include a massive push to alert the public and then connect the most vulnerable to the help they may need. Other cities like Los Angeles, Miami and Phoenix now have "chief heat officers" to coordinate planning and response for dangerous heat. Around the world, cities and countries have adopted similar measures.

But experts warn those steps might not be enough in a world that is seeing heat records consistently shatter and with continuing inequality in who is most vulnerable.

"I don't know a single city that is truly prepared for the worst-case scenario that some climate scientists fear," said Eric Klinenberg, a professor of social sciences at New York University who wrote a book about the Chicago heat wave.

Heat preparedness has generally improved over the years as forecasting has become more accurate, and as meteorologists, journalists and government officials have focused on spreading the word of upcoming danger. Chicago, for example, has expanded its emergency text and email notification system and identified its most vulnerable residents for outreach.

But what works in one city might not be as effective in another. That's because each has its own unique architecture, transportation, layout and inequities, said Bharat Venkat, an associate professor at UCLA who directs the university's Heat Lab, aimed at tackling what he calls "thermal inequality."

Venkat thinks cities should address inequality by investing in labor rights, sustainable development and more. That may sound expensive — who pays, for instance, when a city tries to improve conditions for workers in blistering food trucks? — but Venkat thinks doing nothing will ultimately cost more.

"The status quo is actually deeply expensive," he said. "We just don't do the math."

France launched a heat watch warning system after an extended heat wave in 2003 was estimated to have caused 15,000 deaths — many of them older people in city apartments and homes without air conditioning. The system includes public announcements urging people to hydrate. Just last month, Germany launched a new campaign against heatwave deaths that it said was inspired by France's experience.

In India, a powerful heat wave in 2010 with temperatures over 118 degrees Fahrenheit (48 degrees Celsius) led to the deaths of over 1,300 people in the city of Ahmedabad. City officials now have a heat action plan to improve awareness in the local population and health care staff. Another simple initiative: Painting roofs white to reflect the blazing sun.

Ladd Keith, an assistant professor at the University of Arizona, cited Baltimore's Code Red Extreme Heat alerts as an example of a well-designed alert system. The alerts go out when the forecast calls for a heat index of 105 Fahrenheit or higher, and sets in motion things like more social services in communities most vulnerable to heat risks.

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He lauded the heat officers in cities like Los Angeles, Miami and Phoenix, but said there are “still over 19,000 cities and towns without them.”

Inkyu Han, an environmental health scientist at Temple University in Philadelphia, noted that cities are still struggling to get aids such as cooling centers and subsidized air conditioning into poorer neighborhoods. He said more can be done, too, with simple and sustainable solutions such as improving tree canopy.

“Notably, low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in Philadelphia often lack street trees and green spaces,” Han said.

In Providence, Rhode Island, the Atlantic Ocean typically moderates temperatures but the region can still get heat waves. Kate Moretti, an emergency room physician, said the city’s hospitals see more patients when the heat strikes — with increases in illnesses that may not be obviously related to heat, like heart attacks, kidney failure and mental health problems.

“We definitely notice that it puts a strain on the system,” Moretti said. Older people, people who work outdoors, people with disabilities and people who are homeless make up a big share of those admissions, she said.

Miami — considered a ground zero for the climate change threat due to its vulnerability to sea level rise, flooding, hurricanes and extreme heat — appointed its heat officer two years ago to develop strategies to keep people safe from the heat.

Robin Bachin, an associate professor of civic and community engagement at the University of Miami, noted that the federal government has laws to protect people in cold climates from having their heat shut off in dangerous conditions, but doesn’t have something similar for cooling.

“For people in apartments that are not publicly subsidized, there is no requirement for landlords to provide air conditioning,” Bachin said. “That’s incredibly dangerous to particularly our local low-income population, let alone people who are unhoused or are outdoor workers.”

Klinenberg said that the United States has so far gotten lucky with the duration of most heat waves, but that electrical grids vulnerable to high demand in some regions, along with persistent social inequities, could spell serious trouble in the coming decades.

That’s partly because the underlying social problems that make heat events so deadly are only getting worse, Klinenberg said. Chicago’s 1995 deaths were clustered not only in poor and segregated neighborhoods, but also specifically within what he calls “depleted” neighborhoods, places where it’s harder for people to gather together and where social connections have been worn thin. Empty lots, abandoned restaurants and poorly maintained parks mean that people are less likely to check up on each other.

Noboru Nakamura, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Chicago who specializes in extreme weather events, said he thinks Chicago has made plenty of smart changes by implementing heat emergency plans, routine wellness checks and cooling centers.

But he too cited inequality as a difficult challenge.

“A systemic problem of a resource inequity is something that you can’t really get rid of overnight. And we still have the same issue that we had back then today,” Nakamura said. “So that aspect still is a big, big, big, big, big unsolved problem.”

O’Malley reported from Philadelphia.

Follow Melina Walling on Twitter @MelinaWalling.

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP’s climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

9 missing in China landslide sparked by heavy rains amid flooding and searing temperatures

BEIJING (AP) — Nine people are missing in central China after a landslide sparked by heavy rains amid flooding and searing temperatures across much of the country, authorities said Sunday.

Five people were rescued from under the rubble at a highway construction site in the central province of Hubei, where the accident occurred on Saturday. Crews were still excavating in hopes of finding more survivors.

Tens of thousands of people have been moved to shelters amid heavy flooding in northern, central and southeastern China. Seasonal flooding is a regular occurrence in China, but this year's rising waters have been accompanied by unusually prolonged stretches of high temperatures.

With its more than 9 million square kilometers (4 million square miles) of land area, China is being hit simultaneously this summer by heatwaves, flooding and drought.

Cities have opened their air raid shelters to offer residents relief from the heat.

Earlier this week, Beijing reported more than nine straight days with temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit), a streak unseen since 1961.

Authorities have issued health alerts and, in the capital and elsewhere, suspended outdoor work, although many workers continued to deliver packages, lay bricks and haul goods amid fears over a faltering economic recovery.

So far, two deaths in Beijing have been attributed to the scorching heat. Health authorities said a tour guide collapsed and died of heat stroke Sunday while giving a tour of the Summer Palace — a vast, 18th century imperial garden. Last month, a woman in Beijing also died from a heat stroke.

Health authorities in Shaoxing, a city in Zhejiang province, said Thursday they have recorded deaths caused by the heat but did not specify any details.

Chinese cities such as Chongqing, a southwestern metropolis known for its torrid summers, have for years used their air raid tunnels as public cooling centers.

The shelters are now often equipped with seating areas and offer access to water, refreshments, heat stroke medicine and in some cases amenities such as Wi-Fi, television and table-tennis equipment.

Weather authorities warned Thursday that severe drought in northern China was threatening crops and stressing overworked electric grids. Meanwhile, heavy flooding in southern China has displaced thousands of people over the past few weeks.

Earth's average temperature set a new unofficial record high Thursday, the third such milestone in a week that already rated as the hottest on record.

Deputies accused a Texas sheriff of corruption and dysfunction. Then came the mass shooting

By JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

COLDSRING, Texas (AP) — Sheriff Greg Capers was the classic picture of a Texas lawman as he announced the capture of a suspected mass killer: white cowboy hat on his head, gold star pinned to his chest, white cross on his belt and a large pistol emblazoned with his name on his hip.

For four days, Francisco Oropeza had evaded hundreds of officers after allegedly killing five neighbors when they complained that his late-night shooting was keeping their baby awake. The sheriff said his deputies arrived in 11 minutes, but Oropeza was gone. With the search over, Capers had a message for the victims' families.

"They can rest easy now," Capers told a row of television cameras in May. The burly sheriff later personally hauled the "coward" across a town square into court.

But an Associated Press investigation led the sheriff's office to disclose that deputies took nearly four times as long as Capers initially said to arrive at the mass shooting.

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Garcia recalled telling his wife to "get inside" that April night as he watched their neighbor run toward their home, reloading his rifle. At 12:11 a.m., a dispatcher heard gunfire over the open phone line, according to a detailed timeline that the sheriff's office provided to the AP in response to questions.

Deputies arrived on the street five minutes later, which was 42 minutes after the first 911 call, according to the timeline. Garcia's wife, his 9-year-old son and three others were dead.

Kean and another sheriff's official said the initial calls came in as harassment complaints about Oropeza shooting on his own property and that some calls required a Spanish translator. They said the three deputies on duty were working on an aggravated robbery and the time it took them to respond was "average" given the county's size and the area's rough roads.

The next day, when Keith and Tiffany Pinkston heard about the shooting, their first thought was, "That could have been us."

In January, the family was enjoying a backyard campfire with friends when they said their neighbor began shooting. Bullets blew holes through their fence and one sprayed sandy soil up at their 8-year-old daughter as she ran, screaming, they recalled.

The group scrambled for cover and called 911. When deputies arrived nearly 40 minutes later, the Pinkstons said, they did not ask for the neighbor's identification.

Two months later, state police arrested the neighbor on a manslaughter charge in a deadly car crash. Court documents show he was a convicted sex offender who had failed to register with Houston police the year before. His felony record prohibited him from possessing a firearm.

Kean said deputies "routinely" identify callers and anyone they are calling about, make sure no one is wanted, and look for evidence of gunfire, although he could not say whether they did so at the Pinkstons' home. In logs, deputies wrote that the callers were "heavily intoxicated" and their neighbor denied having a weapon. The deputies suggested the gunfire was fireworks.

Keith Pinkston, a self-described "country boy" who often carries a handgun and generally supports police, showed the AP round holes in his fence that he said were from shooting by the neighbor. He called Capers and his deputies "worthless."

Capers spent decades as a deputy in the Houston-area before being elected sheriff in 2014. He took over a 32-officer force with a history of corruption chronicled in a 1984 book, "Terror on Highway 59," and inspired a made-for-TV movie. The book documented how Sheriff James 'Humpy' Parker ran roughshod over the rights of motorists, particularly those of color, in the 1970s. Parker eventually pleaded guilty to federal civil rights charges and resigned.

"We thought we'd gotten over that," County Commissioner David Brandon said. "But obviously we haven't."

By last year, county commissioners were concerned enough about staff turnover that they paid the LION Institute, the police consulting firm, nearly \$50,000 to review the sheriff's office and suggest improvements.

The group's report lays out evidence that the sheriff's staff falsified training records and failed to pursue 4,000 reported crimes over the years, including 106 alleged sexual assaults. The report said Capers dismissed concerns about an affair between a deputy and an informant and brushed aside reports that the same deputy leaked investigative information to suspects.

When LION CEO Mike Alexander tried to present the findings to commissioners in a closed-door meeting in August, he was surprised to find the sheriff there. Alexander, a former police chief, wrote in his subsequent report that Capers' presence was "analogous to allowing a possible organized crime suspect to be present during a briefing between the investigating detective and prosecuting attorney."

Kean denied deputies neglected investigations, largely blaming an "admin screw-up" in the department's computer system and saying some victims couldn't identify their attackers. He also said Alexander never interviewed Capers, him or other deputies.

Two commissioners told the AP they deferred to the district attorney, rather than referring the matter to the Texas Rangers. The other two dismissed the inquiry as "a witch hunt" that rehashed a disgruntled

former deputy's lawsuit.

That lawsuit, brought by Michael Flynt, accused the sheriff's office of retaliating after he raised concerns about Capers' conduct. Flynt was a retired Houston-area officer whom Capers recruited to run an undercover drug unit in early 2017. The sheriff's office had fired him by June 2018, charging Flynt with forging government documents by allegedly lying on his job application.

Judges eventually dismissed and expunged the charges. Flynt, 57, unsuccessfully ran for sheriff against Capers in 2020.

That year, Capers acknowledged in a deposition that he told a former deputy to scrub Facebook of information about the deputy's romantic relationship with a confidential informant in a series of gambling cases. The county settled Flynt's lawsuit two months later.

After less than two years working amid Capers' "corruption," Flynt said he understands "why people hate cops."

One local whose life was upended by the gambling busts is Rickie Wood. Even after all charges against him were dropped, Wood said he was unable to recover much of the property deputies seized when they raided his used car dealership in 2015. The items included titles to more than 25 vehicles and his pickup truck, he said.

"They took everything that I owned to where I couldn't even operate my business," the 68-year-old said. "It was devastating."

Wood presented a list of more than two dozen items to the sheriff's office in 2017 describing some, including his truck, as badly damaged. Others, including two laptops and a Smith & Wesson revolver, were missing.

Kean said the sheriff's office had warrants for the seizures and he wasn't aware of anything being broken or lost, noting that the office keeps a careful inventory of property.

Former deputies said questionable seizures were common, and Capers conceded in his deposition to paying one person \$2,815 for missing property, including diamond earrings.

He also said under oath that he may have used seized funds to attend a sheriff's conference in Reno, Nevada, after the commissioners refused to foot the bill.

The sheriff said the trip was for training but acknowledged he also spent some of it gambling. ____ Associated Press videojournalist Lekan Oyekanmi contributed to this report.

Some cities are digging up water mains and leaving lead pipe in the ground

By MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Prandy Tavarez and his wife were expecting a baby when they bought a four-bedroom house in a well-kept neighborhood of century-old homes here. They got to work making it theirs, ripping off wallpaper, upgrading the electrical and replacing windows coated in paint that contained lead, a potent neurotoxin that can damage brain development in children.

That wasn't the only lead. The pipe carrying water to their home was made of it, too. Providence's tap water had had dangerous lead levels for years. So it wasn't surprising in 2008 when a road crew came through and dug up the street to take out the pipe. Then they left part of it in the ground.

"They put on a Band-Aid," Tavarez said.

Around the country, utilities have been leaving lead pipe in the ground even when it is easiest to remove during water main work. Worse, they have been removing sections, disturbing the pipe and leaving the rest, which can spike lead levels, causing harm that will last a lifetime, an investigation by The Associated Press has found.

Leaving lead pipe behind should have stopped a long time ago, said Yanna Lambrinidou, a medical anthropologist at Virginia Tech and co-founder of the Campaign for Lead Free Water. The metal is especially dangerous for young children. It can lower IQ and deprive kids of problem-solving skills. The Environmen-

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tal Protection Agency says no amount is safe for kids. Utilities, she said, have tried to reduce costs and dodge responsibility.

"I can't but think of partial replacements as immoral because they involve a witting decision by government agencies to leave residents at continued risk of exposure," said Lambrinidou.

The sections that remain can poison tap water until they're removed. The practice is also more expensive in the long run, since crews presumably will have to return someday.

Many cities say they can leave the pipes and use chemical treatment instead. But that isn't foolproof, and the Biden administration has said it wants all 9.2 million lead pipes in the U.S. replaced. Even some cities that are committed to taking out lead pipe say they have too few resources and local rules can get in the way.

But Buffalo, New York, Lincoln, Nebraska, and even Detroit show it didn't have to be this way. Even though Detroit had recently filed for bankruptcy protection, in 2018 leaders there decided that when work is done on water mains, they would replace all lead pipe.

"We're protecting the intellectual capacity of the next generation of Detroiters," said Sam Smalley, chief operating officer of Detroit's water provider. If a utility doesn't fully replace lead pipes, it's usually because they "don't really want to do it," he said.

It hasn't been easy for Detroit. Officials had to hunt for state and federal funds to keep water bills under control. They hold neighborhood meetings and distribute water filters. Thanks to those efforts, officials say residents there allow contractors to dig on their property and enter homes to take out lead pipes. If residents say no, their water is shut off.

But decades after the dangers of lead became clear, other cities have made different decisions and have been leaving lead pipe in the ground. Experts say it has likely happened hundreds of thousands of times. It has occurred in Providence, Chicago and other places. It continues today in Oklahoma City, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee, and St. Louis.

Recently, more money and attention to the danger of lead pipes has prompted some to stop the practice. Still, it remains legal.

PROVIDENCE'S LONG STRUGGLE

The Environmental Protection Agency first set limits on lead in drinking water in 1991, requiring utilities, with some exceptions, to replace entire lengths of lead pipe when water exceeded those limits.

But the American Water Works Association, a group that represents utilities, challenged that replacement requirement, saying it didn't give the public enough chance to weigh in. A federal appeals court in 1994 agreed.

The EPA then "completely caved," and didn't reissue the provision, said Erik Olson, an attorney on the case with the Natural Resources Defense Council, leaving only partial replacements required when lead levels are high.

That would prove fateful. In 2005, Providence Water made a change to its chemical treatment, causing lead levels to jump above EPA limits.

That triggered the removal requirement, but not for whole pipes. And that raises an issue that continues to plague the whole country: divided ownership of lead pipes. In many cities like Providence, the utility owns part of the pipe that runs to the house, and the homeowner owns the rest.

Providence took the position that it would remove only the city-owned pipe and the homeowner could pay to remove the rest. But at a cost of thousands of dollars, most didn't.

By 2011, however, EPA scientists were weighing in, saying this method doesn't lower lead.

Remember, in these years, lead in Providence water amounted to a crisis. It violated EPA limits in 14 of 17 years, an exceptionally bad record for a major city. Yet despite the fact that partial replacement did not work — and could even spike lead levels in drinking water — local officials continued the practice when performing work on water mains, removing all only if the homeowner paid.

Activists said Providence Water created a two-tiered system: one for people who could afford safe water and one for those who couldn't.

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Colleen Colarusso bought a house that looks down a sharp slope to a busy Providence street in 2019. After testing showed lead levels in her water were over twice the federal limit, she stopped drinking it. She paid for deliveries of five-gallon jugs and then \$3,500 to run a copper line up the slope to her home.

"I don't want that in my body," she said.

But in a neighborhood of tightly-spaced two- and three-story apartments alongside modest single-family houses, city data says a lead pipe likely runs under Richard Charlton's home.

Charlton said he can't afford to replace any pipe and the city should do it for taxpayers. He's worried about his frail heating system and buying a new roof.

"I'm still struggling to get by," he said.

THE WATER UTILITIES

Removing lead pipes isn't just the responsibility of the utility, but also individuals and government, said Steve Via, director of government relations at the AWWA. He said divided ownership of lead pipes, is "still a barrier to full lead service line replacement today." In many communities, local rules forbid spending money to upgrade private property, which can block the work, Via said.

Providence Water General Manager Ricky Caruolo said lead pipe replacements couldn't be done without raising rates and he didn't think it was his decision to force ratepayers to bear the cost of replacing lead pipes that are, in the end, privately owned. Most people don't have a lead pipe, he said, so they wouldn't benefit. That decision "needs to be made at the state or even federal level." Caruolo called lead paint a bigger problem than lead in water and said some homes have lead fittings inside them that will still contaminate water once the lead pipe is gone.

He said officials have addressed lead head-on, improving water treatment, educating the public about lead and providing no-interest loans for pipe removal.

2021 held some good news for Providence. The city's results improved and are now within federal limits, much safer for this newest generation of kids.

"The fact of the matter is, we are in compliance," he said. "We must be doing something right."

Providence Water's policy also changed last year, helped by an influx of federal funds. Officials said now, when they do water main work, they replace the whole pipe and for free, nearly always. The state legislature recently passed a bill to remove all lead pipes within 10 years.

Cities nationally have now also benefited from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that included \$15 billion for finding and replacing lead pipes. Lead in drinking water will remain, but the funds will make water safer for some. And the money is only going to places that replace lead lines in their entirety. The EPA is also drafting stricter lead regulations.

Health and environmental groups have been fighting for lead-free water to drink in Providence for at least a decade.

Devra Levy, a community organizer in Providence formerly with Childhood Lead Action Project, said getting rid of the pipe is the solution.

"It's really frustrating that it has taken so many years of advocacy, and the Flint crisis, and this national awareness, to do something that seems like an obvious solution," she said.

Camille Fassett contributed from Seattle. Charles Krupa contributed from Providence.

The Associated Press receives support from the Walton Family Foundation for coverage of water and environmental policy. The AP is solely responsible for all content. For all of AP's environmental coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/climate-and-environment>

Police link man to two women whose bodies were found in different Minnesota storage units

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — The body of a Minnesota woman who had been missing for two years was found in a storage unit, and St. Paul police said Friday that her death has been linked to a man who was charged after another woman's dismembered body was found in a different storage unit in another Minneapolis suburb.

Joseph Jorgenson hasn't yet been charged in Fanta Xayavong's death, but the 40-year-old was charged last week with second-degree murder in the death of Manijeh "Mani" Starren, 33, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported.

Xayavong's body was found Thursday in a Coon Rapids storage unit, while Starren's body was found last month in a storage unit in Woodbury.

St. Paul police Sgt. Mike Ernster said Jorgenson is a "person of interest" in the 33-year-old Xayavong's death after investigators connected him to the Coon Rapids storage unit. Police are now trying to determine if Jorgenson could be linked to any other missing people.

"It's nothing short of horrific," Ernster said.

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension received a tip in May that Xayavong had been in an abusive relationship with Jorgenson before her disappearance in July 2021. Police have said that Starren and Jorgenson had also been in a relationship before her death.

Police have not determined where or when Xayavong was killed, Ernster said. Investigators searched a home Friday that Jorgenson used to live in until last September.

Jorgenson's attorney didn't return a call from the newspaper Friday.

Police Chief Axel Henry said at a Friday news conference that "cases like this are extremely rare, but they are reminders to all of us that monsters can be real."

Starren was reported missing May 1. Investigators found her body after Jorgenson barricaded himself in his apartment and started a fire when police tried to search the apartment on June 26. He was arrested after he fought with officers. A review of his cell phone activity led police to the storage unit in Woodbury, where Starren's body was found.

According to court documents, prosecutors believe Jorgenson dismembered Starren's body and carried her remains out of the apartment in Maplewood in duffel bags and a small suitcase.

Video from the apartment building showed Starren running from Jorgenson on April 21 before he caught her and pushed her back inside. She wasn't seen leaving the apartment again.

Bob Huggins says he never resigned as West Virginia's coach and wants his job back, attorney claims

By JOHN RABY AP Sports Writer

Bob Huggins says he never resigned as West Virginia's basketball coach following a drunken-driving arrest and wants his job back, according to a letter from his attorney to the university.

Huggins' Cleveland-based attorney, David A. Campbell, wrote to the university Friday that Huggins "never signed a resignation letter and never communicated a resignation to anyone at WVU," according to the letter, which was obtained by The Associated Press on Saturday.

The letter threatens a lawsuit if Huggins isn't reinstated. Huggins' demands were first reported by West Virginia network MetroNews.

Huggins was charged with driving under the influence in Pittsburgh on June 16. A breath test determined Huggins' blood-alcohol content was more than twice the legal limit. His resignation was announced by the university the following night. A week later, assistant coach Josh Eilert was promoted to interim head coach for the 2023-24 season.

Campbell's letter said the university announced Huggins' resignation "based on a text message from Coach Huggins' wife" to Steve Uryasz, West Virginia's deputy athletic director.

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The AP also found Capers' turn in the national spotlight belied years of complaints about corruption and dysfunction that were previously unknown outside the piney woods of San Jacinto County.

Capers did not directly respond to requests for comment.

What has played out under his watch is indicative of challenges police face across rural America, where small staffs must patrol vast jurisdictions. It also reveals the difficulty in holding powerful law enforcement officials accountable in isolated areas with little outside oversight.

Former deputies said Capers' office has long neglected basic police work while pursuing asset seizures that boost its \$3.5 million budget but don't always hold up in court.

Deputies did not arrest Oropeza last year after he was reported for domestic violence and never contacted federal authorities to check his immigration status, although immigration officials say he was in the country illegally. Capers' department also appears to have done little to investigate after another family's call to 911 reporting a different man's backyard gunfire nearly struck their young daughter.

The county paid \$240,000 in 2020 to settle a whistleblower's lawsuit accusing Capers of wide-ranging misconduct. Last year, county leaders hired a police consulting firm to examine the sheriff's office but disregarded its recommendation to have the Texas Rangers' public corruption squad investigate.

The LION Institute found evidence that Capers fostered a "fear-based" culture and oversaw the improper seizure of tens of thousands of dollars of property. The group's report, obtained by the AP, also alleges deputies failed to follow up on reports of 4,000 crimes, including sexual and child abuse.

"The sheriff and his inner circle do whatever they want, regardless of law, with no consequence," said Michael Voytko, who spent nearly five years as a San Jacinto County deputy before leaving in 2020 for another law enforcement job. "There was no accountability there for any of the deputies."

After the April 28 mass shooting outside Cleveland, 46 miles (74 kilometers) northwest of Houston, Capers' second-in-command said the sheriff initially gave his "best guesstimation" about the response time. Chief Deputy Tim Kean added that low pay has left the office short of deputies to patrol the county, where 27,000 people live scattered along dirt roads through thick forest.

Kean also dismissed the consultant's accusations as "straight-up lies" drummed up by the sheriff's political opponents and said the county settled the whistleblower lawsuit to avoid a costly trial.

"This place is open any time to the Texas Rangers," Kean said in an interview. "Any day they can come in here and go through this whole building top to bottom."

In April, as Wilson Garcia and his wife tried to calm their crying baby boy, gunfire from the lot next door echoed off the pines around their house.

Garcia said he walked over and asked Oropeza to take his target practice farther from their home. When Oropeza refused, Garcia and his wife made their first of many 911 calls at 11:34 p.m.

By that point, Oropeza was already on the sheriff's radar.

Deputies were called to Oropeza's home at least three times in the prior two years, according to call logs. One came last June, when his wife reported he punched and kicked her, "pounded" her head on the "driveway gravel" and threatened to kill her, court records said. The logs show a deputy arrived 46 minutes later; Oropeza was gone.

An arrest warrant for Oropeza was dropped late the next month after his wife said she didn't want to press charges, according to Kean. She is accused of hindering his apprehension in the mass shooting.

Experts say Oropeza's immigration record barred him from having a firearm. The 38-year-old Mexican national was deported four times before 2016 and illegally reentered the county, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. His lawyer, Anthony Osso, declined to comment on his client's immigration status and said Oropeza will plead not guilty to capital murder.

Kean said deputies can't check immigration records themselves and did not contact ICE because they don't find the agency responsive.

The logs do not clarify the nature of all the calls to Oropeza's home, but Capers has said his office previously received complaints about the man's gunfire.

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The university responded to Campbell in a letter Saturday that read, in part: "We are frankly confused by the allegations within the letter."

WVU said Huggins met with his players and members of the basketball staff on June 17 "to announce that he would no longer be coaching the team." It said Huggins "clearly" communicated his resignation and retirement in writing and that "both parties have reasonably relied on that resignation and retirement notification in a number of ways since then."

The university provided The AP with a copy of a notice sent by Huggins' wife, June, that same day. It read: "Please accept this correspondence as my formal notice of resignation as WVU Head Basketball Coach and as notice of my retirement from West Virginia University, effective immediately."

The notice was sent from an email address associated with June Huggins, with a signature indicating it was sent via iPhone. It was sent to Uryasz's email address and did not appear to be a text message, as Campbell claimed.

West Virginia athletic director Wren Baker responded an hour later by writing, "We accept your resignation and wish you the best in retirement. We appreciate your many years of dedication to WVU."

Less than an hour after that, the university released two statements. One announced Huggins' resignation.

The other was titled "A Message from Bob Huggins to the WVU Community" and began, "Today, I have submitted a letter to President Gordon Gee and Vice President and Director of Athletics Wren Baker informing them of my resignation and intention to retire as head men's basketball coach at West Virginia University effective immediately."

The resignation was announced a month after the university gave Huggins a three-game suspension for using an anti-gay slur while also denigrating Catholics during a radio interview.

Several of Huggins' players have already entered the transfer portal, and some have found new teams. Campbell said Huggins' contract required the coach to send a notice in writing by registered or certified mail to the athletic director and university general counsel.

Despite the threat of a lawsuit, Campbell's letter said Huggins "does not desire litigation. Rather, he is simply looking for the correction of a clear breach of his employment agreement with WVU."

The 69-year-old Huggins was the third-winningest coach all-time in Division I with 935 victories, trailing only Mike Krzyzewski of Duke (1,202) and Jim Boeheim of Syracuse (1,015), both of whom are retired.

Unlike the others, Huggins did not win a national title. He took Cincinnati to the Final Four in 1992 and West Virginia in 2010. Huggins entered the Basketball Hall of Fame last September. In 41 seasons, his teams went to 25 NCAA Tournaments and finished ranked in the AP top 10 seven times. The Mountaineers made 11 NCAA Tournament appearances under Huggins.

AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-basketball> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-college-basketball-poll> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Condemned building used by homeless people falls in Brazil, killing 14 people

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — An apartment building condemned for more than a decade but used by homeless people collapsed in Brazil's northeastern state of Pernambuco, killing 14 people, including six children, firefighters reported Saturday.

The building in Recife's Paulista suburb crumbled in the early hours of Friday, prompting a frantic search for victims.

Searchers combed through the rubble with the help of sniffer dogs and rescued two 15-year-old girls and a 65-year-old woman alive, firefighters said. An 18-year-old man was also removed alive, but later died from his injuries.

"Search operations are now focused on the removal of animals," the fire department said Saturday.

The building was occupied by homeless people although living there had been forbidden since 2010, the Paulista city hall said in a statement.

City officials referred to the structure as a "coffin block," a name given to buildings built on a large scale in the 1970s in the metropolitan region of Recife, the newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo reported.

The city hall statement said the problem of people using officially closed buildings in Paulista is "chronic." It said officials raised the issue during a recent visit by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is from the northeastern state.

The collapse in Paulista was the second such tragedy in less than three months in Pernambuco. A building disintegrated in April in neighboring Olinda, causing at least five deaths.

Heavy rains had soaked the Recife region before the building collapsed in Paulista, prompting Pernambuco's water and climate agency to post an alert for the metropolitan area.

A Presbyterian church near the site of the fallen building was offering housing assistance to families who had been living there, city officials said. The church was also collecting donations of food, clothes, mattresses, water and hygiene products, officials added.

Six killed when small plane crashes, bursts into flames in field near Southern California airport

MURRIETA, Calif. (AP) — Six people were killed when a small plane crashed in a field and burst into flames during the second of two landing attempts in fog just before dawn Saturday at a Southern California airport, authorities said.

The crash of the Cessna C550 business jet occurred around 4:15 a.m. in Murrieta, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

It took firefighters more than an hour to extinguish the flames, which charred about an acre of vegetation at the edge of French Valley Airport, said the Riverside County Fire Department.

The jet, which can seat up to 13 people, crashed about 500 feet (150 meters) short of the intended runway, said Elliott Simpson, an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

"Most of the airplane, with the exception of the tail, was consumed by fire," Simpson told reporters at an afternoon briefing. Investigators were combing through a debris field about 200 feet (60 meters) long, he said.

All six people on board died at the scene, the Riverside County Sheriff's Office said in a statement. The victims, all adults, were not immediately identified.

The plane, which had departed from Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas for the 45-minute flight to Murietta, crashed during its second approach, the NTSB said. The pilot was cleared for a landing using only instruments because of limited visibility from the low cloud ceiling, Simpson said.

"The visibility and ceilings allowed for a landing, but it was right on the minimums" of the regulations set for that airport, he said. Investigators will review recordings between the pilot and air traffic control.

A preliminary report was expected in about two weeks, the NTSB said.

The FAA's aircraft tracking database lists the jet as owned by Prestige Worldwide Flights LLC of Imperial, California. Officials with the company could not be reached for comment.

It was the second fatal crash this week at the small county-owned airport in Murrieta, a city with about 112,000 residents. A man was killed and three people were injured on July Fourth when a single-engine Cessna 172 crashed in a parking lot shortly after takeoff from French Valley.

Iowa GOP schedules Jan. 15 for leadoff presidential caucuses. It's on Martin Luther King Jr. Day

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Iowa Republicans announced Saturday that the party's presidential nominating caucuses will be held Jan. 15, on the federal holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr., putting the first votes of the 2024 election a little more than six months away as the GOP tries to reclaim the White House.

White House candidates have campaigned in Iowa since last winter, but there has been some uncertainty about the date for the caucuses that have by tradition kicked off the Republican selection process for a nominee. What's changed is the Democratic National Committee's election calendar, dropping Iowa as its first contest.

The Iowa Republican Party's state central committee voted unanimously for the third Monday in January — a date that is earlier by several weeks than the past three caucuses, though not as early as 2008, when they were held just three days into the new year.

Iowa Republican Party Chairman Jeff Kaufmann, during a call with reporters later, reported that the vote was unanimous and that he "never sensed that there was anyone even thinking about voting no" to the proposed date.

"As Republicans, we can, I, we see this as honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King in terms of having a caucus here," Kaufmann said, noting also that committee members hadn't considered the possibility of the contest falling on the federal holiday before arriving at the date.

Caucuses, unlike primary elections, are contests planned, financed and carried out by the parties, not state election officials. The Iowa announcement Saturday allows New Hampshire, which has not inked a primary election date but has circled Jan. 23 as its preference, to protect its first-in-the-nation status, which is codified in state law that requires the contest be held at least seven days ahead of any other primary.

The decision could have implications for both parties. Iowa Democrats had been waiting for the GOP to set a date as they try to adjust to new DNC rules on their primary order.

Democrats have proposed holding a caucus on the same day as the Republicans contest and allowing participants to vote for president via mail-in ballot. But Iowa Democrats have said they may not immediately release the results.

That could allow the state party to still hold the first-in-the-nation caucus without defying a new election-year calendar endorsed by President Joe Biden and approved by the DNC that calls for South Carolina to replace Iowa in the leadoff spot and kick off primary voting on Feb. 3.

Last month, South Carolina Republicans adopted Feb. 24 as the date for the traditional first Southern primary, leaving plenty of time for Nevada to schedule its Republican caucuses without crowding New Hampshire.

"We remain committed to maintaining Iowa's cherished first-in-the-nation caucuses, and look forward to holding a historic caucus in the coming months and defeating Joe Biden come November 2024," Kaufmann said.

Gunman on scooter shoots randomly in NYC, police say, killing an 87-year-old and wounding 3 others

NEW YORK (AP) — A scooter-riding gunman killed an 87-year-old man and wounded three others in a string of random shootings that stretched across two New York City boroughs, police said Saturday.

A 25-year-old man was taken into custody without incident and his identity was not revealed by police, Assistant Police Chief Joseph Kenny said at a news conference. A 9 mm handgun with an extended magazine and a scooter were recovered.

The New York Police Department pulled an image of the gunman from video and sent it to phones of officers, some of whom spotted the suspect about two hours after the first shooting.

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"We don't know the motive. It seems his acts were random," Kenny said.

In all, the NYPD said there were five shootings carried out during the spree by someone on a scooter, one in Brooklyn and four in Queens. No one was injured in one of the shootings.

The shootings began around 11:10 a.m. when someone on a scooter shot a 21-year-old man in the shoulder in Brooklyn. He was brought to a hospital and is expected to survive, police said.

Seventeen minutes later, a 87-year-old man was shot multiple times in the Richmond Hill area of Queens. He later died at a hospital.

Shortly afterward in Queens, witnesses reported a man on a scooter firing randomly into a group of people, although nobody was hurt.

Eight minutes later, a 44-year-old man was shot in the face. He was in critical condition at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center.

About one minute later, a 63-year-old man was shot in the torso. He was in stable condition at a hospital.

Killings in the nation's most populous city have risen in recent years to about where they were a decade ago — well below an early-1990s peak. The number of people wounded by gunfire surged in New York City during the pandemic and remains stubbornly high, and the city has also confronted a series of high-profile crimes.

Mayor Eric Adams, a former New York City police captain, has stressed the importance of getting guns off the streets.

This story has been updated to correct several details about the shooting victims due to incorrect information from New York City police. The man who died was 87 years old, not 86. The second-to-last victim was age 44, not 63; he was wounded in the face, not the shoulder; and he was in critical condition, not stable. The final victim was age 63, not 61; and he was in stable condition, not critical.

Zelenskyy hails Ukraine's soldiers from a symbolic Black Sea island to mark 500 days of war

By FELIPE DANA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy marked the 500th day of the war Saturday by hailing the country's soldiers in a video from a Black Sea island that became the symbol of Ukraine's resilience in the face of the Russian invasion.

Speaking from Snake Island, Zelenskyy honored the Ukrainian soldiers who fought for the island and all other defenders of the country, saying that reclaiming control of the island "is a great proof that Ukraine will regain every bit of its territory."

"I want to thank — from here, from this place of victory — each of our soldiers for these 500 days," Zelenskyy said. "Thank you to everyone who fights for Ukraine!"

It was unclear when the video was filmed. Zelenskyy was returning from Turkey on Saturday.

He announced that five commanders of the defense of the Azovstal steel plant, a grueling months-long siege early in the war, were returning on the plane with him.

The sprawling steelworks was the last bastion of resistance as Russian forces took control of the port city of Mariupol. Its defenders became renowned among Ukrainians for holding out in wretched conditions in the plant's tunnels and corridors.

Azovstal's more than 2,000 defenders left the steelworks in mid-May 2022 and were taken into Russian captivity. The five leaders, some of whom were part of the Azov national guard regiment that Russia denounces as neo-Nazi, were freed in a September prisoner swap and taken to Turkey.

Under the exchange, the leaders were to remain in Turkey until the end of the war under the Turkish president's protection. There was no immediate official explanation from Ankara or Kyiv about why they were allowed to return to Ukraine.

"The return of the leaders of the Azovites from Turkey to Ukraine is nothing more than a direct violation of the terms of the existing agreements. Moreover, in this case, the terms were violated by both the

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Ukrainian side and the Turkish side," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Russian forces took control of Snake Island on Feb. 24, 2022, the day Moscow launched its invasion, in the apparent hope of using it as a staging ground for an assault on Odesa, Ukraine's biggest port and the headquarters of its navy.

The island took on legendary significance for Ukraine's resistance, when Ukrainian troops there reportedly received a demand from a Russian warship to surrender or be bombed. The answer supposedly came back, "Go (expletive) yourself."

The island's Ukrainian defenders were captured but later freed as part of a prisoner exchange. After the island was taken, the Ukrainian military heavily bombarded the small Russian garrison there, forcing the Russians to pull back on June 30, 2022. The Russian retreat reduced the threat of a seaborne Russian attack on Odesa and helped pave the way for a deal to resume Ukrainian grain exports.

"Let the freedom that all our heroes of different times wanted for Ukraine and that must be won right now be a tribute to all those who gave their lives for Ukraine," Zelenskyy said. "We will definitely win!"

Intense battles continued to rage Saturday in the country's east and south as Ukrainian forces pressed their attacks against multi-layered Russian defenses in the initial stages of their counteroffensive.

Ukraine's interior ministry said that a Russian rocket strike on the town of Lyman killed eight civilians and wounded 13 others early Saturday. Pavlo Kyrylenko, the governor of the eastern Donetsk region, posted images showing some of the dead, including a body lying under a bicycle and body fragments on the pavement next to a damaged vehicle, saying that "the Russian terrorists are continuing to strike civilians in Donetsk."

Lyman is a few kilometers (miles) from the front line, where Russian troops have recently intensified fighting in the forests of Kreminna.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense said in its latest intelligence update that the eastern town of Bakhmut that was captured by the Russians in May has seen some of the most intense fighting along the front during the last week.

It said that Ukrainian forces have made steady gains to both the north and south of Bakhmut, noting that "Russian defenders are highly likely struggling with poor morale, a mix of disparate units and a limited ability to find and strike Ukrainian artillery."

Amid the fighting, Russia and Ukraine accused each other of planning to sabotage the Russia-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is Europe's largest, fueling fears of a radiation catastrophe. Ukraine's military intelligence claimed Saturday that Russian troops have planted more mines around the plant, a claim that couldn't be independently verified.

The head of the United Nations nuclear agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, told The Associated Press on Friday that the International Atomic Energy Agency experts had recently gained access to more of the site, including the cooling pond and fuel storage areas, and found no mines there. Grossi said he was still pushing for access to the rooftops of reactors where Ukrainian officials accused Russia of planting explosives.

On Saturday, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu was shown visiting firing ranges where volunteer soldiers are being trained, a trip that comes two weeks after an abortive mutiny launched by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, whose Wagner troops marched on Moscow in a bid to oust Shoigu.

Prigozhin agreed to end the mutiny, which represented the biggest threat to Russian President Vladimir Putin in his more than two decades in power, in exchange for an amnesty for himself and his troops and permission to move to Belarus. On Saturday, Russian messaging app channels ran comments by one of Wagner's commanders, Anton Yelizarov, who said that the mercenaries had taken leave but would eventually deploy to Belarus.

Pitched battles along the front line in Ukraine are raging as NATO leaders are set to meet in Vilnius for a two-day summit next week to offer more help in modernizing Ukraine's armed forces, create a new high-level forum for consultations and reaffirm that it will join their alliance one day.

Ahead of the NATO summit, the U.S. has announced that it will provide Ukraine with cluster munitions, a move that President Joe Biden described as a "difficult decision." Two-thirds of NATO members have banned the munitions, which have a track record of causing many civilian casualties, but the U.S. sees

their delivery as a way to help bolster Ukraine's offensive and push through Russian front lines.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov hailed the U.S. move, saying that the delivery of cluster munitions would help the country de-occupy its territories while saving the lives of the Ukrainian soldiers.

Reznikov vowed that Ukraine would use the munitions only for the de-occupation of its territory and would not fire them at Russia's proper territory. He also noted that the Ukrainian military would not use cluster munitions in urban areas to avoid hurting civilians.

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine: <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

Megan Rapinoe says she'll retire after the NWSL season and her 4th World Cup

By HAVEN DALEY Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — U.S. women's soccer star Megan Rapinoe is ready to retire after an illustrious career in which she won an Olympic gold medal, two World Cups and never shied away from using her platform to spotlight social issues.

Rapinoe, 38, announced Saturday her fourth World Cup will be her last and she'll officially retire with the OL Reign at the end of the National Women's Soccer League season.

Rapinoe and the U.S. team are aiming for a third consecutive title when the Women's World Cup kicks off on July 20 in Australia and New Zealand. The U.S. plays Wales in a final tune-up match Sunday in California before leaving for the World Cup.

"I'm just really grateful to be able to do it in this way," Rapinoe said in San Jose, California, ahead of the match. "I understand that it is incredibly rare for athletes of any stature to be able to go out in their own way, on their own terms, at the time that they want, in a way that feels really peaceful and settled for them.

"So just wanted to do it now and honestly kind of get it out of the way before we go down to New Zealand so we can focus on the task at hand, which is winning another World Cup."

At the 2019 World Cup in France, Rapinoe scored six goals over the course of the tournament, including a penalty in a 2-0 victory over the Netherlands in the final. She also finished with three assists and claimed the Golden Boot and the Golden Ball for the best overall player. Rapinoe also took home the Ballon d'Or and the Best FIFA Women's Player awards — the game's top individual honors — for her play in 2019.

Rapinoe is tied with Abby Wambach for third all-time in assists for the U.S. Women's National Team and is one of only seven players in team history with more than 50 career goals and assists. She first played for the U.S. senior team in 2006.

Rapinoe has played her entire 11-year NWSL career for the Reign. She has scored the sixth most goals in league history with 48.

An outspoken advocate for equal pay in women's soccer and supporter of LGBTQ+ rights, President Joe Biden last year awarded Rapinoe the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

Rapinoe was the first white athlete and first female to kneel during the national anthem in solidarity with former NFL player Colin Kaepernick, according to U.S. Soccer.

She is engaged to be married to women's basketball icon Sue Bird.

"I don't even think there are words to say what she's meant to the growth of soccer in this country, and not just this country, worldwide," U.S. forward Sophia Smith said. "She is a legend. ... So it is a really sad and bittersweet time. But I'm excited to be able to go on this last journey with her in the World Cup and see all the great things that she does after her career."

AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Protests grow as Israel's far-right government advances with its judicial overhaul

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel's anti-government protest movement gained new momentum on Saturday night as tens of thousands of people spilled into the streets of cities across the country to oppose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contentious plan to overhaul the judicial system.

The grassroots movement has staged protests for over six months since Netanyahu's government unveiled the overhaul plan. But in recent weeks, the protests had shown signs of weakening.

Plans by the government to push forward with the overhaul next week in parliament, coupled with the firing of Tel Aviv's police chief, who was accused of being too sympathetic to the protesters, appeared to breathe new life into Saturday's demonstrations.

Some 150,000 people thronged central Tel Aviv, with large rallies in Jerusalem and other major cities. Late Saturday, dozens of people attempted to block Tel Aviv's main highway, but they were quickly cleared away by police. Scuffles broke out, and police sprayed a water cannon at the crowd.

Netanyahu's allies have proposed a series of changes to the Israeli legal system aimed at weakening what they say are the excessive powers of unelected judges. The proposed changes include giving Netanyahu's allies control over the appointment of judges and the power to overturn court decisions they do not support.

His opponents say the plan will destroy the country's fragile system of checks and balances and concentrate power in the hands of Netanyahu and his allies. They also say that Netanyahu has a conflict of interest because he is on trial for corruption charges. Wide swaths of Israeli society, including reserve military officers, business leaders, LGBT and other minority groups, have joined the protests.

A legislative committee chaired by a Netanyahu ally last week approved a bill that would prevent Israel's courts from scrutinizing the "reasonableness" of decisions made by elected officials. The legislature could hold a preliminary vote on the bill as early as Monday.

The "reasonability standard" was used by the Supreme Court earlier this year to strike down the appointment of a Netanyahu ally as interior minister because of a past conviction for bribery and a 2021 plea deal for tax evasion. Critics say removing that standard would allow the government to pass arbitrary decisions and grant it too much power.

Protesters also condemned the ouster of Tel Aviv's police chief, Ami Eshed, who said this week he was forced to resign because of political pressure to act violently toward protesters. Eshed regularly clashed with the hardline national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has demanded that police take a tougher stance against months of anti-government protests.

Saturday's protest is the latest in a series of demonstrations which, since January, have seen thousands of Israelis take to the streets.

Netanyahu put the overhaul on hold in March after mass protests erupted in opposition, but announced last month that the plan would move forward. The protests have blocked roads, disrupted the country's main airport and thronged major cities.

Biden is heading to Europe. A king and a war are on his agenda

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden leaves on Sunday for Europe, where he will spend time in three nations tending to alliances that have been tested by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

After arriving at night in London, Biden will meet the next day with King Charles III for the first time since he was crowned. Next is the centerpiece of the trip, the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Alliance leaders will debate the war and revise plans for dealing with Russian aggression.

The final stop is in Helsinki, where Biden on Thursday is expected to celebrate the expanding alliance, with Finland as the newest member of NATO.

His national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said the trip would "showcase the president's leadership on the world stage."

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A look at Biden's agenda and the issues he will face:

London

Biden arrives in London on Sunday night and is expected to have a full schedule of meetings Monday. "There's always a lot to talk about with the U.K.," said Max Bergmann, a former State Department official who leads the Europe Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Biden will hold talks with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at 10 Downing St. Sunak is facing an election by the end of next year. His Conservative Party is lagging badly behind the opposition in opinion polls.

Despite Sunak's shaky political standing, he has fostered close ties with Biden and it will be their sixth meeting since Sunak took office last October.

Bergmann said Sunak's tenure has been a nice change of pace after "there were some concerns about Boris Johnson," one of Sunak's predecessors, "being a loose cannon."

Biden will visit the king at Windsor Castle, a royal residence outside London. Biden did not attend Charles' coronation — first lady Jill Biden went in his place — so this will be their first encounter since then.

They're expected to discuss climate change, an issue that has been a focus for both leaders, and how to finance initiatives to address the problem.

Vilnius

Biden will spend two days in the capital of Lithuania, which is hosting the annual NATO summit. He will participate in meetings with leaders and deliver a speech from Vilnius University.

The alliance has been reinvigorated by the war in Ukraine, and members have been pouring military hardware into the country to help repel Russia's invasion.

Biden on Friday defended what he said was a "difficult decision" to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine, a move his administration said was key to the fight and buttressed by Ukraine's promise to use the controversial bombs carefully. Biden is likely to face questions from allies on why the U.S. would send a weapon into Ukraine that more than two-thirds of NATO members have banned because it has a track record for causing many civilian casualties.

For Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, the summit "will send a clear message: NATO stands united, and Russia's aggression will not pay."

But NATO has also struggled to bridge divides over important issues. Finland was welcomed into the alliance this year, but Sweden's membership has been held up by Turkey and Hungary.

There are also disagreements over how quickly to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join NATO.

Countries on NATO's eastern flank want to move quickly, viewing it as a way to deter Russian aggression. The U.S. and others advocate a more cautious approach.

One issue has already been settled, at least for the time being. Stoltenberg's term has been extended for a year because members could not agree on a new leader.

Sen. Thom Tillis, who will attend the summit, likened the alliance to a gathering of dozens of family members who bicker and clash but nonetheless remain united.

"At the end of the day, you know you're family," said Tillis, R-N.C.

Tillis is leading a bipartisan delegation along with Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., who said NATO is more powerful than before.

"It's the strongest military alliance in our history, and I think it only has gotten stronger as a result of U.S. leadership, as the result of Stoltenberg's leadership and as the result of the threat from Vladimir Putin to all of the NATO allies and other countries in Europe and around the world and to the international order," she said.

Helsinki

After two nights in Vilnius, Biden visits Helsinki. The stop is a bit of a victory lap, but could also be a reminder of unfinished business.

The Nordic country in April became the 31st member of NATO, ending its history of nonalignment and demonstrating how Russia's invasion of Ukraine has backfired in Europe.

Finland was supposed to join alongside its neighbor Sweden, whose admission has stalled because of Turkey and Hungary. NATO requires unanimous consent of all its members to expand.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson visited the White House on Wednesday and met with Biden to keep up the pressure for membership. But there is little hope that the issue will be resolved in Vilnius.

The White House is billing Biden's visit to Helsinki as a "U.S.-Nordic Leaders Summit."

It's a much different occasion from the last time a U.S. president visited Helsinki five years ago.

During that trip, Donald Trump held a news conference with Putin and brushed off concerns about Russian meddling in Trump's election victory.

Now Biden is heading to the city to demonstrate how his administration has held the line against Moscow and expanded Western defenses.

Associated Press writer Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed to this report.

The US will provide cluster bombs to Ukraine and defends the delivery of the controversial weapon

By ZEKE MILLER, TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday defended what he said was a "difficult decision" to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine, a move the administration said was key to the fight and buttressed by Ukraine's promise to use the controversial bombs carefully.

The decision comes on the eve of the NATO summit in Lithuania, where Biden is likely to face questions from allies on why the U.S. would send a weapon into Ukraine that more than two-thirds of alliance members have banned because it has a track record for causing many civilian casualties.

"It took me a while to be convinced to do it," said Biden in a CNN interview. He added that he ultimately took the Defense Department's recommendation to provide the munitions and discussed the matter with allies and with lawmakers on the Hill. He said "the Ukrainians are running out of ammunition" and the cluster bombs will provide a temporary fix to help stop Russian tanks.

The move was met with divided reactions from Congress, as some Democrats criticized the plan while some Republicans backed it. It was hailed on Twitter by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who thanked Biden for "a timely, broad and much-needed defense aid package" that will "bring Ukraine closer to victory over the enemy, and democracy to victory over dictatorship."

The munitions — which are bombs that open in the air and release scores of smaller bomblets — are seen by the U.S. as a way to get Kyiv critically needed ammunition to help bolster its offensive and push through Russian front lines. U.S. leaders debated the thorny issue for months, before Biden made the final decision this week.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the U.S. will send a version of the munition that has a reduced "dud rate," meaning fewer of the smaller bomblets fail to explode. The unexploded rounds, which often litter battlefields and populated civilian areas, cause unintended deaths. U.S. officials have said Washington will provide thousands of the rounds, but provided no specific numbers.

"We recognize the cluster munitions create a risk of civilian harm from unexploded ordnance," Sullivan told a White House briefing. "This is why we've deferred the decision for as long as we could. But there is also a massive risk of civilian harm if Russian troops and tanks roll over Ukrainian positions and take more Ukrainian territory and subjugate more Ukrainian civilians, because Ukraine does not have enough artillery. That is intolerable to us."

But Marta Hurtado, speaking for the U.N. human rights office, said Friday "the use of such munitions should stop immediately and not be used in any place."

U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "wants countries to abide by the terms of that convention and so as a result, of course, he does not want there to be continued use of cluster munitions on the battlefield."

Colin Kahl, the under secretary of defense for policy, said the U.S. will give Ukraine the most modern cluster munitions that have far lower dud rates. He said the bombs have been tested five times between

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1998 and 2020, and the U.S. is confident the rate of unexploded duds is below 2.35 percent. While he declined to say how many the U.S. will send now, he said the U.S. has "hundreds of thousands" of cluster munitions available for Ukraine at the low dud rate.

He said the key reason to provide the bombs is to keep Ukraine in the fight.

"Things are going a little slower than some had hoped," Kahl said in a Pentagon briefing. "So this is to make sure that the Ukrainians have the confidence that they have what they need. But frankly, also that the Russians know that the Ukrainians are going to stay in the game."

Kahl said the Ukrainians have provided written assurances that they will not use the munitions in urban areas that are populated by civilians and that there will be a careful accounting of where they are employed.

Questioned at length about the decision, Sullivan said the U.S. consulted closely with allies before making the final decision, noting that even allies who have signed on to a ban of the bombs "have indicated, both privately and many of them publicly over the course of today, that they understand our decision."

Allies "recognize the difference between Russia using its cluster munitions to attack Ukraine and Ukraine using cluster munitions to defend itself its citizens and its sovereign territory," he said. The U.S. "will not leave Ukraine defenseless at any point in this conflict, period."

Still, U.S. reaction was mixed. Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., called the decision "unnecessary and a terrible mistake." And Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., said the civilian risk lingers "often long after a conflict is over." Meanwhile, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Arkansas, backed the move, saying Ukraine needs access to weapons Russia already is using.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, some cluster munitions leave behind bomblets that have a high rate of failure to explode — up to 40% in some cases. With a claimed rate under 3% for the supply to Ukraine, U.S. officials said there would be fewer unexploded bombs left behind to harm civilians.

A convention banning the use of cluster bombs has been joined by more than 120 countries that agreed not to use, produce, transfer or stockpile the weapons and to clear them after they've been used. The United States, Russia and Ukraine are among those who have not signed on.

The cluster munitions are included in a new \$800 million package of military aid the U.S. will send to Ukraine. Friday's package, drawn from Pentagon stocks, will also include Bradley and Stryker armored vehicles and an array of ammunition, such as rounds for howitzers and the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, officials said.

Providing the cluster bombs will also ease the pressure on limited U.S. ammunition stockpiles. The U.S. has been taking massive amounts of 155 mm rounds from Pentagon stocks and sending them to Ukraine, creating concerns about eating into American stores. The cluster munitions, which are fired by the same artillery as the conventional 155 mm, will give Ukraine a highly lethal capability and also allow them to strike more Russian targets using fewer rounds.

Kahl said the cluster bombs are not a permanent solution, but more of "a bridge" as the U.S. and allies work to increase the production of the 155 mm rounds.

So far the reactions from allies have been muted. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stressed on Friday that the military alliance takes no position on cluster munitions and it is a decision that allies will make. And Germany, which has signed the ban treaty, said it won't provide the bombs to Ukraine, but expressed understanding for the American position.

"We're certain that our U.S. friends didn't take the decision about supplying such ammunition lightly," German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit told reporters in Berlin. "We need to remember once again that Russia has already used cluster ammunition at a large scale in its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine."

Oleksandra Ustinova, a member of Ukraine's parliament who has been advocating that Washington send more weapons, noted that Ukrainian forces have had to disable mines from much of the territory they are winning back from Russia. As part of that process, Ukrainians will also be able to catch any unexploded ordnance from cluster munitions.

The last large-scale American use of cluster bombs was during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, according to the Pentagon. But U.S. forces considered them a key weapon during the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, according to Human Rights Watch. In the first three years of that conflict, it is estimated the U.S.-led coalition dropped more than 1,500 cluster bombs in Afghanistan.

AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee and Associated Press writers Geir Moulson, Ellen Knickmeyer, Lorne Cook, Nomaan Merchant, Frank Jordans and Edith M. Lederer contributed to this report.

An Iowa meteorologist started talking about climate change on newscasts. Then came the harassment

By HANNAH FINGERHUT, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press
DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The harassment started to intensify as TV meteorologist Chris Gloninger did more reporting on climate change during local newscasts — outraged emails and even a threat to show up at his house.

Gloninger said he had been recruited, in part, to “shake things up” at the Iowa station where he worked, but backlash was building. The man who sent him a series of threatening emails was charged with third-degree harassment. The Des Moines station asked him to dial back his coverage, facing what he called an understandable pressure to maintain ratings.

“I started just connecting the dots between extreme weather and climate change, and then the volume of pushback started to increase quite dramatically,” he said in an interview with The Associated Press.

So, on June 21, he announced that he was leaving KCCI-TV — and his 18-year career in broadcast journalism altogether.

Gloninger’s experience is all too common among meteorologists across the country who are encountering reactions from viewers as they tie climate change to extreme temperatures, blizzards, tornadoes and floods in their local weather reports. For on-air meteorologists, the anti-science trend that has emerged in recent years compounds a deepening skepticism of the news media.

Many meteorologists say it’s a reflection of a more hostile political landscape that has also affected workers in a variety of jobs previously seen as nonpartisan, including librarians, school board officials and election workers.

For several years now, Gloninger said, “beliefs are amplified more than truth and evidence-based science. And that is not a good situation to be in as a nation.”

Gloninger’s announcement sent reverberations through a national conference of broadcast meteorologists in Phoenix, where many shared their own horror stories, recalled Brad Colman, president of the American Meteorological Society.

“They say, ‘You should have seen this note.’ And they try to take it with a smile, a lighthearted laugh,” Colman said. “But some of them are really scary.”

Meteorologists have long been subjected to abuse, but that has intensified in recent years, said Sean Sublette, a former TV meteorologist and now the chief meteorologist for the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

“More than once, I’ve had people call me names or tell me I’m stupid or these kinds of harassing type things simply for sharing information that they didn’t want to hear,” he said.

A decade ago, far fewer TV meteorologists were talking about climate change on air, although they wanted to do so, said Edward Maibach, the director of the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University.

The Weather Channel gave its first climate reporter, scientist Heidi Cullen, a dedicated show in 2006. She faced bitter and sexist resistance from some viewers, including conservative leaders, as she challenged other TV forecasters to address global warming in their reporting.

Climate Matters, a National Science Foundation-funded project, piloted in 2010 and fully launched in 2012 to support reporting on climate change by providing data analysis, graphics and other reporting materials.

Now TV meteorologists across the country report on climate change, though Maibach said they don’t

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always use those words. It is increasingly common to at least show its effects, he said, like highlighting the trend of more days in a year hitting temperatures above 90 degrees (32 degrees Celsius).

Even if that kind of reporting resonates with most people, the criticism can be the loudest.

"If you stop reporting on relevant and important facts about what's going on in your community because you're hearing from the one out of 10, it means you are not serving the other nine out of 10," Maibach said.

Some meteorologists have seen public interest in climate change grow even in largely red states as flooding, drought and other severe weather has ravaged farmland and homes. Jessica Hafner, chief meteorologist at Columbia, Missouri's KMIZ-TV, said that with the exception of a few hecklers, she's seen people respond well to data-based reporting because they want to know what's going on around them.

Meteorologist Matt Serwe, who used to work in Nebraska, said the livelihoods of farmers who live there depend on the weather, so they take climate change seriously.

"You want to know how you can best succeed with these conditions," he said. "Because at that point, it's survival."

It's not just a problem in the United States. Meteorologists in Spain, France, Australia and the U.K. also have been subjected to complaints and harassment, said Jennie King, the London-based head of climate research and policy at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

Some meteorologists don't see harassment as a direct result of their reporting on climate change; it's a pervasive issue in the industry and targets some more than others. TV reporters are more likely than reporters in other mediums to say they have been harassed or threatened, according to Pew Research Center polling in 2022.

The gaps between Republicans' and Democrats' confidence in both the scientific community and the news media have been the widest in nearly five decades of polling by the General Society Survey, a long-standing trends survey conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. But confidence in both declined across the aisle last year.

"Science is under attack in this country," said Chitra Kumar, managing director of Climate and Energy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "It's this larger trend. It's really unacceptable from our perspective that anyone should have to fear for their lives for merely stating the facts."

Gloninger, 38, is moving back to Boston to care for aging parents, but he says he's leaving Des Moines having realized that a small percentage of people who reject climate change make up an overwhelming percentage of the negative comments he has gotten.

"I know that now with the feedback that I've received after the fact, with hundreds of emails, dozens of handwritten letters," he said of messages that have come from all over the state. KCCI-TV didn't respond to request for comment.

"This incident is not representative of what Iowans are and what they believe," Gloninger added. "At the end of the day, the people have been incredibly supportive — not just of me, but of the efforts that my station has made in covering climate."

Hollingsworth reported from Mission, Kansas, and Ballentine from Columbia, Missouri.

Airstrike in Sudanese city kills at least 22, officials say, amid fighting between rival generals

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — An airstrike in a Sudanese city on Saturday killed at least 22 people, health authorities said, in one of the deadliest air attacks yet in the three months of fighting between the country's rival generals.

The assault took place in the Dar es Salaam neighborhood in Omdurman, the neighboring city of the capital, Khartoum, according to a brief statement by the health ministry. The attack wounded an unspecified number of people, it said.

The ministry posted video footage that showed dead bodies on the ground with sheets covering them and people trying to pull the dead from the rubble. Others attempted to help the wounded. People could

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be heard crying.

The attack was one of the deadliest in the fighting in urban areas of the capital and elsewhere in Sudan. The conflict pits the military against a powerful paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces. Last month, an airstrike killed at least 17 people including 5 children in Khartoum.

The RSF blamed the military for Saturday's attack and other strikes on residential areas in Omdurman, where fighting has raged between the warring factions, according to residents. The military has reportedly attempted to cut off a crucial supply line for the paramilitary force there.

A spokesman for the military was not immediately available for comment Saturday.

Two Omdurman residents said it was difficult to determine which side was responsible for the attack. They said the military's aircraft have repeatedly targeted RSF troops in the area and the paramilitary force has used drones and anti-aircraft weapons against the military.

At the time of the attack early Saturday, the military was hitting the RSF, which took people's houses as shields, and the RSF fired anti-aircraft rounds at the attacking warplanes, said Abdel-Rahman, one of the residents who asked to use only his first name out of concern for his safety.

"The area is like a hell ... fighting around the clock and people are not able to leave," he said.

The conflict broke out in mid-April, capping months of increasing tensions between the military, chaired by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. The fighting came 18 months after the two generals led a military coup in October 2021 that toppled a Western-backed civilian transitional government.

Health Minister Haitham Mohammed Ibrahim said in televised comments last month that the clashes have killed over 3,000 people and wounded over 6,000 others. More than 2.9 million people have fled their homes to safer areas inside Sudan or crossed into neighboring countries, according to U.N. figures.

"It's a place of great terror," Martin Griffiths, the United Nations humanitarian chief, said of Sudan on Friday. He decried "the appalling crimes" taking place across the country and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

The conflict has plunged the African country into chaos and turned Khartoum and other urban areas into battlefields. Members of the paramilitary force have occupied people's houses and other civilian properties since the onset of the conflict, according to residents and activists. There were also reports of widespread destruction and looting across Khartoum and Omdurman.

Sexual violence, including the rape of women and girls, has been reported in Khartoum and the western Darfur region, which have seen some of the worst fighting in the conflict. Almost all reported cases of sexual attacks were blamed on the RSF, which hasn't responded to repeated requests for comment.

On Wednesday, top U.N. officials including Volker Türk, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, called for a "prompt, thorough, impartial and independent investigation" into the increasing reports of sexual violence against women and girls.

The Sudanese Unit for Combating Violence against Women, a government organization that tracks sex attacks against women, said it documented 88 cases of rape related to the ongoing conflict, including 42 in Khartoum and 46 in Darfur.

The unit, however, said the figure likely represented only 2% of the true number of cases, which means there were a possible 4,400 cases of sexual violence since the fighting began on April 15, according to the Save the Children charity.

"Sexual violence continues to be used as a tool to terrorize women and children in Sudan," said Arif Noor, director of Save the Children in Sudan. "Children as young as 12 are being targeted for their gender, for their ethnicity, for their vulnerability."

Dylan Crews and Paul Skenes could go 1-2 in the MLB Draft. Still, the Pirates might throw a curve

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

LSU outfielder Dylan Crews is, according to Tigers coach Jay Johnson, "the perfectly built baseball player." Power. Speed. Defense. Smarts. There is little Johnson believes Crews can't do.

"He's the best college hitter I've ever seen," Johnson said.

Such are the riches Johnson and LSU enjoyed this year on the way to the national title that for all of Crews' singular talent, depending on who you ask Crews might not even be the best major league prospect on his team.

Having a pitcher who hits triple digits with alarming regularity and remarkable ease will do that.

Paul Skenes spent the last six months lighting radar guns with impressive fastballs, making a compelling case that he's the most major-league-ready college pitcher since Stephen Strasburg more than a decade ago.

Crews and Skenes have been the consensus top two picks for months.

Yet the consensus won't matter when the Pittsburgh Pirates are on the clock Sunday night in Seattle with the first overall selection in the MLB Draft for the second time in three years.

While Pirates general manager Ben Cherington has a healthy respect for Crews and Skenes, he doesn't sound like someone in a hurry to send MLB commissioner Rob Manfred to the podium to change the arc of a player's life and — Pittsburgh hopes — the trajectory of the franchise.

Maybe it's simple gamesmanship. Maybe it's Cherington's inherent pragmatism. Maybe it's sincerity. Whatever it is, Cherington has made it a point in recent weeks to stress who is going at the very top end of the draft isn't a given. At least not in Pittsburgh.

"We think it's a strong group," Cherington said. "By group, I really do mean that it goes much deeper than two players."

Florida outfielder Wyatt Langford put together a season nearly as impressive as Crews'. High schoolers Max Clark and Walker Jenkins are short on experience but long on potential.

The Pirates went a little off-script in 2021 when they chose catcher Henry Davis at "1-1." Davis, who made his major league debut last month, signed for under slot value, giving Cherington more money to spend later in the draft.

The pick came with Pittsburgh still in the early stages of a top-to-bottom overhaul Cherington began when he took over in the fall of 2019, an overhaul predicated on accumulating as many quality prospects as possible. The Pirates are in a slightly different position now, with the window to contention far closer now than it was two years ago.

Not that Cherington thinks his team's modest step forward in 2023 after consecutive 100-loss seasons will lead him into taking a player that could be in the majors sooner rather than later.

"Even if you're talking about a college player that might be a little closer (to the majors) than a high school player, a lot can happen in this game, even between this year and 12 months from now, a lot can happen to our team and what the needs might be and what the fit might be. So I think we have to stick with the best player available."

Cherington vowed the Pirates will spend their full draft allotment but sidestepped when asked if Pittsburgh would go over slot value to lock down the first pick, saying "we're just focused on getting the board set up and getting the order right or, at least in our opinion right. I believe that needs to come first."

Minnesota, who has been near the top of an underwhelming AL Central all season, is picking fifth. Vice President of amateur scouting Sean Johnson expects there to be upward of 10 players in the mix when their turn comes up. He's been around long enough to know there's no use in speculating on if Crews or Skenes might somehow be available.

"There are rumors that get spread and you're not sure where they came from," Johnson said. "The more we look at past drafts, they never really go like you think they're going to go. There's always a surprise or two in there."

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The Rangers, who pick fourth, pulled one last July when they took Kumar Rocker third overall, a year after the New York Mets drafted but failed to sign the hard-throwing right-hander. Rocker did sign with Texas but his 2023 season ended in May when he underwent Tommy John surgery while pitching for Class-A Hickory.

Rocker's injury is one of the few setbacks the Rangers have endured this season. Texas has spent the first half of the year leading the competitive AL West and while general manager Chris Young called the draft "a great opportunity" he's hopeful it's the last time for the foreseeable future that the Rangers will have a top-five pick.

"Our goal is to pick 30th moving forward," Young said. "I think we've taken steps in that direction this year."

Whoever lands in Texas — particularly if it's a college player — could be joining an organization on the cusp of a breakthrough. It may take longer in places like Pittsburgh, Washington (second) or Detroit (third).

Crews and Skenes insist they are up for whatever no matter when they hear their name called on Sunday. They can control their preparation and their effort. The rest — particularly the constantly-shifting dynamics that shape the top of the draft and all the noise that comes with it — is out of their control.

If anything, as much as they'll make an effort to drink in a moment a lifetime in the making, they'll also be eager to move to the next chapter with the guys they plan to win with down the road.

"Whatever level I go to (after) I get drafted, I'm going to go there and I'm going to be playing with these kids I'm going to see for years, you know?" Skenes said. "As we go up through the system and start to develop that relationship to help them get better, they help me get better. It's kind of that synergy that leads to really good teams winning at the big league level."

AP Sports Writers Dave Campbell, Stephen Hawkins and Brett Martel contributed to this report.

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Top Republicans are gearing up to investigate the Hunter Biden case. Here's what to know.

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Republicans who lead three key House committees are joining forces to probe the Justice Department's handling of charges against Hunter Biden after making sweeping claims about misconduct at the agency.

Leaders of the House Judiciary, Oversight and Accountability, and Ways and Means committees opened a joint investigation into the federal case into President Joe Biden's youngest son days after it was announced last month that he will plead guilty to the misdemeanor tax offenses as part of an agreement with the Justice Department.

Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, James Comer of Kentucky and Jason Smith of Missouri have since issued a series of requests for voluntary testimony from senior officials at the Justice Department, FBI and Internal Revenue Service as they investigate what they claim is improper interference. Republicans have also requested a special counsel review of supposed retaliation against the whistleblowers who came forward with the claims.

The congressional inquiry was launched after the House Ways and Means Committee, led by Smith, voted last month to publicly disclose hundreds of pages of testimony from the IRS employees who worked on the Hunter Biden case.

The transcripts of Greg Shapley and an unidentified agent detail what they called a pattern of "slow-walking investigative steps" and delaying enforcement actions in the months before the 2020 election won by Joe Biden.

The Justice Department has denied the whistleblower claims and said repeatedly that U.S. Attorney David Weiss in Delaware, the federal prosecutor who led the investigation, had "full authority" of the case.

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Here's what to know about the emerging investigation.

INVESTIGATING IRS WHISTLEBLOWER CLAIMS

In April, the first IRS whistleblower, Shapley, came forward when his attorney reached out to GOP Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa to say that his client had information about a "failure to mitigate clear conflicts of interest in the ultimate disposition" of what was then an ongoing criminal investigation related to Hunter Biden.

Smith, chair of the Ways and Means Committee, who has jurisdiction over the IRS, brought in Shapley in late May for an hourslong interview, where he described several roadblocks that he and several other IRS agents on the case encountered when trying to interview individuals relevant to the investigation or issue search warrants.

The whistleblowers insist their testimony reflects a pattern of inference and preferential treatment in the Hunter Biden case and not just disagreement with their superiors about what investigative steps to take. Justice Department policy has long warned prosecutors to take care in charging cases with potential political overtones around the time of an election, to avoid any possible influence on the outcome.

The most disputed claim from the whistleblowers is that Weiss — first appointed by former President Donald Trump and kept on by the Biden administration — asked the Justice Department in March 2022 to be provided special counsel status in order to bring the tax cases against Hunter Biden in jurisdictions outside Delaware, including Washington, D.C., and California, but was denied.

A second IRS whistleblower, who asked the committee to keep his identity secret, described his persistent frustrations with the way the Hunter Biden case was handled, dating back to the Trump administration under Attorney General William Barr. He said he started the investigation into Hunter Biden in 2015 and delved deeply into his personal life and finances.

INVESTIGATING CLAIMS OF RETALIATION

Both men have testified that they faced retaliation at the IRS after coming forward with concerns about the handling of the Hunter Biden case. Shapley, who was a career supervisory agent, told the committee that Weiss helped block his job promotion after the tax agency employee reached out to congressional investigators about the Biden case.

The second unidentified whistleblower said he was taken off the Hunter Biden investigation around the same time as Shapley, who was his supervisor. Though he was informed of the decision by officials at the IRS, the second whistleblower believes his removal was actually ordered by officials in the Justice Department. Neither of the men provided lawmakers evidence that was the case, instead citing what they had witnessed internally as they pushed for various investigative steps.

The three Republican chairmen, along with Sens. Grassley and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, sent a letter to the Justice Department asking for an immediate review of the retaliation claims.

"The importance of protecting whistleblowers from unlawful retaliation and informing whistleblowers about their rights under the law cannot be understated. After all, it is the law," the lawmakers wrote.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT PUSHBACK

The Justice Department has denied the allegations from the whistleblowers, saying that Weiss has had "full authority over this matter, including responsibility for deciding where, when, and whether to file charges as he deems appropriate. He needs no further approval to do so."

Attorney General Merrick Garland also rebuffed the idea that Weiss, a veteran prosecutor, asked to be designated as a special counsel.

"The only person who has the authority to make someone a special counsel, or refuse to make them a special counsel, is the attorney general," Garland told reporters last month. He added, "Mr. Weiss never made that request."

In a June 30 letter, Weiss also further denied the claims by telling House Republicans that the Justice Department "did not retaliate" against Shapley. He also said he was assured by the department that if he sought to bring charges against Hunter Biden in a venue other than Delaware, he would be granted special status to do so. Generally, U.S. attorneys are limited to their own jurisdictions when bringing criminal

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charges.

NEXT STEPS

The three Republican chairmen have provided a deadline of Thursday for the department to begin scheduling nearly a dozen individuals for transcribed interviews. They have said that if the deadline is not met, they will resort to issuing congressional subpoenas to force cooperation.

Weiss said in his recent letter that he would be willing to discuss such topics with congressional officials, but reiterated that he cannot divulge information about the Hunter Biden case because it is an active criminal investigation.

Garland has said publicly that he would not stop Weiss from testifying before Congress. "I would support Mr. Weiss explaining or testifying on these matters when he deems it appropriate," the attorney general said.

Today in History: July 9, Trump chooses Kavanaugh for Supreme Court

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, July 9, the 190th day of 2023. There are 175 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 9, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was read aloud to Gen. George Washington's troops in New York.

On this date:

In 1918, 101 people were killed in a train collision in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 1937, a fire at 20th Century Fox's storage facility in Little Ferry, New Jersey, destroyed most of the studio's silent films.

In 1943, during World War II, the Allies launched Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily.

In 1944, during World War II, American forces secured Saipan as the last Japanese defenses fell.

In 1947, the engagement of Britain's Princess Elizabeth to Lt. Philip Mountbatten was announced.

In 1965, the Sonny & Cher single "I Got You Babe" was released by ATCO Records.

In 1982, Pan Am Flight 759, a Boeing 727, crashed in Kenner, Louisiana, shortly after takeoff from New Orleans International Airport, killing all 145 people aboard and eight people on the ground.

In 2004, a Senate Intelligence Committee report concluded the CIA had provided unfounded assessments of the threat posed by Iraq that the Bush administration had relied on to justify going to war.

In 2010, the largest U.S.-Russia spy swap since the Cold War was completed on a remote stretch of Vienna airport tarmac as planes from New York and Moscow arrived within minutes of each other with 10 Russian sleeper agents and four prisoners accused by Russia of spying for the West.

In 2015, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley relegated the Confederate flag to the state's "relic room" after the legislature passed a measure removing the flag from the grounds of the Statehouse in the wake of the slaughter of nine African-Americans at a church Bible study.

In 2020, The Supreme Court ruled in favor of a New York prosecutor's demands for President Donald Trump's tax records.

Ten years ago: Egypt's military-backed interim leader, Adly Mansour, named economist Hazem el-Beblawi as prime minister, ending days of political deadlock. Francesco Schettino (frahn-CHEHS'-koh skeh-TEE'-noh), the former captain of the luxury liner Costa Concordia, went on trial for the 2012 shipwreck off Giglio that claimed 32 lives. A massive memorial service in Arizona honored 19 members of the Prescott-based Granite Mountain Hotshots who died when a wind-fueled, out-of-control fire overran them. Defensemen Scott Niedermayer and Chris Chelios, along with forward Brendan Shanahan, were elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame; they were joined in the class of 2013 by Geraldine Heaney, the third woman to be enshrined in the hall.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump chose Brett Kavanaugh, a solidly conservative, politically con-

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nected federal appeals court judge, for the Supreme Court to fill the seat left vacant by the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy. (Kavanaugh would be confirmed in October after a contentious nomination fight.) Former movie mogul Harvey Weinstein pleaded not guilty to new sexual assault charges in New York involving a third woman.

One year ago: Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe agreed to resign after the nation's most chaotic day in months of economic and political turmoil, with protesters storming both officials' homes. A top police official acknowledged possible security lapses that allowed an assassin to fire his gun into former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe while he was addressing a campaign rally, raising questions how could the attacker get so close behind him. Abe had been shot and killed in the western city of Nara a day earlier. Oprah Winfrey's father, Vernon Winfrey, died at the age of 89.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-singer Actor Richard Roundtree is 81. Singer Dee Dee Kenniebrew (The Crystals) is 78. Author Dean Koontz is 78. Football Hall of Famer O.J. Simpson is 76. Actor Chris Cooper is 72. TV personality John Tesh is 71. Country singer David Ball is 70. Business executive/TV personality Kevin O'Leary (TV: "Shark Tank") is 69. R&B singer Debbie Sledge (Sister Sledge) is 69. Actor Jimmy Smits is 68. Actor Tom Hanks is 67. Singer Marc Almond is 66. Actor Kelly McGillis is 66. Rock singer Jim Kerr (Simple Minds) is 64. Actor-rock singer Courtney Love is 59. Rock musician Frank Bello (Anthrax) is 58. Actor David O'Hara is 58. Actor Pamela Adlon is 57. Actor Scott Grimes is 52. Actor Enrique Murciano is 50. Rock singer-musician Isaac Brock (Modest Mouse) is 48. Musician/producer Jack White is 48. Rock musician Dan Estrin (Hoobastank) is 47. Actor-director Fred Savage is 47. Actor Linda Park is 45. Actor Megan Parlen is 43. Actor Mitchel Musso is 32. Actor Georgie Henley is 28.