

# Groton Daily Independent

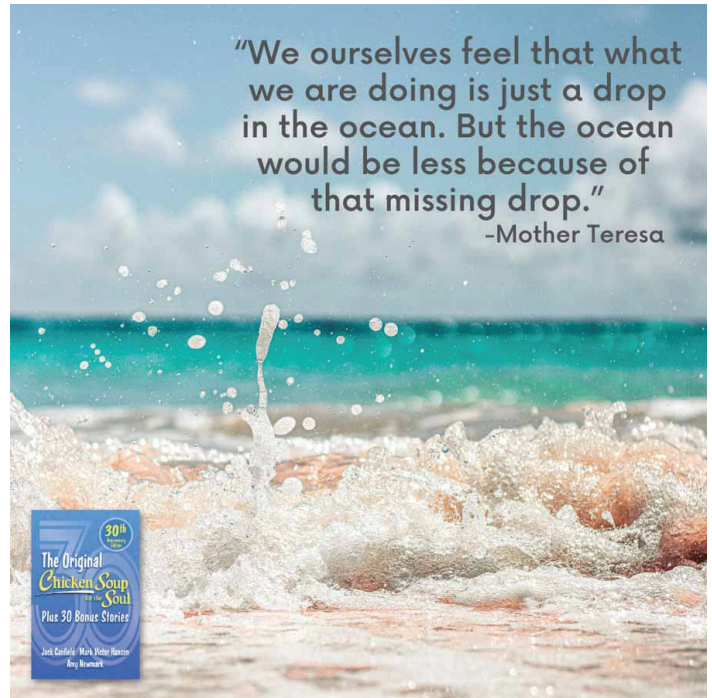
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## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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



"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop."  
-Mother Teresa

## **Friday, July 21**

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, mashed potatoes, green beans, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.

Olive Grove: Ferney Open

Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville

State Jr. Teener Tournament in Corsica

## **Saturday, July 22**

10 a.m.: Groton 10U Baseball Round Robin Games

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. ago 1 p.m.

Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville

State Jr. Teener Tournament in Corsica

## **Sunday, July 23**

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 worship, 9 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship, 11 a.m.

Amateur District in Groton

Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville

State Jr. Teener Tournament in Corsica

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## The Bulletin by Newsweek

JULY 18, 2023

### World in Brief

Republican lawmakers are jeopardizing national security after releasing classified documents that accuse President Joe Biden of conspiring with Ukrainian gas company Burisma, retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Mark Hertling said.

The Democrat-led Senate Judiciary Committee voted 11-10 to advance legislation that would require Supreme Court justices to adopt a code of conduct following ethics concerns raised during the high court's last term.

Louisville's new police chief will be the first Black woman to hold the position, sparking hope that the much-scrutinized police force could undergo significant reform.

U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party suffered two defeats in a trio of special elections, including a formerly safe conservative seat in Selby and Ainsty. The party narrowly held on to a seat in Boris Johnson's former constituency.

Donald Trump's midnight deadline to declare if he would appear before a grand jury convened by Special Counsel Jack Smith over charges related to election subversion has passed.

James Barber, 64, became the first person executed in Alabama after it halted its use of capital punishment last November. His last words were an apology to the family of Dorothy Epps, who he murdered in 2001.

CIA Director Bill Burns said he would be "surprised if [Wagner group leader Yevgeny] Prigozhin escapes further retribution" from the Kremlin for his aborted mutiny, calling Russian President Vladimir Putin the "ultimate apostle of payback."

A mass shooting has left at least five people dead on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent, with police placing the island on high alert.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Kyiv has insisted that it aims to steer clear of partisan mudslinging ahead of the 2024 U.S. presidential election, as anti-establishment figures from both the Democrats and the GOP attempt to weaponize U.S. funding for the war against President Joe Biden..

### TALKING POINTS

"We love having children of alumni who deserve to be on campus, and most of the ones who come do deserve to be there, but we don't need to give preferential treatment to people who already have resources bestowed upon them," Wesleyan University President Michael Roth said of the school's decision to end legacy admissions during an interview with CNN.

"The Dahl family and the Roald Dahl Story Company deeply apologize for the lasting and understandable hurt caused by Roald Dahl's antisemitic statements. Those prejudiced remarks are incomprehensible to us and stand in marked contrast to the man we knew and to the values at the heart of Roald Dahl's stories, which have positively impacted young people for generations. We hope that, just as he did at his best, at his absolute worst, Roald Dahl can help remind us of the lasting impact of words," a U.K. museum celebrating the work of writer Roald Dahl said in a statement posted on its website..

### WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

President Joe Biden is scheduled to deliver afternoon remarks about artificial intelligence at the White House.

"Barbenheimer" lands in movie theaters with the dual release of Greta Gerwig's Barbie and Christopher Nolan's Oppenheimer.

The U.S. Women's National Team will take on Vietnam in their first match of the FIFA Women's World Cup in New Zealand. Those watching in the U.S. can tune in to FOX or FOXSports.com at 9 p.m. on Friday.

Prince George, the eldest son of the U.K.'s Prince William and Kate Middleton, will celebrate his 10th birthday on Saturday.

Spain's snap general election takes place on Sunday as voters decide who will be their next prime minister. Incumbent socialist Pedro Sánchez is facing another leftist candidate and two right-wing candidates.

The Discovery Channel's Shark Week kicks off on Sunday.

## Johnson Bills Bring Clarity to Cryptocurrency

Washington, D.C. – Today, House Agriculture Subcommittee on Commodity Markets, Digital Assets, and Rural Development Chairman Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.), Financial Services Subcommittee on Digital Assets Chairman French Hill (R-AR), and Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA) introduced legislation to bring clarity and consistency to the digital assets market. With clear guidelines, digital asset developers can innovate and advance currency by sticking to the rules without the fear of lawsuits by regulators.

The Financial Innovation and Technology (FIT) for the 21st Century Act provides a structure for Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regulators for digital assets, including those in the gray area between security and commodity jurisdictions.

Johnson also introduced a resolution expressing support for digital asset markets and blockchain technology. It addresses the need for the functional framework to bridge the gap in regulatory framework.

“The digital asset space is muddled with regulatory uncertainty, lack of authority, and a lacking framework for core operating principles,” said Johnson. “The crypto industry wants clarity, and our collaborative bill gives both the CFTC and SEC a seat at the table. Our bill establishes clear principles to ensure financial security and certainty as blockchain technology continues to innovate.”

## Thune Introduces Bill to Increase Transparency of the Prescription Drug Supply Chain

“This bipartisan legislation would shed light on the practices that occur in the prescription drug supply chain and ensure patients have choice in where they get their medicine.”

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) today introduced the Strengthening Pharmacy Access for Seniors Act, bipartisan legislation that would increase transparency measures on pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and provide seniors with additional options to fill their prescriptions. The bill would specifically require PBMs to reveal the criteria used to classify drugs that are dispensed by certain pharmacies and prevent PBMs from steering patients to certain pharmacies that limit patients’ options.

“In order to truly determine the impact of PBMs’ practices on patients and the drug supply chain, transparency measures must improve,” said Thune. “This bipartisan legislation would shed light on the practices that occur in the prescription drug supply chain and ensure patients have choice in where they get their medicine.”

“We are extremely grateful to Senator Thune for introducing this bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to assure pharmacy access and choice for Medicare beneficiaries,” Amanda Bacon, executive director of the South Dakota Pharmacists Association. “This legislation has real impact here in South Dakota, where this practice is becoming a more prevalent problem. It often disrupts patient care, by steering patients away from their preferred pharmacy – and the pharmacists who have cared for them for years. In our rural state, this can even mean a patient now has to travel hundreds of miles, or rely on mail service for essential medications.”

“As PBMs have continued to consolidate and vertically integrate, they increasingly limit patient choice by declaring pricey medications as ‘specialty’ to steer patients to a PBM affiliated specialty pharmacy,” said Anne Cassity, senior vice president of government affairs at the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA). “Many of these so-called specialty drugs can and should be dispensed by independent community pharmacies directly to patients, instead of forcing seniors to rely on PBM-owned mail-order pharmacies. NCPA applauds Senator Thune and his colleagues for their leadership to tackle this anticompetitive practice that limits patient access to the pharmacy of their choice.”

The legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), and Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.).

PBMs are third-party administrators in the prescription drug supply chain that are hired by health insurance plans to negotiate for rebates and other price concessions, decide which drugs go on formularies, and establish pharmacy networks.

## Farmers Union Supports Brown County Commission's Eminent Domain Reform Request

South Dakota Farmers Union Board of Directors and State Policy Committee supports the Board of Brown County Commissioners resolution asking the Governor and Lt. Governor to revise South Dakota law to eliminate the taking of private property for non-public use.

"As Summit Carbon Solutions, a private corporation actively ignores landowners' property rights, the Board of Brown County Commission is taking a bold step to protect Brown County landowners," said Doug Sombke, President of South Dakota Farmers Union and a fourth-generation Brown County farmer. "I hope the Governor listens to their plea and uses her executive power to protect our state's landowners."

Landowner rights are supported by South Dakota Farmers Union policy and were the topic of two Special Orders brought forward today, July 20, during the organization's annual Policy Meeting. During the Policy Meeting, the Board of Directors and State Policy Committee also voted to support the Brown County Resolution.

"We encourage County Commissions throughout the state to join Brown County and create similar resolutions," Sombke said.

### Resolution #27-23

A Resolution in Support of Eminent Domain Reform

WHEREAS, the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution states that "Nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." U.S. Const. Amend. V. (emphasis added).

WHEREAS, the South Dakota State Constitution provides that "Private property shall not be taken for public use, or damaged, without just compensation {,}" SD CONST Art. 6 § 13 (emphasis added).

WHEREAS, the omission of "private use" from these laws implies a complete prohibition on taking of private property for non-public purpose.

WHEREAS, On July 6, 2023 hundreds of citizens held a rally in Pierre in support of revisions to South Dakota eminent domain law, culminating with approximately 2,000 signatures in support of eminent domain reform.

WHEREAS. The Brown County Board of Commissioners is in support of the Constitutional rights of property owners.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Brown County Commissioners is in support of the Governor and Legislature revising South Dakota law to eliminate the taking of private property for non-public use.

Dated at Aberdeen, South Dakota, this \_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_, 2023.

## Avantara Help Wanted

AVANTARA OF GROTON has the following positions open: part-time house-keeping, cook and resident concierge. Apply at [www.avantaragroton.com](http://www.avantaragroton.com).

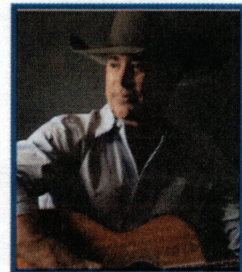
**2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL  
COLUMBIA FEST  
& PARKS DEDICATION  
"A BLAST FROM THE PAST"  
JULY 29, 2023**



**COME FOR A FULL DAY OF FUN!**

- 10:00 AM.....PARADE!**
- 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.....Vendors**
- 11:00 AM.....Parks Dedication**
- 12:00 - 3:00 PM.....Ballgames**
- 3:00 - 4:00 PM.....Home Run Derby**
- 4:00 - 5:00 PM.....Harry Luge Performs**
- 5:00 PM.....Duck Race**
- 6:00 - 8:00 PM.....Karaoke**
- 9:00 PM.....Harry Luge**

**Lots of GREAT ENTERTAINMENT, DELICIOUS FOOD and FUN ACTIVITIES. Bring your lawn chairs and picnic blanket.**



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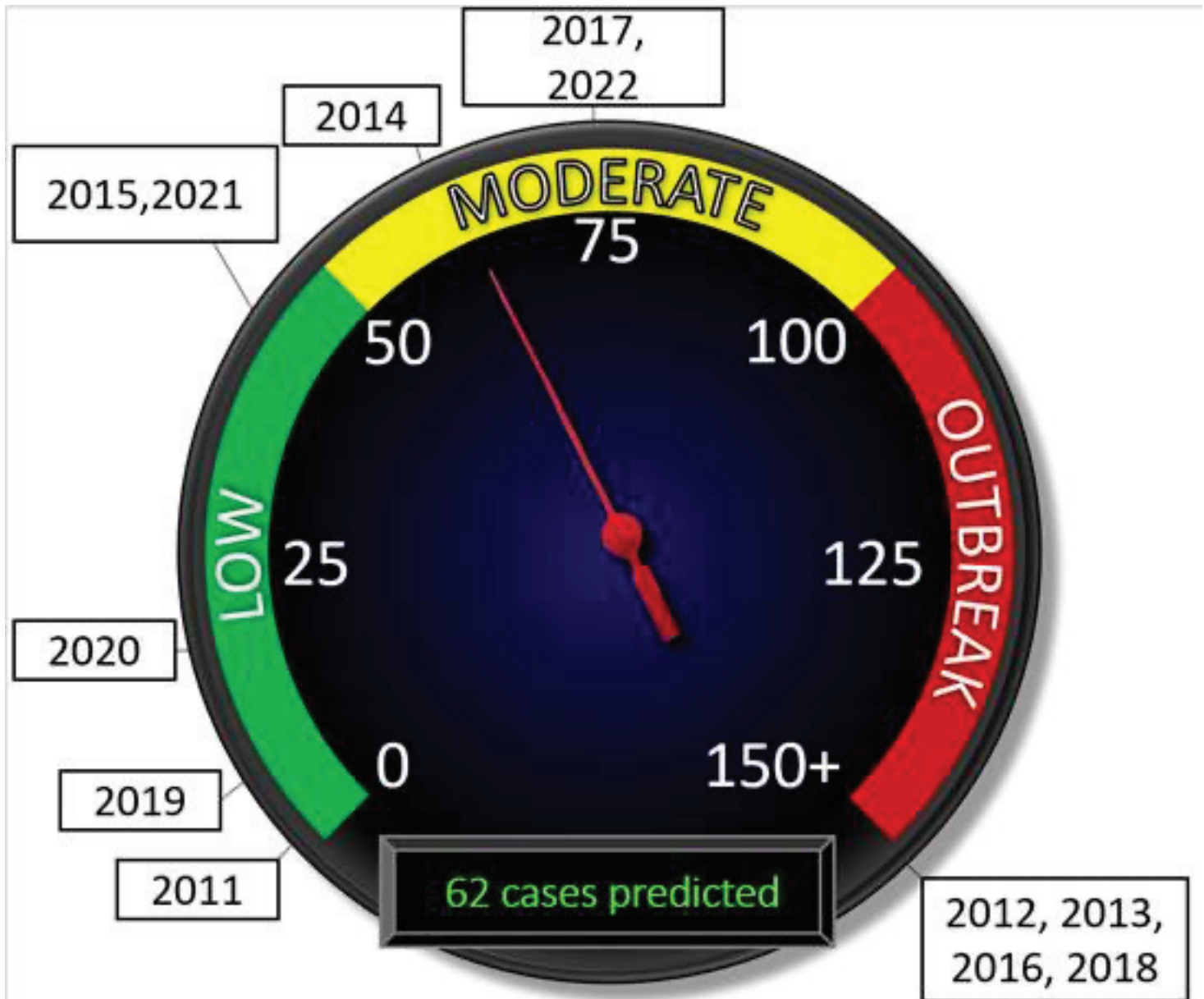
## SD West Nile Virus (as of July 20):

4 human cases reported (Beadle, Campbell, Jerauld, Sanborn)

5 counties with positive mosquito pools (Beadle, Brown, Codington, Hughes, Minnehaha)

US WNV (as of July 18): 47 cases (AR, AZ, GA, IA, LA, MO, NE, SC, SD, TX, WV, WY)

WNV Prediction Model – Total Number of Cases Projected for 2023, South Dakota (as of July 20)



## Bye Aerospace Welcomes Rod Zastrow as President and COO, Strengthening Leadership Team

June 20, 2023, Denver – Bye Aerospace is pleased to announce the appointment of Rod Zastrow as President and Chief Operating Officer (COO). Zastrow joins the leadership team to spearhead the final stages of FAA certification and commence production of the highly anticipated eFlyer 2, the world's first FAA Part 23 certified electric airplane.

With an impressive background as the former Chair and CEO of Spartan Global Aviation Training, Zastrow brings extensive expertise in pilot training, aircraft maintenance, logistics, and global business development. Zastrow played a pivotal role in securing a prominent position in a comprehensive \$1 billion pilot and maintenance training Middle East Foreign Military Sale for Spartan. Zastrow's accomplishments also include a distinguished career as a senior USAF leader, F-15 combat pilot and Fighter Weapons School "Top Gun" graduate.

Bye Aerospace recently achieved a significant milestone by completing the full 'Means of Compliance' for its eFlyer 2 certification. This accomplishment, comprising 16 specific plans encompassing a wide range of systems and procedures, marks the first ever FAA approval under Amendment 64 for a Level 1 all-electric aircraft in the general aviation industry worldwide. Zastrow will lead Bye Aerospace's team of experts as they embark on the assembly of the initial conforming eFlyer aircraft.

George Bye, Chairman and CEO of Bye Aerospace, expressed his enthusiasm for Zastrow's addition to the team, stating, "Rod Zastrow brings invaluable aviation leadership experience to our organization. His guidance will be instrumental in leading the Company through the completion of the FAA certification process and transitioning to eFlyer 2 production. Of particular significance is his extensive background in global logistics, supply chain management, and support for large fleets of pilot training aircraft."

Rod Zastrow commented on his appointment, saying, "I am honored and thrilled to join the Bye Aerospace team during this pivotal moment on the path to achieving a historic FAA all-electric certification. We have a clear roadmap to eFlyer 2 certification, and I have complete confidence in our exceptional team's ability to execute on that game plan. Our focus is laser sharp as we work towards delivering this clean and quiet technology to our pilot training customers and their students, as well as other customers who stand to benefit from the disruptive advantages of significantly lower operating costs."

Zastrow is a Columbia native and a 1980 Groton graduate. Also he is a retired USAF Colonel.

He is married to the former Carol Ball Johnson of Groton and is the son of Bruce and Berdette Zastrow, Pickerel Lake.



**Rod Zastrow**

## South Dakota Mines Students Build Software to Connect Music Teachers and Professors with Sheet Music

RAPID CITY, SD (July 20, 2023) — Finding great ensemble music that drives crowds to standing ovations is a bit of a challenge for music teachers and professors who lead bands across the country.

There is a whole world of sheet music on the market, but there is no central location where music directors can search, review and discuss sheet music with each other.

Haley Armstrong, D.M.A., associate professor and Music Center program coordinator at South Dakota Mines, presented this problem to three of her music students: Chami Senarath, Christian Olson and Haakon Anderson. The students brought a unique skillset to the table as computer science and engineering majors. Senarath, Olson and Anderson spent their senior year working on software solution to this problem, and in the process, they started a new business.

Score-Score is a database and networking application designed to aid band directors in the struggle of programming concerts with a multiplatform application that centralizes the discussion of ensemble music. The program allows directors to quickly and easily search and identify pieces based on publishing information, score analytics and demographics. It also allows directors to add, edit, discuss, rate and view pieces they and other directors have performed, creating abundant and available information for thousands of pieces.

"I have been engaged in music performances since my childhood. Thinking about integrating technology to classical music enhance the human experience in concert halls drives me and it feels like my team has a positive influence on the music industry," says Senarath.

Besides working at Mines, Armstrong has also served as the flight commander and conductor for the United States Air Force Band in Washington D.C. Her background in both academia and in the US military gives her a unique perspective.

"This project has solidified my faith in the concept that the arts and STEM can work together and together we can impact change," says Armstrong.

For the students, the project enabled them to use their skills as programmers in a real-world application.

"It was an awakening moment when I realized how the knowledge that I learned from my classes can be applied to the betterment of a community," says Senarath. "I am an avid music enthusiast and, also, I enjoy developing applications. This project is a win-win for me and motivates to keep being part of it."

Score-Score went on to take fifth place and a \$1,000 prize in the student division of the 2023 South Dakota Governor's Giant Vision Business Competition. Armstrong says she is delighted with the success of this project.

"The students have made my wild idea become a reality. Their dedication and vision have taken the project further than I could have hoped to bring new ideas and focus to an idea that would have been subpar without their expertise," says Armstrong.

Right now, Score-Score has a focus on band music, but Anderson says there is room for growth. "This project has a potential to grow horizontally to other areas in classical music such as choir, orchestra, jazz, small ensembles and solos," he says. "Classical music has provided to humankind for many centuries. It is time for us as computer science students to support this art to be up to date with technology to keep performing arts alive in this day and age," Senarath adds.

The team is continuing work on the project and hopes to see it grow in the coming years. "Our work on the business side of the project provides the opportunity to stand on its own and continue well into the future, helping a community, which is in dire need of technological support. This opportunity and the possibility of continuing to be a part of it makes the project worth the time spent," says Olson.



## **Thune-Smith Bill Would Provide Flexibility for Emergency CRP Haying** **Senators' bipartisan legislation would provide relief to producers experiencing drought conditions during primary nesting season**

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Tina Smith (D-Minn.), members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, today reintroduced the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Flexibility Act. This bipartisan legislation would improve the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) ability to allow for expedited emergency haying of CRP acres in response to drought and other weather-related disaster events. Under current statute, emergency CRP haying is not allowed until after the primary nesting season, which ends August 1 in South Dakota and Minnesota. The bill would create flexibility for producers by allowing emergency haying on CRP acres before August 1 when certain conditions are met and in consultation with the state technical committee.

"As South Dakota farmers and ranchers deal with ever-changing drought conditions, it's critical that USDA has the flexibility to step in and help producers access forage for their livestock," said Thune. "As a longtime supporter of CRP, I'm proud to lead this common-sense measure that would help producers meet their forage needs during weather-related emergencies, and I will continue to work to ensure that it is included in the final farm bill."

"In Minnesota and across the country, more and more areas are experiencing severe drought and heat waves," said Smith. "This is devastating for our cattle producers, who rely on hay to feed their herds. When severe droughts hit, farmers should be able to work with USDA and conservationists on a way to access reserve land for haying and grazing. This will lessen the impact of severe weather on the farm economy and help our farmers get through increasingly common bouts of extreme weather."

"This legislation is needed to improve the timeliness of emergency haying of Conservation Reserve Program acres during droughts like the current one that has caused forage shortages and the culling of herds," said Scott VanderWal, president of South Dakota Farm Bureau and vice president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. "We appreciate the efforts of Senator Thune and Senator Rounds to make this program more helpful to producers during weather-related disaster events."

The legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Sens. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), John Hoeven (R-N.D.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), and Mike Rounds (R-S.D.).



## Locals get SD Highway Patrol Saved by the Belt Award

Raelee Lilly, Gavin Kroll, Camryn Kurtz and Ashtyn Bahr were driving down the highway when a distracted driver entered their lane and collided with them. After the collision, Ashtyn's vehicle entered the ditch and rolled several times. Thankfully all four occupants were wearing their seatbelts and only very minor injuries were sustained. Here all four were presented with the SDHP Saved by the Belt Award. Well done Ashtyn, Gavin, Camryn and Raelee ! (Photo from SD Highway Patrol Facebook Page)

## Jr. Legion Baseball Pairings

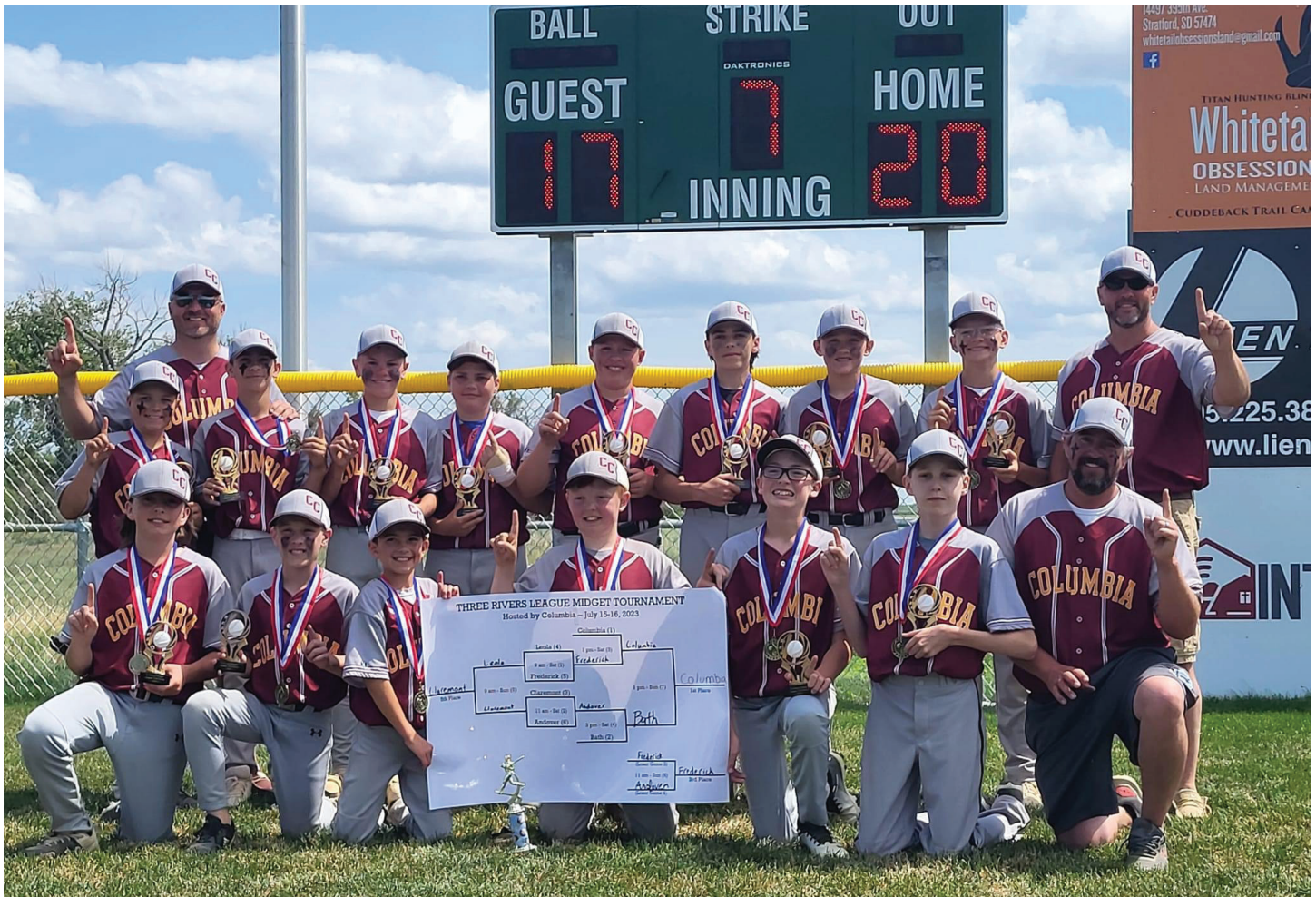
The Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament is scheduled to start Tuesday in Northville. In the first round on Tuesday, Faulkton takes on Clark at 1:30 p.m. with the winner playing WIN at 7:30 p.m. Redfield plays Groton at 5 p.m. The tournament continues Wednesday and Thursday at Northville.

## Amateur Tournament Pairings

The Northern Plains League Tournament will be played July 23-27 in Groton. First round games on July 23 have Redfield DQ playing Miller Outlaws at 4 p.m. followed by Northville Merchants playing Groton Locke Electric at 7 p.m.

## Schedule for Saturday's U10 baseball round robin in Groton:

Groton Vs Doland 10:00  
Doland Vs Columbia 11:45  
Groton vs Columbia 1:30



## Columbia Comets Midget Team wins Three Rivers Tournament

Front Row left to right: Cody Meyer, Landon Schafner, Hudson Eichler, Easton Larson, Bennett Roettele, Marshall Mettler, Coach Colin Eichler

Back Row left to right: John Dennert, Coach Josh Larson, Treston Hanson, Alex Abeln, Cole Brust, Layne Johnson, Cole Meyer, John Bisbee, T.C. Schuster, Coach Tony Bisbee

1st game Columbia VS Frederick – Columbia won and moved onto the Championship game  
Championship Game – Columbia VS Bath. Columbia won 20-17

### Team Facts

2023 Three Rivers League Midget League Champs

2023 Three Rivers League Tournament Champs (this was the first championship win for Columbia's Midget team since 2004)

Columbia's Pee Wee team also won the 2023 Three Rivers League Championship. (Photo courtesy

Columbia Baseball Facebook Page. Sarah Schuster for providing information)

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## Olive Grove Golf Course PRO AM Results



**Jake Unzen, Mitch Perman and Josh Heupel took first place in the Pro Am Tournament held Thursday at the Olive Grove Golf Course. Their pro was Joshua Reckley.** (Photo courtesy Alexa Schuring, Olive Grove Golf Course)



**Kade Brown won the Pro division with a 67 on a playoff.**  
(Photo courtesy Alexa Schuring, Olive Grove Golf Course)



**Brad Larson had low gross and Josh Heupel had low net at the Pro Am Golf Tournament.** (Photo courtesy Alexa Schuring, Olive Grove Golf Course)

### Thursday, July 20, 2023

#### Team Standings

- 1st Place – Mitch Perman, Jake Unzen, Josh Heupel, PRO – Joshua Reckley – 76 points
- 2nd Place – Brad Larson, Tyler Sperry, Blake Ronning, PRO – Ben Van Scoyk – 70 points
- 3rd Place – Kalen Kjellsen, Scott Vedvei, Brandon Stanley, PRO – Chris Gilman – 68 points
- 4th Place – Jason Hill, Eric Moody, Brian Carrels, PRO – Ben Van Scoyk – 67 points

#### PRO Results

- 1st Place – Kade Brown – 67 (won on playoff)
- 2nd Place – Ben Van Scoyk – 67
- (Tie) 3rd Place – Brandon Baker, Chris Gilman – 68

#### Amateur Gross Results

- 1st Place – Brad Larson – 73
- 2nd Place – Brad Waage – 76
- 3rd Place – Gabe Kjellsen – 77
- 4th Place – Sam Heintzman – 77

#### Amateur Net Results

- 1st Place – Josh Heupel – 66
- 2nd Place – Randy Stanley – 71
- 3rd Place – Jake Unzen – 71
- 4th Place – Brandon Stanley – 72

## Age of South Dakota farmers rise – along with land and input costs

Abbey Stegenga

South Dakota News Watch

DIMOCK, S.D. – Ron Neugebauer has been farming in South Dakota for more than 60 years.

He began in the early 1960s when he was in high school. By the time he was 30 years old, he and his brother had taken over the family farm after their father died.

“The first big feeling was driving a John Deere, one brand new John Deere tractor in the middle ‘50s. I was only like 8 years old, but I was able to go out and pull a drag in the field,” Neugebauer said.

He would go on to raise his own five children on that same farmland. Most mornings, he and the kids would milk the dairy cows and watch the sun rise.

Neugebauer’s land, which currently grows corn and soybeans, sits about 10 miles west of Dimock, a town of an estimated 150 people and the home of the oldest cheese plant in South Dakota.

At 77, Neugebauer is among nearly two-thirds of South Dakota farmers who are at least 55 years old.

In 2017, according to the most recent Census of Agriculture, nearly 4,100 principal producers in South Dakota were over the age of 75.

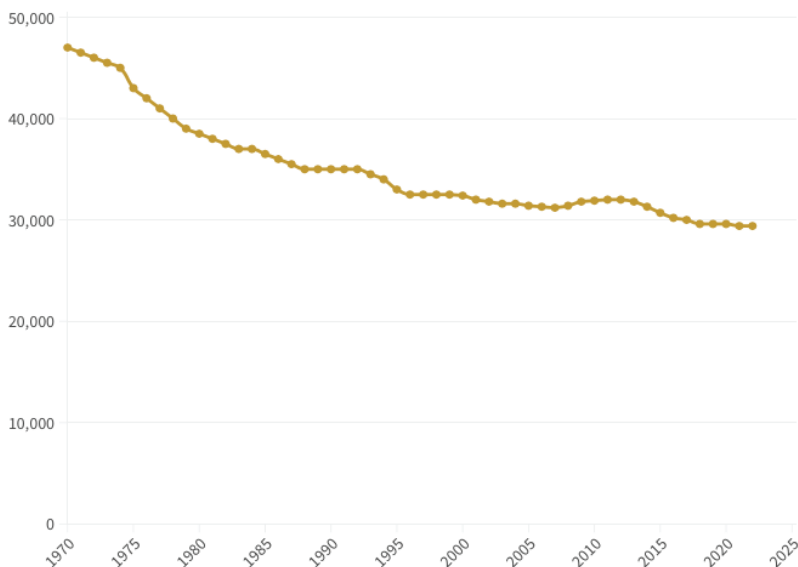


**Ron Neugebauer stands in a patch of sweet corn in his garden west of Dimock, S.D.** (Photo:

Abbey Stegenga / SD News Watch)

### Farms in South Dakota since 1970

Farms in the state have decreased more than 17,000 in 50 years.



Source: USDA Survey Data • Graphic: Michael Klinski / SD News Watch



A principal producer is the person who has the primary responsibility for a farm’s day-to-day operations, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As the number of young farmers remains low and those nearing retirement age grows, some worry about the future of the state’s No. 1 industry.

### Fewer farms in South Dakota

In 2022, the state had 2,600 fewer farm operations than it did in 2012, according to USDA data. Over the past two years, the number of South Dakota farms has hovered around 29,400. In 1923, the state was home to 78,800 farm operations.

Neugebauer’s farm has remained in operation since 1882.

“My grandpa started it and homesteaded here,” Neugebauer said.

In 2021, South Dakota ranked 28th in

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the country for the number of farms, behind New York and Mississippi.

However, while the number of farms has decreased, the number of acres in operation has remained rather stable.

South Dakota had 44.9 million acres devoted to agriculture in 1950, according to USDA data. Last year, the state had 43.2 million acres in operation.

Family-owned farms have remained a South Dakota staple as well.

As of 2017, 1% of South Dakota's farm operations belonged to non-family held corporations, according to the most recent Census of Agriculture.

Heather Gessner, a livestock business management field specialist with South Dakota State University Extension, said while it's too early to tell if 2023 will see a drop in the number of farm operations from 2022, she expects South Dakota will hold steady.

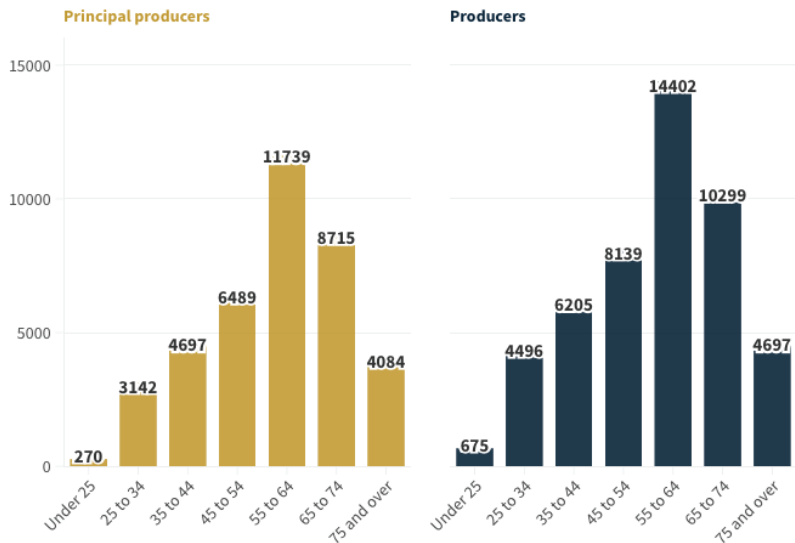
"I don't think we've lost a number of farms that would be alarming, either through farmers retiring or going out of business or whatever the issue might be," she said. "The age of our farmers continues to increase, so when we can get new farmers started and help them get a foot in the door, that's always great so that we can maintain those farming numbers."



**City Hall on Main Street in Dimock, S.D. The town had a population of an estimated 150 people in 2022.** (Photo: Abbey Stegenga / SD News Watch)

## South Dakota producers by age

A producer is someone involved with making decisions on a farm. Principal producers farm operators who have primary responsibility for a farm's daily operations.



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture • Graphic: Michael Klinski / SD News Watch

## South Dakota's farming population aging

Gessner said the state has a smaller number of 40- to 45-year-old farmers because of the difficulties farmers faced in the 1980s and 1990s.

"There wasn't an opportunity at that time to come back to the farm and farm. Commodity prices were low. Hog prices were disastrously low. Expenses were kind of starting to creep up," Gessner said.

Now, more than 20 years later, some of the people who graduated high school in the 1990s are in a place to move back to the family operation and take up management positions, she said.

Gessner said those 40- to 45-year-olds could currently find themselves in a stable job, have money saved, desire to move to a smaller town or have a parent retiring



**Ron Neugebauer and his wife, Dawn Neugebauer, will celebrate 54 years of marriage this year. The pair raised five children together on their farm west of Dimock, S.D.** (Photo: Abbey Stegenga / SD News Watch)

from farming — all of which would encourage them to return to the farming profession.

“It takes such a huge amount of money to get into it. You gotta have some kind of help, either from family or somebody to help them get started, to get going,” Neugebauer said.

As a high schooler in the early 1960s, Neugebauer’s father rented him and his brother a quarter of his uncle’s ground.

“And we were able to start farming. We each invested in a tractor. I bought a third and my brother bought a third and my dad bought a third. That’s how we got started,” he said.

More people are seeking agriculture-focused degrees from South Dakota technical schools, which gives Neugebauer hope for the future of farming in the state.

According to a South Dakota Board of Technical Education Report, South Dakota’s four technical schools enrolled more than 7,200 students at the start of the fall 2022 semester,

489 of whom were seeking a career in agriculture, food and natural resources.

### Land prices challenge new farmers in South Dakota

According to a National Young Farmers Coalition survey, 59% of young farmers say finding access to affordable land is “very or extremely challenging.”

“One of the biggest barriers that we face and that the next generation talked to me about is finding land then trying to afford it,” Gessner said.

The average cash rental rate for non-irrigated cropland in South Dakota rose from \$32 per acre in 1991 to \$149 in 2023, according to data from a South Dakota State University Extension survey on land market trends in the state.

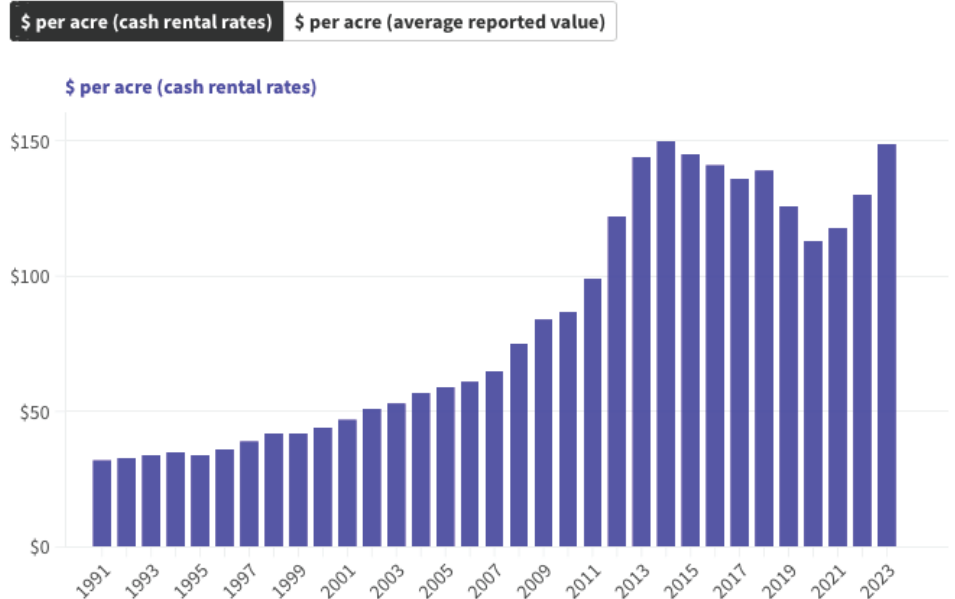
Using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ inflation calculator, \$32 in May 1991 would be equivalent to a value of \$71.77 in May 2023.

The average value per acre of non-irrigated cropland in South Dakota is now \$5,458, up a whopping 1,321% from \$384 in 1991.

“Finding ground where you want to be is also another component. There’s a lot of variation

### Cash rental rates / and average land value in SD

Non-irrigated cropland is farmland that relies on natural rain to water crops. Farmers pay an agreed upon cash rental rate for agricultural land, and the rate does not change depending on the success of production that year. Land value signifies how much the non-irrigated cropland is worth.



Source: SDSU Extension • Graphic: Michael Kliniski / SD News Watch



**Heather Gessner**

between different parts of South Dakota," Gessner said.

However, more challenges await beginning farmers.

"The biggest barrier comes down to that financial component, you know, just the operating expenses related on a per acre basis," Gessner said.

If a farmer finds land that fits his needs and his budget, he then must find a way to fund and finance the input costs, she said.

"You've got to be able to develop your balance sheets and your cash flows and your financial statements because probably you don't have \$20,000 or \$30,000 sitting around just waiting to be put into input costs," Gessner said.

### **Programs assist beginning farmers**

Several programs in South Dakota aim to help bridge the gap between beginning and retiring farmers.

South Dakota State University Extension offers estate planning and farm transition programs, which Gessner has headed since 2006.

The organization puts on four to five estate planning conferences for farmers and ranchers across the state each year. Gessner said the conferences cover communication differences and personality styles, so farmers and families can work together and ensure the longevity of the operation.

Participants also learn about the tools available to them for retiring and preserving their operations, like long-term care insurance and different trusts, Gessner said.

"When I try to teach about the tools, I also have the goal of trying to introduce the farmers and ranchers to the industry professionals that they need to help implement those tools," she said.

SDSU Extension also holds an eight-week workshop series titled "Farmland for the Next Generation."

According to SDSU Extension, the series covers "an introduction to land tenure, financial readiness, land tenure options, finding land, land assessment, leasing land, purchasing land and succession planning."

Throughout the course, participants learn about ways to enter the farming industry if they don't currently have a family farm to return to or if the family farm involves many people and needs to increase in size to accommodate everyone's livelihood, Gessner said.

"How do we put all those pieces together and start that conversation on, 'Should I even buy that piece of ground that came up next to me?'" Gessner said.

USDA offers a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which allocates grants to organizations for education, mentoring and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers.

The USDA also oversees several loan programs for beginning farmers, such as the Farm Ownership loans, which provide access to land, and the Microloan program, which helps establish a source of financial assistance for beginning farmers in their first years.

Looking forward: 'You have to keep a positive outlook'

Neugebauer always knew he would go into farming.

"I kind of had a love for it, you know, kind of always did," he said.

Within the next year or two, Neugebauer plans to fully retire from farming and rent out his land to his two nephews.

To those entering the farming profession, Neugebauer advises positivity.

"You have to keep a positive outlook. I mean, you have to always think it's gonna turn out good, and you can't go looking at it like, 'Well, I don't think this is gonna work out.' You have to have faith that things will work out," he said.

— *This article was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit journalism organization located online at [sdnews-watch.org](http://sdnews-watch.org).*



### **ABOUT ABBEY STEGENGA**

Abbey Stegenga joined South Dakota News Watch as a 2023 summer intern through the Scripps-Howard Fund. She studies journalism, English and Spanish at Augustana University in Sioux Falls.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### State board gives blessing to Black Hills gold mine expansion

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 20, 2023 2:22 PM

The state Board of Minerals and Environment unanimously endorsed the expansion of the Coeur Wharf Resources mine, just north of Terry Peak and west of Lead, during its Thursday meeting in Pierre.

The action is contingent on the later submission of surety bonds and conditions that the mining company address and mitigate a surface water quality violation on its property. The violation is caused by excessive amounts of selenium, which is a naturally occurring mineral in soil that can pollute water and be harmful to people and fish in great amounts.

The department first noticed increases in selenium in False Bottom Creek, which is on Wharf property, in 2014 and sent a warning letter to Wharf in 2021. Wharf had begun depositing rock at the site in an effort to reclaim an area no longer used for the mine, though Wharf Environmental Manager Matt Zietlow previously said it was "unknown" if Wharf caused the problem.

The board members at their Thursday meeting continued a hearing that was held two months ago regarding Wharf's expansion, which is expected to extend the mine's life by one to three years, or until 2028 or 2030. The mine was granted four other expansion permits in its 40-year history, the latest in 2011.

The expansion will disturb an estimated 31.9 million tons of material, including 6.7 million tons of ore and 25.2 million tons of overburden and non-mineralized rock. Wharf's 2022 gold and silver sales totaled over \$150 million, and its net income was over \$34 million. Wharf paid about \$4.3 million in state mineral severance taxes last year.

The board heard testimony in May from Wharf, the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Rapid City-based activist Carla Marshall, who filed as a formal intervenor to oppose the expansion.

The conditions of the permit include a timeline to treat selenium amounts in False Bottom Creek to meet required selenium limits by 2025, and a requirement to submit monthly updates to the department. It also requires that Wharf submit an annual surface and groundwater characterization report.

Board member Gary Haag said he would like to see Wharf or the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources keep the board informed about the schedule and implementation of the treatment system.

The permit conditions will keep the board and the public more informed about the remedies made at False Bottom Creek, Chairman Rex Hagg said.

"Everybody has stepped up to agree to address it, and that's the main thing," the chairman said during the meeting. "I feel comfortable that the state's interest is being served by that."

The permit will not be officially approved until Wharf presents surety bonds for the expansion, which will be presented to the board at its next meeting later this year.

Wharf did officially object to the department's statement that it is in violation of the Clean Water Act, saying it did not receive formal notice of the violation and that there hasn't been a hearing on the violation. The state Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources disputed the claim, saying that the notification was appropriate.

The Wharf Mine is the only active, large-scale gold mine in the Black Hills.

*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.*

## Texas man gets 30-year sentence in 'brutal' beating death on Yankton Sioux land

BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 20, 2023 1:13 PM

SIoux FALLS — A judge handed down a 30-year sentence Thursday morning in an Indian Country homicide she described as among the most brutal she'd seen in more than two decades on the federal bench.

Alexis Delarosa, 33, helped beat George "Bug" Cournoyer Jr. to death with a hammer and baseball bat in December of 2020 after Delarosa and his co-defendant got the upper hand during a fight inside the victim's Wagner home.

An autopsy of the 41-year-old victim revealed 61 distinct injuries inflicted by Delarosa and co-defendant Justine Tuttle, Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann Hoffman said Thursday morning. Hoffman asked Judge Karen Schreier for a sentence higher than the 24 to 30 years recommended for Delarosa under federal sentencing guidelines.

The crime was particularly brutal, said Hoffman, who described the hammer assault as a form of torture and noted that Delarosa ignored Cournoyer's pleas to "stop, bro, stop!"

The pair left the home and drove away with Cournoyer's laptop and cell phone, Hoffman said.

"Not only did they not call for help, they left Bug with no way to call for help," she said.

Delarosa's criminal history also played into Hoffman's argument for a longer sentence. He held a knife to a victim's throat in Yankton in 2017, Hoffman said, and he'd threatened to kill another person in a Dallas, Texas, robbery after that.

"His criminal history encompasses his entire adulthood," Hoffman said.

Defense lawyer Amber Eggert asked Schreier to stay within the guidelines and avoid imposing the five additional years the government wanted for her client.

Delarosa and Cournoyer were friends, she said. The fight began over Cournoyer's behavior toward Tuttle, Eggert said Thursday, and the victim was an active participant. Tuttle and Delarosa continued to assault the victim after it became clear he was losing the fight, but Eggert said the pair had come to Cournoyer's home to take drugs, not to kill.

"This was a fight," Eggert said. "An unfortunate fight."

She also said the co-defendants believed that Cournoyer would survive as they left. Delarosa, a Texas native, and Tuttle, who lived in Nebraska, were captured nine months after the crime.

Delarosa apologized to the victim's family in a written statement he read aloud in court. He said he wished he could "turn back time" so he could handle the situation differently, and that he'll be haunted by the memory of what he'd done to his friend for the rest of his life.

"If I could switch places with him, I would," Delarosa said.

The victim's mother, Kathy Cournoyer, was one of about a half dozen friends and family members in attendance on Thursday. She asked Schreier to impose the stiffest possible sentence for a crime that will impact her family's life forever, especially her 11-year-old granddaughter.

"My son is gone, and his daughter has to grow up without him," Kathy Cournoyer said.

Schreier declined to depart from the sentencing guidelines, pointing out that Delarosa's criminal history already put him at the top end of the sentencing range for the crime of second-degree murder.

She imposed the highest sentence possible within that range, 365 months, in part because of those prior crimes. She also described the homicide as "one of the more brutal" she'd seen in her time as a judge. She was appointed to the bench in 1999.

She told Delarosa that his anger issues made him a danger to the public, and that his actions toward a supposed friend show as much.

"This was truly unforgiving conduct from you," Schreier said.

By staying within the guideline range, Schreier ensured Delarosa will lose most avenues for appeal. In his plea agreement, he gave up the right to appeal as long as his sentence stayed within the guideline range.

Tuttle was sentenced earlier this year to more than six years in federal prison in a plea deal that saw her admit to two counts of aggravated assault.

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After the hearing, Kathy Cournoyer said she felt "relieved," although she'd hoped for a life sentence after a long wait for justice.

George Cournoyer Jr. was a big fan of softball, playing third base, first base and catcher for Wagner-area teams like the Rez Sox and The Warriors. His mother said the community had hoped to put on a softball tournament in June in his memory, but the family decided to wait a year because of delays in the case.

"It just took a toll on our family," Kathy Cournoyer said of the delays. "We'd be getting all geared up to come up here and face this man, then it would be reset."

Her granddaughter spent months in counseling to cope with the loss of a loving and attentive father, she said. She hopes her son can be remembered for his contributions to his family and community.

"He was just a wonderful son and dad," she said. "He loved his daughter unconditionally. She was his pride and joy."

*John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux falls Argus Leader.*

## House passes aviation bill, including Johnson amendment, that boosts smaller airports

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JULY 20, 2023 1:02 PM

The U.S. House overwhelmingly passed a bill Thursday that would reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration for five years, including a big increase in subsidies for airlines providing flights to smaller markets.

The chamber voted 351-67 to approve the bill, which would authorize \$104 billion for the agency through 2028, increase authorized spending levels for rural aviation programs and add some protections for the flying public amid ongoing complaints over cancellations and delays.

"This bill ensures robust investment in infrastructure for airports of all sizes, including the thousands of smaller and general aviation airports that make up the bulk of our aviation system," U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Sam Graves, a Missouri Republican, said.

The bipartisan support on the floor came after lawmakers kept the measure clear of the controversial social issues a handful of House Republicans attached to the defense authorization bill last week.

For example, on the FAA bill the chamber rejected, 181-254, an amendment from Illinois Republican Mary Miller to restrict funding for diversity, equity and inclusion training at the agency. In last week's defense authorization bill, the House adopted two amendments targeting such programs in the Defense Department.

The committee's ranking Democrat, Rick Larsen of Washington, praised the process in a Thursday floor speech.

"We are on the verge of passing a comprehensive, bipartisan, negotiated-in-good faith, important, policy-based bill, I presume in a bipartisan manner, which may not make the news because it wasn't exciting enough," Larsen said minutes before the vote. "We have prided ourself on being a boring committee, on being a workhorse committee."

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved the bill on a 63-0 vote last month.

Even after passage, Larsen said he and Graves will have to coordinate with the Senate and White House to see the bill enacted into law. Leaders of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee introduced a companion bill last month, but have not scheduled a committee vote on the measure.

Current FAA authorization expires Sept. 30 and the legislation is considered one of this year's must-do bills for Congress.

### Johnson votes yes, inserts amendment

Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, voted in favor of the FAA reauthorization bill and said it includes his amendment to turn back a plan that would have charged the Pierre, Aberdeen and Watertown communities more than \$4 million over the next 10 years to maintain passenger air service.

Original language in the bill would have charged rural passenger airports new fees to participate in the

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Essential Air Service program, Johnson said. The program provides federal funding to ensure air service to rural and small communities.

Johnson's office also said his amendment to accelerate environmental reviews for FAA projects was adopted unanimously. The amendment encourages the FAA to adopt interactive digital platforms, which can shorten the amount of time spent reviewing documents for large projects by 50%. A typical environmental review process takes an average of 6.5 years to complete, Johnson's office said.

## **Rural air service, consumer aid**

Under Graves, a licensed pilot and longtime champion of general aviation, the bill includes provisions meant to boost air service in rural America.

The measure includes a major increase for the Essential Air Service, a program to subsidize flights to small, rural airports that's often been targeted for cutbacks or elimination. It would authorize an average of \$292 million per year for the program. The current law, enacted in 2018, authorized about \$162 million per year on average.

Essential Air Service subsidizes airlines with routes to and from 110 airports in the contiguous 48 states as of 2021, with dozens more in Alaska and Hawaii. Subsidies of more than \$200 per passenger are reserved for airports beyond 210 miles from the nearest mid- or large-hub airport.

The bill also includes an entire title, or section, on general aviation, the non-commercial, non-military flight operations that include flights for agricultural, medical and business travel purposes. It's the first such title in an FAA authorization bill, according to Graves.

Larsen also praised the measure's consumer protections sections on the House floor Wednesday.

"Recent flight cancellations and delays have shaken the confidence of passengers in the U.S. aviation system," Larsen said. "To get us back on the right course, the reauthorization requires airlines to create resiliency plans to address mass flight disruptions."

The bill would require airlines to publish on their websites guidelines on compensation related to flight delays, diversions, cancellations and mishandled luggage.

It would also create a passenger experience advisory committee, to report to the Transportation secretary and FAA administrator.

## **Fight over D.C. flights**

The bill would not alter the routes allowed to serve Washington's Ronald Reagan National Airport, which sits in Virginia just across the Potomac River from the nation's capital. Federal law prohibits routes to destinations more than 1,250 miles from the airport, with limited exceptions to cities including Denver, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Portland, Oregon and Seattle.

The provision is meant to protect Dulles International Airport, which is farther out in Northern Virginia from the city center, and proposals for added air traffic out of National Airport proved highly contentious.

Utah Republican Burgess Owens proposed an amendment to allow seven new round-trip flights to National. The measure was defeated, 205-229.

Most Democrats voted against the amendment and most Republicans supported it, though dozens from both sides crossed party lines.

Several members of both parties from major metropolitan areas in Texas and California voted to add flights.

Republican Chip Roy and Democrats Joaquin Castro and Henry Cuellar all spoke on the floor to advocate for a direct flight from their San Antonio-area districts.

"My city of San Antonio is known as Military City, USA," Castro said. "It's home to tens of thousands of soldiers, airmen, intelligence professionals, and cybersecurity experts who need direct access to Washington, D.C."

So, too, did most members from Delta Air Lines' home state of Georgia. Delta supports adding flights to National Airport, also known by its international airport code, DCA. Democrat Lucy McBath was the only member from Georgia to vote against the measure.

"The only reason airlines are opposing this is that they want to limit competition," U.S. Rep. Hank John-

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son, a Georgia Democrat, said.

Members from Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia and the District of Columbia opposed the measure.

"No one asked our regional delegation about this, and we are united against adding more air traffic at DCA," Virginia Democrat Don Beyer said. The airport is already overcrowded, with 20% of flights late, he added.

The area's U.S. Senate delegation is also opposed to adding long-distance flights. U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin III, a Democrat from West Virginia, said this week he opposed the idea, fearing airlines may opt to cut short regional flights in favor of longer ones.

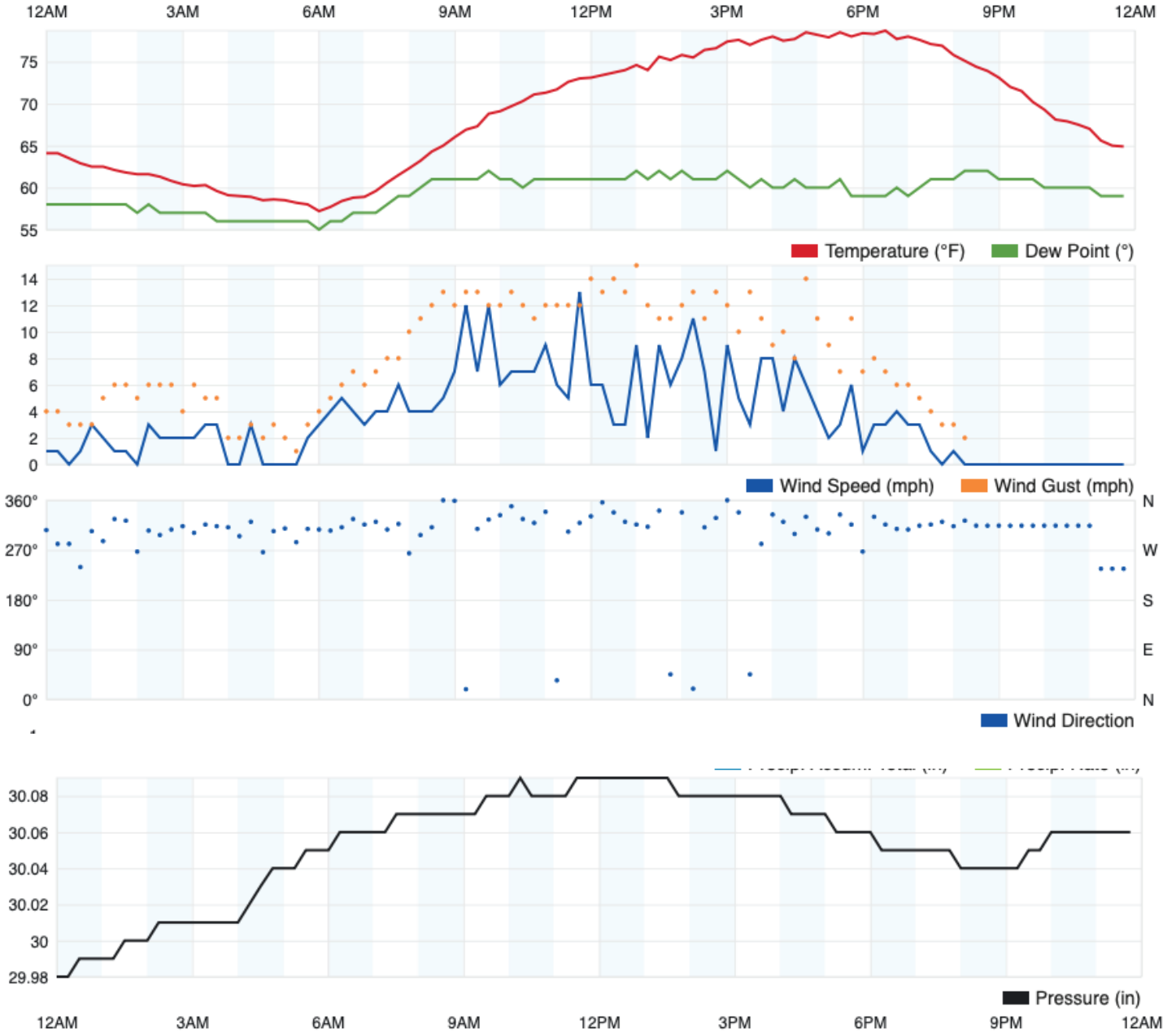
— *South Dakota Searchlight's staff contributed to this report.*

*Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 83 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 91 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 95 °F



## Increasing Temps This Weekend/Next Week

July 21, 2023  
2:34 AM

Low Chances For Moisture

**Friday: Isolated Thundershowers  
Highs In The 80s**

**Saturday: Isolated Thundershowers  
Highs In The Mid 80s & Low 90s**

**Sunday: Sunny  
Highs In The Upper 80s to Upper 90s**

**Next Week:  
Highs In The Upper 90s/Low 100s**

 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Its a mostly dry forecast for the next few days...with a steady increase in temperatures culminating in highs near the century mark for the middle of next week

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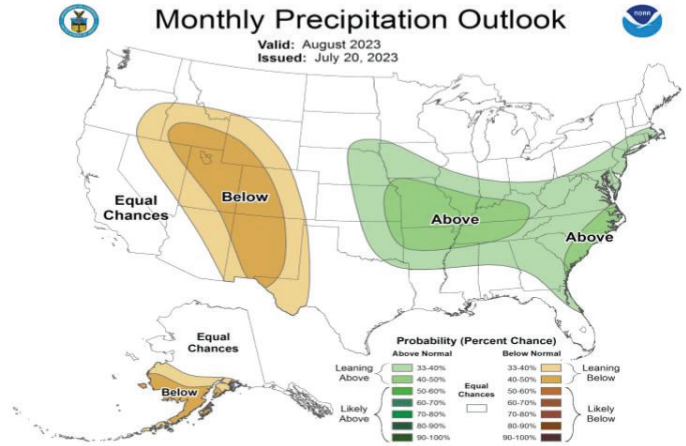
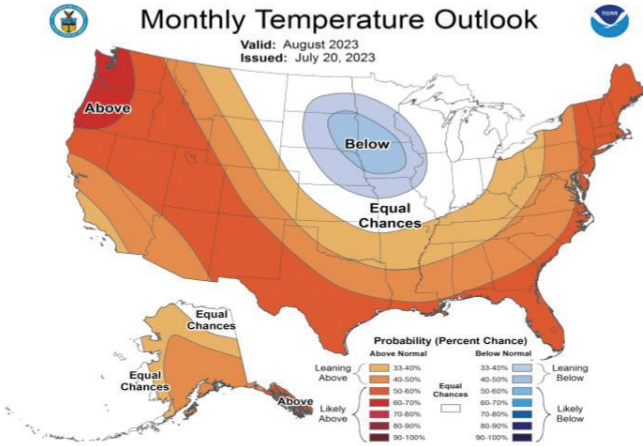
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## August Outlook (issued July 20th)

July 20, 2023  
12:11 PM

Climate Prediction Center



### Main Forecast Points:

- An upper trough will likely persist over the central part of the continental USA during the month.
- This may lead to below normal **temperatures**, on average, for the month across eastern South Dakota.
- That doesn't mean **temperatures** can't get hot for short periods of time, as is typical in August.
- **Precipitation** chances are spread evenly between above, below, and normal, meaning the forecast for rain is somewhat indeterminate at this time.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 79 °F at 6:26 PM

Low Temp: 57 °F at 6:00 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 12:06 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 12 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1899

Record Low: 41 in 1902

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.27

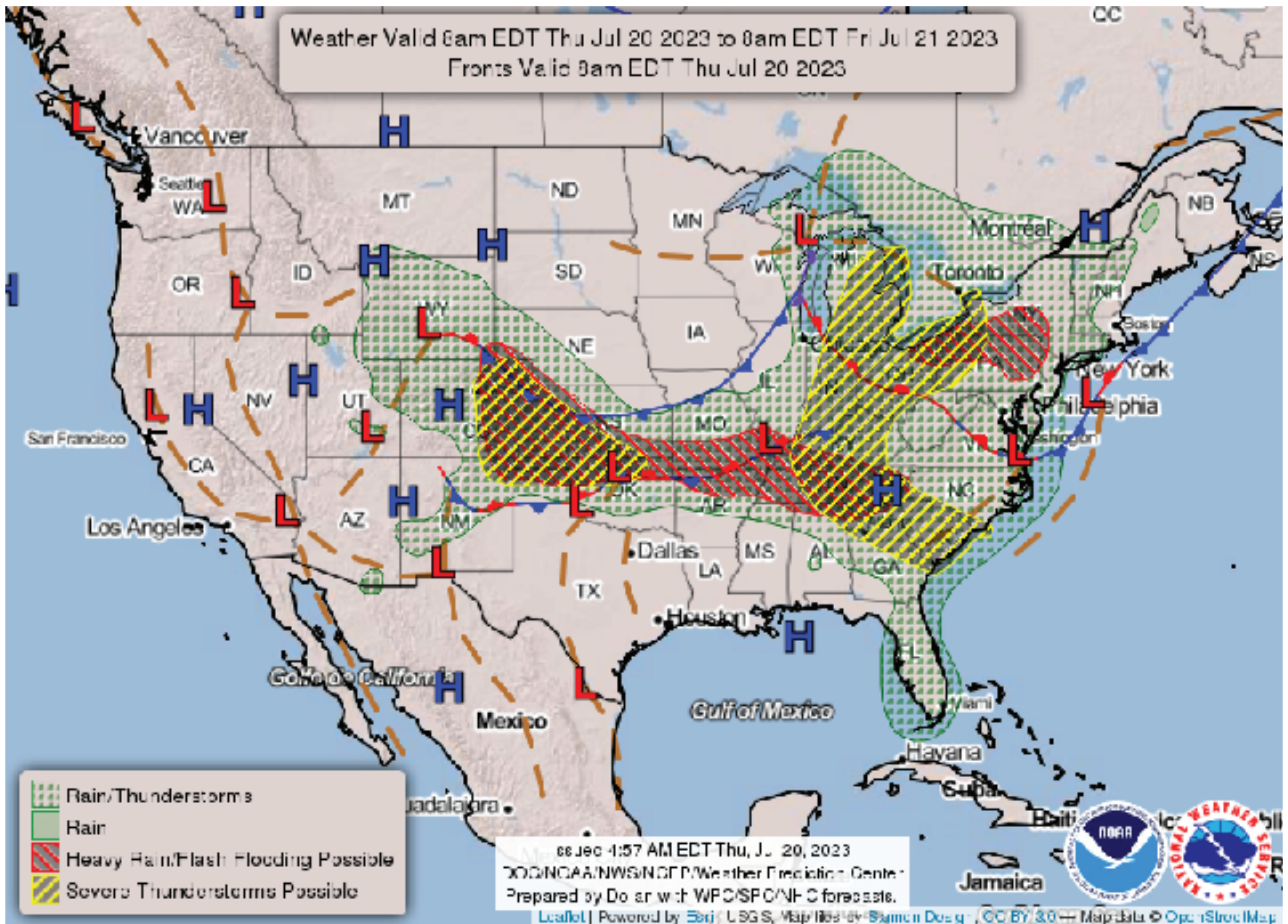
Precip to date in July.: 1.32

Average Precip to date: 13.28

Precip Year to Date: 12.67

Sunset Tonight: 9:14:54 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:03:50 AM



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## Today in Weather History

July 21, 1940: From near Miller, an estimated F2 tornado moved southeast, destroying a barn, garage, and two windmills.

July 21, 2000: 3.25-inch hail was reported near Okreek in northeastern Todd County.

1911 - The temperature at Painter, WY, dipped to 10 degrees to equal the record low for July for the continental U.S. (The Weather Channel)

1934 - The temperature reached 109 degrees at Cincinnati, OH, to cap their hottest summer of record. The state record for Ohio was established that day with a reading of 113 degrees near the town of Galipolis. (David Ludlum)

1975 - Six inches of rain fell across Mercer County, NJ, in just ten hours causing the worst flooding in twenty years. Assumpink Creek crested eleven feet above flood stage at Hamilton and Trenton, the highest level of record. Traffic was brought to a standstill, and railway service between New York City and Washington D.C. was cut off for two days. Flooding left 1000 persons homeless, and caused an estimated 25 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1983: At Vostok Station in Antarctica, the temperature dropped to 128.6 degrees below zero. This reading is the coldest temperature ever recorded.

1987: An F4 tornado ravages the Teton Wilderness and Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. The tornado's violent winds destroy millions of trees on a 24.3-mile track that traverses the Continental Divide at an elevation of 10,170 feet.

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Utah to North Dakota, spawning a dozen tornadoes in North Dakota. Thunderstorms in North Dakota also produced baseball size hail at Clifford which caused four million dollars damage, and high winds which toppled a couple of eighty foot towers cutting off power to the town of Blanchard. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - While cool air invaded the central U.S., unseasonably hot weather continued over the western states. The temperature at Spring Valley, NV, soared from a morning low of 35 degrees to an afternoon high of 95 degrees. Fallon, NV, reported an all-time record high of 108 degrees, and Death Valley, CA, reported their sixth straight day of 120 degree heat. (The Weather Channel) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Afternoon thunderstorms over Florida produced wind gusts to 92 mph at Jacksonville, damaging thirteen light planes at Herlong Field. Five cities in Texas reported record low temperatures for the date. Corpus Christi, TX, equalled their record low for the date with a reading of 71 degrees, and then tied their record high for the date that afternoon with a reading of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### DON'T DOUBT

Samuel Francis DuPont was a successful Admiral in the United States Navy. In spite of his brilliant career, on one occasion he suffered a humiliating defeat. Following this loss, he went to his commanding officer and carefully explained what went wrong.

At the end of his explanation, his commanding officer said, "There's one more reason you lost the battle that you did not mention. You did not believe that you could win."

Doubt leads to defeat. It destroys our determination and undermines our vision. The same is true in our relationship with God. Whenever we doubt God's power or ability and place our trust in ourselves, some other person, or something else, it is as though we are saying, "God, I don't trust You so I'm going to try to solve my problem on my own or with someone else's help because I don't need You."

Jesus once said, "If you really believe, you can say to this mountain - May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea - and it will happen!" Jesus used this powerful illustration to emphasize one fact: God can do the impossible with us, for us, or through us. God answers our prayers when we pray sincerely and honestly and place our faith in Him alone. When we are seeking to glorify ourselves and have selfish motives, He will neither hear nor answer our prayers. If what we ask for will bring ultimate glory to Him, is in agreement with His character, and extend His kingdom on earth, He will hear and answer.

Prayer: Lord, help us to realize that our prayers must be consistent with Your teachings and will. Help us to know Who You are and have confidence in Your Word and believe that all things are possible. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God." Mark 11:22



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:  
07.18.23

19 22 31 37 54 18

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$720,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 30 Mins 27  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.19.23

9 12 16 33 40 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$6,120,000**

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 45  
DRAW: Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.20.23

12 27 31 39 46 5

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.19.23

10 16 19 22 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 27  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.19.23

13 15 28 43 57 25

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 29  
DRAW: Mins 28 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.19.23

7 10 11 13 24 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 29  
DRAW: Mins 28 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **Idaho jury finds 5 from white nationalist group guilty of criminal conspiracy to riot at Pride event**

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho (AP) — Five members of the white nationalist hate group Patriot Front were convicted Thursday of misdemeanor charges of conspiracy to riot at a Pride event.

A Kootenai County jury found Forrest Rankin, Devin Center, Derek Smith, James Michael Johnson and Robert Whitted guilty after about an hour of deliberation, news outlets reported.

A total of 31 Patriot Front members, including one identified as its founder, were arrested June 11, 2022, after someone reported seeing people loading into a U-Haul van like "a little army" at a hotel parking lot in Coeur d'Alene, police have said.

Police found riot gear, a smoke grenade, shin guards and shields inside the van after pulling it over near where the North Idaho Pride Alliance was holding a Pride in the Park event, Coeur d'Alene Police Chief Lee White has said.

Documents found with the group reportedly outlined a plan to form a column outside City Park and proceed inward, "until barriers to approach are met." Once "an appropriate amount of confrontational dynamic had been established," the column would disengage and head down Sherman Avenue.

Those arrested came from at least 11 states, including Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota, Illinois, Wyoming, Virginia and Arkansas.

Rioting is generally a misdemeanor in Idaho. Conspiracy to riot is punishable by up to one year in jail, as well as a \$5,000 fine and up to two years of probation. The five men are scheduled to be sentenced on Friday.

### **Connected Solutions Group launches national wireless channel partnership program**

RICHMOND, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jul 20, 2023--

Connected Solutions Group, LLC (CSG) a national leader in wireless hardware deployment and services, today announced they have launched a full-scale channel compensation program titled simply "CSG Partner Network". The new channel model, effective July 15 th of 2023, will allow strategic partners to expand their connectivity offerings into cellular and 5G sales enablement and deployment services for their customers.

"This nationwide program is about so much more than just introducing a comp model to a potential partner," CSG CEO Michael Pittman said. "It's about truly enabling our network by training them on what has worked for us, giving them access to our nationwide resources, leveraging our support and managed services teams, and being able to really flex some muscle to your customers knowing the weight you have behind you."

The different compensation models will vary between lead generation or co-sell movements for wireless and FWA (fixed-wireless access) on 5G, IoT connectivity, pots-line replacement, field services, emergency or disaster response connectivity, on-demand remote connectivity needs, storage, fulfillment and staging and kitting services and much more.

"Our goal is to give smaller companies that have wonderful customer relationships an entirely new arsenal of state-of-the-art products and services to offer them," Cannon Loudermilk, Director of the program for CSG said. "It's not about simply selling a widget or lighting up a line, it's enabling them to provide a total customer experience that would otherwise take much larger bandwidth."

Travis Buysse, co-owner of twenty7 Technology Group based in South Dakota has experienced steady growth since working closely with CSG as a sub-agent or CSG Partner Network member.

"We have had the opportunities to work with many VAD's (Value-Added Distributors). The reason we chose and continue to use CSG is the responsiveness and expertise of their team," said Buysse. "As a

growing VAR (Value-Added Reseller) it is important for us to partner with leaders who are in front of the daily industry changes. We need people in our corner who care about our business's success. When we bring something to their attention - it's all hands on deck. We wouldn't be in the position we are in today if it wasn't for our partnership with CSG."

## Sunak's Conservatives suffer 2 big defeats but avoid a wipeout in trio of UK special elections

By JILL LAWLESS and PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Voters weary of economic pain and political turmoil handed Britain's governing Conservatives two thumping defeats Friday in a trio of special elections that point toward likely defeat for the party in the next national election.

The Conservatives avoided a wipeout by holding onto former premier Boris Johnson's seat in suburban London — a sliver of comfort for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's party.

Sunak said the results showed that the next general election, due by the end of 2024, was not "a done deal."

But elections expert John Curtice said the Conservatives were "in a deep electoral hole" after the main opposition Labour Party and the smaller centrist Liberal Democrats overturned huge Conservative majorities to win a seat apiece.

The three results show the Conservatives losing ground across a broad range of voters: suburban Londoners, smalltown-dwellers in the north of England and rural residents in the southwest. If replicated at a general election, the results would see Labour become the biggest single party, possibly with an overall majority.

"This is a historic result that shows that people are looking at Labour and seeing a changed party that is focused entirely on the priorities of working people with an ambitious, practical plan to deliver," Labour leader Keir Starmer said after the party's 25-year-old candidate, Keir Mather, overturned a 20,000-vote Conservative majority to win the northern seat of Selby and Ainsty.

The Liberal Democrats took the rural seat of Somerton and Frome in southwest England with a similarly large swing away from the Conservatives.

"The people of Somerton and Frome have spoken for the rest of the country who are fed up with Rishi Sunak's out-of-touch Conservative government," said Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey. He congratulated candidate Sarah Dyke beside a confetti-firing mock circus cannon emblazoned "get these clowns out of No. 10," the prime minister's Downing Street residence.

The Conservatives won Uxbridge and South Ruislip in west London by 495 votes — down from a majority of 7,000 under Johnson — after a campaign that focused on an unpopular local green levy imposed by London's Labour mayor.

Sunak headed straight to the scene of his party's sole electoral success and noted that governments often find midterm elections difficult.

"The message I take away is that we've got to double down, stick to our plan and deliver for people," he said during a visit to a cafe in the constituency.

The defeats don't mean a change of government, since the Conservatives still have a chunky majority in the House of Commons. But they confirm the trend of opinion polls, which for months have given Labour a lead of up to 20% nationwide over the Conservatives, who have been in power since 2010.

The two defeats also showed electors voting tactically, backing the party most likely to defeat the Conservative candidate. That will leave many Conservative lawmakers rattled ahead of a national vote.

Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, said it was tempting "for Conservative spin doctors to emphasize Uxbridge and the result that they got there. But I think really they will be deluding themselves if they think that that bodes well for the next general election."

The right-of-center governing party has been plagued by the fallout from the tumultuous terms of Johnson and his successor Liz Truss, who quit within weeks after her plan for unfunded tax cuts alarmed financial



markets, worsening a a cost-of-living crisis and sending mortgage costs soaring.

Johnson triggered one of the special elections when he quit as a lawmaker last month, almost a year after resigning as prime minister, when a standards watchdog concluded he'd lied to Parliament about lawbreaking parties in his office during the coronavirus pandemic. The former lawmaker in Selby, a Johnson ally, followed him out the door, while the legislator in Somerton resigned amid sex and drugs allegations.

The bruising defeats make it likely that Sunak will shake up his government with a Cabinet shuffle when Parliament returns from its summer recess in September.

There are also questions for Starmer, who has been cautious in laying out his plans for government, to the frustration of some Labour supporters.

Labour's defeat in Uxbridge will likely stoke concern over Mayor Sadiq Khan's plan to expand an anti-pollution zone first introduced when Johnson was mayor to outer boroughs of London, slapping a daily emissions charge on older gas and diesel vehicles. Khan is also up for reelection next year.

Bale said Labour "will worry a little bit, since much of the party's economic message is built around green issues."

But he said the Conservatives should be more concerned, because many voters who backed them during the 2019 general election had become disillusioned.

"We got used to the idea that somehow there was this big realignment in British politics and the Conservatives were capable of winning seats where they weren't before," he said. "I think the Conservatives now should be quite worried "

## **Alabama executes man for the 2001 beating death of a woman, resuming lethal injections after review**

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

ATMORE, Ala. (AP) — Alabama executed a man on Friday for the 2001 beating death of a woman as the state resumed lethal injections after failed executions prompted the governor to order an internal review of procedures.

James Barber, 64, was pronounced dead at 1:56 a.m. after receiving a lethal injection at a south Alabama prison.

"Justice has been served. This morning, James Barber was put to death for the terrible crime he committed over two decades ago: the especially heinous, atrocious, and cruel murder of Dorothy Epps," Attorney General Steve Marshall said in a statement.

Barber was convicted and sentenced to death for the 2001 beating death of Epps. Prosecutors said Barber, a handyman, confessed to killing the 75-year-old with a claw hammer and fleeing with her purse. Jurors voted 11-1 to recommend a death sentence, which a judge imposed.

Before he was put to death, Barber told his family he loved them and apologized to Epps' family.

"I want to tell the Epps' family I love them. I'm sorry for what happened," Barber said. "No words would fit how I feel."

Barber said he wanted to tell the governor "and the people in this room that I forgive you for what you are about to do."

It was the first execution carried out in Alabama this year after the state halted executions in November. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey announced a pause on executions to conduct an internal review of procedures.

The move came after the state halted two lethal injections because of difficulties inserting IVs into the condemned men's veins.

Attorneys for inmate Alan Miller said prison staff poked him with needles for more than an hour as they unsuccessfully tried to connect an IV line during Miller's aborted execution in September, at one point leaving him hanging vertically on a gurney. State officials called off the November execution of Kenneth Eugene Smith after they were unsuccessful in connecting the second of two required lines.

Advocacy groups claimed a third execution, carried out after a delay because of IV problems, also was botched, a claim the state has disputed.

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Barber's execution came hours after Oklahoma executed Jemaine Cannon for stabbing a Tulsa woman to death with a butcher knife in 1995 after his escape from a prison work center.

Alabama's governor announced in February that the state was resuming executions. Alabama Corrections Commissioner John Hamm said prison system had added to its pool of medical professionals, ordered new equipment and conducted additional rehearsals.

The last-minute legal battle centered on Alabama's ability to obtain intravenous access in past executions. Barber's attorneys unsuccessfully asked the courts to block the execution, saying the state has a pattern of failing "to carry out a lethal injection execution in a constitutional manner."

The state wrote in legal filings that it was using different IV team members. The state also changed the deadline to carry out the execution from midnight to 6 a.m. to give more time for preparations and to carry out last-minute appeals.

Alabama Corrections Commissioner John Hamm said the two intravenous lines were connected to Barber with "three sticks in six minutes."

The Supreme Court denied Barber's request for a stay without comment. Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote a dissent from the decision that was joined by Justice Elena Kagan and Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. She said the court was allowing "Alabama to experiment again with a human life."

"The Eighth Amendment demands more than the State's word that this time will be different. The Court should not allow Alabama to test the efficacy of its internal review by using Barber as its 'guinea pig,'" Sotomayor wrote.

The Alabama attorney general's office had urged the Supreme Court to let the execution proceed.

The state wrote that the previous executions were called off because of a "confluence of events including health issues specific to the individual inmates and last-minute litigation brought by the inmates that dramatically shortened the window for ADOC officials to conduct the executions."

In the hours leading up to the scheduled execution, Barber had 22 visitors and two phone calls and ate a final meal, a prison spokesperson said.

After his last words, Barber spoke with a spiritual adviser who accompanied him into the death chamber. As the drugs were administered, Barber's eyes closed and his abdomen pulsed several times. His breathing slowed until it was no longer visible.

## Rescue efforts have resumed in western India where a landslide killed at least 16 people

RAIGAD, India (AP) — Rescue efforts resumed Friday after an overnight halt in India's western Maharashtra state where a landslide triggered by torrential rains killed at least 16 people, with many others feared trapped under debris, officials said.

Scores of rescuers and trained trekkers have been deployed to find people trapped by the landslide, which occurred late Wednesday night, the state's deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis tweeted. Harsh weather conditions have hampered rescue efforts and authorities have sent in medical teams to help the injured, he added.

Search operations were suspended on Thursday night due to heavy rainfall plus the threat of further landslides in the dark, said a statement by the National Disaster Response Force.

While 75 people have been rescued, many others are still stuck, an official told the Press Trust of India news agency.

The landslide hit the Irshalwadi village in Raigad district and buried 17 of the 50 houses there.

The hilly terrain has made the task of rescuers difficult as heavy equipment to remove the rubble couldn't be moved easily. From the hill base, it takes about one-and-a-half hours to reach Irshalwadi because it is not linked by paved roads.

India's weather department put Maharashtra on alert as the state has been lashed by incessant rains this week. The downpours have disrupted life for many in the state, including in the capital, Mumbai, where authorities on Thursday shut schools.

Local train services have been disrupted with water flowing inside stations and over tracks, local media reported.

Record monsoon rains killed more than 100 people in northern India over the last two weeks, officials said, as the downpours caused roads to cave in and homes to collapse.

Monsoon rains across the country have already brought about 2% more rainfall this year than normal, India's weather agency said.

India regularly sees severe floods during the monsoon season, which runs between June and September and brings most of South Asia's annual rainfall. The rains are crucial for rain-fed crops planted during the season but often cause extensive damage.

Scientists say monsoons are becoming more erratic because of climate change and global warming, leading to frequent landslides and flash floods in India's Himalayan north.

## **Muslim-majority nations express outrage and plan street protests over Quran desecration in Sweden**

BAGHDAD (AP) — Muslim-majority nations expressed outrage Friday at the desecration of a copy of the Quran in Sweden. Some prepared for street demonstrations following midday prayers to show their anger.

In Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, protesters planned demonstrations after Swedish police permitted a protest Thursday in which an Iraqi of Christian origin — now a self-described atheist — living in Stockholm kicked and stood on a Quran, Islam's holy book, outside of the Iraqi Embassy. Hours before that, demonstrators in Baghdad broke into the Swedish Embassy and lit a fire to show their anger at his threats to burn the book.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has ordered the expulsion of the Swedish ambassador from Iraq and the withdrawal of the Iraqi charge d'affaires from Sweden. But that may not be enough to calm those angered, and another protest in Baghdad is planned for Friday afternoon.

The right to hold public demonstrations is protected by the constitution in Sweden. Blasphemy laws were abandoned in the 1970s. Police generally give permission based on whether they believe a public gathering can be held without major disruptions or safety risks. For Muslims, burning or other abuse of the Quran represents a desecration of their religion's holy text.

While he showed no signs of backing off from his decision to cut diplomatic relations with Sweden, Sudani in a statement on Friday called on Iraqi protesters to "identify and deal with any disruptive individuals attempting to deviate the protests from their peaceful and constitutionally protected nature" and on security forces "to safeguard both public and private property."

On Thursday, the state-run Iraqi News Agency reported that some 20 people had been arrested in connection with the storming of the Swedish embassy.

Among those arrested were an Associated Press photographer and two Reuters staff who were covering the protests. The detained journalists were released hours later without charges, following an order from the prime minister's office.

In neighboring Iran, demonstrators also planned to take to the streets. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has written a letter to the United Nations secretary-general over the Quran desecration and has summoned the Swedish ambassador.

"We consider the Swedish government responsible for the outcome of provocation reactions from the world's Muslims," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said.

The man in Stockholm also wiped his feet with a picture of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during his demonstration and did similar to a photo of Iraqi Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a powerful leader there.

Lebanon's Shiite militant group Hezbollah also called for a demonstration Friday afternoon. Khamenei and Iran's theocracy serve as Hezbollah's main sponsor.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in a video address Thursday night called on Muslims to demand their governments expel Sweden's ambassadors.

"I invite brothers and sisters in all neighborhoods and villages to attend all mosques, carrying their Qurans and sit in them, calling on the state to take a stance toward Sweden," Nasrallah said in the address, according to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency.

On Friday "the whole world must see how we embrace our Quran, and the whole world must see how we protect our Quran with our blood."

Saudi Arabia and Qatar, two Sunni-ruled Gulf Arab nations, summoned Swedish diplomats to condemn the desecration. Turkey's Foreign Ministry also criticized it.

In Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the events in Sweden. He called on the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation to play a "historic role in expressing the sentiments of Muslims and stopping this demonization." Meanwhile, Islamists in his country have been pushing Sharif, who faces an upcoming election, to cut diplomatic ties with Sweden.

On Thursday morning, protesters in Baghdad occupied the Swedish Embassy for several hours and set a small fire. The embassy staff had been evacuated a day earlier. After protesters left the embassy, diplomats closed it to visitors without specifying when it would reopen.

Prime Minister Sudani said in a statement that Iraqi authorities would prosecute those responsible for starting the fire and referred to an investigation of "negligent security officials." Some demonstrators stayed at the site, ignored by police, after the attack. An Associated Press photographer and two Reuters staff members were arrested while covering the protest and released several hours later without charges.

This is the second Quran desecration to involve the Iraqi Christian in Sweden, identified as Salwan Momika. Last month, a man identified by local media and on his social media as Momika burned a Quran outside a Stockholm mosque during the major Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, triggering widespread condemnation in the Islamic world.

Quran burnings in the past have sparked protests across the Muslim world, some turning violent. In Afghanistan, the Taliban suspended all the activities of Swedish organizations in the country in response to the recent Quran burning.

A similar protest by a far-right activist was held outside Turkey's Embassy earlier this year, complicating Sweden's efforts to persuade Turkey to let it join NATO.

In June, protesters who support al-Sadr stormed the Swedish embassy in Baghdad over that Quran burning.

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Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Abby Sewell in Beirut; Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran; and Munir Ahmed in Islamabad contributed to this report.

## **Rapinoe's farewell begins with the U.S. team's opening Women's World Cup match against Vietnam**

By JENNA FRYER AP National Writer

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP) — Megan Rapinoe's final run on the global stage begins Saturday when the United States opens its quest to win an unprecedented third consecutive Women's World Cup title.

The 38-year-old American said this month she will retire after the tournament — an announcement timed to help the squad avoid distracting questions about Rapinoe's future.

"I'm just grateful to be able to do it in this way," Rapinoe said. "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."

Her final World Cup begins Saturday when the U.S. plays Vietnam in Auckland. Although it was Rapinoe's desire to help her teammates focus on the tournament and not her future, her looming sendoff has still weighed heavily on the squad.

Kelley O'Hara nearly broke down in tears this week when asked what Rapinoe has meant to the team, and the game of soccer.

"I know that the world sees the Megan Rapinoe that the world sees, but we get to see her up close and

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personal, and the 'Pino' that the world sees is an incredible person and human and that is her. She brings a sense of humor and lightness, but intensity and empathy," O'Hara said. "She's one of a kind. There's never been one like her, there's probably never going to be one close to her.

"It's sad to think about this being her last, but she's done such incredible things for this team and for the world," O'Hara continued. "I hope that we all send her out on a high."

And midfielder Andi Sullivan said she's yet to accept that there will be a U.S. team that doesn't include Rapinoe whenever the Americans end the tournament.

"I don't really think about the team without her, and even as she announced it, she did it with such grace and humor and joy and light," Sullivan said. "We're trying to just soak up as much 'Pino' as we can."

Rapinoe isn't expected to have a major role for the Americans, and Vietnam should not be a tough challenge in its World Cup debut. Vietnam is one of eight nations making its first appearance at the tournament and has never played the United States.

The U.S., meanwhile, has never lost to an Asian nation in the World Cup.

Vietnam prepared for the tournament with a respectable 2-1 loss to Germany, but then lost to co-host New Zealand 2-0 and was routed by Spain 9-0.

## ENGLAND-HAITI

One of the tournament favorites faces a Women's World Cup newcomer when England plays Haiti in a Group D match in Brisbane, Australia.

England is the reigning European champion and trying to join Germany as the only teams to win the World Cup while holding that continental title. Germany did it in 2003 and 2007. The Lionesses have qualified for five consecutive World Cups and, along with the United States and Germany, is one of only three teams to make it to the quarterfinals in each of the last four tournaments.

England and the U.S. are the only two teams to reach the semifinals in the last two World Cups.

The match in Brisbane marks the first meeting between the two teams, and the Lionesses have never lost a group stage game against a CONCACAF team.

Haiti is another one of eight teams making its World Cup debut and qualified by beating Senegal and Chile in the inter-confederation playoffs. Haiti is led by Daelle Dumornay, who is also known as "Corventina." She scored both goals in Haiti's win over Chile.

Haiti is trying to become the first CONCACAF team to win a match in its first World Cup since the U.S. won all six games at the inaugural tournament in 1991. Four CONCACAF teams have tallied a combined three draws and nine losses in their first World Cups. And even though England is favored, the Lionesses have won only one of their last eight games against CONCACAF teams.

But Haiti arrived in Australia in a slump, losing four games over the last month.

## ZAMBIA-JAPAN

Zambia makes its Women's World Cup debut against Japan as a questionable participant in the elite tournament.

The Copper Queens qualified because of Africa's qualifying format. Because they are ranked 77th in the world, critics have questioned if the team would be here if it had competed for any other continental confederation.

But then Zambia surprised in a three-match tour through Europe, leading in every match while drawing against Switzerland before notching an upset win over Germany.

It's next challenge is a Group C match against Japan to be played in Hamilton, New Zealand. The group also includes Spain and Costa Rica.

Zambia has a long-term plan and only one player in its squad is over the age of 28. Barbra Banda, the captain and team's best player, is only 23 years old. She has scored 22 goals in 10 appearances for Zambia.

Zambia is not known for its defense and often seemed tired at the end of its recent matches, giving up eight goals on the European tour. The team also is shrouded in controversy amid reports coach Bruce Mwape has been accused of sexual misconduct. He has denied wrongdoing but FIFA is investigating.

Japan is clinging to its status as a powerhouse after winning the title in 2011 and making the final in

2015. Its squad is largely comprised of players that won the Under-20 Women's World Cup five years ago. More than half the roster is 24 or younger.

The veteran is 26-year-old Yui Hasegawa, a central midfielder who started each of Manchester City's 20 Women's Super League matches last season.

## DENMARK-CHINA

China is making its third consecutive appearance at the Women's World Cup and opens with a Group D match in Perth, Australia, against Denmark, which is back in the tournament for the first time since 2007.

Denmark ended its 16-year absence by winning all eight of its qualifying games behind an impressive 40 goals scored. Denmark will have to continue that level of play to have a shot to advance out of its group — which also includes England and Haiti — for the first time since 1995.

China is making its eighth World Cup appearance after winning the Asian Cup for the ninth time. China, which has reached the knockout round in its previous seven World Cup appearances and lost in the 1999 final, has not won its opening match since 2007.

The Danes will be trying to go deep into the tournament as a send-off for coach Lars Sørensgaard, who will end his nearly six-year run with the national team after the World Cup. He'll rely on captain Pernille Harder, who is making her tournament debut. Harder recently ended her time playing for Chelsea and signed with Bayern Munich.

China is led by striker Wang Shanshan, who was named the country's player of the year in April and scored five goals in the Asian Cup. She's also scored in a previous World Cup, with two goals in 2015.

AP World Cup coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/world-cup> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Northeast floods devastate 'heartbroken' farmers as months of labor and crops are swept away

By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

Well before it was warm enough to plant seedlings in the ground, farmer Micah Barritt began nursing crops like watermelon, eggplant and tomatoes — eventually transplanting them from his greenhouse into rich Vermont soil, hoping for a bountiful fall harvest.

Within a few hours last week, those hopes were washed away when flood waters inundated the small farm, destroying a harvest with a value he estimated at \$250,000. He still hopes to replant short-season crops like mustard greens, spinach, bok choy and kale.

"The loss of the crops is a very tangible way to measure the flood, but the loss of the work is hard to measure," said Barritt, one of five co-owners of Diggers' Mirth Collective Farm in Burlington, Vermont. "We're all grieving and heartbroken because of this."

That heartbreak was felt by farmers in several Northeast states after floods dealt a devastating blow at the worst possible time, when many plants were too early to harvest, but are now too late to replant in the region's abbreviated growing season.

Storms dumped up to two months' worth of rain in a couple of days in parts of the region, surpassing the amount that fell when Tropical Storm Irene blew through in 2011, causing major flooding. Officials have called last week's flooding Vermont's worst natural disaster since floods in 1927.

Atmospheric scientists say floods occurring in different parts of the world are fueled by climate change, with storms forming in a warmer atmosphere, making extreme rainfall more frequent. The additional warming scientists predict is coming will only make it worse.

Diggers' Mirth is one of seven commercial organic farms located at the Intervale Center, according to Melanie Guild, development director of the center, which manages 350 acres (142 hectares) in the heart of Burlington.

Operators of the center, located near the Winooski River, have long been aware of the threat of flooding. As the forecast called for heavy rains, the center reached out to hundreds of volunteers to harvest as much as possible.

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"This is smack dab in the middle of the growing season so anything that was ready to harvest was pulled. Whatever was left was lost," Guild said. "There were cabbages just floating around in the flood."

All seven farms were washed out. Losses will likely run higher than Irene, where losses tallied about \$750,000, she said.

Not all farms that suffered losses grew vegetables or flowers.

The Maple Wind Farm in Richmond Vermont, which produces pasture-raised animals, was also struck.

Beth Whiting, who owns the farm with her husband, said even with predicted heavy rains they assumed their turkeys would be OK because they'd never seen flooding reach the area where they kept the birds.

Then at about 3:30 a.m. on July 10, the nearby Winooski River crested higher than they'd ever imagined, Whiting said. Workers in a canoe were able to rescue about 120 of 500 turkeys. Workers also saved about 1,600 chickens, but lost 700 at a second farm.

"We had no idea the flood was going to be so dramatic," she said.

The flooding forced many farmers into tough choices, according to Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Anson Tebbetts. Dairy farmers who found roads to processing plants impassable were forced to dump milk.

Another problem is the loss of corn, a key source of food for the dairy industry. Thousands of acres were completely or partially underwater or flattened and unusable, he said. Flower farms were also destroyed.

"Some blueberry bushes are under water. That is very important for pick-your-own operations. Once produce is underwater it can't be used," he said.

As of the end of last week, Vermont farmers had reported 7,000 acres (2,833 hectares) in crop damage, Tebbetts said, adding many farms must clear debris washed onto their fields when rivers overflowed.

In Massachusetts, at least 75 farms have been hurt by flooding, with about 2,000 acres (809 hectares) in crop losses at a minimum value of \$15 million, according to the state Department of Agricultural Resources. That number is expected to climb as more damage is assessed and the longer-term impacts set in.

Damaged farms ranged from community farms to a farm with 300 acres (121 hectares) of potatoes that were a total loss just weeks from harvest to a 230-member "community supported agriculture" farm only five weeks into a 30-week program.

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey said the disaster requires an unprecedented effort to chase federal, state and private money. On Thursday she announced a Massachusetts Farm Resiliency Fund, a partnership between philanthropic organizations and private foundations

"It's just such a shame," Healey said after touring flooded farms this week. "Unlike Irene, this happened right on the cusp of harvest, so the crops are ruined for this year."

In Connecticut, Bryan Hurlburt, the state's agriculture commissioner, said the flooding impacted about 2,000 acres (809 hectares) of farmland, much of it in the Connecticut River valley.

The flooding is part of a larger environmental crisis, according to Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont.

"What the hell is going on here?" Lamont said, speaking in front of a flooded farmer's field in Glastonbury. "Look behind us. We were irrigating that a couple of months ago, desperate for water in the middle of a drought. And today it's Lake Wobegon. And so what do you do?"

Kate Ahearn, who runs Fair Weather Growers along the Connecticut River in Rocky Hill, said the flood waters took a heavy toll.

"This is our livelihood that is at stake," she said. "Fair Weather Growers is going to lose about 300 acres (121 hectares) of crops and more than half of our labor force, plus all of our wholesale accounts."

In Pennsylvania, officials have been monitoring rainfall.

"When water is rising, that's the big concern because you get a lot of standing water and the soil starts to loosen up, turns into mud and the mud starts to wash away. When dirt and soil washes away, crops do as well," said David Varner from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

Recently, a farmer called the Penn State Extension in Bucks County saying his crops looked wilted, as if they hadn't been watered in a while, said Margaret Pickoff, horticulture extension educator.

It was the opposite: The soil was so full of water, the plant roots were unable to take in any oxygen, and were dying off.

Associated Press contributors include Pat Eaton-Robb in Hartford, Connecticut, and Brooke Schultz in Philadelphia.

## **Biden is building his 2024 reelection bid around an organization Obama shunned**

By WILL WEISSERT Associated press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is staking his reelection bid on the political and financial muscle of the Democratic National Committee.

As it prepares for a bruising 2024 contest, his campaign plans to raise and spend around \$2 billion. But it will do so in coordination with the national and state Democratic parties, in an effort to establish a coordinated campaign around the country. The idea is to bolster field, volunteer and data organizations, and ensure they work jointly to promote Biden and down-ballot Democratic candidates.

"The president is really rewriting the playbook when it comes to what a reelection campaign looks like and how we are in deep partnership with the DNC," said Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Biden's campaign manager, "and will continue to show, by all metrics, that we're running a successful campaign."

The strategy is different from the way the last Democratic president treated the DNC. Barack Obama largely shunned the party's traditional fundraising apparatus and instead raised money with his own groups, relying on personal star power. That helped leave the DNC depleted and in debt.

What Rodriguez called a "one-team, one-fight mentality" allows Democrats to raise money faster than Biden's campaign can itself, while letting the reelection effort keep its staffing and logistical expenses low as it relies on state and national parties to cover costs. The party says the plan lets it remain unified politically and financially behind Biden, while Republican presidential candidates are locked in a contentious primary.

But President Donald Trump avoided serious primary challengers and teamed with the Republican National Committee to take in more than \$1 billion in 2020, without winning reelection. The Democrats' model also requires Biden's 2024 campaign to lean more heavily on parties in major states where Republicans have dominated recent elections.

Rodriguez, though, pointed to Democrats' success in last year's midterm races, when the DNC spent \$95 million on campaigns across the country and helped the party's candidates defy historical precedent by maintaining control of the Senate and only narrowly losing the House. The amount spent was more than double the committee's previous midterm cycle record of \$42 million ahead of the 2010 race.

Biden's 2020 campaign gave the national party its supporter and fundraising data after Inauguration Day in 2021. And the DNC says it has since expanded the volunteer list to 250,000 in all 50 states. Rodriguez said the committee is now building and testing new precision online targeting tools to better reach voters on social media, especially young ones and those of color.

The DNC also has developed systems allowing its volunteers to share localized content to bolster phone banking and texting to voters, and created "relational organizing" to help existing volunteers potentially organize people closest to them. Sam Cornale, the DNC's executive director, said that national and state parties will be able to hire organizers, recruit volunteers and talk to voters "as close to year-round and every day as resources allow."

"As we are scaling this effort, you will see state party payrolls increase dramatically," Cornale said.

Fundraising is also easier since the DNC and the president's affiliated fundraising arm, the Biden Victory Fund, can raise roughly \$1 million annually from individual donors. Biden's reelection campaign itself can only collect \$6,600 per donor, per year.

"The work that we know needs to happen, the broad swath of it, the DNC and our state party partners can do, and pay for," Cornale said.

Cornale has traveled with Rodriguez to make fundraising pitches, and reelection campaign staffers are working out of the DNC's Washington headquarters until the Biden 2024 campaign opens its official base in Wilmington, Delaware, later this year. For now, the reelection campaign has fewer than 10 people on



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its payroll.

"It's important that, at this stage, we're smart about where we're investing and how we're building and growing," Rodriguez said.

The DNC staff, by contrast, has grown to 300-plus, double its size prior to the 2016 and 2012 presidential elections.

National Democrats previewed their 2024 approach in key Wisconsin state races this spring. The DNC sent Biden-signed fundraising emails for the Wisconsin Democratic Party, and organized in-state robocalls with South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn, a close congressional ally of the president.

For his part, Obama created his own political operation, Organizing for America, which was meant to capitalize on a 2008 campaign that appealed to swing voters who might have been alienated by traditional party entities. The move also came amid concerns the DNC was too closely aligned with Obama's presidential primary opponent, Hillary Clinton.

But DNC and state party chairs complained about competing with Organizing for America for donors. The group went through various iterations, eventually ending up as part of the DNC. Still, the committee was millions of dollars in debt until 2019.

Jim Messina, who managed Obama's 2012 reelection campaign, said it secured joint fundraising agreements, which ease donor limits, with Democratic parties in 10 battleground states, plus New York and California — while Biden 2024 has agreements with all 50 states. He also noted that Biden has "long been a traditional Democrat" more than Obama.

"He came from the Democratic world," Messina said. "He understands the DNC whereas, because Obama was running against Hillary, who sort of had control of the DNC, he built a grassroots movement outside of it."

The Biden campaign and DNC raised \$72-plus million in the 10 weeks since the president announced his reelection. That trailed the \$85.6 million Obama took in during the April-to-June quarter in 2011, though he launched three weeks earlier than Biden.

Messina said, however, that he was most excited about the DNC and Biden affiliates' cash-on-hand of \$77 million on June 30. He said that showed the campaign's discipline in allowing the party to cover costs.

"I admire how little money they've spent," Messina said.

The DNC has paid for early Biden 2024 TV spots, as well as advertising around issues like defending abortion rights, while also financing the president's fundraising events. Biden's first 2024 campaign rally in June was with powerful unions who paid for the event themselves.

Keith Ellison, Minnesota's attorney general and former DNC deputy chair, said all of this means "the DNC is a better organization than it was five, 10 years ago."

"Now we're back on our feet," he said. "There's still a lot of strengthening that needs to happen."

Ellison said that, going forward, the committee must ensure it doesn't "turn into a little appendage of Biden," and called getting "too wrapped around the existing president" a "legitimate concern." He also said that state parties need to make more progress in places like New York, where Republican midterm House victories helped the GOP reclaim the chamber last year.

Indeed, relying more heavily on state parties will require coordinating with officials in solidly Republican places, like Texas, or onetime battlegrounds that have become increasingly red, such as Ohio and Florida.

Kevin Cate, a longtime Florida political strategist and veteran of Obama's 2008 campaign, said the May victory of Democrat Donna Deegan in Jacksonville's mayoral race is reason for optimism, and shrugged off suggestions Republican wins in recent statewide races have left Florida Democrats too weak to do what the DNC needs.

"I think the biggest concern here is the DNC just giving up and letting the party flail," he countered.

A recent strategy memo said the reelection campaign would stay on the offensive in Florida and North Carolina. Absent was Texas, where Democrats haven't won statewide office in nearly 30 years.

Still, Texas Democratic Chairman Gilberto Hinojosa said the DNC has since told him that the original strategy list "wasn't comprehensive."

The teams play all of their matches in New Zealand, which is co-hosting the tournament with Australia. Should the United States top the group, the team will head to Sydney for the round of 16.

Saturday's game will be the first meeting between the United States and Vietnam. The Vietnamese lost two exhibition matches ahead of the tournament and fell 9-0 to Spain in a closed-door tune-up match in Auckland last Friday.

Andonovski was asked what would happen if the United States lost to Vietnam, similar to how Argentina lost to Saudi Arabia at the beginning of the men's World Cup in Qatar last year. Argentina recovered to win the World Cup.

"Then we'll have to win the next two games and move forward," the coach said, "and hopefully end up like Argentina."

AP Women's World Cup coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/fifa-womens-world-cup> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## **Man with thousands of bullets and a grenade attacked police, killing officer. What was his plan?**

By JACK DURA Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — It was a routine collision on a busy Fargo street. But after Mohamad Barakat drove past, armed with 1,800 rounds of ammunition, numerous firearms and a grenade, tragedy ensued.

After the shooting ended on July 14, one police officer was dead, and two other officers as well as a woman in the crash were wounded, leaving authorities wondering what further carnage Barakat might have been planning.

Officer Zach Robinson, the only officer in the melee who was not wounded, fatally shot Barakat with bystanders crouched nearby. More details are expected at a briefing Friday.

Barakat, a 37-year-old who briefly trained as an emergency responder at a nearby community college, had no criminal record. No social media presence.

But then he saw the collision. With police and firefighters tied up helping, Barakat began "stalking his way in and sizing up his opportunity," North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley told reporters Wednesday in the most detailed update yet.

Barakat parked, watching for minutes until the officers walked away, about 15 to 20 feet (5 to 6 meters) from him. Then he lifted a .223-caliber rifle out of his car window and began firing in what Wrigley called "an absolute ambush" and "a murderous barrage of fire."

The officers "had no time" to reach for their holstered guns with Barakat's fusillade "so rapid," Wrigley said.

Barakat, who lived in an apartment 2 miles (3 kilometers) away, was using a double-stacked magazine. He killed Officer Jake Wallin, 23, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Minnesota Army National Guard. The barrage also left Officers Andrew Dotas and Tyler Hawes critically wounded.

Wallin and Hawes were so new that they were still undergoing field training.

Barakat also hit Karlee Koswick, who was involved in the traffic collision, with two rounds as she ran away.

Robinson, who was in the street about 75 feet (23 meters) away from Barakat, "was the last man standing between what was coming next and what you can see this assailant was armed for," Wrigley said.

Robinson moved from behind a vehicle involved in the crash and fired at Barakat. One of his shots disabled Barakat's rifle, leaving 20 rounds unused after the killer fired 40.

"We have three officers down; send everybody," Robinson said over the radio, after moving closer and noticing the fallen officers.

A wounded Barakat lay on the ground protected by his car, waving a 9 mm handgun. Robinson moved closer, calling out 16 times for Barakat to surrender.

Robinson came around the vehicle and gave one last command to Barakat to put down the gun before

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shooting him, said Wrigley, who called Robinson's use of deadly force "justified."

Lasting about two minutes, the gunfight was still longer than most, Fargo Police Chief David Zibolski said. Wrigley noted Robinson fired approximately 30 rounds and had to stop to reload.

Zibolski said it might have been worse had there not been emergency crews already there, including an ambulance. As soon as the firing stopped, "firefighters bounced out and they were applying first aid immediately to our officers," Zibolski said.

Before taking the drive, Barakat had rolled a weapons-filled suitcase from his apartment, Wrigley said. Inside his vehicle, investigators found the homemade hand grenade, as well as a vest with loaded magazines, more firearms and canisters of gasoline. There were more weapons back at his apartment.

"When you look at the amount of ammunition this shooter had in his car, he was planning on more mayhem in our community," Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney said.

The attorney general said he believes the violence could have been the beginning of a mass shooting as the Downtown Fargo Street Fair and the Red River Valley Fair were underway.

The police chief said Barakat "was obviously dead-set on some pretty horrific acts, targets unknown at this time." Authorities have said a motive is unknown.

As the state Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the FBI work on the case, the wounded are recovering, their conditions good or stable. Meanwhile, a funeral service is planned for Saturday for Wallin, whose body was cremated in his police uniform.

## **By pulling out of the Ukrainian grain deal, Russia risks alienating its few remaining partners**

By The Associated Press undefined

By pulling out of a landmark deal that allowed Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea, Russian President Vladimir Putin is taking a gamble that could badly damage Moscow's relations with many of its partners that have stayed neutral or even been supportive of the Kremlin's invasion of its neighbor.

Russia also has played the role of spoiler at the United Nations, vetoing a resolution on extending humanitarian aid deliveries through a key border crossing in northwestern Syria and backing a push by Mali's military junta to expel U.N. peacekeepers — abrupt moves that reflect Moscow's readiness to raise the stakes elsewhere.

Putin's declared goal in halting the Black Sea Grain Initiative was to win relief from Western sanctions on Russia's agricultural exports. His longer-term goal could be to erode Western resolve over Ukraine and get more concessions from the U.S. and its allies as the war grinds toward the 17-month mark.

The Kremlin doubled down on terminating the grain deal by attacking Ukrainian ports and declaring wide areas of the Black Sea unsafe for shipping.

But with the West showing little willingness to yield any ground, Putin's actions not only threaten global food security but also could backfire against Russia's own interests, potentially causing concern in China, straining Moscow's relations with key partner Turkey and hurting its ties with African countries.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who helped broker the grain deal with the U.N. a year ago, has pushed for its extension and said he would negotiate with Putin.

Turkey's role as a top trading partner and a logistical hub for Russia's foreign trade amid Western sanctions strengthens Erdogan's hand and could allow him to squeeze concessions from Putin, whom he calls "my dear friend."

Turkey's trade with Russia nearly doubled last year to \$68.2 billion, feeding U.S. suspicions that Moscow is using Ankara to bypass Western sanctions. Turkey says the increase is largely due to higher energy costs.

Their relationship is often characterized as transactional. Despite being on opposing sides in fighting in Syria, Libya and the decades-long conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, they have cooperated in areas like energy, defense, diplomacy, tourism and trade.

Ozgur Unluhiscarkli, director of the German Marshall Fund in Ankara, said the relationship's dual nature dates back to the sultans and czars.

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"Sometimes they compete, sometimes they cooperate. At other times they both compete and cooperate at the same time," he said.

While the pendulum seems to have swung in Ankara's favor for now, Unluhisarcikli noted the Kremlin has a few levers to pull, such as canceling a deferment of gas payments or removing financial capital for the Akkuyu nuclear plant being built by Russia. Moscow also could hurt Turkey by restricting Russian tourists, who visit in greater numbers than any other nationality, offering a steady flow of cash.

"How much weaker the relationship gets depends on how Russia responds to Turkey getting closer to the West," he said.

Some observers in Moscow speculate that Russia agreed to extend the grain deal for two months in May to help Erdogan win reelection but was appalled to see his pro-Western shift afterward.

Erdogan backed Sweden's membership in NATO earlier this month. In another snub to Moscow, Turkey allowed several Ukrainian commanders who led the defense of Mariupol last year to return home. They surrendered after a two-month Russian siege and then moved to Turkey under a deal that they stay there until the end of the war.

Kerim Has, a Moscow-based expert on Turkey-Russia ties, said Erdogan had been emboldened by his reelection to pursue rapprochement with the West, appointing a "pro-Western" Cabinet and adopting a stance that was causing "discomfort" in the Kremlin.

"It's a dilemma for Putin," Has said. "He supported Erdogan's candidacy but he will face a more active, pro-Western Turkey under Erdogan in the coming period."

Moscow could try to pressure Erdogan by challenging Turkey's interests in northwestern Syria, where Ankara has backed armed opposition groups since the start of the conflict. Even though Russia has joined with Iran to shore up Syrian President Bashar Assad's government while Turkey has backed its foes, Moscow and Ankara have negotiated cease-fire deals.

But Russia abruptly toughened its stand this month when it vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution backed by virtually all members to continue humanitarian aid deliveries to opposition-held areas through the Bab el-Hawa border crossing with Turkey, a key lifeline for about 4.1 million people in the impoverished enclave. Moscow warned that if its rival draft was not accepted, the crossing would be shut.

The presence of 3.4 million Syrians in Turkey is a sensitive issue for Ankara. Erdogan has advocated their voluntary repatriation to parts of northern Syria under Turkish control.

Dareen Khalifa, senior analyst on Syria at the International Crisis Group, says Russia's hard-line approach to the issue was an attempt to pressure Ankara.

"Turkey will be directly impacted by that if the mechanism ends," he said.

Others were skeptical Russia could use the border crossing issue to strong-arm Ankara. "I do not think Russia is in a position to increase its pressure on Turkey in Syria," Has said.

Joseph Daher, a Swiss-Syrian researcher and professor at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, observed that Russia could be trying to pressure the West by raising the prospect of a new wave of refugees in Europe.

Richard Gowan, U.N. director of the International Crisis Group, noted that along with the tougher stand on Syria, Russia's "disruptive" actions included support for Mali's push to expel U.N. peacekeepers.

"It looks like Russia is looking for ways to annoy the West through the U.N.," he told The Associated Press.

Reflecting Moscow's increasingly muscular stand, Russian military pilots recently have harassed U.S. aircraft over Syria in incidents that added to tensions between Moscow and Washington. The Pentagon described Russia's maneuvers as unprofessional and unsafe, while Moscow sought to turn the tables by accusing the U.S. of violating deconfliction rules intended to prevent collisions over Syria.

Amid the hardball at the U.N. and in Syria, Russia has been courting African nations with promises of support.

The Kremlin has emphasized it stands ready to provide poor countries in Africa with free grain after the termination of the Black Sea deal, and Putin is set to woo African leaders at a summit in St. Petersburg later this month. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow's offer of free grain shipments would

be on the agenda.

The Black Sea deal allowed Ukraine to ship 32.9 million metric tons of grain and other food to global markets. According to official data, 57% of the grain from Ukraine went to developing nations, while China received the most — nearly a quarter.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy noted that 60,000 metric tons of grain destroyed by Russia's strike on the port of Odesa on Wednesday were bound for China.

Putin, in turn, accused the West of using the grain deal to "shamelessly enrich itself" instead of its declared goal of easing hunger. Despite such rhetoric, the Russian move won't play well in African countries.

Even as the Kremlin tried to contain the damage to those ties, it unleashed more attacks on Odesa and other ports to thwart Ukrainian attempts to continue grain shipments. Moscow described them as "strikes of retribution" for Monday's attack that damaged the Kerch Bridge linking Moscow-annexed Crimea with Russia.

Hard-liners in Moscow praised Putin for halting the deal, which they have criticized as a reflection of what they described as the Kremlin's futile hope to compromise with the West.

Pro-Kremlin commentator Sergei Markov lauded the retaliatory strikes and argued that the withdrawal from the deal was long overdue.

"The grain deal's extension led to a drop in the government's ratings and was fueling talk about betrayal on top," he said.

Andrew Wilks in Istanbul, Turkey, Kareem Chehayeb in Beirut, Lebanon and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed.

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

## **DeSantis takes his presidential campaign to Utah, a heavily GOP state where Trump has struggled**

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and SAM METZ Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Ron DeSantis is taking his presidential campaign to Utah on Friday, prioritizing a state where rival Donald Trump has struggled in the past and that could be a beacon of strength for the Florida governor's stalled bid.

DeSantis is set to appear at the state Capitol with about a dozen supportive state lawmakers, meet with Republican Gov. Spencer Cox and attend a fundraiser.

His trip out West comes as he has been working to reset a campaign confronting financial pressures and a static position in the field trailing Trump. The former president has remained a front-runner despite his mounting legal problems, including an expected indictment in a Justice Department investigation into his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

"The more people see Governor DeSantis and hear his forward-thinking plan for our nation's comeback, the more inspired they become to vote for him for president," campaign spokesperson Andrew Romeo said in a statement.

For DeSantis, the ability to show strength against Trump in a heavily Republican state like Utah could buoy his effort. In a place where the conservative and religious culture has at times given Trump a chilly reception, there are signs there's an opening for the Florida governor.

Among those set to appear with him on Friday is state Senate President Stuart Adams, who was one of the few Republicans to endorse Trump early in 2016 but who is now backing DeSantis.

"They're both great candidates. But I believe Gov. DeSantis deserves a shot. I wouldn't say anything bad about President Trump," Adams said in an interview this week.

Trump's history and style have long been jarring to Utah's dominant religious culture.

More than half the state's residents belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the

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faith's emphasis on decorum pervades its politics. Trump, a former reality television star known for his brazen personality and insulting comments about women and people of color, finished third in the state's 2016 Republican presidential caucuses, behind Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

Utah was also home to the resistance campaign of Evan McMullin, an anti-Trump former Republican who launched a long-shot independent bid for president in 2016.

Nevertheless, Trump won the state in both the 2016 and 2020 general elections.

Utah politicians have historically boasted of their penchant for striking compromises on polarizing issues ranging from immigration to discrimination against LGBTQ residents. But the Legislature, with its Republican supermajority, has lurched rightward in recent years, in line with many red states.

It has passed laws banning gender-affirming care for transgender kids and directing school boards to convene "sensitive materials" committees to weigh whether to remove certain books from school libraries — issues that have become a key feature of DeSantis' campaign message.

Adams, who said he was impressed with the way DeSantis steered his state during the pandemic, believes it will be a very close race between Trump and DeSantis in Utah.

"I believe as people get to know Gov. DeSantis, he'd have great support in Utah," he said. "Utah has great family values. Gov. DeSantis has great family values."

Asked if he thought Trump did not have great family values, Adams said, "No, I think he has a great family." He went on and said, "I think he loves his family."

Republican state Sen. Todd Weiler, who helped put together Friday's event with DeSantis, said he didn't think the former president would win the state's GOP primary.

"I think it's his character when it comes to his affairs and his divorces and also when it comes to some of his rhetoric and some of his rude comments on Twitter and whatnot," Weiler said. He cited the Jan. 6 attack and multiple indictments as among the reasons Trump wouldn't win the support of independents, along with his record of already having lost one presidential election to Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump has even lost one of his biggest supporters in Utah: Don Peay, who helped lead Trump's 2016 effort in Utah, went hunting with Trump's children and once said those who didn't support Trump need to "ask for forgiveness."

Peay told the Deseret News in an interview earlier this year that he's no longer supporting Trump and doesn't feel he can win "because he's living in the past." He did not respond to messages seeking comment from The Associated Press.

Utah will be among more than a dozen states holding primary contests on Super Tuesday, which falls on March 5 next year. Super Tuesday, a critical proving point for campaigns, is the biggest day on the primary calendar because it offers up the largest number of delegates, which candidates must win state by state.

Unlike 2016, when voters had to wait in long lines and attend meetings to participate in Utah's caucuses, the state now holds a primary election. That is expected to draw a broader base of voters, though it's unclear what that means for the GOP field. The winner is expected to be awarded all 40 of Utah's delegates.

Cox, the recently minted head of the National Governors Association, will meet with DeSantis on Friday afternoon. He has said on numerous occasions that he would like to see a governor in the Oval Office. He and DeSantis co-headlined the state GOP convention in April.

His spokeswoman Jennifer Napier Pearce did not respond to a question about whether Cox is endorsing DeSantis or meeting with other candidates, but instead said in a statement: "As chairman of the National Governors Association, Gov. Cox has been vocal about supporting candidates who are Republican governors — including Gov. DeSantis — because governors are executives who get things done. He looks forward to welcoming Gov. DeSantis to Utah,"

Cox has notably not been supportive of Trump in the past.

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Price reported from New York.

"What they've told me is that Texas will be a battleground state," Hinojosa said, noting that, financially, the party "hasn't given us the love up until now."

"Now, what that means," he added, "depends on how things look in the future."

## Confident US enters Women's World Cup against underdog Vietnam as quest for 3rd title begins

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP) — In the words of Vietnam's coach, facing the U.S. national team in the Women's World Cup is a daunting quest, something "like a mountain," said Mai Duc Chung.

Vietnam makes its World Cup debut Saturday against the United States, the heavy favorites to win the tournament for an unprecedented third time. The Americans enter Saturday's game in Auckland at Eden Park with the same confidence it carried through its last two World Cup-winning runs.

"The U.S. is a very, very strong team. It is like a mountain. But it doesn't mean that we will give up," said Mai.

But few believe Vietnam has a chance. The national team is very similar to Thailand, which the Americans thumped 13-0 in the opener at the World Cup four years ago in France. The United States went on to beat the Netherlands 2-0 for its second consecutive World Cup and fourth overall, the most of any nation.

"Fear? We Believe," said captain Nuyh Nhu. "We've already prepared. Nothing to fear, nothing to be afraid of."

The Americans wouldn't dare discount an opponent, particularly after the criticism it took for running up the score against Thailand four years ago in France. They are taking Vietnam in the opening game quite seriously.

"We want to show our respect by giving our best game, and we know that they'll do the same for us," captain Lindsey Horan said Friday, the eve of the match. "I think everyone always gives us their best game."

The United States has a new cast of players at this World Cup, including 14 who are making their first appearance in soccer's biggest tournament. Among them is 18-year-old phenom Alyssa Thompson and up-and-comer Trinity Rodman, the 20-year-old daughter of former NBA star Dennis Rodman.

Another quickly rising star is Sophia Smith. Just 22, she was named National Women's Soccer League's Most Valuable Player and U.S. Soccer's Player of the Year last year.

Coach Vlatko Andonovski infused the United States with young talent after the team finished with a disappointing bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

"I think that we have a very good mix of young, energetic, enthusiastic players, and experienced players that have been through tough games, that have been in big tournaments and know how to win big games," Andonovski said.

Megan Rapinoe is among the veterans on the squad and should make her 200th appearance for the national team if she plays against Vietnam. Rapinoe, 38, announced before the team left for New Zealand that this would be her last World Cup and she would retire from her professional team at the end of the season.

Rapinoe and Rose Lavelle were both limited by injuries in the run-up to the tournament, but Andonovski said both are available to play.

There were still several other players that weren't available for the U.S. roster. Mallory Swanson, the team's top scorer this year, injured her patella tendon in her left knee during an exhibition match against Ireland in early April.

Catarina Macario tore an ACL last year while playing for the French club Lyon and was unable to recover in time. But the biggest blow was the loss of captain Becky Sauerbrunn, who announced that a right foot injury suffered in April would keep her out of the World Cup.

Also in Group E are the Netherlands and Portugal, which meet Sunday in Dunedin. Portugal is also making its first World Cup appearance.

## Actors and writers strikes enter second week with no signs of a deal to get Hollywood working again

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The combined strike by Hollywood actors and screenwriters is entering its second week with no sign that a swift ending will be achieved.

For a week, actors including household names like Tina Fey, Kevin Bacon and wife Kyra Sedgwick, Rosario Dawson, David Duchovny and other stars have joined working class performers and writers on picket lines outside studios and corporate offices of streaming giants Amazon, MAX and Netflix.

The actors' regular appearance on picket lines has provided additional stardom and voices on issues that are key to both groups — better pay and preserving established practices like residual payments, as well as protection from the use of artificial intelligence. Roughly 65,000 actors — the vast majority of whom don't make enough from acting to qualify for health benefits through their guild — along with 11,500 screenwriters, are on strike.

While many of the picket lines are in Los Angeles and New York, film and television production happens throughout the country. Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago were among the the major cities with strike events Tuesday and Wednesday. Later Friday, actors in London are scheduled to hold an event in solidarity with their Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists brethren.

There's no indication when negotiations with studios and streaming companies, which are represented by the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, will resume. The group has said they've offered both writers and actors substantial pay increases and have tried to meet other demands.

Many on the picket lines have seized upon comments by their corporate bosses like Disney CEO Bob Iger, who last week called the unions' demands "not realistic."

During an earnings event Wednesday, Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos said grew up in a union household and knew the strike was painful on workers and their families. "We're super committed to getting to an agreement as soon as possible. One that's equitable and one that enables the unions, the industry and everybody in it to move forward into the future," he said.

Actor-writer Seth Green said streaming, which became a dominant entertainment outlet during the pandemic, has upended the livelihoods of those striking.

"It all got broken. I mean, it sounds silly to say, but it's really as simple as that," Green said speaking outside Paramount Studios in Hollywood Thursday. Traditional entertainment contracts used to compensate actors and writers throughout the long lifespan of successful shows and movies. But no longer, he said.

"If the company that owned the thing made a billion dollars, you'd get like a little bit of money from that. All of that is gone," Green said.

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Associated Press Writer Krysta Fauria contributed to this report.

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For more on the writers and actors strike, visit: <https://apnews.com/hub/hollywood-strikes/>

## Music Review: 'Barbie' soundtrack delivers a dreamhouse of Kenergy and ballads alike

By JIM POLLOCK Associated Press

"Barbie: The Album" by Various Artists (Atlantic/Warner/Mattel)

The Barbie industrial complex has detonated, coating the planet in pink, sparkly fallout. For the blockbuster's soundtrack, "Barbie: The Album," film director Greta Gerwig and music producer Mark Ronson corralled a set of huge artists at the top of their games and have come away with a raucous, joyous and, occasionally, touching compilation.

The soundtrack works because the contributors understood the assignment. Collectively, they deliver a dreamhouse of songs that are each at least a little better than they have to be. The tracks succeed both as cinematic elements and as standalone songs. The result is a worthy, danceable bookend to the classic



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"Saturday Night Fever" soundtrack of a generation before.

Director Greta Gerwig has now delivered small, medium, large and stratospheric films with excellent soundtracks. Her commitment to quirky rock songs and contemporary classical spans, with this latest endeavor, a whole slew of disco, hip-hop, K-pop, and a half-dozen other genres meld together into an impressively coherent package.

Lizzo gets the dance party started with the soundtrack's opener, "Pink," a bouncy confection that might be the most conventional movie song on the album. The artist sells it with her characteristic smiling effervescence.

Dua Lipa's "Dance the Night" throws her megahit "Levitate" in the blender with strings reminiscent of golden-era Bee Gees and comes out with a modern disco classic. Ronson's production is razor-sharp and Lipa marches straight in with a casual self-assurance that deftly set the tone for the film in the early trailers.

The brand architects at Mattel must have suffered a few sleepless nights after tapping Nicki Minaj and Ice Spice for the next track, a reimagination of Aqua's "Barbie Girl." The song is (openly) a little profane and (slyly) a little raunchy, but the collaborators take the edge off with humor and a sense of fun.

Ken actor Ryan Gosling goes all in on "I'm Just Ken" with a hilariously earnest performance that somehow spans the arena rock of Journey and Broadway decadence of Andrew Lloyd Webber.

On "What Was I Made For?," Billie Eilish delivers a soft and surprisingly touching piano, um, Barb-ballad. Like "Hopelessly Devoted to You" in "Grease," Eilish and brother/producer Finneas get the existential-crisis moment just right by going simple and raw. Eilish has never sounded better.

The album closes with a surprise cover of the Indigo Girls' fan-favorite "Closer to Fine." Brandi Carlile and her wife, Catherine, stay respectful of the source material, delivering a lighter and more open interpretation that complements the original.

There is plenty more good music within the 18 tracks. Sam Smith goes techno-glam on "Man I Am." Charli XCX delivers an instant road-trip staple with the propulsive "Speed Drive." Tame Impala provide a trippy dreampop interlude with "Journey to the Real World." Dominic Fike warms it up with Malibu-infused sunshine on "Hey Blondie."

It would be a reach to frame a project with this scope and budget as an underdog, but Ronson and Gerwig have executed a small miracle creating an eclectic sprawl of a soundtrack that can be enjoyed from start to finish. Barbie has inspired millions of hours of pretend play over the decades, and the artists involved have evidently devoted real energy to celebrate this jewel of childhood.

## Grassley releases full FBI memo with unverified claims about Hunter Biden's work in Ukraine

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley released an unclassified document Thursday that Republicans claim is significant in their investigation of Hunter Biden as they delve into the financial affairs of the president and his son, and revive previously debunked claims of wrongdoing.

Grassley of Iowa has been working alongside House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer, R-Ky., as Republicans deepen their probe of President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, ahead of the 2024 election. Comer had issued a subpoena for the document from the FBI.

While lawmakers on the Oversight Committee have already been able to partly review the information, this is the first time the full document — which contains raw, unverified information — is being made public. Called an FD-1023 form, it involves claims a confidential informant made in 2020 about Hunter Biden's alleged business dealings when he served on the board of Ukrainian energy company Burisma. Top Republicans have acknowledged they cannot confirm whether the information is true.

"The American people can now read this document for themselves," Grassley said.

The document adds to information that had widely aired during Donald Trump's first impeachment trial, which involved Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani's efforts to dig up dirt on the Bidens ahead of the 2020 elec-

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tion. It was also the subject of a subsequent Department of Justice review that Trump's Attorney General William Barr launched in 2020 and closed later that year.

Grassley's office said the FBI told the senator the document was related to an ongoing matter.

White House spokesman Ian Sams said Thursday, "It is remarkable that congressional Republicans, in their eagerness to go after President Biden regardless of the truth, continue to push claims that have been debunked for years."

"These claims have reportedly been scrutinized by the Trump Justice Department, a Trump-appointed U.S. Attorney, and a full impeachment trial of the former President that centered on these very issues, and over and over again, they have been found to lack credibility," he said. "It's clear that congressional Republicans are dead-set on playing shameless, dishonest politics and refuse to let truth get in the way."

In the four-page document, the confidential informant claims to have been involved in various meetings some years earlier, in 2015 or 2016, with officials from the Burisma energy company looking to do business in the United States. The informant claims being told by Burisma officials about their relationship and dealings with Hunter Biden.

One company official said they kept Hunter Biden on the Burisma board because they believed through "his dad" it could protect them from all kinds of problems, the informant claimed.

In another instance, a top company official suggested payment of \$5 million to each of the Bidens as the company sought to have Ukraine's prosecutor general at the time, Viktor Shokin, removed from office, according to the document.

Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the Oversight panel, said the document released by Republicans "records the unverified, secondhand, years-old allegations" that were already shown to be not true during the 2019 impeachment hearings.

After lawmakers reviewed a redacted document in June, Raskin had said "Congress thoroughly reviewed and debunked" similar allegations that Giuliani had made.

"As the FBI explained, the allegations were also thoroughly investigated by Donald Trump's own Justice Department," Raskin wrote. That assessment was closed in August 2020 after eight months of investigative efforts, he said, and "found insufficient evidence" to warrant further investigation.

But Comer said Thursday: "The American people must be able to read this record for themselves. I thank Senator Grassley for providing much needed transparency."

Grassley said while the FBI had released a redacted version to lawmakers, he was able to provide a fuller document because whistleblowers made it available to him.

Comer's panel held a hearing this week with two Internal Review Service whistleblowers who have claimed Justice Department interference as they tried to probe Hunter Biden's financial affairs. They said they were unaware of the document.

The Justice Department has denied the whistleblower claims. Department policy has long told prosecutors to take care when bringing charges with political overtones so close to an election.

A recovering addict, Hunter Biden pleaded guilty last month to misdemeanor charges over his finances after years of failing to pay taxes. Republicans have denounced the agreement with federal prosecutors as a "sweetheart deal."

The top prosecutor in the case, U.S. Attorney David Weiss in Delaware, has said he is willing to testify before the House panel once he is legally able to share information with Congress without violating the longstanding department policy of discussing an ongoing investigation.

Testimony from Justice Department officials could come after Hunter Biden appears for his plea hearing next week.

## Solar panels on water canals seem like a no-brainer. So why aren't they widespread?

By BRITTANY PETERSON and SIBI ARASU Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Back in 2015, California's dry earth was crunching under a fourth year of drought. Then-Governor Jerry Brown ordered an unprecedented 25% reduction in home water use. Farmers, who use the most water, volunteered too to avoid deeper, mandatory cuts.

Brown also set a goal for the state to get half its energy from renewable sources, with climate change bearing down.

Yet when Jordan Harris and Robin Raj went knocking on doors with an idea that addresses both water loss and climate pollution — installing solar panels over irrigation canals — they couldn't get anyone to commit.

Fast forward eight years. With devastating heat, record-breaking wildfire, looming crisis on the Colorado River, a growing commitment to fighting climate change, and a little bit of movement-building, their company Solar AquaGrid is preparing to break ground on the first solar-covered canal project in the United States.

"All of these coming together at this moment," Harris said. "Is there a more pressing issue that we could apply our time to?"

The idea is simple: install solar panels over canals in sunny, water-scarce regions where they reduce evaporation and make electricity.

A study by the University of California, Merced gives a boost to the idea, estimating that 63 billion gallons of water could be saved by covering California's 4,000 miles of canals with solar panels that could also generate 13 gigawatts of power. That's enough for the entire city of Los Angeles from January through early October.

But that's an estimate — neither it, nor other potential benefits have been tested scientifically. That's about to change with Project Nexus in California's Central Valley.

### BUILDING MOMENTUM

Solar on canals has long been discussed as a two-for-one solution in California, where affordable land for energy development is as scarce as water. But the grand idea was still a hypothetical.

Harris, a former record label executive, co-founded "Rock the Vote," the voter registration push in the early 1990s, and Raj organized socially responsible and sustainability campaigns for businesses. They knew that people needed a nudge - ideally one from a trusted source.

They thought research from a reputable institution might do the trick, and got funding for UC Merced to study the impact of solar-covered-canals in California.

The study's results have taken off.

They reached Governor Gavin Newsom, who called Wade Crowfoot, his secretary of natural resources.

"Let's get this in the ground and see what's possible," Crowfoot recalled the governor saying.

Around the same time, the Turlock Irrigation District, an entity that also provides power, reached out to UC Merced. It was looking to build a solar project to comply with the state's increased goal of 100% renewable energy by 2045. But land was very expensive, so building atop existing infrastructure was appealing. Then there was the prospect that shade from panels might reduce weeds growing in the canals — a problem that costs this utility \$1 million annually.

"Until this UC Merced paper came out, we never really saw what those co-benefits would be," said Josh Weimer, external affairs manager for the district. "If somebody was going to pilot this concept, we wanted to make sure it was us."

The state committed \$20 million in public funds, turning the pilot into a three-party collaboration among the private, public and academic sectors. About 1.6 miles (2.6 kilometers) of canals between 20 and 110 feet wide will be covered with solar panels between five and 15 feet off the ground.

The UC Merced team will study impacts ranging from evaporation to water quality, said Brandi McKuin, lead researcher on the study.

"We need to get to the heart of those questions before we make any recommendations about how to

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do this more widely," she said.

## LESSONS LEARNED ABROAD

California isn't first with this technology. India pioneered it on one of the largest irrigation projects in the world. The Sardar Sarovar dam and canal project brings water to hundreds of thousands of villages in the dry, arid regions of western India's Gujarat state.

Then-chief minister of Gujarat state, Narendra Modi, now the country's prime minister, inaugurated it in 2012 with much fanfare. Sun Edison, the engineering firm, promised 19,000 km (11,800 miles) of solar canals. But only a handful of smaller projects have gone up since. The firm filed for bankruptcy.

"The capital costs are really high, and maintenance is an issue," said Jaydip Parmar an engineer in Gujarat who oversees several small solar canal projects.

With ample arid land, ground-based solar makes more sense there economically, he said.

Clunky design is another reason the technology hasn't been widely adopted in India. The panels in Gujarat's pilot project sit directly over the canal, limiting access for maintenance and emergency crews.

Back in California, Harris took note of India's experience, and began a search for a better solution. The project there will use better materials and sit higher.

## NEXT STEPS

Project Nexus may not be alone for long. The Gila River Indian Tribe received funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to install solar on their canals in an effort to save water to ease stress on the Colorado River. And one of Arizona's largest water and power utilities, the Salt River Project, is studying the technology alongside Arizona State University.

Still, rapid change isn't exactly embraced in the world of water infrastructure, said Representative Jared Huffman, D-Calif.

"It's an ossified bastion of stodgy old engineers," he said.

Huffman has been talking up the technology for almost a decade, and said he finds folks are still far more interested in building taller dams than what he says is a much more sensible idea.

He pushed a \$25 million provision through last year's Inflation Reduction Act to fund a pilot project for the Bureau of Reclamation. Project sites for that one are currently being evaluated.

And a group of more than 100 climate advocacy groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity and Greenpeace, have now sent a letter to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and Bureau Commissioner Camille Touton urging them "to accelerate the widespread deployment of solar photovoltaic energy systems" above the Bureau's canals and aqueducts. Covering all 8,000 miles of Bureau-owned canals and aqueducts could "generate over 25 gigawatts of renewable energy — enough to power nearly 20 million homes — and reduce water evaporation by tens of billions of gallons."

Covering every canal would be ideal, Huffman said, but starting with the California Aqueduct and the Delta Mendota canal, "it's a really compelling case," he said. "And it's about time that we started doing this."

Arasu reported from Bengaluru, India.

\_\_\_ 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>

## Australian castaway recounts comfort he felt adrift at sea, thanks to meditation, swimming and dog

BY MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

MANZANILLO, Mexico (AP) — He quit his corporate job and moved to Mexico to pursue his dream of sailing solo across the ocean.

Australian Timothy Shaddock, 54, bought his 30-foot catamaran two years ago in the Mexican Pacific resort of Puerto Vallarta. He needed a place to live and he liked the isolation.

"Of course, living on a boat and sailing on a boat is two different things and that was more of a chal-

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enge," Shaddock told The Associated Press Wednesday after stepping onto land for the first time in months. As his training ground Shaddock chose the Sea of Cortez, a narrow finger of water between the Baja California Peninsula and the Mexican mainland.

"I was aware and the only preparation that you can really do is take the boat out to sea and test the boat at sea," Shaddock said. He would take short journeys, noting what was working on the boat and what wasn't, but was conscious that, in late April, hurricane season was coming.

"It was either now or I could not really wait one more year," he said.

"There's one moment where you're going and it's most likely that you will not stop," Shaddock said. "And I remember that day very well, because once you hit the Pacific, the wind and the current is behind you, it's one way, you cannot come back."

He sailed out of the Sea of Cortez and into the Pacific under a full moon. He thinks it was early May, though the dates are vague in his memory.

"It was very good sailing on that full moon," he recalled. "The boat was moving fast. It was a clear night. The winds were strong. I was amazed how the boat moved and it felt so good to sail under that moon and perfect direction. It was so easy to make the decision. I wanted to keep sailing."

When he arrived in Mexico at the beginning of the pandemic in June 2020, he initially lived in San Miguel de Allende, a charming colonial town in central Mexico popular with foreign tourists.

There, he met Bella, a black and brown stray dog, who became his constant companion for the next three years, despite occasional efforts to find her a suitable home on land.

Shaddock and Bella were a few weeks into their journey when a storm changed everything in an instant.

"The current changes direction. So if you're drifting you're suddenly drifting in a circle. And the wind, it's changing all the time," Shaddock described. "The waves are moving in many directions and it's hypnotizing, you sort of suddenly feel like you're in a whirlpool."

He lost his sail, some electronics, and his ability to cook food. Shaddock did say in other interviews that he still had the capacity to issue a mayday call, but he hadn't done so. It's not clear why.

Days became a battle against fatigue: fixing things on the boat, fishing, capturing rainwater. He was overwhelmed by the fear that the next day he might be too exhausted, too weak.

Shaddock found comfort in meditation, swimming in the ocean and writing in a journal.

Keeping Bella fed and content gave him added purpose. The two subsisted on raw fish and rainwater.

Shaddock thought he probably would die at sea until he heard a helicopter on July 12. Its pilot, Andrés Zamorano, was the first person Shaddock had seen in months and has since become a friend. Zamorano had taken off from the tuna boat María Delia in search of schools of the fish.

They were 1,200 miles from the nearest land.

Zamorano believes a moral obligation Shaddock felt to keep Bella alive helped them both survive.

Aboard the María Delia, Shaddock and Bella were showered with attention and first aid. Crew members spoiled Bella and treated the blisters on her paws.

"He would come up to the bridge every day whenever he wanted and we would drink coffee, talk," the boat's captain, Oscar Meza, said.

Two days after the rescue, the boat found a huge school of tuna, allowing it to fill its hold and turn for its home port of Manzanillo.

"The best moment was being with the dolphins when they catch all the tuna," Shaddock said. "You hear their sounds, you see them move and you feel their magic. That is the magic of freedom and it is the truth of why we are alive."

Stepping onto land Tuesday for the first time in months was both incredibly welcome and a bit uncomfortable for someone who had grown quite accustomed to being alone.

Everyone asked about Bella and then felt deflated when told Shaddock had decided to give her to an animal lover on the crew of the María Delia.

"The Australian embassy really made that decision for me," Shaddock said later, noting that his country has very strict animal quarantine laws.

For now, Shaddock plans to return soon to Australia to see his parents, sister and his daughter. He still loves the sea, but said he was not sure how soon he would again go out of sight of land. There was still an air of uncertainty in his voice.

"My daughter she might come here, get me and bring me home," he said. "Maybe. She wants to come."

## **Commanders' Dan Snyder fined \$60 million for sexually harassing employee, financial improprieties**

By BEN NUCKOLS AP Sports Writer

Washington Commanders owner Dan Snyder sexually harassed a team employee and oversaw team executives who deliberately withheld millions of dollars in revenue from other clubs, and he has agreed to pay a \$60 million fine, the league announced Thursday.

The NFL released a 23-page report detailing the findings of an independent investigation into Snyder's conduct just minutes after its owners unanimously approved the sale of the Commanders to Josh Harris for a record \$6.05 billion. The fine represents 1% of the sale price; Snyder bought the team, then known as the Redskins, for \$800 million.

The investigation was led by former Securities and Exchange Commission chair Mary Jo White and conducted by her law firm, Debevoise & Plimpton. The league had pledged to make the findings of the probe public.

Investigators concluded that Washington withheld \$11 million in revenue that should have been shared with other teams, an amount the report suggests may have been far greater. White's firm was unable to reach a conclusion about tens of millions of additional dollars that may have been withheld in part because Snyder and the team did not cooperate fully with the investigation, according to the report.

The report concluded that Snyder sexually harassed former team employee Tiffani Johnston, allegations that Johnston first made last year in front of a House committee. Snyder placed his hand on Johnston's thigh at a team dinner and pushed her toward his car as they were leaving the restaurant, the report said.

"The findings do speak for themselves. In both cases, it's inappropriate, it's wrong, it doesn't match our values," Commissioner Roger Goodell said at a news conference in Minnesota after NFL owners voted.

Snyder has denied Johnston's allegations and repeated that denial in an interview with White's investigators. He only agreed to speak with investigators for one hour, the report said.

Investigators spoke with Johnston several times and "found her to be highly credible," the report said, and her account was corroborated by witnesses and other evidence. The investigation also substantiated claims by another former employee, Jason Friedman, who told the House about financial improprieties.

"Dan Snyder has been forced to sell the team he said he would never sell, pay a massive fine to the NFL and there now exists an extensive public record of his personal wrongdoing and the misconduct that occurred under his leadership," attorneys Lisa Banks and Debra Katz, who represent Johnston and Friedman, said in a statement. "We are proud of our clients' courage in coming forward publicly and working tirelessly to hold Mr. Snyder accountable."

The report also concluded that a former team executive improperly took possession of a photograph of Johnston from a calendar shoot of the team's cheerleaders. Johnston was wearing lingerie in the photo, which had not been edited "to fully cover inadvertent exposures." Investigators found insufficient evidence to show Snyder was personally involved in that incident.

White's firm did not conclude whether Snyder was personally aware of the financial misdeeds, but witnesses told investigators that Snyder repeatedly pressured team employees to improve its financial performance, telling them, "every dollar matters." Documents detailing how the team moved revenue into accounts that shielded the money from other teams were shared with Snyder on at least one occasion, the report said.

"At a minimum, (Snyder) was aware of certain efforts to minimize revenue sharing, at least some of which were later found to be in violation of the NFL rules," the report said.

Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, said White's

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findings contradicted Snyder's sworn testimony and introduced two bills intended to protect American workers from the abuses committed by Snyder and the Commanders.

In order to skirt NFL revenue-sharing rules, Washington would classify team-related revenue as money made from special events such as concerts, college football games or soccer games.

"(I)f the NFL had a jail ... we would be in it," a team employee wrote to its chief financial officer in 2010 after agreeing to allocate NFL revenue to a college game.

Friedman alleged that the Commanders had "a second set of books," and the investigation corroborated his account. Among its findings were that millions of dollars in revenue from "tickets sold or bartered with sponsors at falsely undervalued prices" were moved into accounts that hid the money from the league.

In addition to the \$11 million that White's firm found the team withheld from the league, forensic accountants who reviewed the team's books identified another \$44 million in parking, license and other revenues that were transferred from accounts holding league revenue into special events accounts.

The report notes that the team's revenue-shielding scheme "appear(s) to have become more aggressive after its ticket sales began deteriorating in 2008." Washington had long touted a decades-long waiting list for season tickets, but demand cratered under Snyder's stewardship of the team, which went 166-226-2 overall and won only two playoff games during his 24 years as owner.

Snyder long had a reputation for squeezing every possible dollar out of fans, from aggressive pricing of parking and concessions to charging fans to attend training camp. He even filed lawsuits against fans for canceling their season tickets. The District of Columbia Attorney General's office reached a settlement with Snyder over the team's failure to return season-ticket security deposits.

White's firm wrote that while Snyder and the team pledged to fully cooperate with investigators, they did not. Instead, the Commanders failed to produce requested documents, declined to let investigators speak to the team's external auditors, and engaged in other tactics that "delayed and impeded the investigation."

"Evidencing his individual failure to cooperate, Mr. Snyder engaged in months of scheduling, canceling, and rescheduling of his interview," the report said.

AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nfl> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## Police seized laptops, memoir from Vegas-area home of witness to Tupac Shakur's 1996 killing

By RIO YAMAT and KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A home that Las Vegas police raided this week in connection with the 1996 drive-by shooting of Tupac Shakur is tied to one of the only surviving witnesses to the crime, a man long known to investigators whose nephew was seen as a suspect shortly after the rapper's killing.

Detectives sought items "concerning the murder of Tupac Shakur" from Duane "Keffe D" Davis, according to warrant documents obtained Thursday by The Associated Press.

Davis, now 60, is a self-described "gangster" and the uncle of Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson, one of Shakur's known rivals. Anderson denied involvement in Shakur's killing, and died two years later in a shooting in Compton, California.

Police reported collecting multiple computers, a cellphone and hard drive, "documentary documents," a Vibe magazine that featured Shakur, "purported marijuana," several .40-caliber bullets, two "tubs containing photographs" and a copy of Davis' 2019 tell-all memoir, "Compton Street Legend."

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department confirmed it served a search warrant Monday in the neighboring city of Henderson. The department hasn't said whether investigators expect to make a first-ever arrest in the slaying of the rapper nearly 27 years ago.

Residents of the neighborhood in foothills about 20 miles (32 kilometers) southeast of the Las Vegas Strip said they saw officers detain two people outside the home Monday night while investigators searched the one-story property.

"There were cruisers and SWAT vehicles. They had lights shining on the house," said Don Sansouci,

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who watched from the sidewalk as a man and a woman stepped out of a house to bullhorn commands, placed their hands behind their heads and slowly walked backwards toward officers amid a swirl of blue and red police lights.

The case is being presented to a grand jury in Las Vegas, according to a person with direct knowledge of the investigation who was not authorized to speak publicly. The timing and results of those proceedings was unclear, and the person did not identify the two people whom police encountered at the house.

It was not immediately known if Davis has a lawyer who can comment on his behalf. Messages left for Davis and his wife, Paula Clemons, weren't returned. Records show the two were married in Clark County, Nevada, in 2005.

News of the search breathed new life into Shakur's long-unsolved killing, which has been surrounded by conspiracy theories. There has never been any arrest and attention on the case has endured for decades.

"I'm one of the only living eyewitnesses to Tupac's killing, who also knows the much larger story around the reasons why both Tupac and Biggie were killed," Davis wrote in the memoir, referring also to the 1997 killing of rapper "Biggie Smalls," also known as "Notorious B.I.G."

Shakur's death came as his fourth solo album, "All Eyez on Me," remained on the charts, with some 5 million copies sold. Nominated six times for a Grammy Award, Shakur is largely considered one of the most influential and versatile rappers of all time.

On the night of Sept. 7, 1996, Shakur was riding in a black BMW driven by Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight in a convoy of about 10 cars. They were waiting at a red light a block from the Las Vegas Strip when a white Cadillac pulled up next to them and gunfire erupted. Shakur was shot multiple times and died days later.

Knight, now 58, was wounded but recovered. He was sentenced in October 2018 to 28 years in prison for running over a man with his pickup truck, killing him, in a Compton burger stand parking lot in January 2015.

The Shakur shooting unfolded shortly after a casino brawl earlier in the evening involving Anderson, Shakur and their associates.

There were many witnesses, but the investigation stalled because people refused to cooperate, Las Vegas police said in the past.

That silence broke, to a point, in 2018, when Davis — saying he was ready to speak publicly after a cancer diagnosis — admitted to being in the front seat of the Cadillac. In an interview for a BET show, he implicated his nephew in the shooting, saying Anderson was one of two people in the backseat.

Davis said the shots were fired from the back of the car, though he stopped short of naming the shooter, saying he had to abide by the "code of the streets."

But in his memoir, Davis said he shared what he knew nearly a decade earlier in a closed-door meeting with federal and local authorities who were investigating the possibility that Shakur's slaying was linked to B.I.G.'s death.

"They offered to let me go for running a 'criminal enterprise' and numerous alleged murders for the truth about the Tupac and Biggie murders," Davis, who was 46 at the time, said in his book. "They promised they would shred the indictment and stop the grand jury if I helped them out."

At the time of their deaths, Shakur and B.I.G. were involved in the infamous East Coast-West Coast rivalry that primarily defined the hip-hop scene during the mid-1990s. The feud was ignited after Shakur was seriously wounded in another shooting during a robbery in the lobby of a midtown Manhattan hotel.

Shakur openly accused B.I.G. and Sean "Diddy" Combs of having prior knowledge of the shooting in New York, which both vehemently denied. It sparked a serious divide within the hip-hop community and among fans.

In the memoir, Davis wrote that he finally decided to tell authorities in 2010 what he knew of the Shakur and B.I.G. killings to protect himself as well as 48 of his associates involved in the Southside Compton Crips gang from what might have been sentences of life in prison.

"I sang because they promised I would not be prosecuted," Davis said, adding that he thought they



were lying about the deal. "But they kept their word and stopped the indictment, tore up the whole case. Nobody went to jail."

It's unclear if Davis was at the Henderson home when officers descended on the property. Las Vegas court records show he has been sought on an arrest warrant since July 2022, when he failed to appear in court on a drug charge.

Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

## **NFL owners unanimously OK the Commanders sale to Josh Harris; Dan Snyder fined \$60M on the way out**

By DAVE CAMPBELL and STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writers

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (AP) — NFL owners unanimously approved the sale of the Washington Commanders on Thursday from Dan Snyder to a group led by Josh Harris and including Magic Johnson for a record \$6.05 billion, right before the league announced a \$60 million fine for Snyder for improprieties corroborated by its investigation into workplace culture and business dealings.

"We are humbled and awed by the level of responsibility that we have to take care of the city, to win championships and really excite the fans again," Harris said in a news conference after the vote.

The purchase by Harris Blitzer Sports and Entertainment is the highest price paid for a North American professional sports club. Harris, like Snyder and Commissioner Roger Goodell, grew up in the Washington metro area as an avid fan of the team.

"He has a remarkable business record, not just in finance but also now in sports, and I think he's a person who cares deeply about not just his assets but at least more importantly his communities," Goodell said.

The sale was expected to close in the coming days and thus finalize an ugly two-plus decades for one of the NFL's oldest franchises. Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones beamed in a brief interview with reporters on his way into the meeting.

"It's a hallmark day," Jones said. "I'm excited about the prospects of going into Washington and giving them some capital punishment."

Owners also received an in-person summary from former U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White on her investigation for the NFL into the Commanders that was launched 1½ years ago launched in light of the congressional review into workplace misconduct that also included a referral to the Federal Trade Commission for potential business improprieties by Snyder.

The probe corroborated an allegation that Snyder sexually harassed a former team employee who first brought that account forward in front of a House committee.

White's report also confirmed that team executives under Snyder's supervision deliberately withheld millions of dollars in revenue from other clubs.

Snyder had owned his favorite boyhood team since 1999, when he bought it for \$800 million. Success was fleeting, both on and off the field. With Snyder in charge, the team made the playoffs just six times in 24 years, only twice won a postseason game and went 166-226-2 overall. The franchise has lost a significant amount of luster from the glory days under coach Joe Gibbs, who won three Super Bowls in his 12-year run from 1981-92.

Then there were the problems outside of football, from a feud with minority owners that led Snyder to buy out their shares of the team to allegations of sexual harassment by former employees, which prompted a series of investigations into workplace misconduct. Over and over again, Snyder said he would never sell the team.

The tide began to shift on that front last October when Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay said there was "merit to remove" Snyder, an ouster that would have required votes from at least 24 of the other 31 clubs. Two weeks later, Snyder and his wife Tanya hired a firm to begin exploring a sale of part or all of one of the NFL's oldest franchises — one that has called the nation's capital home since 1937.

Ultimately, that process led to a group chaired by Harris. His investment crew also includes David Blitzer,

with whom he co-owns the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers and the NHL's New Jersey Devils, Washington-area businessman Mitchell Rales and more than a dozen others. The unusually large ownership group needed and received league finance approval for a deal that shattered the \$4.35 billion Walmart heir Rob Walton paid last year for the Denver Broncos.

The special meeting for the Commanders sale was conducted at the same hotel adjacent to the Mall of America in suburban Minneapolis where Walton's group gained formal control of the Broncos. Johnson raved about the approval of the sale on Twitter — "truly the biggest achievement in my business career," he tweeted — shortly before Harris posed for photos with a Commanders helmet and accepted well wishes from Goodell and others.

"They want to put that franchise where they believe it belongs, where it's respected not just in the community but worldwide," Goodell said. "They're committed to that."

Their biggest immediate challenge for the long-term future of the organization is a new stadium to replace FedEx Field, the rushed-to-completion home of the team since 1997 in Landover, Maryland, that has not aged well. Virginia abandoned a stadium bill more than a year ago, a consequence of the number of off-field controversies swirling around the team. The site of RFK Stadium, the club's previous home in the capitol city, has significant backing as the place for the new venue.

"It's going to take awhile to unpack what really makes sense," Harris said. "As far as RFK, I understand it's the spiritual home of the history of the Commanders.

Bringing the fans back is a major priority after Washington ranked last in the league in attendance in 2022 and second-to-last in 2021. The team rebranded last year as the Commanders after dropping the name Redskins in 2020 and generically going by the Washington Football Team for two seasons.

"I've had many sleepless nights, and I will have many sleepless nights. I'm going to sweat this," Harris said. "I feel an awesome responsibility to the city of Washington. I know what I've got to give."

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Whyno reported from Washington.

\_\_\_AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nfl> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## Senate committee approves legislation to impose stronger ethics standards on Supreme Court justices

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court would have to abide by stronger ethics standards under legislation approved on Thursday by the Senate Judiciary Committee, a response to recent revelations about donor-funded trips by justices. The bill faced united opposition from Republicans, who said it could "destroy" the court.

The panel voted along party lines to set ethics rules for the court and a process to enforce them, including new standards for transparency around recusals, gifts and potential conflicts of interest. Democrats first pushed the legislation after reports earlier this year that Justice Clarence Thomas participated in luxury vacations and a real estate deal with a top GOP donor — and after Chief Justice John Roberts declined to testify before the committee about the ethics of the court.

Since then, news reports also revealed that Justice Samuel Alito had taken a luxury vacation with a GOP donor. And The Associated Press reported last week that Justice Sonia Sotomayor, aided by her staff, has advanced sales of her books through college visits over the past decade.

The ethics legislation has little chance of passing the Senate — it would need at least nine GOP votes, and Republicans have strongly opposed it — or the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. But Democrats say the spate of revelations means that enforceable standards on the court are necessary.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin said the legislation would be a "crucial first step" in restoring confidence in the court. He said that if any of the senators sitting in the room had engaged in similar activities, they would be in violation of ethics rules.

"The same is not true of the justices across the street," Durbin said.

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The legislation comes after years of increasing tension, and increasing partisanship, on the committee over the judiciary. Then-President Donald Trump nominated three conservative justices to the Supreme Court, all of whom were confirmed when Republicans were in the Senate majority and with considerable opposition from Democrats. The court has as a result shifted sharply to the right, overturning the nationwide right to an abortion and other liberal priorities.

Republicans charged that the legislation is more about Democratic opposition to the court's decisions than its ethics.

"It's about harassing and intimidating the Supreme Court," said Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, a senior GOP member of the panel.

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, the top Republican on the Judiciary panel, said Democrats are trying to "destroy" the court as it exists by tightening the rules around recusals and disqualifying conservatives from some decisions. Congress should stay out of the court's business and mind the separation of powers, Graham said.

The bill "is an assault on the court itself," Graham said.

The legislation would mandate a new Supreme Court "code of conduct" with a process for adjudicating the policy modeled on lower courts that do have ethics codes. It would require that justices provide more information about potential conflicts of interest, allow impartial panels of judges to review justices' decisions not to recuse and require public, written explanations about their decisions not to recuse. It would also seek to improve transparency around gifts received by justices and set up a process to investigate and enforce violations around required disclosures.

Republicans on the committee offered a series of amendments to the bill, some of which were focused on boosting security for judges after a man was found with a gun, knife and pepper spray near the home of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh last year. The panel rejected most of the amendments as majority Democrats said that Republicans were trying to distract from the ethics reforms.

Durbin pushed back on the notion that the legislation is about politics, noting he started pushing for Supreme Court ethics reforms more than a decade ago, when the court was more liberal. "The reforms we are proposing would apply in equal force to all justices," Durbin said.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., took a more partisan approach in a statement praising the Judiciary panel's vote. "We must ensure that the Supreme Court is not in the pocket of the ultra-wealthy and MAGA extremists," Schumer said.

The current push came after news reports revealed Thomas' close relationship with Dallas billionaire and GOP donor Harlan Crow. Crow had purchased three properties belonging to Thomas and his family in a transaction worth more than \$100,000 that Thomas never disclosed, according to the nonprofit investigative journalism organization ProPublica. The organization also revealed that Crow gifted Thomas and his wife, Ginni, with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of annual vacations and trips over several decades.

Durbin had invited Roberts to testify at a hearing, but he declined, saying that testimony by a chief justice is exceedingly rare because of the importance of preserving judicial independence. Roberts also provided a "Statement on Ethics Principles and Practices" signed by all nine justices that described the ethical rules they follow about travel, gifts and outside income.

The statement provided by Roberts said that the nine justices "reaffirm and restate foundational ethics principles and practices to which they subscribe in carrying out their responsibilities as Members of the Supreme Court of the United States."

The statement promised at least some small additional disclosure when one or more among them opts not to take part in a case. But the justices have been inconsistent in doing so since.

Roberts has acknowledged that the court could do more to adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, but he didn't elaborate and has not followed up publicly on that idea.

Besides Sotomayor's push for book sales, the AP reported that universities have used trips by justices as a lure for financial contributions by placing them in event rooms with wealthy donors and that justices have taken expenses-paid teaching trips to attractive locations that are light on actual classroom instruction.

## CLIMATE GLIMPSE: Here's what you need to see and know today

By The Associated Press undefined

A landslide triggered by torrential rains in India's western Maharashtra state killed at least 10 people, with many others feared trapped under piles of debris, officials said Thursday. In this image captured by Associated Press photographer Rafiq Maqbool, a woman holds the hand of her relative as family members of people trapped under rubble wait after a landslide washed away houses.

In Greece, a huge fire was contained west of Athens, but authorities braced Thursday for a new round of extreme weather. Searing heat across Europe's Mediterranean south has maintained a high or very high risk of fires in Spain, Italy and Greece. And in the Balkans, a storm that followed an intense heat wave left six dead, including a Coatian firefighter.

Here's what's happening related to extreme weather and the climate right now:

—In a refugee camp in Kenya, food shortages left kids hungry amid a drought even before Russia ended the grain deal. One farmer was forced to give most of his produce as tax to al-Qaida-linked extremists who have controlled parts of Somalia for years, and the little that remained wasn't enough to feed his family during Somalia's worst drought in decades, Evelyne Musambi reports.

—A study found that the exclusion of race from a federal climate justice tool could worsen air pollution exposure disparities along racial lines in the U.S., Drew Costley reports.

—Temperatures have peaked at or above 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 degrees Celsius) the entire month of July in Phoenix and air conditioning has been a lifeline for many in the city. Isabella O'Malley and Beatrice Dupuy explain how the heat wave has some residents concerned about the energy bills they'll receive.

—Travelers, considered a bellwether for the U.S. insurance industry due to its size, said Thursday that catastrophe losses doubled in its most recent quarter as severe wind and hailstorms in a number of regions led to rising coverage claims, Michelle Chapman reports.

—Canada's worst-ever wildfire season has choked much of North America with dangerous smoke for months, coupling with deadly heat around the globe in a summer that's focusing the world's attention on the perils of climate change. See the photos by Noah Berger here.

—The tornado damage to a Pfizer plant in North Carolina will likely mean shortages of some drugs hospitals need, Tom Murphy reports.

QUOTABLE:

"This level of heat that we are having in Phoenix right now is enormously dangerous, particularly for people who either don't have air conditioning or cannot afford to operate their air conditioner," said Evan Mallen, a senior analyst for Georgia Institute of Technology's Urban Climate Lab.

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.

## The sea otter harassing surfers off the California coast eludes capture as her fan club grows

By HAVEN DALEY and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (AP) — A sea otter launched into the national spotlight after images of her aggressively wresting surfboards away from surfers off the coast of Santa Cruz, California circulated on social media is building a fan club as she continues to evade capture.

A team of wildlife experts with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the nearby Monterey Bay Aquarium have been trying to capture the 5-year-old animal, known as otter 841, since last week because they say she poses a public safety risk.

They say they want to examine her and relocate her at a zoo or aquarium —as yet to no avail.

She now has a growing fan club, with people showing up every day to get a glimpse of her spending time sunbathing on the rocky shore, diving in the water and chomping down on crabs.

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Jessica Fujii, Sea Otter Program Manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, said the team has faced some challenges in its pursuit, including bad weather.

"The main issue is more just her ability to evade. Because this has been an ongoing effort, she is wary of those nets," Fujii said.

Federal and state wildlife officials did not return messages from The Associated Press seeking comment Thursday on their effort to catch otter 841.

The mischievous mammal was made famous by a professional photographer who posted photos and videos on social media that show her aggressively approaching surfers and getting on top of surfboards — on at least one occasion biting and tearing chunks off a board.

"They can't throw a net over her in the water. They can't tranquilize her because of fear of her drowning. So they really need to get hands on her," said the Santa Cruz photographer, Mark Woodward.

The team trying to capture her has used a baited surfboard. She's gotten on it multiple times in the past few days, according to Woodward. But as soon as a wildlife official towing the surfboard carrying her gets near the team's boat, she dives off, he said.

The otter's aggressive behavior is highly unusual, and the reason is unknown, federal wildlife officials said. "Aggressive behavior in female southern sea otters may be associated with hormonal surges or due to being fed by humans," the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said in a statement last week.

Otter 841 was born in captivity and released into the wild in June 2020. She is tagged with her number and has a radio transmitter that officials have been monitoring to keep tabs on her.

They said it is not the first time the otter has been aggressive toward humans. She was observed approaching people in late 2021. In May 2022, she was spotted with a pup in the Santa Cruz area, and four months later exhibited similar aggressive behavior.

Meanwhile, her fans want her to be left alone.

"Just leave 'em alone. Just let 'em have fun. Hasn't bitten anybody. Roughs up the board. It's like a dog with a chew, you know?" said Jackie Rundell, a Santa Cruz resident who on Wednesday visited the bay.

Southern sea otters, whose population dwindled to about 50 in 1938, are managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. They are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and are protected under the Marine Mammal Act and California state law.

Now with a population of about 3,000, sea otters play a fundamental role in maintaining healthy coastal ecosystems by preying on sea urchins that can multiply and eat their way through the kelp forests both marine creatures share, wildlife officials said.

## **Tornado damage to Pfizer plant will probably create long-term shortages of some drugs hospitals need**

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

The fallout from a Pfizer factory being damaged by a tornado could put even more pressure on already-strained drug supplies at U.S. hospitals, experts say.

Wednesday's tornado touched down near Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and ripped up the roof of a Pfizer factory that makes nearly 25% of Pfizer's sterile injectable medicines used in U.S. hospitals, according to the drugmaker.

Pfizer said all employees were safely evacuated and accounted for, and no serious injuries were reported. The drugmaker is still assessing damage.

Here's a closer look at the possible effects.

### **WHAT ARE STERILE INJECTABLES?**

The North Carolina plant produces drugs that are injected or through an IV.

The plant makes drugs for anesthesia, medicines that treat infections and drugs needed for surgeries. The latter are used in surgeries or intensive care units for patients who are placed on ventilators, said Mike Gano, who studies drug shortages at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

The Pfizer site does not make or store the company's COVID-19 vaccine or treatments Comirnaty and

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Paxlovid.

HOW BIG IS THE SITE?

Pfizer bought the eastern North Carolina factory in 2015 as part of its acquisition of the drugmaker Hospira. There is more than 1.4 million square feet of manufacturing space, or the equivalent of more than 24 football fields, and 22 packaging lines.

Pfizer says well over 2,000 people work there.

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT HOSPITAL DRUG SUPPLIES?

It will likely lead to some long-term shortages while Pfizer shifts production to other locations or rebuilds, said Erin Fox, senior pharmacy director at University of Utah Health.

"If Pfizer falls out, it makes it that much harder for other companies to make up the difference," Fox said.

The specifics of which drugs might be involved in a shortage and how long that shortage will go aren't clear.

"Anyone who is aware of this event is basically holding their collective breath at this point, hoping for the best and waiting for news," Ganio said.

He noted that drugmakers tend to ship finished products quickly from manufacturing sites, which may limit how much inventory was damaged by the twister.

HOW CAN HOSPITALS HANDLE SHORTAGES?

They have several tools to soften the impact for patients.

Some hospitals have started increasing inventories of stored drugs instead of relying on regular deliveries from a wholesaler. Ganio said that it's particularly true of drugs that hospital executives know will be hard to get.

Hospitals also may switch to different forms of a drug by giving a patient an antibiotic pill instead of an IV if that person can handle it. If a larger vial size of a drug is more readily available, they may order that and then fill several syringes with smaller doses ready for use.

AREN'T HOSPITALS ALREADY DEALING WITH DRUG SHORTAGES?

Yes, it's been happening for years. But recently, hospitals have been dealing with shortages for things like chemotherapy drugs, pain medications and local anesthetics.

The impact of drug shortages isn't limited to hospitals. They also affect more routine care delivered through drugstores and doctor's offices.

Overall, there were 309 active drug shortages in the U.S. at the end of June, according to the University of Utah Drug Information Service. That's up from 295 at the end of last year and the highest total recorded since 2014.

WHAT WILL PFIZER DO?

The company hasn't said what happens next. Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said Thursday on Twitter that the company was "working urgently to determine the best way to get back online as quickly as possible, while ensuring the safety of our people."

Drugmakers can shift manufacturing to other locations. But that can be complicated because they must reroute raw materials — usually made elsewhere — to other locations and may have to train workers to make a product.

Pfizer also may have to figure out whether to cut production of another product to squeeze in more manufacturing at the new site.

"It's not always as easy as just flipping a switch to increase production," Ganio said.

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This story has been updated to show that the North Carolina plant makes nearly 25% of Pfizer's sterile injectables used in U.S. hospitals, not nearly 25% of all injectables used in U.S. hospitals.

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Associated Press reporters Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina, and JoNel Aleccia in Temecula, California, contributed to this report. Murphy reported from Indianapolis.

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The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## **As temperatures rise, mosquitoes are also on the move. Scientists worry that could mean more malaria**

By MARY KATHERINE WILDEMAN Associated Press

As the planet warms, mosquitoes are slowly migrating upward.

The temperature range where malaria-carrying mosquitoes thrive is rising in elevation. Researchers have found evidence of the phenomenon from the tropical highlands of South America to the mountainous, populous regions of eastern Africa.

Scientists now worry people living in areas once inhospitable to the insects, including the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro and the mountains of eastern Ethiopia, could be newly exposed to the disease.

"As it gets warmer at higher altitudes with climate change and all of these other environmental changes, then mosquitoes can survive higher up the mountain," said Manisha Kulkarni, a professor and researcher studying malaria in sub-Saharan Africa at the University of Ottawa.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This story is part of a collaboration between The Associated Press and Grist exploring the intersection of climate change and infectious diseases.

Kulkarni led a study published in 2016 that found the habitat for malaria-carrying mosquitoes had expanded in the high-elevation Mt. Kilimanjaro region by hundreds of square kilometers in just 10 years. Lower altitudes, in contrast, are becoming too hot for the bugs.

Similar occurrences have been found elsewhere. For example, researchers in 2015 also noticed native Hawaiian birds were squeezed out of lower elevation habitats as mosquitoes carrying avian malaria slowly migrated upward into their territory. But given 96% of malaria deaths occurred in Africa in 2021, most research on the trend is found there.

The region Kulkarni studied, which is growing in population, is close to the border of Tanzania and Kenya. Together, the two countries accounted for 6% of global malaria deaths in 2021.

Global deaths from malaria declined by 29% between 2002 and 2021, as countries have taken more aggressive tactics in fighting the disease. However, the numbers remain high, especially in Africa where children under 5 years old account for 80% of all malaria deaths. The latest world malaria report from the WHO recorded 247 million cases of malaria in 2021 — Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Mozambique alone accounted for almost half of those cases.

"The link between climate change and expansion or change in mosquito distributions is real," said Doug Norris, a specialist in mosquitoes at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, who was not involved in the research.

Despite this, uncertainty remains on the extent of how shifting mosquito populations will affect people in the future. A recent Georgetown University study investigating the movement of mosquitoes across all of sub-Saharan Africa also found the vectors have moved upward in elevation at a rate of 6.5 meters (roughly 21 feet) each year.

Mosquitoes are picky about their habitat, Norris added, and the various malaria-carrying species have different preferences in temperature, humidity and amount of rainfall. Add on the fact that people are fighting malaria with bed nets, insecticides and other tools, and it becomes hard to pin any single trend to climate change, he said.

Jeremy Herren, who studies malaria at the Nairobi-based International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, said there is evidence that climate change is already impacting where mosquito populations choose to live. But, he said, it is still difficult to predict how malaria will spread.

For example, in Kenya, Herren said researchers have documented "massive shifts" in malaria in mosquitoes. A species that was once dominant is now almost impossible to find, he said. But those changes

are probably not due to climate change, he said, adding that the rollout of insecticide-treated nets is one explanation for that shift.

In general, however, mosquitoes grow faster in warmer conditions, Norris said.

Rising temperatures are also not the only way a changing climate gives mosquitoes the upper hand. The bugs tend to thrive in the kind of extremes that are happening more frequently because of human-caused climate change.

Longer rainy seasons can create better habitats for mosquitoes, which breed in water. But conversely, while droughts can dry up those habitats, they also encourage people to store water in containers, creating perfect breeding sites. An outbreak of chikungunya, another mosquito-borne disease, between 2004 and 2005 was linked to drought in coastal Kenya for these reasons.

Researchers were also able to tie a reduction in malaria cases in the highlands of Ethiopia in the early 2000s to a decline in temperatures happening at the same time.

Weather patterns in the years prior had stalled the effects of global warming.

Pamela Martinez, a researcher at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, said her team's findings on malaria trends in Ethiopia, which were published in 2021 in the journal *Nature*, lent more confidence to the idea that malaria and temperature — and, therefore, climate change— are linked.

"We see that when temperature goes down, the overall trend of cases also goes down, even in the absence of intervention," Martinez said. "That proves the case that temperature has an impact on transmission."

The researchers also noticed mosquito populations creeping upward during warmer years.

Temperatures began to warm again in the mid-2000s, but public health officials also ramped up efforts to control malaria in the highlands region of Ethiopia around that time, which has led to a sustained decline in cases.

But even as the Ethiopian Ministry of Health drafted a plan to eliminate malaria by 2030, its authors laid out the threats to that goal: population shifts, a lack of funding, the invasion of a new mosquito species and climate change.

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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.

## **Why is hazing such a widespread problem? Abuse prevalent despite efforts to stop it**

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Northwestern University is facing multiple lawsuits after allegations that the football program had a hazing problem for years, including "forced participation, nudity and sexualized acts of a degrading nature."

The scandal at the Big Ten school, which led to the firing of longtime coach Pat Fitzgerald, centers on a problem that extends far beyond sports, even if it is sports that often gets the headlines.

Studies have found that 48% high school students report being subjected to some form of hazing. An Alfred University study from 1999 also found that 79% of NCAA athletes reported being hazed in high school and their recruiting trips were not always about a positive experience: "One in five was subjected to unacceptable and potentially illegal hazing. They were kidnapped, beaten or tied up and abandoned. They were also forced to commit crimes — destroying property, making prank phone calls or harassing others," the study found.

Experts say more, updated research is also needed.

### **WHY HAZING?**

Experts say hazing is about an individual or group exerting power and control over others.

"If you understand hazing as a form of an abuse of power, then you can see how in those environments or group situations where people are jockeying for power or trying to enforce some kind of hierarchies, hazing is an easy way to kind of make clear who's got the power," said Elizabeth Allan, a professor at the University of Maine who has studied hazing.



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## SEXUAL ABUSE

Acts of hazing are frequently sexualized or can be classified as sexual assault. Allan said in a hyper-masculine situation that sexualized acts are often the most powerful ways for an individual or group to dominate others.

Susan Lipkins, a psychologist and researcher who studies hazing, said of sexualized hazing that it is "the quickest way to humiliate someone and to make them powerless."

Lipkins said that while more research would be beneficial, she believes hazing incidents are becoming more frequent, severe and sexualized.

## IT IS CYCLICAL

Hazing newcomers to a team or group can become so ritualistic and traditional that it seems normal to those in the group.

Some of the former Northwestern players who spoke out this week talked about the hazing they were subjected to early in their careers, and thinking that maybe this was just part of playing big-time college football.

"(T)he culture was so strong that we felt we had to go with it," former player Lloyd Yates said. "There was a code of silence that felt insurmountable to break."

"The abusive culture was especially devastating for many players of color," Yates added. Many of them were the first in their family to attend college and football was their "ticket to a better life."

"They had so much at stake and no voice or power to stop the abuse," he said.

Those who have been hazed often want to carry on the tradition and do the hazing when they are in a position of power. As Allan put it: "This happened to me, therefore, that's what we're supposed to do and we're not thinking beyond it."

Vanderbilt coach Clark Lea said he doesn't directly address hazing, but tries to create an environment where players trust coaches enough to come to them if they are having issues with the behavior of teammates.

"There's no brotherhood that I know that starts with a level of abuse in the locker room," Lea said.

## WHAT IS HAZING:

Even in professional sports there is a tradition of putting the rookies in their place. A younger player might carry the equipment of an older player or be forced to pick up a big tab at dinner. Baseball has a tradition of rookies being forced to wear silly costumes on road trips late in the season.

Alone, these acts seem harmless because usually no one gets hurt and rarely is physical or psychological intimidation involved. Experts warn they still set a bad precedent.

"They send a message and create a dynamic where there are these expectations that some people have to do the grunt work, so to speak," Allan said.

## CAN HAZING BE PREVENTED?

Countless attempts have been made to stop hazing, from specific rules in schools and prep athletics to laws in 44 states that carry different forms of punishment. The NCAA provides specific guidance to stop hazing, though it leaves anti-hazing rules and punishments to its member schools and the federal Clery Act does not require colleges to report hazing incidents.

Former college football coach Gerry DiNardo, who led Vanderbilt, LSU and Indiana from the mid-1990s to early 2000s, said he actively discouraged hazing. DiNardo said he went so far as to make a team rule against joining fraternities that hazed their pledges.

Experts say that would be the most effective approach. Don't avoid specific discussions about hazing.

"We need to have visible messaging around expectations for behavior, and that includes what we do not tolerate," Allan said.

\_\_\_AP Sports Writer Teresa M. Walker contributed.

\_\_\_Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <http://www.appodcasts.com>

\_\_\_AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and [https://twitter.com/ap\\_top25](https://twitter.com/ap_top25)

## Russia bombards Odesa and other southern Ukraine port cities for third night since end of grain deal

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia pounded Ukraine's southern cities with drones and missiles for a third consecutive night Thursday, keeping Odesa in the Kremlin's crosshairs after a bitter dispute over the end of a wartime deal that allowed Ukraine to send grain through the key Black Sea port.

The strikes killed at least two people in Odesa. In the nearby city of Mykolaiv, which is close to the Black Sea, at least 19 people were injured, including a child, Ukrainian officials said.

Russia has targeted Ukrainian critical grain export infrastructure since it vowed "retribution" this week for an attack that damaged a crucial bridge between Russia and the Moscow-annexed Crimean Peninsula. Russian officials blamed that strike on Ukrainian drone boats.

The strikes on Ukraine's grain export infrastructure have helped drive up food prices in countries facing hunger. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the end of the deal Monday would result in more human suffering, with potentially millions of people affected.

The grain deal provided guarantees that ships would not be attacked entering and leaving Ukrainian ports, while a separate agreement facilitated the movement of Russian food and fertilizer.

The Russian military on Thursday described its strikes on Odesa, a city whose downtown area is described by the United Nations' cultural agency UNESCO as possessing "outstanding universal value," as "retaliatory."

In January, UNESCO added Odesa's historic center to its list of endangered World Heritage Sites, with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay saying the "legendary port that has left its mark in cinema, literature and the arts."

Despite multiple Russian artillery attacks and airstrikes during the war that began in February 2022, Odesa had not previously been subjected to the heavy barrages that have targeted other towns and cities in Ukraine's south and east.

Odesa residents reeled from Russia's sudden focus on their city.

"I remember the attack on the port last year, but now it feels like it was only 5% compared to what the Russians have launched at us during these past three days," Oleksandr Kolodin, a 29-year-old photographer, told The Associated Press.

Some feared that Russia's decision to tear up the grain deal would make Odesa a long-term primary target.

"We saw how they could attack Kyiv for an entire month," said 29-year-old programmer Victor, referring to the intense bombardment of the Ukrainian capital in May. He asked to use only his first name out of concern for his safety.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement that it targeted "production shops and storage sites for unmanned boats" in Odesa and the nearby city of Chornomorsk. In the Mykolaiv area, the Russian military claimed to have destroyed Ukrainian fuel infrastructure facilities and ammunition depots.

Neither sides' claims could be independently verified.

The previous night, an intense Russian bombardment using drones and missiles damaged critical port infrastructure in Odesa, including grain and oil terminals. The attack destroyed at least 60,000 tons of grain.

In what appeared to be a tit-for-tat move, Ukraine's Defense Ministry announced that as of Friday, all vessels in the Black Sea heading to Russian ports "may be considered by Ukraine as such carrying military cargo with all the associated risks." That may result in higher insurance costs for those ships.

Russia's Defense Ministry said earlier this week that Moscow had formally declared wide areas of the Black Sea dangerous for shipping and warned that it would view any incoming ship as laden with weapons, effectively announcing a sea blockade.

Despite the risks, ship owners haven't shown any less interest in carrying Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea, according to John Stawpert, senior manager of environment and trade for the International Chamber of Shipping, which represents 80% of the world's commercial fleet.

The European Union's foreign affairs chief condemned Russia's targeting of grain storage facilities.

"More than 60,000 tons of grain has been burned," Josep Borrell said in Brussels on Thursday, regarding

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Moscow's recent tactics. "So not only they withdraw from the grain agreement ... but they are burning the grain."

German Foreign Affairs Minister Annalena Baerbock said at the same meeting that the EU is involved in international efforts to get Ukrainian grain to the world market.

"The fact that the Russian president has canceled the grain agreement and is now bombing the port of Odesa is not only another attack on Ukraine, but an attack on the people, on the poorest people in the world," she said. "Hundreds of thousands of people, not to say millions, urgently need grain from Ukraine."

The White House warned Wednesday that Russia was preparing possible attacks on civilian shipping vessels in the Black Sea. The warning could alarm shippers and further drive up grain prices.

Russia has laid additional sea mines in the approaches to Ukrainian ports, White House National Security Council spokesman Adam Hodge said in a statement. "We believe that this is a coordinated effort to justify any attacks against civilian ships in the Black Sea and lay blame on Ukraine for these attacks," the statement said.

Carlos Mera, head of agricultural commodities markets at Rabobank, said wheat prices have risen about 17% over the last week, calling it a surprising rise that started even before the grain deal ended Monday and attributing it to "a little bit of panic."

A lot of the wheat exported from Ukraine goes to very poor countries, such as those in North Africa, he said. People in those places are already struggling with food insecurity and high local food prices. Russia, meanwhile, has been exporting record amounts of wheat in recent months despite complaints that its agricultural exports have been hindered.

Russia has blasted Ukrainian towns and cities since the start of the war. Ukraine's Western allies have helped upgrade its air defense systems. The latest military aid package from the United States, announced by the Pentagon on Wednesday, includes funding for four National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems, or NASAMS, and munitions for them.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian military has begun deploying cluster munitions — bombs that open in the air and release scores of smaller bomblets — that it recently received from the U.S., U.S. National Security spokesman John Kirby said Thursday at a news conference.

"We have gotten some initial feedback from the Ukrainians and they're using them quite effectively," he said.

On Thursday, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, said agency inspectors have not seen signs of explosives or mines at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Ukraine's military intelligence has claimed for weeks, without providing evidence, that Russia is planning a "large-scale provocation" at the plant, which is Europe's largest and under Russian control.

However, Grossi noted in a statement that the inspectors have not been allowed access to the roofs of reactors and their turbine halls.

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Raf Casert in Brussels, Courtney Bonnell in London and Aamer Madhani in Washington contributed.

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

## **As a child, she sold street tamales; a senator now, she's shaking up Mexico's presidential race.**

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A street-food salesgirl who became a tech entrepreneur and senator is shaking up the contest to succeed Mexico's popular president and offering many voters the first real alternative to her country's dominant party.

Xóchitl Gálvez, 60, helped her family as a girl by selling tamales on the street. Today the straight-talking opposition senator is a long shot against Andrés Manuel López Obrador's Morena party, which holds Congress and 22 of Mexico's 32 states.

Despite her slim chances, Gálvez seems to have shaken the president so badly that he's been insult-

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ing her almost daily during his morning briefings. The opposition senator comfortably sits in the national spotlight nearly a year ahead of the June 2, 2024 national election.

"She fills a space that was completely empty," said Roy Campos, president of polling firm Mitofsky Group. "All of the opposition population starts to see her and it generates hope."

Next year's election is López Obrador's chance to show if he has built a political movement that can outlast his charismatic leadership. Whoever his successor is, they will have to tackle persistently high levels of violence, heavily armed drug cartels and migration across the nearly 2,000-mile border with the United States.

Campos's group has not conducted an opposition candidate survey but that doesn't prevent him from feeling comfortable declaring Gálvez a "political phenomenon."

A political independent who initially set her sights on competing to be Mexico City mayor and often travels the sprawling capital on a bicycle, Gálvez entered the Senate chamber in December dressed as a dinosaur, an allusion to party leaders known known for their archaic, unmovable practices. At the time, López Obrador had proposed electoral reforms that critics said would weaken the country's National Electoral Institute. The Senate passed them earlier this year, but the Supreme Court later blocked them from taking effect.

Gálvez never shies from conflict with López Obrador. She went to a judge in December asking for an order to let her speak at the president's daily press briefing. She was granted the order, but the president rejected it.

Gálvez's fluid use of profanity, contrasting with her comfort moving in political circles, is an advantage with much of the working class, and with many young Mexicans. She registered this month to compete for the presidential nomination of a broad opposition coalition — the historically leftist PRD, the conservative PAN and the PRI that ruled Mexico for 70 years — joking that López Obrador was her campaign manager.

López Obrador remains highly popular, and while he cannot run for another six-year term, several high-profile members of his Morena party have been jockeying fiercely for months. They include Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, Foreign Affairs Secretary Marcelo Ebrard and Interior Secretary Adan Augusto, who all agreed to resign their positions last month to campaign in earnest.

Their faces are plastered on billboards across the country, while Gálvez makes clever videos often shot with her own iPhone, some viewed millions of times.

Mexican society is looking for someone new to believe in, Gálvez told The Associated Press.

"We'll have to see how much I manage to connect and how much I can convince," she recently told the AP.

Growing up poor in the central state of Hidalgo, her father was an Indigenous Otomi schoolteacher. He was also abusive, macho and alcoholic, Gálvez said. She learned to speak his native ñähñu as a child, holds her Indigenous roots close and favors wearing embroidered huipils.

As a girl, she sold gelatin and tamales to help her family. She worked as a scribe in a local civil registry office as a teen. At 16, she moved by herself to Mexico City and worked as a phone operator until earning a scholarship that allowed her to study computer science. Then she started a technology company, that, as López Obrador noted recently, has won government contracts.

Gálvez served as Indigenous affairs minister for President Vicente Fox, a plain-talking politician from the conservative National Action Party (PAN) who broke the Institutional Revolutionary Party's 70-year stranglehold on Mexican politics.

While she entered the Senate with the PAN, she has registered to compete for the nomination of the broad coalition of the country's traditional parties.

Galvez has assured PAN voters that she wants to keep advocating for them despite her moving to win over other parties with interests outside the traditional conservative base.

Her sense of humor and ability to speak comfortably, even at times profanely, with people in the street are characteristics she shares with López Obrador. They may be why he treats her as a threat.

The president accuses Gálvez of using her humble origins and speech to "trick" the poor, who make up much of his base of support. Instead, he paints her the candidate of the rich, the "oligarchs" and "conservatives."

She dismisses him as a fearful male chauvinist.

"He's going to try to deny my origins and deny my work, but there it is," she said.

"I had to face a very patriarchal culture, very macho, where as women we weren't seen as anything else but for work," she said.

Gálvez said she's not put off by the challenge posed by the favorites from the president's party.

"They're there because they want to continue doing the same as the president," she said. "They don't have their own identity."

Víctor Gordoá, president of Public Image Group, said Gálvez's life story is the kind that can reach people across social strata, resonating with the working class who see themselves in Gálvez, as well as the wealthy who see her as a potential weapon who has been untouchable so far.

## **RFK Jr. denies making antisemitic comments as congressional Republicans give him a platform**

By LISA MASCARO and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Robert F. Kennedy Jr. worked to defend himself Thursday against accusations that he traffics in racist and hateful online conspiracy theories, testifying at a House hearing on government censorship despite requests from outside groups to disinvite the Democratic presidential candidate after his recent antisemitic remarks.

The Republican-led Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government is amplifying GOP claims that conservatives and others are being unfairly targeted by technology companies that routinely work with the government to try to stem the spread of disinformation online. Democrats argued that free speech comes with responsibilities not to spread misinformation, particularly when it fans violence.

In opening remarks, Kennedy invoked his famous family's legacy in decrying the complaints of racism and antisemitism against him.

"This is an attempt to censor a censorship hearing," said Kennedy, the son of Robert F. Kennedy and the nephew of President John F. Kennedy.

Growing animated at times, Kennedy defended his statements, which have delved into race, vaccine safety and other issues, as neither "racist or antisemitic." He said his family has long believed in the First Amendment right to free speech.

"The First Amendment was not written for easy speech," Kennedy said. "It was written for the speech that nobody likes you for."

Republicans are eager to elevate Kennedy after he announced in April he was mounting a long-shot Democratic primary challenge to President Joe Biden. Kennedy's presidential campaign chairman, Dennis Kucinich, the former congressman and past presidential contender, sat in the front row behind him during the more-than-three-hours hearing.

The Big Tech companies have adamantly denied the GOP assertions and say they enforce their rules impartially for everyone regardless of ideology or political affiliation. And researchers have not found widespread evidence that social media companies are biased against conservative news, posts or materials.

The top Democrat on the House panel, Del. Stacey Plaskett of the Virgin Islands, said the Republican majority was giving a platform to Kennedy and others to promote conspiracy theories and a rallying cry for "bigotry and hate."

"This is not the kind of free speech I know," Plaskett said.

Plaskett warned against misinformation from Russia and other U.S. adversaries who have interfered in American elections and are expected to meddle again in the 2024 election.

Often emotional and heated, Thursday's hearing came as subcommittee chairman Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, portrayed what he claimed were examples of censorship, including a White House request to Twitter to remove a race-based post from Kennedy about COVID-19 vaccines.

"It's why Mr. Kennedy is running for president — it's to stop, to help us expose and stop what's going

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on," Jordan said.

A watchdog group asked Jordan to drop the invitation to Kennedy after he suggested COVID-19 could have been "ethnically targeted" to spare Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese people.

In those filmed remarks first published by The New York Post, Kennedy said "there is an argument" that COVID-19 "is ethnically targeted" and that it "attacks certain races disproportionately."

After the video was made public, Kennedy posted on Twitter that his words were twisted and denied ever suggesting that COVID-19 was deliberately engineered to spare Jewish people. He called for the Post's article to be retracted.

A clip from the video was aired at the hearing.

Kennedy has a history of comparing vaccines — widely credited with saving millions of lives — with the genocide of the Holocaust during Nazi Germany, comments for which he has sometimes apologized.

In heated exchanges, Democrats implored Kennedy and Republicans to consider the fallout from their words and actions — and noted that one of the posts Republicans had singled out at the hearing was not removed by any censors.

"Hate speech has consequences," said Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., who made reference to the mass shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue, among others. He called the hearing Orwellian.

Rep. Sylvia Garcia, D-Texas, said she received a death threat after the last hearing of the Weaponization panel.

When Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., read aloud Kennedy's postings and questioned his intent, Kennedy interjected that she was "slandering me" and claimed what the congresswoman was saying was a lie.

An organization that Kennedy founded, Children's Health Defense, currently has a lawsuit pending against a number of news organizations, among them The Associated Press, accusing them of violating antitrust laws by taking action to identify misinformation, including about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines.

Ahead of the hearing, Jordan said that while he disagreed with Kennedy's remarks, he was not about to drop him from the panel. Speaker Kevin McCarthy took a similar view, saying he did not want to censor Kennedy.

The panel wants to probe the way the federal government works with technology companies to flag postings that contain false information or downright lies. Hanging over the debate is part of federal communications law, Section 230, which shields technology companies like Twitter and Facebook from liability over what's said on their platforms.

Lawmakers on the panel were also hearing testimony from Emma-Jo Morris, journalist at Breitbart News, who has reported extensively on Biden's son, Hunter Biden; and D. John Sauer, a former Solicitor General in Missouri who is now a special Assistant Attorney General at the Louisiana Department of Justice involved in the lawsuit against the Biden administration.

Morris tweeted part of her opening remarks in which she described an "elaborate censorship conspiracy" that she claimed sought to halt her reporting of Hunter Biden.

A witness called by Democrats, Maya Wiley, the president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, implored the lawmakers to consider the platforms where Americans share views — but also "how deeply vital that they be based in fact, not fiction."

The U.S. has been hesitant to regulate the social media giants, even as outside groups warn of the rise of hate speech and misinformation that can be erosive to civil society.

\_\_\_ The Associated Press receives support from several private foundations to enhance its explanatory coverage of elections and democracy. See more about AP's democracy initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Hazing remains ingrained in team sports and experts say they see increase in sexualized attacks

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Georgia coach Kirby Smart remembers having his head shaved when he was a freshman football player at his alma mater back in the mid-1990s and busing tables after team meals.

Older players putting the newbies in their place by hazing remains ingrained in team sports at all levels in the United States. That is not the way Smart wants to run the Bulldogs, who have won two straight national championships.

"Now, those freshmen, the guys we sign, they have to play," Smart said this week at Southeastern Conference media days. "So when you create this separation of, they have to do this and they have to do that, they're not ready to play. They're like a different team."

While major college sports programs have become multimillion-dollar, high-stakes businesses run more like professional teams, ritualistic hazing remains a problematic tradition within them. School rules forbidding hazing, more than 40 state laws against it and horror story after horror story have not stopped it.

"I think it's happening more often than people realize and we see it making the headlines around what's happening in high school locker rooms," said Elizabeth Allan, a professor at the University of Maine who has studied hazing on campus. "And so students are coming to college often having experienced hazing in their high school athletics programs."

Northwestern fired longtime football coach Pat Fitzgerald after a university investigation found allegations of hazing by 11 current or former players, including "forced participation, nudity and sexualized acts of a degrading nature." Fitzgerald, who was reportedly making more than \$5 million per year, was let go after he was initially given a two-week suspension.

The school is now facing at least two lawsuits by former players and more are possible. Players said hazing was so rampant in the football program it had become normalized.

"You're overpowered, you're dominated by the culture," said Lloyd Yates, a member of the Northwestern football team from 2015-17.

Allan said studies have shown about half of all students report experiencing some type of hazing in high school. She said hazing can be found wherever a large group is trying to establish a hierarchy.

"If you understand hazing as a form of an abuse of power, then you can see how in those environments or group situations where people are jockeying for power or trying to enforce some kind of hierarchies, hazing is an easy way to kind of make clear who's got the power," she said.

She added that often those who have been hazed are conditioned to perpetuate the bad behavior.

"It was done to me, so ... this is what we do here," Allan said.

Forty-four states, including Illinois, have laws against hazing; some treat it as a felony.

The NCAA, the largest governing body for college sports in the United States that includes more than 1,100 member schools and more than 400,000 athletes, does not have rules regarding hazing. Instead, the association defers to state laws and school policies.

Particularly egregious and violent acts of hazing routinely draw headlines. Fraternities and other school-based groups have often been involved despite the efforts of organizations like the Anti-Hazing Coalition.

Members of the Florida A&M marching band were convicted of manslaughter and felony hazing for the 2011 beating death of a bandmate, Robert Champion, and were given multiyear prison sentences. A Minnesota high school football team suspended its season and fired its coach in 2021 after a hazing incident; a former student and football player was given probation for assaulting the victim with a toilet plunger.

Susan Lipkins, a psychologist and researcher who studies hazing, said she believes incidents have increased in "frequency and severity, and in sexuality."

"So the reason it has become more sexualized is that it is the quickest way to humiliate someone and to make them powerless," Lipkins said.

Experts say even seemingly harmless acts of hazing that still occur in the professional ranks — younger players being forced to carry equipment, wear silly costumes in public or clean up after team events —

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should be discouraged by coaches.

Allan said a study involving NCAA Division III college athletes back up what was suspected.

"In general, hazing goes from mild to severe," Lipkins said.

Vanderbilt linebacker Ethan Barr said head coach Clark Lea sent a group text to the team with a link to a news story about the Northwestern hazing scandal.

"I don't know all too much about it, but it was definitely a little stunning to see that kind of behavior not stop when people knew about it," Barr said.

Lea said he doesn't directly address hazing with his players, but the goal is to create an environment where they have a positive experience — and for them to be comfortable coming forward if something is preventing that.

Gerry DiNardo was the head coach at Vanderbilt, LSU and Indiana from 1991-2004. He said he never experienced hazing as a player at Notre Dame in the early 1970s and never wanted it in his programs.

DiNardo, now an analyst for the Big Ten Network, said he went so far as to tell his players that they could not join fraternities that hazed their pledges. These days, DiNardo can't imagine high-level recruits putting up with hazing and choosing to play for programs where it is a tradition.

"Everyone says we got a great culture. But what is a culture?" DiNardo said. "It's the way we do things. And if you have people doing things like we've heard described, you know, that's toxic culture."

AP Sports Writer Teresa M. Walker contributed.

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## Home sales in June fell to the slowest pace since January with near-historic low inventory for sale

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell in June to the slowest pace since January, as a near-historic low number of homes for sale and rising mortgage rates kept many would-be homebuyers on the sidelines. The national median sales price fell on an annual basis for the fifth month in a row, though fierce competition led to about one-third of homes selling for more than their list price.

Existing home sales fell 3.3% last month from May to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.16 million, the National Association of Realtors said Thursday. That's slightly below what economists were expecting, according to FactSet, and marks the slowest sales pace since January.

Sales sank 18.9% compared with June last year. All told, sales are down 23% through the first half of this year.

The national median sales price fell 0.9% from June last year to \$410,200. That's the smallest annual decline since March. While down from a year earlier, the median sales price rose from the previous month, reaching the second-highest level on records going back to January 1999.

"Perhaps home prices are beginning to firm up or at least certainly any downward pressure is ending," said Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist.

The latest housing market figures are more evidence that even with prices easing back on an annual basis after rising for more than a decade many house hunters are being held back by a persistently low inventory of homes for sale.

Some 1.08 million homes remained on the market by the end of June, down 13.6% from a year earlier, the NAR said. That amounts to a 3.1-month supply at the current sales pace. In a more balanced market between buyers and sellers, there is a 5- to 6-month supply.

The shortage of homes for sale has kept the market competitive, driving bidding wars in many places, especially for the most affordable homes. About one-third of homes purchased last month sold for above



their list price, and 76% of homes sold in June were on the market for less than a month.

"This is a tough market to be a buyer," Yun said.

The combination of high borrowing costs and intense competition for the most affordable homes on the market is shutting out many first-time buyers. They accounted for 27% of home sales last month, down from 28% in May and 30% in June last year, the NAR said. In a normal housing market, that would be 40%.

The U.S. housing market has yet to emerge from a slump that started a little more than a year ago, when the average rate on a 30-year mortgage began to climb from ultra-low levels as the Federal Reserve began raising its short-term rate in its fight against inflation.

Global demand for U.S. Treasuries, which lenders use as a guide to pricing loans, investors' expectations for future inflation and what the Fed does with interest rates influence rates on home loans.

The average rate on a 30-year home loan is still more than double what it was two years ago, when the ultra-low rates spurred a wave of home sales and refinancing. Weekly average rates on a 30-year mortgage ranged between 6.67% and 6.79% in June, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac. This week, the average rate slipped to 6.78%, the lowest level in four weeks. A year ago, the rate averaged 5.54%.

Higher mortgage rates can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for homebuyers on top of already high home prices. They also discourage homeowners who locked in those low rates two years ago from selling -- one reason the supply of homes for sale has been low even during the traditionally busy spring homebuying season.

## Oklahoma executes a man for the 1995 butcher knife slaying of a Tulsa woman

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

McALESTER, Okla. (AP) — Oklahoma executed a man Thursday for stabbing a Tulsa woman to death with a butcher knife in 1995 after his escape from a prison work center.

Jemaine Cannon, 51, received a lethal injection at 10:01 a.m. and was pronounced dead 12 minutes later at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester. It was the second execution in Oklahoma this year and the ninth since the state resumed lethal injections in 2021.

Cannon was convicted of killing 20-year-old Sharonda Clark, a mother of two with whom Cannon had been living at an apartment in Tulsa after his escape weeks earlier from a prison work center in southwest Oklahoma. Cannon had been serving a 15-year sentence for the violent assault of another woman who suffered permanent injuries after prosecutors say Cannon raped her and beat her viciously with a claw hammer, iron and kitchen toaster.

A federal appeals court late Wednesday denied Cannon's last-minute appeal seeking a stay of execution in which Cannon claimed, among other things, that he was Native American and not subject to Oklahoma jurisdiction. Asked if he had any last words, Cannon said: "Yes, I confess with my mouth and believe in my heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. Therefore I am saved. Thank you."

Cannon was executed on the same day that Alabama planned to execute James Barber for the 2001 beating death of a woman. It would be Alabama's first lethal injection after a pause in executions following a string of problems with inserting the IVs.

Clark's eldest daughter, Yeh-Sehn White, and Clark's sister, Shaya Duncan, witnessed Cannon's execution and described it as peaceful.

"In my opinion, he died in a very favorable way," White said. "Unfortunately my mom did not have that opportunity."

Cannon claimed at a clemency hearing before the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board last month that he killed Clark in self-defense.

"I am deeply disheartened that the act of defending my life and the acts that she initiated against me ever happened," Cannon told the board via a video feed from the state penitentiary.

Cannon's attorney, Mark Henricksen, also told the panel that Cannon's trial and appellate attorneys were ineffective for not presenting evidence to support that claim. His trial attorneys presented no witnesses

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or exhibits and rested after prosecutors presented their case, Henricksen said.

In a statement sent to The Associated Press this week, Henricksen said the state's decision to proceed with Cannon's execution amounted to "historic barbarism."

"Mr. Cannon has endured abuse and neglect for fifty years by those charged with his care," Henricksen said. "He sits in his cell a model prisoner. He is nearly deaf, blind, and nearing death by natural causes. The decision to proceed with this particular execution is obscene."

But White and prosecutors from the attorney general's office urged the state to execute Cannon, and the board rejected clemency on a 3-2 vote..

Oklahoma uses a three-drug lethal injection protocol beginning with the sedative midazolam, followed by the paralytic vecuronium bromide and finally potassium chloride, which stops the heart. The state had one of the nation's busiest death chambers until problems in 2014 and 2015 led to a de facto moratorium.

Richard Glossip was just hours from being executed in September 2015 when prison officials realized they received the wrong lethal drug. It was later learned that the same wrong drug had been used to execute an inmate in January 2015.

The drug mix-ups followed a botched execution in April 2014 in which inmate Clayton Lockett struggled on a gurney before dying 43 minutes into his lethal injection — and after the state's prisons chief ordered executioners to stop. \_\_\_ Associated Press writer Jake Bleiberg contributed to this report.

## **Fatal shooting hours before the Women's World Cup began in New Zealand appears to be an isolated act**

By NICK PERRY and JENNA FRYER Associated Press

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP) — A gunman opened fire on terrified workers on a construction site in downtown Auckland early Thursday, killing two people hours before New Zealand hosted the first game of the Women's World Cup. The man was found dead, and authorities said his motive appeared to be connected to his previous work at the site.

New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said the shooting was an isolated act, and the FIFA tournament opened as scheduled with a game between the home team and Norway, though with tighter security and many jarred in a country where such attacks are rare. A large crowd, including the prime minister, still showed up at the stadium, and a moment of silence was held for the victims of the shooting, which also left a police officer and four civilians injured.

"I want to reiterate that there is no wider national security threat," said Hipkins. "This appears to be the action of one individual."

Police Commissioner Andrew Coster said the gunman was a 24-year-old who had a history of family violence and was serving a sentence of home detention but had previously worked at the building site and had an exemption to do so. He said the man's motive appeared to be connected to that work.

The shooting began early in the morning, as the man, armed with a shotgun, moved through the unfinished building, firing at people as many fled or hid, Coster said. The man then barricaded himself in an elevator shaft, and a SWAT-type team moved in.

"The offender fired at police, injuring an officer," Coster said. "Shots were exchanged and the offender was later found deceased."

Coster said it wasn't yet clear whether police had shot the man or he had killed himself. He said the man didn't have a gun license and so shouldn't have been in possession of a firearm, though the shotgun used is not on a list of banned weapons.

Hipkins praised police for arriving within minutes of the first emergency call.

"These kinds of situations move fast, and the actions of those who risk their lives to save others are nothing short of heroic," Hipkins said.

The shooting happened near hotels where soccer teams have been staying ahead of the opening of the Women's World Cup, which New Zealand is jointly hosting with Australia.

Armed police officers placed an area in Auckland's downtown on heavy lockdown, with streets cordoned

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off surrounding the harbor ferry terminal, which is popular with tourists. Police ordered bystanders to disperse and told people inside office buildings to shelter in place.

Norway captain Maren Mjelde said her teammates were woken up abruptly when a helicopter began hovering outside the hotel window.

"We felt safe the whole time," she said in a statement. "FIFA has a good security system at the hotel, and we have our own security officer in the squad. Everyone seems calm and we are preparing as normal for the game tonight."

Team USA said all its players and staff were safe and accounted for. It said the team was in contact with local authorities and proceeding with its daily schedule.

New Zealand has tight gun laws, imposed in 2019 after the country's worst mass shooting prompted a sea change in attitudes toward guns. In that attack, a shooter killed 51 Muslim worshippers at two Christchurch mosques during Friday prayers.

The prime minister at the time, Jacinda Ardern, vowed to ban most semiautomatic weapons within a month and she succeeded, with only a single member of Parliament voting against the ban.

A subsequent buyback scheme saw gun owners hand over more than 50,000 of the newly banned weapons to police in exchange for cash.

Jennifer Deering, a tourist from Orlando, Florida, said she was initially shocked to learn of the shooting after a tour guide had previously assured her that Auckland "was very safe here, other than some petty thieves."

Then she went about her day.

"It's sad that it's normal for us (Americans) to see something like this on the news," she added.

Coster said the officer who was shot was taken to a nearby hospital in critical condition, had stabilized, and was expected to undergo surgery. He said the others had injuries ranging from moderate to critical. It wasn't immediately clear if all those injured had been shot.

"I want to acknowledge that this has been a shocking and traumatic event for those people who came to work and found themselves in the middle of an armed emergency," Coster said. "Thankfully, many people were able to escape the building, but I know for those who hid or remained trapped, this was a terrifying experience."

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said that he and Secretary-General Fatma Samoura had met with New Zealand Sports Minister Grant Robertson following the shooting to discuss security arrangements for the tournament.

Tourism New Zealand canceled a media welcome party that was to have been held Thursday afternoon at a location within the cordoned-off area downtown.

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Perry reported from Wellington, New Zealand.

## **India's Modi breaks silence over ethnic violence in Manipur after a video shows mob molesting women**

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Prime Minister Narendra Modi broke more than two months of public silence over deadly ethnic clashes in India's northeast, saying Thursday that the assaults of two women as they were being paraded naked by a mob in Manipur state were unforgivable.

A video showing the assaults triggered massive outrage and was widely shared on social media late Wednesday despite the internet being largely blocked and journalists being locked out in the remote state. It shows two naked women surrounded by scores of young men who grope their genitals and drag them to a field.

"The guilty will not be spared. What has happened to the daughters of Manipur can never be forgiven," Modi told reporters before a parliamentary session as he made his first public comments related to the Manipur conflict.

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Without referring to the violence directly, Modi urged heads of state governments to ensure the safety of women and said the incident was "shameful for any civilized nation."

"My heart is filled with pain and anger," he said.

The ethnic violence depicted in the video was emblematic of the near-civil war in Manipur, where mobs rampaged through villages and torched houses, leaving more than 130 people dead since May.

The conflict was sparked by an affirmative action controversy in which Christian Kukis protested a demand from the mostly Hindu Meiteis for a special status that would let them buy land in the hills populated by Kukis and other tribal groups and get a share of government jobs.

The clashes have persisted despite the army's presence in Manipur, a state of 3.7 million people tucked in the mountains on India's border with Myanmar that is now divided in two ethnic zones. The warring factions have also formed armed militias, and isolated villages are still raked with gunfire. More than 60,000 people have fled to packed relief camps.

Police said the assault on the two women happened May 4, a day after the violence started in the state. According to a police complaint filed May 18, the two women were part of a family attacked by a mob that killed its two male members. The complaint alleges rape and murder by "unknown miscreants."

The state police have made a first arrest in the case, Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh said on Twitter, without specifying the number of people who were apprehended.

"A thorough investigation is currently underway and we will ensure strict action is taken against all the perpetrators, including considering the possibility of capital punishment. Let it be known, there is absolutely no place for such heinous acts in our society," Singh said.

India's Supreme Court, meanwhile, expressed concern over the assault and asked the government to inform the court about the steps it has taken to catch those responsible.

"In a constitutional democracy, it is unacceptable. If the government does not act, we will," Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said.

The victims are from the Kuki-Zo community, according to the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum, a tribal organization in Manipur. One of them told The Associated Press that the men who assaulted the two women were part of a Meitei mob that had earlier torched their village.

"They forced us to remove our clothes and said we will be killed if we don't do as told. Then they made us walk naked. They abused us. They touched us everywhere ... on our breasts, our genitals," she said over the phone from Manipur.

The woman said the duo was then led into a field where they were both sexually assaulted. The two women are now safe in a refugee camp.

India's Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani called the incident "condemnable and downright inhuman." She said Thursday that investigations were underway and that "no effort will be spared to bring perpetrators to justice."

India's main opposition Congress party president Mallikarjun Kharge, however, accused the ruling Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party of "turning democracy and the rule of law into mobocracy."

Kharge said Modi should speak about Manipur in Parliament, a demand that has been made by other opposition parties and rights activists.

"India will never forgive your silence," he wrote on Twitter.

Last week, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on Indian authorities to take action to stop the violence in Manipur and protect religious minorities, especially Christians. India's foreign ministry condemned the resolution, describing it as "interference" in its internal affairs.

## Today in History: July 21, guilty verdict in Scopes "Monkey Trial"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, July 21, the 202nd day of 2023. There are 163 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On July 21, 1925, the so-called "Monkey Trial" ended in Dayton, Tennessee, with John T. Scopes found guilty of violating state law for teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution. (The conviction was later overturned.)

On this date:

In 1861, during the Civil War, the first Battle of Bull Run was fought at Manassas, Virginia, resulting in a Confederate victory.

In 1944, American forces landed on Guam during World War II, capturing it from the Japanese some three weeks later.

In 1954, the Geneva Conference concluded with accords dividing Vietnam into northern and southern entities.

In 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin blasted off from the moon aboard the ascent stage of the lunar module for docking with the command module.

In 1972, the Irish Republican Army carried out 22 bombings in Belfast, Northern Ireland, killing nine people and injuring 130 in what became known as "Bloody Friday."

In 1998, astronaut Alan Shepard, the first American to travel to space, died in Monterey, California, at age 74.

In 1999, Navy divers found and recovered the bodies of John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn, and sister-in-law, Lauren Bessette (bih-SEHT'), in the wreckage of Kennedy's plane in the Atlantic Ocean off Martha's Vineyard.

In 2002, Ernie Els won the British Open in the first sudden-death finish in the 142-year history of the tournament.

In 2008, former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic (RA'-doh-van KA'-ra-jich), one of the world's top war crimes fugitives, was arrested in a Belgrade suburb by Serbian security forces. (He was sentenced by a U.N. court in 2019 to life imprisonment after being convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.)

In 2009, prosecutors in Cambridge, Massachusetts, dropped a disorderly conduct charge against prominent Black scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr., who was arrested by a white officer at his home near Harvard University after a report of a break-in.

In 2011, the 30-year-old space shuttle program ended as Atlantis landed at Cape Canaveral, Florida, after the 135th shuttle flight.

In 2016, Donald Trump accepted the GOP presidential nomination with a speech in which he pledged to cheering Republicans and still-skeptical voters that as president, he would restore the safety they feared they were losing, strictly curb immigration and save the nation from what he said was Hillary Clinton's record of "death, destruction, terrorism and weakness."

Ten years ago: Belgium's King Albert abdicated after a 20-year reign; his son Philippe took over as the fractured nation's seventh king. Phil Mickelson won the British Open, shooting a 5-under 66 to match the best round of the tournament and win his first claret jug. Britain's Chris Froome won the 100th Tour de France.

Five years ago: Reacting to the disclosure that his former lawyer had secretly taped their discussion about a potential payment for a former Playboy model, President Donald Trump called such taping "totally unheard of & perhaps illegal," but added that he "did nothing wrong." A store employee was shot and killed when a gunman who was being chased by police ran into a busy Los Angeles supermarket, where he held hostages for about three hours before handcuffing himself and surrendering; police determined that the employee, Melyda Corado, had been hit by a bullet fired by a police officer during an exchange of fire with the suspect.

One year ago: The House Jan. 6 committee made the case in its final hearing that Donald Trump's lies about a stolen election fueled the grisly Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol. The panel delved into 187 minutes in which it said Trump did nothing to stop the violence but instead "gleefully" watched on television. President Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 and isolated with "very mild symptoms," the White House said. A federal judge sentenced former Minneapolis police Officer Thomas Lane to 2 1/2 years in prison for violating George Floyd's civil rights, calling Lane's role in the restraint that killed Floyd "a very

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serious offense in which a life was lost" but handing down a sentence well below what prosecutors and Floyd's family sought.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Norman Jewison is 97. Actor Leigh Lawson is 80. Singer Yusuf Islam (also known as Cat Stevens) is 75. Cartoonist Garry Trudeau is 75. Actor Jamey Sheridan is 72. Rock singer-musician Eric Bazilian (The Hooters) is 70. Comedian Jon Lovitz is 66. Actor Lance Guest is 63. Actor Matt Mulhern is 63. Comedian Greg Behrendt is 60. Retired soccer player Brandi Chastain is 55. Rock singer Emerson Hart is 54. Rock-soul singer Michael Fitzpatrick (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 53. Actor Alysia Reiner is 53. Country singer Paul Brandt is 51. Christian rock musician Korey Cooper (Skillet) is 51. Actor Ali Landry is 50. Actor-comedian Steve Byrne is 49. Rock musician Tato Melgar (Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real) is 46. Actor Justin Bartha is 45. Actor Josh Hartnett is 45. Contemporary Christian singer Brandon Heath is 45. Actor Sprague Grayden is 45. Reggae singer Damian Marley is 45. Country singer Brad Mates (Emerson Drive) is 45. Former MLB All-Star pitcher CC Sabathia (suh-BATH'-ee-uh) is 43. Singer Blake Lewis ("American Idol") is 42. Latin singer Romeo Santos is 42. Rock musician Johan Carlsson (Carolina Liar) is 39. Actor Vanessa Lengies (LEHN'-jeez) is 38. Actor Betty Gilpin is 37. Actor Rory Culkin is 34. Actor Jamie Waylett ("Harry Potter" films) is 34. Figure skater Rachael Flatt is 31.