

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, July 31

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, green beans, Jell-O with fruit, whole wheat bread.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Food Pantry open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Groton Community Center
State Legion Tournament in Redfield
First allowable day for soccer practice

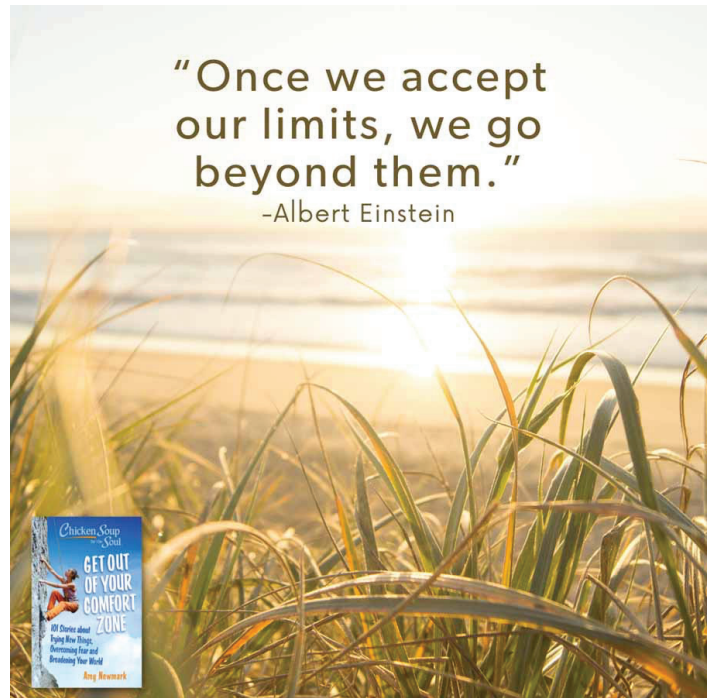
Tuesday, Aug. 1

Senior Menu: Goulash, 7 layer salad, garlic toast, mixed fruit.
The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 2

Senior Menu: Breaded pork cutlet, scalloped potatoes, Harvard beets, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.
Groton Chamber meeting, noon, at City Hall
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Freshmen Confirmation Info (students and parents), 6 p.m.; Youth Gathering Info (8th-12th), 7 p.m.

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



United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

Thursday, Aug. 3

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, corn, Mandarin orange salad, whole wheat bread.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 4

Senior Menu: Chicken pasta salad, grape juice, muffin, watermelon, carrots.
Wine on Nine Golf Event
State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Lennox: Groton vs. SF Christian 30 minutes after the second game.

Saturday, Aug. 5

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.
State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Lennox

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

World in Brief

A suicide bombing in Pakistan killed at least 55 people and injured more than 130 others at a political rally in the northwest district of Bajaur.

70 million Americans are under heat advisories as the southeastern U.S. could break records with temperatures of 115 degrees. A massive wildfire in California's Mojave National Preserve spread into Nevada amid unpredictable winds.

The French embassy in Niger was attacked by supporters of the coup as Western African nations threatened to use

force and impose sanctions if President Mohammed Bazoum is not reinstated within a week.

House Republicans called out the Justice Department for what they're saying is an obstruction into their investigation of Hunter Biden and his business dealings.

A judge has temporarily blocked an Arkansas law that brings criminal charges against librarians and booksellers for providing "harmful" material to minors.

Australian authorities say there is no hope of finding alive any of the four crew members of a military helicopter involved in a "catastrophic" crash on Friday.

A shooting at a large party in Muncie, Indiana, left at least one dead and 19 wounded, including some critically.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, four people have been killed by a series of missile strikes on the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih, with rescue teams searching through rubble for more survivors.

TALKING POINTS

"I think Mitch McConnell did an amazing job when it comes to our judiciary. When we look at the judges, when we look at the Supreme Court he's been a great leader, But I do think that this is one—you know, we've gotta stop electing people because they look good in a picture and they hold a baby well. We've got to stop electing people because we like them, and they've been there a long time, that's actually the problem," Nikki Haley making a case for term limits for politicians.

"What we see [in the Barbie movie] is gays, trans people, and women who have taken over the world, i.e. Barbies. There's nothing about some kind of union, that there can be a man and a woman, about love. There's nothing about that...Barbie should be removed from the market, along with the Mattel company, because they bring the LGBT agenda here," Russian lawmaker Maria Butina calling on Moscow to ban Barbie dolls over its depiction in the recent movie.

It made me feel bad that someone who has accomplished a lot in the league is that insecure that they have to take another man down to set themselves up for some easy fall if it doesn't go well for that team this year. I think it was way out of line, inappropriate, and I think he needs to keep my coaches' names out of his mouth," New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers responding to new Broncos coach Sean Payton calling Nathaniel Hackett's coaching gig at Denver "one of the worst" in the history of the NFL.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

Republican presidential candidate and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is expected to appear for a 6 p.m. ET Fox News interview with Special Report anchor Bret Baier.

Earnings season continues this week with tech giants like Apple and Amazon set to report their quarterly results. We'll also get updates on the job market, with job openings, ADP employment, and nonfarm payrolls due from Tuesday.

E-commerce giant Amazon shuts down its Halo services, which sells health and sleep trackers. Halo devices can be recycled via the Amazon Recycling Program.

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August 2023 Community Calendar

Tuesday, Aug. 1

Senior Menu: Goulash, 7 layer salad, garlic toast, mixed fruit.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 2

Senior Menu: Breaded pork cutlet, scalloped potatoes, Harvard beets, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.

Groton Chamber meeting, noon, at City Hall

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Freshmen Confirmation Info (students and parents), 6 p.m.; Youth Gathering Info (8th-12th), 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

Thursday, Aug. 3

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, corn, Mandarin orange salad, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 4

Senior Menu: Chicken pasta salad, grape juice, muffin, watermelon, carrots.

Wine on Nine Golf Event

State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Lennox: Groton vs. SF Christian 30 minutes after the second game.

Saturday, Aug. 5

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Lennox

Sunday, Aug. 6

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m. (Daniel and Karla Grenz will be speaking)

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.

State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Lennox

Groton CM&A: Vacation Bible School (Keepers of the Kingdom), 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 7

Senior Menu: Turkey sub with lettuce, tomato and cheese, macaroni salad with peas, peaches, whole wheat bread.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

School Supply Drive, Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.; Sunday school meeting, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Vacation Bible School, 5:30 p.m.

Groton CM&A: Vacation Bible School (Keepers of the Kingdom), 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

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TREE TRIMMING & REMOVAL
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Tuesday, Aug. 8

Senior Menu: New England ham dinner, dinner roll, fruit cocktail.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Vacation Bible School, 5:30 p.m.

Groton CM&A: Vacation Bible School (Keepers of the Kingdom), 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 9

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, acini depepi fruit salad.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

Groton CM&A: Vacation Bible School (Keepers of the Kingdom), 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 10

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, California blend, peaches, whole wheat bread.

Family Fun Fest, Downtown Groton, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Summer Splash, Downtown Groton, 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Groton CM&A: Vacation Bible School (Keepers of the Kingdom), 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 11

Senior Menu: Taco salad with chips, Mexican rice with black beans, Mandarin oranges, pineapple, breadstick.

Girls soccer hosts West Central: Varsity at 11 a.m., JV at 1 p.m.

Baseball Golf Tourney Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course

Saturday, Aug. 12

Girls Soccer hosts Dakota Valley: Varsity at 1 p.m., JV at 2:30 p.m.

Boys Soccer at Freeman Academy, 1 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

Sunday, Aug. 13

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 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.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 14

Senior Menu: Chicken rice casserole, mixed vegetables, chocolate pudding with banana, whole wheat bread.

Boys Golf at Sioux Valley (Volga), 10 a.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

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

Tuesday, Aug. 15

Senior Menu: Baked pork chops, creamy noodles, California blend, apple sauce, whole wheat bread.

Girls Soccer hosts Garretson, 6 p.m.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde Ad Council City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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Wednesday, Aug. 16

Senior Menu: Beef stew, biscuit, Waldorf salad, muffin, tomato juice.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

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

Thursday, Aug. 17

Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin potatoes, broccoli/cauliflower blend, fruit, cookie, whole wheat bread.

Boys Golf at Milbank, 10 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA "Do Day", 1:30 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 18

Senior Menu: Chicken strips, tri-tators, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Girls Soccer hosts Belle Fourche, 4 p.m.

Boys Soccer hosts Belle Fourche, 6 p.m.

Football hosts Aberdeen Roncalli, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 19

Girls Soccer hosts St. Thomas More, 11 a.m.

Boys Soccer hosts St. Thomas More, 1 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

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

Sunday, Aug. 20

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Worship at Avantara, 3 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 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.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 21

Senior menu: Lasagna rotini, spinach salad with dressing, ambrosia fruit salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.

Faculty In-Service

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

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

Tuesday, Aug. 22

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, oriental blend vegetables, fruit, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread.

Faculty In-Service

Northeast Conference Boys Golf at Redfield, 10 a.m.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 23

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, cooked carrots.

Senior Menu: Chicken cordon bleu hot dish, broccoli with carrots, pears, chocolate pudding, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

Thursday, Aug. 24

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, fries.

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, carrots, apricots, whole wheat bread.

Volleyball hosts Hamlin, 6 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 25

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn.

Senior Menu: Hamburger gravy over mashed potatoes, green beans, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.

Football at Redfield, 7 p.m.

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Saturday, Aug. 26

Girls Soccer at Vermillion, 1 p.m.
Boys Soccer at Vermillion, 2:30 p.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 27

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 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.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 28

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzini, mixed vegetables, honey fruit salad, lettuce salad with dressing, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.
School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, green beans.
Girls Soccer at Mitchell, 4 p.m.
Boys Soccer at Mitchell, 6 p.m.
The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner starting at noon.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 29

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, green beans, sunset salad, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Waffles.
School Lunch: Hot dogs at elementary, bratwurst at MS/HS, baked beans.
Boys Golf at Lee Park Golf Course, Aberdeen, 10 a.m.
Volleyball at Ipswich, 6 p.m.
The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 30

School Breakfast: Egg bake.
School Lunch: Cheese nachos.
Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked sweet potatoes, creamed peas, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

Thursday, Aug. 31

School Breakfast: Pop tarts.
School Lunch: Sloppy Joes (new recipe), tater tots.
Senior Menu: Breaded chicken breast on bun, sliced tomato, fruit, cucumber salad, Mandarin oranges.
Cross Country at Redfield, 10 a.m.
Volleyball hosts Sisseton, 6 p.m.

"Nasal Congestion"

One of the most common reasons a person comes to the Ear Nose and Throat clinic is a stuffy nose. The way the symptoms are described varies. The stuffiness or congestion can be present at all times, at certain times of year, worse on one side, alternate sides, and may or may not respond to medications.

Getting this clear history and taking a close look helps me determine what are the causes and how best to help.

The nasal passages are divided from left and right by the nasal septum, which is made of bone and cartilage. A deviation (or bend) of the septum is common, but can be more extreme in some cases and cause significant narrowing of the nasal passage on one or both sides. Some are born with this deviation, and it may worsen as the person grows. Sometimes a history of a nasal injury is present, which could have bent the septum or increased the chance it becomes more bent over time if the injury occurred in childhood.

Within the nasal cavity are outpouchings called turbinates. A job of the nose is to prepare the air for the lungs, and it has structures that allow the air to be humidified, warmed and filtered. The turbinates are covered with a lining, called mucosa, which has numerous mucous glands and microscopic hairs. The turbinates are rich with blood vessels and periodically swell. This normal cycle of swelling can cause nasal congestion that alternates sides every few hours if the turbinates are excessively swollen.

The turbinates can become excessively swollen for several reasons, including viral infections, irritation from dryness, or allergies to name a few. Turbinate swelling can respond to topical medications such as steroid and antihistamine spray. Medical management of allergies if present, including allergy shots, can improve and control symptoms over time.

A less frequent cause of nasal congestion includes nasal polyps. These can be difficult to see from the front of the nose unless they are extremely enlarged. As an ENT, we often use a scope to see if these are present. A CT scan can also help.

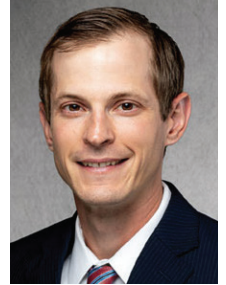
An even less frequent cause of congestion includes weakness of the cartilage of your nose. This can happen over time, or can be seen after an injury or prior surgery. A careful exam in the clinic can help determine if this problem is present. It is often managed with surgery.

In most cases there is more than one cause of a person's nasal congestion. If medicines do not improve symptoms, surgery can improve nasal breathing. A discussion with your surgeon on the risks and benefits to make an informed decision may be the next step.

Dr. Bennett has been trained to provide comprehensive otolaryngology care. Dr. Bennett practices at Midwest ENT & Allergy in Sioux Falls, SD. His special interests include disorders of the ear/hearing, endoscopic sinus surgery, pediatric otolaryngology, head and neck surgery, thyroid and parathyroid disorders, voice and swallowing disorders. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, streaming live on Facebook and on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Donald Bennett, MD

Weekly Vikings Recap - All- Time Vikings Defense

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The Minnesota Vikings kicked off training camp this week, but with the high heat and bad air quality, the Vikings took it easy this week, practicing in shorts and no pads. Although there were a few highlights that made their way onto social media, there was not much to make of the Vikings' practices so far. Thus, we will finish off our fun summer of articles by putting together the all-time defense in Vikings' history. Next week we will officially dive into the 2023 Vikings season.

Defensive Line - Jared Allen (2011), Alan Page (1971), John Randle (1997), and Chris Doleman (1989)

Although the Vikings have historically always had a great defensive line, there were not a lot of tough decisions to be made regarding who would be the four defensive linemen on the all-time Vikings' defense. The defensive ends include Jared Allen and Chris Doleman, who both had over 21 sacks each in their respective seasons. And the interior is made of arguably the two quickest and most athletic interior defensive linemen the NFL has ever seen.

Not only does this group consist of three Hall-of-Famers, and a likely a fourth one in Jared Allen soon, but it also contains the first defensive player ever to win the NFL MVP award in Alan Page. Alan Page, who in my opinion is the greatest Viking ever, was the force behind the Purple People Eaters in the 1970s and the main reason why the team went to four Super Bowls. Before there was Aaron Donald and John Randle, there was Alan Page. He set the standard for every future athletic pass-rushing interior defensive lineman.

Also, if we can add substitutions to this all-time defense, I think a second-string group of Carl Eller, Kevin Williams, Keith Millard, and Jim Marshall would make a fun platoon system to help terrorize opposing quarterbacks.

Linebackers - Matt Blair (1980), Eric Kendricks (2019), and Jeff Siemon (1975)

For all the stars the Vikings have produced on the defensive side of the ball in their history, the linebacker group lacks any star names. In the Vikings' 62-year history, they have only had two linebackers be named as first-team all-pros, Matt Blair in 1980 and Eric Kendricks in 2019. Both Blair and Kendricks were underrated from a national perspective but beloved by Vikings fans everywhere for their reliability on the football field. And to round out the group, we'll add Jeff Siemon who made four pro bowls in the 1970's when the Vikings' defense was at its ultimate peak.

Defensive Backs - Carl Lee (1988), Paul Krause (1975), Harrison Smith (2017), and Antoine Winfield (2009)

Like the linebacker group, the defensive backs group for the all-time Vikings defense seems to lack the star power as the defensive line group did. However, the group is still impressive nonetheless. At the safeties' position, you have Paul Krause, who is the all-time leader in career interceptions, a record that will never be broken. And you have Harrison Smith, who was the star of the Vikings' defense in 2017 when the team had the best defense in the NFL that year.

The cornerbacks' group consists of Carl Lee, who made one first-team all-pro and three pro bowls, and Antoine Winfield, who is without a doubt the greatest tackling cornerback the NFL has ever seen. Although this group consists of only one Hall-of-Famer in Paul Krause, it is a strong group that would succeed mightily with the help of the defensive line in front of it harassing opposing quarterbacks.

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Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for new water tower



The ribbon cutting ceremony was held recently for Groton's new water tower and pump-room. Pictured left to right are Councilman Jason Wambach, City Attorney Drew Johnson, Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich, Water Superintendent Terry Herron, Mayor Scott Hanlon, Councilman Karyn Babcock and Ken Heir from IMEG. (Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Water Superintendent Terry Herron (right) gave a tour of the inside of the column for the water tower. Pictured are Mayor Scott Hanlon and Alan Strom. (Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)

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Nick Strom (left) and Alan Strom (right) were a couple of the contributors to have the United States Flag painted on the new water tower. In the middle is American Legion Post 39 Commander Bruce Babcock. (Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)

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BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

August 1, 2023, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Christopher Theroux, SD Department of Legislative Audits – Closing Conference for 2021 Audit
5. Clarence Habeck – Regarding possible Address Change (2270 vs 2330 N. Br. Co. 19)
6. Second Reading & Possible Adoption of Ordinances:
 - a. #247 - Rezone
 - b. #248 - Rezone
 - c. #249 - Rezone
 - d. #250 – Rezone
7. Dirk Rogers, Hwy. Superintendent
 - a. R-O-W Web Water
 - b. 3 Federal Local Bridge Grants
 - c. Speed Zone Amendment
 - d. Department Update
8. 2024 Provisional Budget – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Publication
9. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes from July 25, 2023
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Claim Assignments
 - e. Travel Requests
 - f. Lottery Permit
10. Other Business
11. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
12. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission - Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board)

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is America's electrician shortage hurting our ability to get away from fossil fuels?

-- P. Simpson, Dallas, TX

A shift away from fossil fuels is necessary if we are to mitigate climate change, but a serious electrician shortage in the U.S. is proving to be one of the biggest barriers to reaching this goal. An American energy transition will be difficult to realize without enough people with the technical skills to implement it!

In August 2022, President Biden introduced the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) which included climate legislation aimed at lowering emissions and stimulating the green job economy. The act pledges a \$370 billion investment over the next decade in clean energy initiatives, and includes tax rebates to ensure that using renewable power sources is the accessible and attractive option.

The act thus increases the demand for the people who make these changes possible: electricians. To service the greater number of electric vehicles on roads (due to the \$7,500 tax rebate on new electric vehicles), electricians need to install hundreds of charging stations along highways. The shortage of electricians, particularly in California and the Northeastern states where demand for these developments is greatest, manifests as months-long waiting lists, discouraging consumers from going green.

Unfortunately, the rate at which electricians are retiring is greater than the rate at which new electricians are joining the workforce. Despite the median electrician's salary being greater than the average American salary, it is proving difficult to recruit and retain younger electricians. A university education is often perceived to be the most desirable route out of high school. The director of a regional apprenticeship program of the Laborers' International Union of North America said to David Owen of The New York Times, that despite union members earning more than \$50 per hour (in wages and benefits) ...one challenge "is overcoming the hesitation of parents who worry that "laborer" means "sweeper."

Technical schools, for those few who decide to attend, lack funding and teachers—experts earn far more in industry than they do teaching. Similarly, many electricians choose not to take on apprentices because it drains company money and time. Fortunately, some states (see below) offer tax credits to employers who take on apprentices, an incentive which encourages experienced laborers to educate the next generation. If your state is not listed, appeal to your local congressman for change.

The extent of the electrician shortage could also be reduced by resolving the gaping hole in the skilled-labor industry: women and people of color. Harassment, historically exclusionary unions and lack of child-care are sometimes insurmountable barriers to entry. Only seven percent of electricians are black, and less than two percent are women. Developing and diversifying the workforce is sorely needed, but while that will emerge as it is doing in many industries, consider becoming an electrician. As climate activist Bill McKibben told The New York Times in an interview: "If you know a young person who wants to do something that's going to help the world and wants to make a good living at the same time, tell them to go become an electrician."



An electrician shortage in the U.S. is proving to be one of the biggest barriers to mitigating the worst effects of climate change.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lawmakers have themselves to blame for SD's embarrassing teacher pay

DANA HESS

Call it deja vu gone bad. A recent meeting of the state's Teacher Compensation Review Board had to once again deal with the fact that teachers' salaries in South Dakota are a national embarrassment.

At the board meeting, figures were used from the National Education Association which listed the average teacher pay in South Dakota as \$50,592, just ahead of Mississippi at \$47,902 and West Virginia at \$50,315. According to the NEA, the average teacher pay in the United States is \$66,745.

South Dakota's teacher pay was ranked 50th out of 51 (don't forget the District of Columbia) in 2016 when the Legislature increased the state sales tax by a half percent with the majority of the funds earmarked to increase teacher pay. Designed to raise \$107.4 million, Gov. Dennis Daugaard originally proposed using the tax increase to send \$67 million to schools.

(Knowing he had to placate the anti-tax crowd in Pierre, Daugaard proposed using the other \$40 million for property tax relief. At least one lawmaker went on the record questioning if it made sense to raise one tax so that another could be cut.)

When the dust settled at the Capitol, 63% of the tax increase was designated for public schools, 34% went to property tax relief and 3% went to raise instructor pay at the state's four public technical institutes. Of the money that went to public schools, 85% had to be used to increase teacher salaries. Schools that failed to properly use the money for raises for teachers were in danger of losing the new funding.

At the recent meeting, the board's chairman, Sen. Jim Bolin, a Republican from Canton, likened teacher pay to a 2-mile race at a track meet. According to a KELO story, the former teacher acknowledged that South Dakota isn't winning the race, "But we are not being lapped by other runners."

No, the state isn't being lapped. It is, however, in danger of dropping into the sub-basement if Mississippi or West Virginia happens to strike oil.

The 2016 sales tax increase bumped the average teacher salary in South Dakota only as high as 47th in the national rankings. Moving up in the rankings didn't mean the work was done. Teacher salary increases had to be maintained and obviously that has failed to happen.

Once again the Legislature has to figure out how to get South Dakota teacher pay out of the cellar, and lawmakers have only themselves to blame for this predicament. The 2016 law based future funding for teachers' salaries on the Consumer Price Index, but in subsequent years lawmakers didn't find the funds to fulfill that obligation. In the years they had money, they didn't backfill their obligation to raise teachers' salaries. All the while our lawmakers were ignoring teacher pay, other states were investing in education, dropping South Dakota down in the salary rankings.

Awash in excess revenue this year, lawmakers cut the very sales tax that funded the original bump in teacher pay. Unable to help themselves, lawmakers cut the 4.5% state sales tax to 4.2%. While the cut doesn't make much of a dent in everyday purchases, it will account for an estimated \$104 million less in state revenue.

Lawmakers, convinced that revenue increases could sustain a \$104 million tax cut, should have been more circumspect about the state of education and put some of that money into funding an increase in teacher salaries.

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Now, tasked with finding more for teacher pay while cutting \$104 million in state revenue, lawmakers face the prospect of an initiative on the next ballot that calls for elimination of the state sales tax on groceries. If that's as popular with voters as previous polls have shown it to be, lawmakers will have to deal with another \$124 million in missing state revenue.

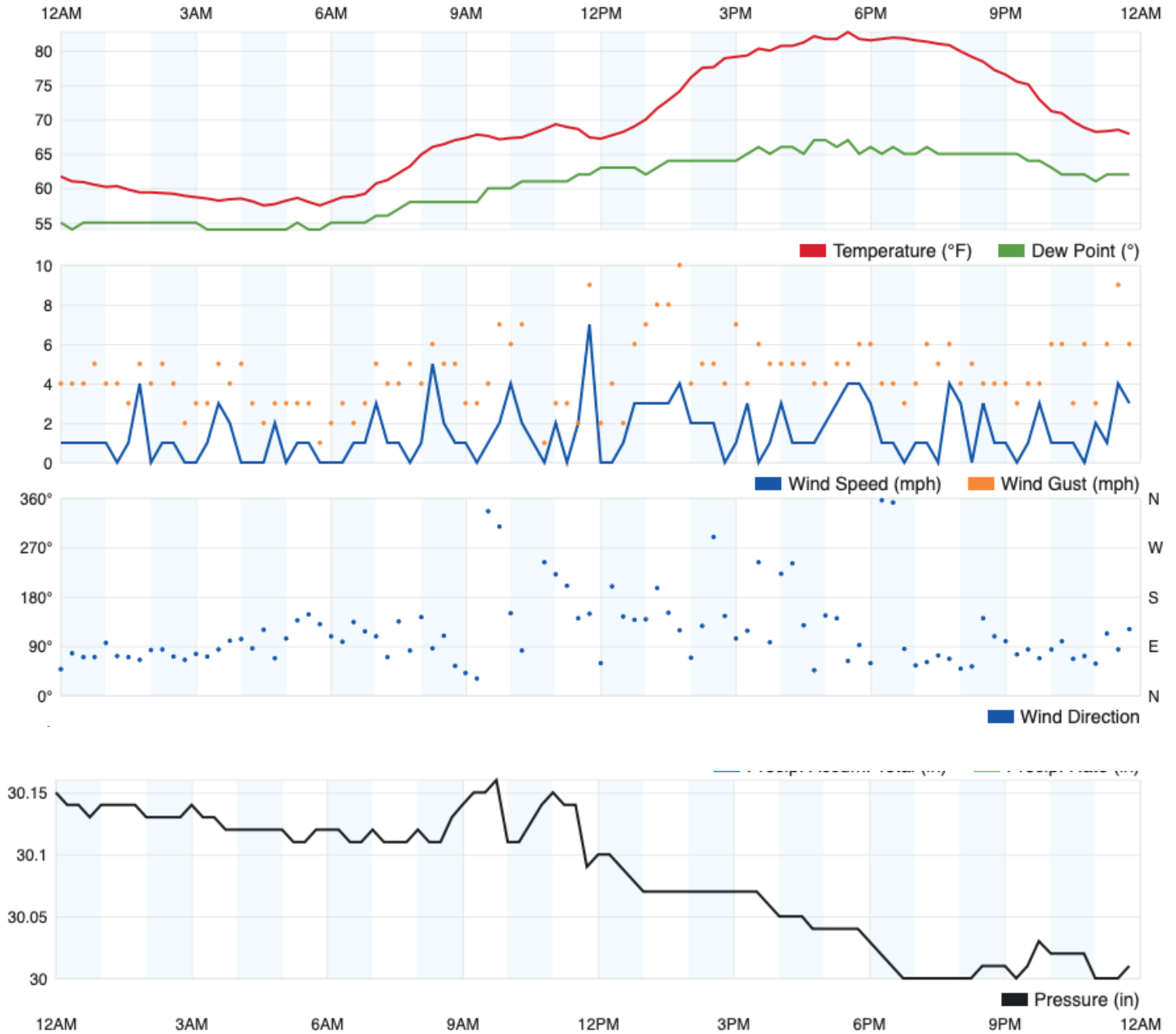
There's more to raising teacher pay than avoiding a national embarrassment. A reasonable wage, at least competitive with surrounding states, helps school districts retain teachers and recruit new ones. While the argument is centered on teacher pay, this debate is really about students and how to get them the best education possible. That will only get harder each year that South Dakota is mired in the salary basement.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Hot	Slight Chance T-storms	Hot	Partly Cloudy	Hot
High: 87 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 91 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 93 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 92 °F

What to Expect

- Isolated to scattered storms with a marginal risk of becoming strong to severe.

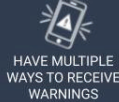
Late this afternoon into the evening

- Hail and strong winds will be the main threat. Frequent lightning and brief heavy downpours are also possible.



What to Do

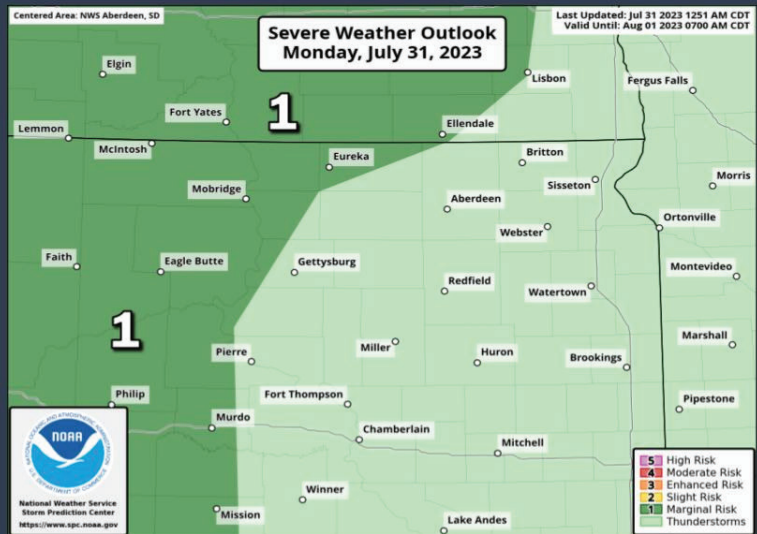
Stay up on the latest weather updates



weather.gov/aberdeen



STRONG to SEVERE STORMS Possible



SEVERE THUNDERSTORM RISK



Today appears to be a bit less active compared to what we saw on Sunday. Nonetheless, there is still a small threat for strong to severe storms today, mainly for western portions of the forecast area.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 83 °F at 4:49 PM

Low Temp: 57 °F at 5:41 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 1:39 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 49 minutes

In Groton, South Dakota, the first day of July is 15 hours, 40 minutes long. The last day of the month is 14 hours, 49 minutes, so the length of the days gets 50 minutes shorter in July 2023.

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1987

Record Low: 42 in 1903

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 3.09

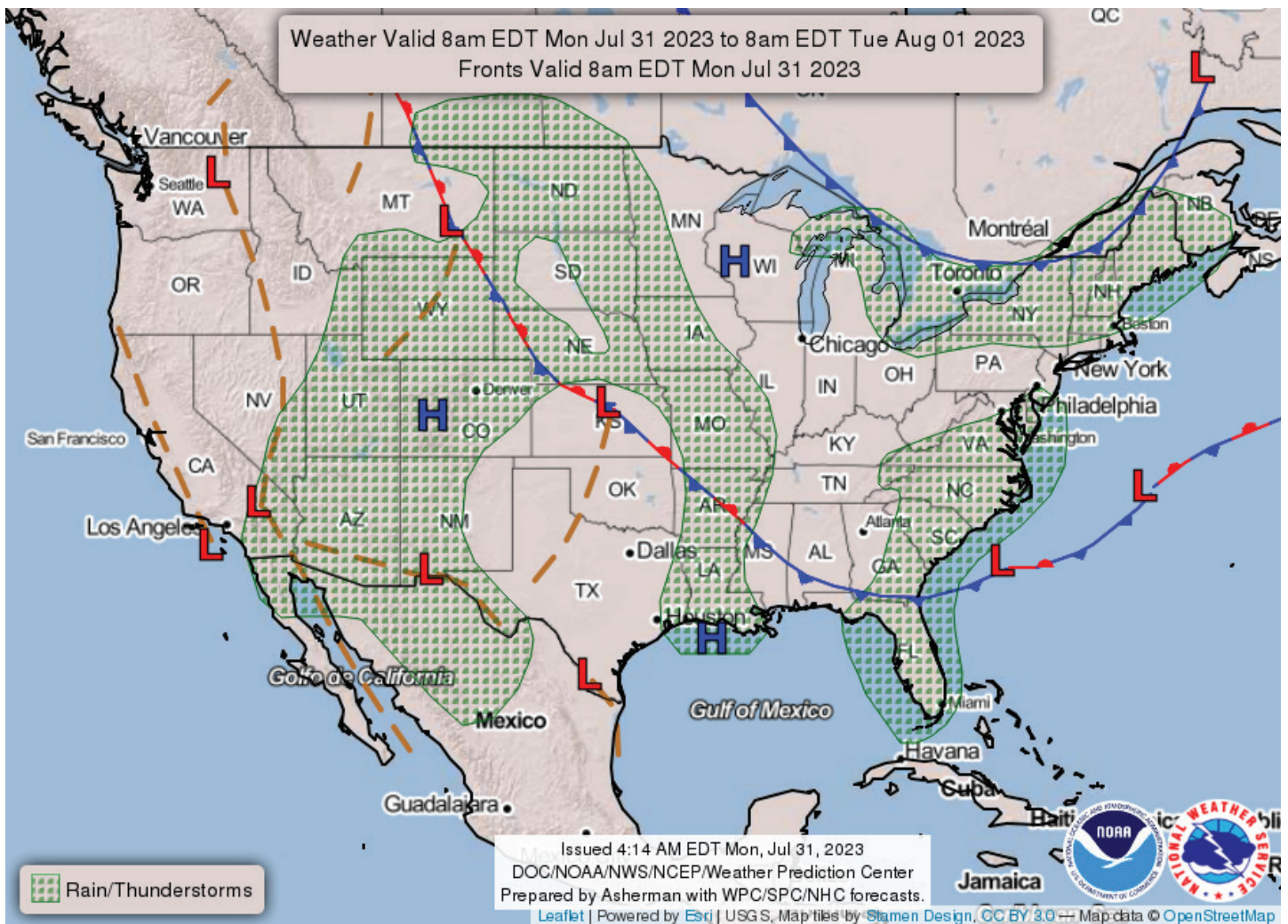
Precip to date in July.: 1.32

Average Precip to date: 14.10

Precip Year to Date: 12.67

Sunset Tonight: 9:03:47 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:14:59 AM



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Today in Weather History

July 31, 1966: A deadly, estimated F3 tornado moved southeast, passing south of Ashley, North Dakota, destroying buildings on five farms with near F4 damage to one farm house. Another tornado with F2 strength occurred north of Long Lake where two adults were killed, and three children were injured as a car was thrown 500 feet from Highway 101. A second estimated F2 tornado moved ENE just south of Aberdeen. A trailer was demolished, killing a man and injuring his wife. Seven airplanes were also had damage. Property damage was estimated at a quarter million dollars. An estimated 90 mph wind gust was also reported northeast of Aberdeen.

July 31, 2008: In the early morning hours of the 31st, a line of storms originating in North Dakota began to expand and surge southeast into northeast South Dakota. As the storms moved southeast, they started to tap into warmer, more humid air and rapidly evolve into a line of severe thunderstorms. Widespread damage occurred in a broad swath extending from Long Lake in McPherson County all the way into eastern Grant County and southern Big Stone County in Minnesota. The most extensive damage was found along and near US Highway 12 from Aberdeen to Milbank. Several observing stations in the path of this system measured wind speeds ranging from 70 mph to over 115 mph. Estimated wind speeds from damage surveys indicated even stronger winds with peak speeds of 120 mph.

Over fifty communities in northeast South Dakota and the surrounding rural areas received minor to major tree, and structural damage as straight-line winds from 70 to 120 mph raced across the area. Webster and Waubay received the most extensive damage from the storms. Thousands of trees were snapped or uprooted, hundreds of grain bins were damaged or destroyed, hundreds of homes, businesses, and outbuildings were damaged or destroyed along with many power poles and miles of power lines downed. Many mobile homes, campers, and boats were damaged or destroyed along with many road and business signs.

Fallen trees also damaged countless homes, vehicles, and campers. Thousands of acres of crops were also damaged or destroyed by the winds and hail. The most significant crop damage occurred in the Roslyn, Grenville, Eden, and Pickerel Lake areas in Marshall and Day counties. Many acres of corn were blown down and not able to come back. The large hail combined with the strong winds also broke out many windows in homes and vehicles along with damaging the siding on houses. Thousands of people were left without power for up to several days. Large hay bales were moved up to 700 yards by the high winds. A semi was overturned on Highway 12 near Webster, injuring the driver. Near Milbank on Highway 12, two other semis were blown off the road resulting in injuries to both drivers. A State Forestry Specialist said it was one of the worst tree damage events he has ever seen in the Webster area. A fifty-eight-year-old man died two miles north of Waubay during the cleanup after the storms when he was pinned between a backhoe and a tree.

1715: Spanish treasure ships, returning from the New World to Spain, encountered a hurricane during the early morning hours on this day. Eleven of the twelve ships were lost near present-day Vero Beach, Florida.

1949: Lightning struck a baseball field at Baker, Florida during a game. The shortstop and third baseman were killed instantly.

1976 - A stationary thunderstorm produced more than ten inches of rain which funneled into the narrow Thompson River Canyon of northeastern Colorado. A wall of water six to eight feet high wreaked a twenty-five mile path of destruction from Estes Park to Loveland killing 156 persons. The flash flood caught campers, and caused extensive structural and highway damage. Ten miles of U.S. Highway 34 were totally destroyed as the river was twenty feet higher than normal at times. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1986 - The temperature at Little Rock, AR, soared to 112 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. Morrilton, AR, hit 115 degrees, and daily highs for the month at that location averaged 102 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1987: The second deadliest tornado in Canadian history occurred in Edmonton, Alberta. An F4 tornado killed 27 people, injured over 300, and caused a quarter of a billion dollars in damage.

1997: South Pole, Antarctica recorded their coldest July ever. The average temperature of -86.8 degrees broke the previous record of -83.6 degrees set in July 1965.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

LIFE IS CHOICE

Some politicians are notorious for the ability to explain away all of the issues without taking a stand on any of them. One politician was recognized as being as spineless as spaghetti. Once when asked a question he said, "Part of my friends favor one side of that issue and part of them favor the other side of that issue. I am in favor of my friends!"

No matter what is at stake, it is always possible to find people who will take opposing sides of any given issue. There are even times when the topic under consideration does not matter. People will still take sides and argue for the sake of arguing. Often the issue is fleeting or frivolous and not worth serious discussion or debate. Still, sides are chosen, positions staked out, and battle lines drawn.

There is one issue, however, that confronts everyone. It is the issue of who will be the Lord of our lives. Joshua once confronted the people of Israel and said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve." The people had to make a choice between the God whom they knew they could trust or the gods they knew who had always failed them.

We, too, must make that choice. What we decide will determine our destiny. Chose the God you can trust - today!

Prayer: Father, give us courage to make the right choice and choose the living God! May we stand firm in Your strength and always be faithful in our commitment to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD. Joshua 24:14-15



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
- 08/10/2023 Family Fun Fest, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- 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:

07.28.23

5 10 28 52 63 18

MegaPlier: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$1,050,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 17
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.29.23

8 14 29 50 52 10

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$6,740,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 32 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.30.23

5 9 19 44 46 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 47 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.29.23

1 4 20 28 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 47
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.29.23

10 23 27 62 65 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 16 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

07.29.23

10 25 27 34 38 2

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$74,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 16 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

News from the Associated Press

Death toll in Pakistan suicide bombing rises to 54 as families hold funerals, police say

By ANWARULLAH KHAN and RIAZ KHAN Associated Press

KHAR, Pakistan (AP) — The death toll from a massive suicide bombing that targeted an election rally for a pro-Taliban cleric rose to 54 Monday, as Pakistan held funerals and the government vowed to hunt down those behind the attack.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for Sunday's bombing, which also wounded nearly 200 people. Police said their initial investigation suggested that the Islamic State group's regional affiliate could be responsible.

The victims were attending a rally organized by the Jamiat Ulema Islam party, headed by hard-line cleric and politician Fazlur Rehman. He did not attend the rally, held under a large tent close to a market in Bajur, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province that borders Afghanistan.

Rehman, who has long supported Afghanistan's Taliban government, escaped at least two known bomb attacks in 2011 and 2014, when bombings damaged his car at rallies.

Victims of the bombing were buried in Bajur on Monday.

As condolences continued to pour in from across the country, dozens of people who received minor injuries were discharged from hospital while the critically wounded were taken to the provincial capital of Peshawar by army helicopters. The death toll continued to rise as critically wounded people died in hospital, physician Gul Naseeb said.

On Monday, police recorded statements from some of the wounded at a hospital in Khar, Bajur's largest town. Feroz Jamal, the provincial information minister, said police were "investigating this attack in all aspects."

At least 1,000 people were gathered under a large tent Sunday as their party prepared for parliamentary elections, expected in October or November.

"People were chanting God is Great on the arrival of senior leaders, when I heard the deafening sound of the bomb," said Khan Mohammad, a local resident who said he was standing outside the tent.

Mohammad said he heard people crying for help, and minutes later ambulances started arriving and taking the wounded away.

Abdul Rasheed, a senior leader in Rehman's party said the bombing was aimed at weakening the party but that "such attacks cannot deter our resolve."

Islamist groups have long had a presence in Bajur. The district was formerly a base for Al Qaida and a stronghold of the outlawed Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP. The army declared the district clear of the group in 2016 following a series of offensives.

The IS regional affiliate, known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, is based in neighboring Afghanistan's Nangarhar province and is a rival of the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaida.

Shaukat Abbas, a senior police officer, said that police have made progress in their investigation, but did not provide details.

Pakistani security analyst Mahmood Shah told The Associated Press that breakaway factions of the TTP could also be behind the attack. He said some TTP members have been known to disobey their top leadership to carry out attacks, as have breakaway factions of the group.

Shah said such factions could have perpetrated the attack to cause "confusion, instability and unrest ahead of the elections."

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to dissolve Pakistan's parliament in August.

Rehman's party is part of Sharif's coalition government, which came to power in April 2022 by ousting former Prime Minister Imran Khan through a no-confidence vote in the legislature.

Sharif called Rehman to express his condolences and assure the cleric that those who orchestrated the

attack would be punished. The bombing has also drawn nationwide condemnation, with ruling and opposition parties offering condolences to the families of the victims. The U.S. and Russian embassies in Islamabad also condemned the attack.

Khan condemned the bombing Sunday.

The Pakistani Taliban also distanced themselves from the attack, saying that the attack aimed to set Islamists against each other. Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman for the Afghan Taliban, wrote in a tweet that "such crimes cannot be justified in any way."

The bombing came hours before the arrival of Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in Islamabad, where on Monday he was to participate in an event to mark a decade of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a sprawling package under which Beijing has invested billions of dollars in Pakistan.

In recent months, China has helped Pakistan avoid a default on sovereign payments. Some Chinese nationals have also been targeted by militants in northwestern Pakistan and elsewhere.

Sunday's bombing was one of the four worst attacks in northwestern Pakistan since 2014, when 147 people, mostly schoolchildren, were killed in a Taliban attack on an army-run school in Peshawar.

In January, 74 people were killed in a bombing at a mosque in Peshawar. And in February, more than 100 people, mostly policemen, died in a bombing at a mosque inside a high-security compound housing Peshawar police headquarters.

West African nations threaten to use force if Niger's president isn't reinstated within a week

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — West African nations have given Niger's coup leaders one week to reinstate the country's democratically elected president and have threatened to use force if the demands aren't met.

The announcement came at the end of an emergency meeting of West African countries Sunday in Nigeria, where the regional bloc, known as ECOWAS, convened to respond to last week's military takeover. President Mohamed Bazoum remains under house arrest and has yet to resign.

"In the event the authority's demands are not met within one week, (the bloc will) take all measures necessary to restore constitutional order in the Republic of Niger. Such measures may include the use of force," said the statement.

The bloc also imposed strict sanctions, including suspending all commercial and financial transactions between ECOWAS member states and Niger and freezing of assets in regional central banks.

Economic sanctions could have a deep impact on Nigeriens, who live in the third-poorest country in the world, according to the latest U.N. data. The country relies on imports from Nigeria for up to 90% of its power, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency.

The sanctions could be disastrous and Niger needs to find a solution to avoid them, Prime Minister Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou told French media outlet Radio France Internationale on Sunday.

"When people say there's an embargo, land borders are closed, air borders are closed, it's extremely difficult for people ... Niger is a country that relies heavily on the international community," he said.

The 15-nation ECOWAS bloc has unsuccessfully tried to restore democracies in nations where the military took power in recent years. Four nations are run by military governments in West and Central Africa, where there have been nine successful or attempted coups since 2020.

In the 1990s, ECOWAS intervened in Liberia during its civil war. In 2017, it intervened in Gambia to prevent the new president's predecessor, Yahya Jammeh, from disrupting the handover of power. Around 7,000 troops from Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal entered, according to the Global Observatory, which provides analysis on peace and security issues.

If the regional bloc uses force, it could trigger violence not only between Niger and ECOWAS forces but also civilians supporting the coup and those against it, Niger analysts say.

"While this remains to be a threat and unlikely action, the consequences on civilians of such an approach if putschists chose confrontation would be catastrophic," said Rida Lyammouri, senior fellow at the Policy

Center for the New South, a Morocco-based think tank.

"I believe economic sanctions are the ones to be imposed, but don't see a military intervention happening because of the violence that could trigger," he said.

The military junta, which seized power on Wednesday when members of the presidential guard surrounded Bazoum's house and detained him, is already cracking down on the government and civil liberties.

On Sunday, junta spokesman Col. Maj. Amadou Abdramane said on state television that all government cars need to be returned by midday Monday and banned the use of social media to diffuse messages against state security. He also claimed that Bazoum's government had authorized the French to carry out strikes to free Bazoum. The Associated Press can't verify his allegations.

In anticipation of the ECOWAS decision Sunday, thousands of pro-junta supporters took to the streets in the capital, Niamey, denouncing its former colonial ruler, France, waving Russian flags and telling the international community to stay away.

Demonstrators in Niger are openly resentful of France, and Russia is seen by some as a powerful alternative. The nature of Moscow's involvement in the rallies, if any, isn't clear, but some protesters have carried Russian flags, along with signs reading "Down with France" and supporting Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The situation of this country is not good ... It's time for change, and change has arrived," said Moussa Seydou, a protester. "What we want from the putschists — all they have to do is improve social conditions so that Nigeriens can live better in this country and bring peace," he said.

Blue blood from horseshoe crabs is valuable for medicine, but a declining bird needs them for food

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A primordial sea animal that lives on the tidal mudflats of the East Coast and serves as a linchpin for the production of vital medicines stands to benefit from new protective standards.

But conservationists who have been trying for years to save a declining bird species — the red knot — that depends on horseshoe crabs fear the protections still don't go far enough.

Drug and medical device makers are dependent on the valuable blue blood of the crabs — helmet-shaped invertebrates that have scuttled in the ocean and tidal pools for more than 400 million years — to test for potentially dangerous impurities. The animals are drained of some of their blood and returned to the environment, but many die from the bleeding.

Recent revisions to guidelines for handling the animals should keep more alive through the process, regulators said. The animals — not really true crabs but rather more closely related to land-dwelling invertebrates such as spiders and scorpions — are declining in some of their East Coast range.

"They were here before the dinosaurs," said Glenn Gauvry, president of Ecological Research & Development Group, a Delaware-based nonprofit that advocates for horseshoe crab conservation. "And they're having problems because the new kids on the block, us, haven't learned to appreciate the elders."

The harvest of horseshoe crabs, which are also caught for bait in the commercial fishing industry, has emerged as a critical issue for conservationists in recent years because of the creature's role in coastal ecosystems. The crabs' eggs are vitally important food for a declining subspecies of a bird called the red knot — a rust-colored, migratory shorebird listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The birds, which migrate some 19,000 miles (30,577 kilometers) roundtrip from South America to Canada and must stop to eat along the way, need stronger protection of horseshoe crabs to survive, said Bethany Kraft, senior director for coastal conservation with the Audubon Society. Kraft and other wildlife advocates said the fact the guidelines for handling crabs are voluntary and not mandatory leaves the red knot at risk.

"Making sure there is enough to fuel these birds on this massive, insanely long flight is just critical," Kraft said. "There's very clear linkage between horseshoe crabs and the survival of the red knot in the coming decades."

The horseshoe crabs are valuable because their blood can be manufactured into limulus amebocyte lysate, or LAL, that is used to detect pathogens in indispensable medicines such as injectable antibiotics.

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The crabs are collected by fishermen by hand or via trawlers for use by biomedical companies, then their blood is separated and proteins within their white blood cells are processed. It takes dozens of the crabs to produce enough blood to fill a single glass tube with its blood, which contains immune cells sensitive to bacteria.

There are only five federally licensed manufacturers on the East Coast that process horseshoe crab blood. The blood is often described by activist groups as worth \$15,000 a quart (liter), though some members of the industry say that figure is impossible to verify.

Regulators estimate about 15% of the crabs die in the bleeding process. In 2021, that meant about 112,000 crabs died, said Caitlin Starks, a senior fishery management plan coordinator with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The bait fishery for horseshoe crabs, which are used as bait for eels and sea snails, killed more than six times that, she said.

Still, the fisheries commission in May approved new best management practices for the biomedical industry's harvesting and handling of the crabs. Those include minimizing exposure to sunlight and keeping crabs cool and moist, Starks said.

"The goal is to give the crabs that are bled a better chance of surviving and contributing to the ecosystem after they are released," she said.

That's exactly what the new guidelines will do, said Nora Blair, quality operations manager with Charles River Laboratories, one of the companies that manufactures LAL from horseshoe crab blood. Blair was a member of a working group that crafted the updated guidelines alongside other industry members, conservationists, fishery managers, fishermen and others.

Blair said the industry is working toward a synthetic alternative — an outcome conservationists have been pushing for years. However, for now the wild harvest of horseshoe crabs remains critically important to drug safety, Blair said.

"The critical role of horseshoe crab in the biopharmaceutical supply chain and coastal ecosystem makes their conservation imperative," he said.

The Atlantic horseshoe crab, the species harvested on the East Coast, ranges from the Gulf of Maine to Florida. The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists the species as being "vulnerable" based on a 2016 assessment.

One of the most important ecosystems for horseshoe crabs is the Delaware Bay, an estuary of the Delaware River between Delaware and New Jersey. The bay is where the crabs breed and the red knots feed.

The density of horseshoe crab eggs in the bay is nowhere near what it was in the 1990s, said Lawrence Niles, an independent wildlife biologist who once headed New Jersey's state endangered species program. Meanwhile, the population of the rufa red knot, the threatened subspecies, has declined by 75% since the 1980s, according to the National Park Service.

The birds need meaningful protection of horseshoe crab eggs to be able to recover, Niles said. He tracks the health of red knots and horseshoe crabs and has organized a group called Horseshoe Crab Recovery Coalition to advocate for conservation measures.

Niles and volunteers he organizes have been counting the horseshoe crab eggs since the 1980s and tagging birds since the 1990s. In mid-June, as he was wrapping up this year's tracking in southern New Jersey, he described the eggs as "good and consistent" through the month.

"What we want is the harvest to stop, the killing to stop, and let the stock rebuild to its carrying capacity," Niles said.

The horseshoe crabs have been harvested for use as bait and medicine from Florida to Maine over the years, though the largest harvests are in Maryland, Delaware, Massachusetts and Virginia. According to federal fishery statistics, the crabs were worth about \$1.1 million in total at the docks in 2021.

That figure is dwarfed by seafood species such as lobsters and scallops, which are routinely worth hundreds of millions of dollars. However, horseshoe crab fishers are dedicated stewards of a fishery that supplies a vital product, said George Topping, a Maryland fisherman.

"Everything you do in life comes from horseshoe crab blood. Vaccines, antibiotics," he said. "The horse-

shoe crab stocks are healthy.”

Ukraine says Russian missiles hit another apartment building and likely trapped people under rubble

By FELIPE DANA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian missiles slammed into the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih, killing at least one person and likely trapping others beneath rubble, an official said Monday.

The two missiles struck an apartment building, destroying a section of it between the fourth and ninth floors, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said, and a university building. Ten people were wounded, he said.

Kryvyi Rih, the hometown of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, is in Ukraine’s Dnipropetrovsk region and has seldom been targeted by the Kremlin’s forces since the war began in February 2022.

But bombardment with missiles, artillery and drones has been a hallmark of Moscow’s tactics since the full-scale invasion, with some aerial attacks hitting civilian areas. Russian officials insist they only take aim at legitimate military targets.

That approach has continued during Kyiv’s recently launched counteroffensive that is trying to drive Russian forces out of occupied areas.

Commenting on the attack, Ukraine’s president said that “in recent days, the enemy has been stubbornly attacking cities, city centers, shelling civilian objects and housing.”

“But this terror will not frighten us or break us,” Zelenskyy said in a social media statement.

Ukraine, meanwhile, has sought to take the war deep into Russia, reportedly using drones to hit targets as far away as Moscow. The latest strike, on Sunday, damaged two office buildings a few miles (kilometers) from the Kremlin.

Fans pay tribute to Coco Lee, Hong Kong singer who had international success

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Fans of singer and songwriter Coco Lee, who was known for her powerful voice and live performances, were gathering with flowers to pay their respects to their idol at her funeral in Hong Kong on Monday.

The evening services were expected to be attended by her family, friends and supporters. Lee died July 5 at age 48.

She was born in Hong Kong and attended school in San Francisco before releasing her first album in 1994 at age 19. She began her career as a Mandopop singer but branched out to release albums in Cantonese and English.

She was the first Chinese singer to break into the American market, and her English song “Do You Want My Love” climbed to #4 on Billboard’s Hot Dance Breakouts chart in December 1999. In 2001, she sang “A Love Before Time” from Ang Lee’s movie “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” at the Academy Awards, becoming the first Chinese American to perform at the Oscars.

Lee was also the voice of heroine Fa Mulan in the Mandarin version of Disney’s “Mulan,” and sang the Mandarin version of the movie’s theme song “Reflection.”

Lee was married to Bruce Rockowitz, former CEO of Hong Kong supply chain company Li & Fung. She had two stepdaughters.

Her death had shocked fans. Her siblings posted on Facebook that she had depression for years and had attempted suicide at home on July 2. She died a few days later.

On Monday afternoon, more than 100 fans dressed in black were waiting outside the funeral home.

Lin Jing, a fan from Fujian province in the southeast, said she admired Lee’s smile and appearance, adding: “She was really talented. She always tried to improve and she inspired women to feel independent.”

In a video for her memorial service, actors and singers from Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan

recalled their memories with Lee and mourned her death.

Action star Jackie Chan said in the video that everyone was proud of her when she sang at the Oscars. "To friends like us, Coco was a passionate and kind friend who showed care to us. She was really a good person. That's why we are so reluctant to accept she has left us," he said.

Award-winning director Ang Lee recalled his exchanges with the late singer before the Oscars and said it was a pity she died so young. "We miss her very much. Coco, rest in peace," he said in the video.

In Coco Lee's recent social media posts, she kept spreading positivity. In March, she posted about having to relearn how to walk after undergoing surgery for an old leg injury.

"Successful surgery. Even though I'm in a lot of pain and I have to re-learn how to walk again, I know I can do it," she wrote in a Facebook post. "Yes I can and I will!"

As the pope heads to Portugal, he's laying the groundwork for the church's future and his own legacy

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — When Pope Francis made the first foreign trip of his papacy, to Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day in 2013, he urged young people to make a "mess" in their local churches, to shake things up even if it ruffled the feathers of their bishops.

As he embarks this week on another edition of World Youth Day, in Lisbon, Portugal, Francis in many ways has taken his own advice to heart. After 10 years as pope, Francis is accelerating his reform agenda and making revolutionary changes in personnel and policy that are definitely shaking things up.

Unencumbered by the shadow of Pope Benedict XVI, who died seven months ago, and despite recovering from a second intestinal surgery in as many years, the 86-year-old Francis is opening a frenetic second half of the year with his Portugal visit. He seems aware that he has a limited sweet spot of time to solidify the changes he believes are necessary for the 21st century church, and is looking to the next generation of faithful and leaders to execute them.

"The sense I get is that this is the consolidation phase of the pontificate," said papal biographer Austen Ivereigh. "He's laying the basis now, laying the ground, for the future."

And no better place to put it on display than at a World Youth Day. The international rally, which St. John Paul II launched in 1986 to galvanize young Catholics in their faith, is expected to draw up to 1 million people for the first post-pandemic event of its kind. Francis' perennial social justice concerns about climate change, social inequality and fraternity, as well as Russia's war in Ukraine, are expected to be major themes.

Beyond Portugal, though, Francis' multifold strategy for laying the groundwork for the future is coming together and will hit significant marks in the coming months.

His global canvassing of rank-and-file Catholics about their vision for the future comes to fruition this October with a big synod at the Vatican. The meeting is intended to give direction on such hot-button issues as the place of LGBTQ+ Catholics and women in the church, and for the first time will feature women and young people voting on proposals alongside bishops.

"I really think that for Pope Francis, he felt that 'OK, now it's mature' and it would be good really to involve all the members, all the people in the synod as members" with the right to vote, said Sister Nathalie Becquart, who is one of the key synod organizers.

To then implement the vision that emerges from the synod, Francis has been naming a slew of unusually young bishops for key archdioceses — in his native Buenos Aires, Madrid and Brussels, among others. At the same time, he's elevated several cardinals in their 50s — and in some cases their 40s — including the auxiliary bishop of Lisbon who is organizing World Youth Day.

Putting such young clerics in such important positions ensures a generation's worth of likeminded leadership in the Vatican and archdioceses around the world. While not all are cookie-cutter proteges of Francis, many are seen as similarly pastorally minded and thus more game to implement his reforms, especially as the older generation of bishops and cardinals dies out.

After Francis is gone, the youngest of these new cardinals will have some three decades' worth of local

leadership and conclave votes to select future popes, suggesting a generational and ideological shift in the church leadership is very much underway.

Francis' most important young "legacy" appointment was that of the Vatican's new doctrinal czar, Argentine Cardinal-elect Victor Manuel Fernandez, 61. Francis' theological ghostwriter ran into Vatican problems in the past over questions about his doctrinal orthodoxy, and his appointment sent shockwaves through the conservative and traditionalist wings of the church.

Fernandez sees his appointment as part of Francis' longer-term agenda. "He is proposing a more inclusive church, more respectful of different ways of living, even of thinking," Fernandez said in an interview.

Portuguese Cardinal-elect Americo Aguiar, who is in charge of World Youth Day, is another young churchman who also understands his appointment as part of a generational turning point for the Catholic hierarchy.

At age 49 he will become the second-youngest member of the College of Cardinals when he is installed Sept. 30. He is just six months older than the current youngest cardinal, whom Francis elevated this time last year: Cardinal Giorgio Marengo, head of the church in Mongolia where Francis will travel at the end of August.

"My reading of it is that this has to do with young people, it has to do with youth, it has to do with Portugal, it has to do with World Youth Day, it has to do with all of that," Aguiar said in an interview. "I think that his objective and his underlining was exactly to send a signal to the young people, to every young person who is preparing the day, whether in Portugal or in the world, to feel identified with this decision."

Francis said as much in his monthly prayer intentions for August, this time dedicated to the Lisbon event.

"In Lisbon, I would like to see a seed for the world's future," Francis said. "A world where love is at the center, where we can sense that we are sisters and brothers."

His wish in many ways echoed his words at the 2013 World Youth Day in Rio, which now seem prescient in outlining many of the key pastoral messages Francis has emphasized over the past decade. Delivering a spontaneous, off-the-cuff exhortation to a gathering of Argentine pilgrims that was organized at the last minute, Francis urged the young to get out into the streets, spread their faith and "make a mess."

"I want to see the church get closer to the people," Francis said then, speaking in his native Spanish. "I want to get rid of clericalism, the mundane, this closing ourselves off within ourselves, in our parishes, schools or structures."

Realizing the radical nature of his message, Francis apologized to the bishops for what was about to come, even though in the 10 years since, he has only gone further than anyone could have imagined at the time.

"The true reform of the church, you know, is not a revolution bringing something completely from outside," said Becquart, the French nun, as she reflected on Francis' agenda. "It's a path of change that is a way to unfold tradition, but in a very dynamic way."

Suicide bomber at political rally in northwest Pakistan kills at least 44 people, wounds nearly 200

By ANWARULLAH KHAN and RIAZ KHAN Associated Press

KHAR, Pakistan (AP) — A suicide bomber blew himself up at a political rally in a former stronghold of militants in northwest Pakistan bordering Afghanistan on Sunday, killing at least 44 people and wounding nearly 200 in an attack that a senior leader said was meant to weaken Pakistani Islamists.

The Bajur district near the Afghan border was a stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban — a close ally of Afghanistan's Taliban government — before the Pakistani army drove the militants out of the area. Supporters of hard-line Pakistani cleric and political party leader Fazlur Rehman, whose Jamiat Ulema Islam generally supports regional Islamists, were meeting in Bajur in a hall close to a market outside the district capital. Party officials said Rehman was not at the rally but organizers added tents because so many supporters showed up, and party volunteers with batons were helping control the crowd.

Officials were announcing the arrival of Abdul Rasheed, a leader of the Jamiat Ulema Islam party, when the bomb went off in one of Pakistan's bloodiest attacks in recent years.

Provincial police said in a statement that the attack was carried out by a suicide bomber who detonated

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his explosives vest close to the stage where several senior leaders of the party were sitting. It said initial investigations suggested the Islamic State group — which operates in Afghanistan and is an enemy of the Afghan Taliban — could be behind the attack, and officers were still investigating.

“There was dust and smoke around, and I was under some injured people from where I could hardly stand up, only to see chaos and some scattered limbs,” said Adam Khan, 45, who was knocked to the ground by the blast around 4 p.m. and hit by splinters in his leg and both hands.

The Pakistan Taliban, or TTP, said in a statement sent to The Associated Press that the bombing was aimed at setting Islamists against each other. Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Afghan Taliban, said on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that “such crimes cannot be justified in any way.”

The Afghan Taliban’s seizure of power in Afghanistan in mid-August 2021 emboldened the TTP. They unilaterally ended a cease-fire agreement with the Pakistani government in November, and have stepped up attacks across the country.

The bombing came hours before the arrival of Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in Islamabad, where he was to participate in an event to mark a decade of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, a sprawling package under which Beijing has invested billions of dollars in Pakistan.

In recent months, China has helped Pakistan avoid a default on sovereign payments. However, some Chinese nationals have also been targeted by militants in northwestern Pakistan and elsewhere.

Feroz Jamal, the provincial information minister, told The Associated Press that so far 44 people had been “martyred” and nearly 200 wounded in the bombing.

The bombing was one of the four worst attacks in the northwest since 2014, when 147 people, mostly schoolchildren, were killed in a Taliban attack on an army-run school in Peshawar. In January, 74 people were killed in a bombing at a mosque in Peshawar. In February, more than 100 people, mostly policemen, died in a bombing at a mosque inside a high-security compound housing Peshawar police headquarters.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Arif Alvi condemned the attack and asked officials to provide all possible assistance to the wounded and the bereaved families. Sharif later, in a phone call to Rehman, the head of the JUI, conveyed his condolences to him and assured him that those who orchestrated the attack would be punished.

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad also condemned the attack. In a post on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, it expressed its condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims killed in the attack.

Maulana Ziaullah, the local chief of Rehman’s party, was among the dead. JUI leaders Rasheed and former lawmaker Maulana Jamaluddin were also on the stage but escaped unhurt.

Rasheed, the regional chief of the party, said the attack was an attempt to remove JUI from the field before parliamentary elections in November, but he said such tactics would not work. The bombing drew nationwide condemnation, with the ruling and opposition parties extending condolences to the families of those who died in the attack.

Rehman is considered to be a pro-Taliban cleric and his political party is part of the coalition government in Islamabad. Meetings are being organized across the country to mobilize supporters for the upcoming elections.

“Many of our fellows lost their lives and many more wounded in this incident. I will ask the federal and provincial administrations to fully investigate this incident and provide due compensation and medical facilities to the affected ones,” Rasheed said.

Mohammad Wali, another attendant at the rally, said he was listening to a speaker address the crowd when the huge explosion temporarily deafened him.

“I was near the water dispenser to fetch a glass of water when the bomb exploded, throwing me to the ground,” he said. “We came to the meeting with enthusiasm but ended up at the hospital seeing crying, wounded people and sobbing relatives taking the bodies of their loved ones.”

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July keeps sizzling as Phoenix hits another 110-degree day and wildfires spread in California

By WALTER BERRY Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Phoenix sizzled through its 31st consecutive day of at least 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius) and other parts of the country grappled Sunday with record temperatures after a week that saw significant portions of the U.S. population subject to extreme heat.

The National Weather Service said Phoenix climbed to a high of 111 F (43.8 Celsius) before the day was through.

July has been so steamy thus far that scientists calculate it will be the hottest month ever recorded and likely the warmest human civilization has seen. The World Meteorological Organization and the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service on Thursday proclaimed July beyond record-smashing.

The historic heat began blasting the lower Southwest U.S. in late June, stretching from Texas across New Mexico and Arizona and into California's desert.

On Sunday, a massive wildfire burning out of control in California's Mojave National Preserve spread rapidly amid erratic winds, while firefighters reported progress against another major blaze to the south that prompted evacuations.

The York Fire that erupted Friday near the remote Caruthers Canyon area of the preserve sent up a huge plume of smoke visible nearly 100 miles (160 kilometers) away across the state line in Nevada.

Flames 20 feet (6 meters) high in some spots have charred more than 110 square miles (284 square kilometers) of desert scrub, juniper and Joshua tree woodland, according to a Sunday update.

"The dry fuel acts as a ready ignition source, and when paired with those weather conditions it resulted in long-distance fire run and high flames, leading to extreme fire behavior," authorities said. No structures were threatened, but there was also no containment.

To the southwest, the Bonny Fire was holding steady at about 3.4 square miles (8.8 square kilometers) in rugged hills of Riverside County. More than 1,300 people were ordered to evacuate their homes Saturday near the remote community of Aguanga, California.

Triple-digit heat was expected in parts of the central San Joaquin Valley through Monday, according to the National Weather Service.

And in Burbank, California, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of Los Angeles, the summer heat may have been responsible for some unusual behavior in the animal kingdom: Police in the city responded to a report of a bear sighting in a residential neighborhood and found the animal sitting in a Jacuzzi behind one of the homes.

As climate change brings hotter and longer heat waves, record temperatures across the U.S. have killed dozens of people, and the poorest Americans suffer the most. Air conditioning, once a luxury, is now a matter of survival.

Last year, all 86 heat-related deaths indoors were in uncooled environments.

"To explain it fairly simply: Heat kills," said Kristie Ebi, a University of Washington professor who researches heat and health. "Once the heat wave starts, mortality starts in about 24 hours."

It's the poorest and people of color, from Kansas City to Detroit to New York City and beyond, who are far more likely to face grueling heat without air conditioning, according to a Boston University analysis of 115 U.S. metro areas.

Back in Phoenix, slight relief may be on the way as expected seasonal thunderstorms could drop temperatures Monday and Tuesday.

"It should be around 108 degrees, so we break that 110 streak," meteorologist Tom Frieders said. "Increasing cloud cover will put temperatures in a downward trend."

The relief could be short-lived, however. Highs are expected to creep back to 110 F (43.3 C) Wednesday with temperatures reaching 115 F (46.1 C) by the end of the week.

Phoenix has also sweated through a record 16 consecutive nights when the lows temperature didn't dip

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below 90 F (32.2 C), making it hard for people to cool off after sunset.

Meanwhile, Las Vegas continues to flirt with its hottest July ever. The city is closing in on its 2010 record for the average of the high and low each day for July, which stands at 96.2 F (35.5 C).

The extreme heat is also hitting the eastern U.S, as soaring temperatures moved from the Midwest into the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, where some places recorded their warmest days so far this year.

Trump could be indicted soon in Georgia. Here's a look at that investigation

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A Georgia prosecutor is expected to seek a grand jury indictment in the coming weeks in her investigation into efforts by Donald Trump and his allies to overturn the former president's 2020 election loss.

Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis began investigating more than two years ago, shortly after a recording was released of a January 2021 phone call Trump made to Georgia's secretary of state.

Willis has strongly hinted that any indictment would come between July 31 and August 18. One of two grand juries seated July 11 is expected to hear the case.

If Trump is indicted by a Georgia grand jury, it would add to a growing list of legal troubles as he campaigns for president. Trump is set to go to trial in New York in March to face state charges related to hush-money payments made during the 2016 presidential campaign. And he has another trial scheduled for May on federal charges related to his handling of classified documents. He has pleaded not guilty in those cases.

The Justice Department is also investigating Trump's role in trying to halt the certification of 2020 election results in the run-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the U.S. Capitol. Trump said he's been told he's a target of that investigation, which likely has some overlap with the one in Georgia.

Details of the Georgia investigation that have become public have fed speculation that Willis is building a case under the Georgia Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, which would allow her to charge numerous people in a potentially wide-ranging scheme.

Here are six investigative threads Willis and her team have explored:

THE PHONE CALLS

The Georgia investigation was prompted by the Jan. 2, 2021 phone call Trump made to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. Trump suggested the state's top elections official could help "find" the votes needed to put him ahead of Democrat Joe Biden in the state.

"All I want to do is this: I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have," Trump is heard saying on a recording of the call, which was leaked to news outlets. "Because we won the state."

Trump has insisted he did nothing wrong and has repeatedly said the call was "perfect."

Trump also called other top state officials in his quest to overturn his 2020 election loss, including Gov. Brian Kemp, then-House Speaker David Ralston, Attorney General Chris Carr and the top investigator in the secretary of state's office.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican, also called Raffensperger shortly after the November election. Raffensperger said at the time that Graham asked whether he had the power to reject certain absentee ballots, which Raffensperger has said he interpreted as a suggestion to toss out legally cast votes.

Graham has denied wrongdoing, saying he just wanted to learn about the signature verification process.

FAKE ELECTORS

Biden won Georgia by a margin of fewer than 12,000 votes. Just over a month after the election, on Dec. 14, 2020, a group of 16 Georgia Democratic electors met in the Senate chamber at the state Capitol to cast the state's Electoral College votes for him. They each marked paper ballots that were counted and confirmed by a voice roll call.

That same day, in a committee meeting room at the Capitol, 16 prominent Georgia Republicans — a lawmaker, activists and party officials — met to sign a certificate falsely stating that Trump had won and

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declaring themselves the state's "duly elected and qualified" electors. They sent that certificate to the National Archives and the U.S. Senate.

Georgia was one of seven battleground states that Trump lost where Republican fake electors signed and submitted similar certificates. Trump allies in the U.S. House and Senate used those certificates to argue for delaying or blocking the certification of the election during a joint session of Congress.

Prosecutors in Fulton County have said in court filings that they believe Trump associates worked with state Republicans to coordinate and execute the plan.

The multi-state effort was ultimately unsuccessful. Despite public pressure from Trump and his supporters, then-Vice President Mike Pence refused on Jan. 6, 2021, to introduce the unofficial pro-Trump electors. After the attack on the U.S. Capitol put a violent halt to the certification process, lawmakers certified Biden's win in the early hours of Jan. 7, 2021.

At least eight of the fake electors have since reached immunity deals with Willis' team. And a judge last summer barred Willis from prosecuting another one, Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, because of a conflict of interest.

FALSE CLAIMS OF ELECTION FRAUD

Republican state lawmakers held several hearings at the Georgia Capitol in December 2020 to examine alleged problems with the November election. During those meetings, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani and other Trump allies made unproven claims of widespread election fraud.

They alleged that election workers tallying absentee ballots at State Farm Arena in Atlanta had told outside observers to leave and then pulled out "suitcases" of unlawful ballots and began scanning them. The Trump allies played clips of surveillance video from the arena to support their allegations. State and federal officials investigated and said there was no evidence of election fraud at the site.

Some Trump allies also said thousands of people who were ineligible — including people convicted of felonies, people under the age of 18, people who had voted in another state — had cast votes in Georgia. The secretary of state's office has debunked those claims.

ALLEGED ATTEMPTS TO PRESSURE ELECTION WORKER

Two of the election workers seen in the State Farm Arena surveillance video, Ruby Freeman and her daughter Wandrea "Shaye" Moss, said they faced relentless harassment online and in person as a result of the allegations made by Trump and his allies.

Giuliani last week conceded that statements he made about the two election workers were false.

In a bizarre episode detailed by prosecutors in court filings, a woman traveled from Chicago to Georgia and met with Freeman on Jan. 4, 2021. The woman initially said she wanted to help Freeman but then warned that Freeman could go to prison and tried to pressure her into falsely confessing to committing election fraud, prosecutors wrote in court filings last year.

ELECTION EQUIPMENT ACCESSED

Trump-allied lawyer Sidney Powell and others hired a computer forensics team to copy data and software on election equipment in Coffee County, some 200 miles southeast of Atlanta, according to invoices, emails, security video and deposition testimony produced in response to subpoenas in a long-running lawsuit.

The county Republican Party chair at the time — who also served as a fake elector — greeted them when they arrived at the local elections office on Jan. 7, 2021, and some county elections officials were also on hand during the daylong visit. The secretary of state's office has said this amounted to "alleged unauthorized access" of election equipment and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation is looking into it at the secretary of state's request.

Two other men who have been active in efforts to question the 2020 election results also visited Coffee County later that month and spent hours inside.

U.S. ATTORNEY RESIGNATION

U.S. Attorney BJay Pak, the top federal prosecutor in Atlanta, abruptly resigned two days after Trump called Raffensperger and a day after a recording of that call was made public. During that conversation, Trump called Pak a "never-Trumper," implying that he didn't support the president.

In December 2020, then-U.S. Attorney General William Barr asked Pak to investigate allegations by

wants to make sure Carlos is good." The indictment says the employee responded that De Oliveira was loyal and wouldn't do anything to affect his relationship with Trump. That same day, the indictment alleges, Trump called De Oliveira directly to say that he would get De Oliveira an attorney.

Prosecutors allege that De Oliveira later lied in interviews with investigators, falsely claiming that he hadn't even seen boxes moved into Mar-a-Lago after Trump left the White House.

Idaho mom Lori Vallow Daybell faces sentencing in deaths of 2 children and her romantic rival

ST. ANTHONY, Idaho (AP) — Idaho mother Lori Vallow Daybell faces up to life in prison without parole Monday as she is sentenced in the murders of her two youngest children and a romantic rival in a case that included bizarre claims that her son and daughter were zombies and that she was a goddess sent to usher in the Biblical apocalypse.

Vallow Daybell was found guilty in May of killing her two youngest children, 7-year-old Joshua "JJ" Vallow and 16-year-old Tylee Ryan, as well as conspiring to kill Tammy Daybell, her fifth husband's previous wife.

The husband, Chad Daybell, is awaiting trial on the same murder charges. Vallow Daybell also faces two other cases in Arizona — one on a charge of conspiring with her brother to kill her fourth husband, Charles Vallow, and one of conspiring to kill her niece's ex-husband. Charles Vallow was shot and killed in 2019, but her niece's ex survived an attempt later that year.

Monday's sentencing will take place at the Fremont County Courthouse in St. Anthony, Idaho. Judge Steven W. Boyce is expected to hear testimony from several representatives of the victims, including Vallow Daybell's only surviving son, Colby Ryan.

The case began in July 2019, when Vallow Daybell's brother, Alex Cox, shot and killed her estranged husband, Charles Vallow, in a suburban Phoenix home. Cox told police he acted in self defense. He was never charged in the case and died later that year of what authorities determined were natural causes.

Vallow Daybell was already in a relationship with Chad Daybell, a self-published author who wrote doomsday-focused fiction loosely based on Mormon teachings. She moved to Idaho with her kids and brother to be closer to him.

The children were last seen alive in September 2019. Police discovered they were missing a month later after an extended family member became worried. Their bodies were found buried in Chad Daybell's yard the following summer.

Chad Daybell and Lori Vallow married in November 2019, about two weeks after Daybell's previous wife, Tammy, was killed. Tammy Daybell initially was described as having died of natural causes, but an autopsy later showed she had been asphyxiated, authorities said.

Defense attorney Jim Archibald argued during the trial that there was no evidence tying Vallow Daybell to the killings, but plenty showing she was a loving, protective mother whose life took a sharp turn when she met Chad Daybell and fell for his "weird" apocalyptic religious claims. He suggested that Daybell and Vallow Daybell's brother, Alex Cox, were responsible for the deaths.

Daybell told her they had been married in several previous lives and she was a "sexual goddess" who was supposed to help him save the world by gathering 144,000 followers so Jesus could return, Archibald said.

Vallow Daybell's former friend Melanie Gibb testified during the trial that Vallow Daybell believed people in her life had been taken over by evil spirits and turned into "zombies," including JJ and Tylee.

Skepticism prevails as Chinese leaders promise to back private businesses to spur slowing economy

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — The Fangbiaogan Real Estate Agency in the southern city of Nanning is still waiting for China's post-COVID rebound.

Home sales are 30-40% below last year's depressed level after the economy barely grew in the latest quarter, according to the owner, who would give only his surname, Cai. He has cut staff by 80% to 40 employees. Their income from sales commissions has fallen as much as 90%.

"People are worried," said Cai. "They feel safer holding onto their savings instead of spending them."

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government is making ambitious promises to drag the economy out of that crisis of confidence aggravated by tension with Washington, wilting exports, job losses and anxiety among foreign companies about an expanded anti-spying law.

Its most striking pledge: To support entrepreneurs who generate jobs and wealth but have felt under attack over the past decade as the ruling Communist Party built up state-owned industry, tightened control over business and pressured them to pay for its technology and industrial ambitions.

China has an "urgent need" to "boost confidence in the outlook for the private economy," the Cabinet said in a July 19 announcement.

Entrepreneurs and investors are waiting to see what tax, spending or other steps the ruling party might take — and whether it will rein in state companies that dominate banking, energy and other industries and that economists say are stifling growth.

The ruling party took action after the economy grew by just 0.8% in the three months ending in June from the previous quarter, down from 2.2% growth in January-March. That is equal to a 3.2% annual rate, among China's weakest in decades.

With households anxious about possible job losses, retail sales growth slid to 3.1% in June from the previous month's 12.7%.

"Policymakers have underestimated the difficulty in boosting the confidence of households and private companies," Macquarie economists Larry Hu and Yuxiao Zhang said in a report. China needs a "reset in macro and regulatory policies to make them more pro-growth and pro-business," they said.

The ruling party's Politburo followed up on July 24 with a statement promising to shore up economic growth and support real estate, which has struggled since Beijing clamped down on debt levels in China's biggest industry. Stock markets in Hong Kong and China surged on the news but fell back as investors waited to see what Beijing might do.

"I've seen lots of policies like this, but none were carried out," said Cai, the real estate broker.

China's leaders want the prosperity generated by free enterprise but also are requiring businesses to invest in political initiatives that include developing computer chips and narrowing the wealth gap between China's elite and the poor majority. Regulators shut down an internet-based tutoring industry and imposed limits on children playing online games.

Skeptical businesspeople and economists expect little more than fine-tuning.

"We doubt this marks a fundamental shift in the way that the leadership views the role of private firms," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a report.

The country's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and Cabinet ministers spent the first half of this year meeting visiting CEOs including Apple Inc.'s Tim Cook and Elon Musk of Tesla Ltd. in a charm offensive aimed at reviving investor interest.

Despite that, foreign companies are on edge following unexplained raids on two consulting firms and a due diligence firm. The expansion of an anti-spying law and a push for self-reliance in technology also are seen as risks. Foreign investment into China fell 2.7% from a year earlier in the first half of 2023, according to official data.

A survey by the British Chamber of Commerce in China found 70% of foreign companies want "greater clarity" before making new investments. The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China said its

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members are shifting investments to Southeast Asia and other targets.

Exports in June fell 12.2% from a year earlier after interest rate hikes to cool inflation dampened U.S. and European consumer demand.

A furniture dealer in the central city of Taiyuan said her sales were down 20-30% compared with during the pandemic. The merchant, who would give only her family name, Ma, said her customers are salaried urban workers who still were recovering from anti-virus measures that shut down companies.

"We have lost money so far this year," said Ma, who was unaware of the ruling party's promise of support.

An official survey found unemployment among young people in cities spiked to a record 21.3% in June.

A researcher at Peking University, Zhang Dandan, wrote in the business news magazine Caixin the true rate might be almost 50% if young people who are paid by parents to work around the house while they try to find other jobs or have given up looking are included.

The party's decision to reverse one of its signature policies and ease controls imposed in 2020 to rein in surging debt in real estate reflect the urgency of the problem. Those curbs triggered a wave of hundreds of bankruptcies among developers and dragged on business activity.

Still, the property industry's problems persist. Developers have renegotiated payments to banks and bondholders, but financial analysts say they face another cash crunch if sales fail to pick up. The biggest, Evergrande Group, still is trying to resolve more than \$300 billion in debt.

Tech tycoon Ma Huateng, the publicity-shy co-founder of games and social media giant Tencent Holding, broke his media silence and issued a statement praising the July 19 announcement as a "clear and in-depth understanding" of challenges for entrepreneurs.

Tencent, operator of the popular WeChat message service, is a target of anti-monopoly and data security crackdowns launched by Beijing in 2020 to tighten control over tech industries. Its share price has fallen by half, wiping out more than \$400 billion in stock market value.

The statement "raised earnest expectations for high-quality development of private enterprises," Ma wrote on a state TV blog.

The party has tried to shift money to the public by pressuring successful companies including e-commerce giant Alibaba Group to raise wages and reduce charges. But the party has avoided giving money straight to households through Western-style social welfare programs.

The chief economist of state-owned Bank of China International Ltd. suggested a politically sensitive alternative: Hand ownership of state-owned companies that are the core of the ruling party's strategic plans to the Chinese public.

Their dividends would "create wealth effects for residents, stimulating increased income and consumption," Xu Gao wrote in a commentary published by a Beijing think tank, the Center for China and Globalization.

The party has given no sign it might consider that. It has not clarified the status of law and consulting firms and other companies under the anti-spying rules, which have left many uncertain about whether gathering information on business conditions is prohibited.

Another risk factor: More abrupt policy changes as Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades, pursues his economic, social and strategic ambitions.

"There is little to prevent private firms from being targeted again down the road," said Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics.

Record heat waves illuminate plight of poorest Americans who suffer without air conditioning

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press/Report for America

DENVER (AP) — As Denver neared triple-digit temperatures, Ben Gallegos sat shirtless on his porch swatting flies off his legs and spritzing himself with a misting fan to try to get through the heat. Gallegos, like many in the nation's poorest neighborhoods, doesn't have air conditioning.

The 68-year-old covers his windows with mattress foam to insulate against the heat and sleeps in the concrete basement. He knows high temperatures can cause heat stroke and death, and his lung condition makes him more susceptible. But the retired brick layer, who survives on about \$1,000 a month largely from Social Security, says air conditioning is out of reach.

"Take me about 12 years to save up for something like that," he said. "If it's hard to breathe, I'll get down to emergency."

As climate change fans hotter and longer heat waves, breaking record temperatures across the U.S. and leaving dozens dead, the poorest Americans suffer the hottest days with the fewest defenses. Air conditioning, once a luxury, is now a matter of survival.

As Phoenix weathered its 27th consecutive day above 110 degrees (43 Celsius) Wednesday, the nine who died indoors didn't have functioning air conditioning, or it was turned off. Last year, all 86 heat-related deaths indoors were in uncooled environments.

"To explain it fairly simply: Heat kills," said Kristie Ebi, a University of Washington professor who researches heat and health. "Once the heat wave starts, mortality starts in about 24 hours."

It's the poorest and people of color, from Kansas City to Detroit to New York City and beyond, who are far more likely to face grueling heat without air conditioning, according to a Boston University analysis of 115 U.S. metros.

"The temperature differences ... between lower-income neighborhoods, neighborhoods of color and their wealthier, whiter counterparts have pretty severe consequences," said Cate Mingoya-LaFortune of Groundwork USA, an environmental justice organization. "There are these really big consequences like death. ... But there's also ambient misery."

Some have window units that can offer respite, but "in the dead of heat, it don't do nothing," said Melody Clark, who stopped Friday to get food at a nonprofit in Kansas City, Kansas, as temperatures soared to 101, and high humidity made it feel like 109. When the central air conditioning at her rental house went on the fritz, her landlord installed a window unit. But it doesn't do much during the day.

So the 45-year-old wets her hair, cooks outside on a propane grill and keeps the lights off indoors. She's taken the bus to the library to cool off. At night she flips the box unit on, hauling her bed into the room where it's located to sleep.

As far as her two teenagers, she said: "They aren't little bitty. We aren't dying in the heat. ... They don't complain."

While billions in federal funding have been allocated to subsidize utility costs and the installation of cooling systems, experts say they often only support a fraction of the most vulnerable families and some still require prohibitive upfront costs. Installing a centralized heat pump system for heating and cooling can easily reach \$25,000.

President Joe Biden announced steps on Thursday to defend against extreme heat, highlighting the expansion of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which funnels money through states to help poorer households pay utility bills.

While the program is critical, said Michelle Graff, who studies the subsidy at Cleveland State University, only about 16% of the nation's eligible population is actually reached. Nearly half of states don't offer the federal dollars for summer cooling.

"So people are engaging in coping mechanisms, like they're turning on their air conditioners later and leaving their homes hotter," Graff said.

While frigid temperatures and high heating bills birthed the term "heat or eat," she said, "we can now

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transition to AC or eat, where people are going to have to make difficult decisions.”

As temperatures rise, so does the cost of cooling. And temperatures are already hotter in America’s low-income neighborhoods like Gallegos’ Denver suburb of Globeville, where people live along stretches of asphalt and concrete that hold heat like a cast-iron skillet. Surface temperatures there can be roughly 8 degrees hotter than in Denver’s wealthier neighborhoods, where a sea of vegetation cools the area, according to the environmental advocacy group American Forests.

This disparity plays out nationwide. Researchers at the University of San Diego analyzed 1,056 counties and in over 70%, the poorest areas and those with higher Black, Hispanic and Asian populations were significantly hotter.

About one in 10 U.S. households have no air conditioning, a disparity compounded for marginalized groups, according to a study by the Brookings Institution. Less than 4% of Detroit’s white households don’t have air conditioning; it’s 15% for Black households.

At noon on Friday, Katrice Sullivan sat on the porch of her rented house on Detroit’s westside. It was hot and muggy, but even steamier inside the house. Even if she had air conditioning, Sullivan said she’d choose her moments to run it to keep her electricity bill down.

The 37-year-old factory worker pours water on her head, freezes towels to put around her neck, and sits in her car with the air conditioner on. “Some people here spend every dollar for food, so air conditioning is something they can’t afford,” she said.

Shannon Lewis, 38, lived in her Detroit home for nearly 20 years without air conditioning. Lewis’s bedroom was the only place with a window unit, so she’d squeeze her teenager, 8-year-old and 3-year-old-twins into her queen-size bed to sleep, eat meals and watch television.

“So it was like cool in one room and a heat stroke in another,” Lewis said. For the first time, Lewis now has air conditioning through a local non-profit, she said. “We don’t have to sleep or eat in the same room, we are able to come out, sit at the dining room table, eat like a family.”

After at least 54 died during a 2021 heat wave, mostly elderly people without air conditioning, in the Portland area, Oregon passed a law prohibiting landlords from placing blanket bans on air conditioning units. By and large, however, states don’t have laws requiring landlords to provide cooling.

In the federal Inflation Reduction Act, billions were set aside for tax credits and rebates to help families install energy-efficient cooling systems, but some of those are yet to be available. For people like Gallegos, who doesn’t pay taxes, the available credits are worthless.

The law also offers rebates, the kind of state and federal point-of-sale discounts that Amanda Morian has looked into for her 640-square-foot home.

Morian, who has a 13-week-old baby susceptible to hot weather, is desperate to keep her house in Denver’s Globeville suburb cool. She bought thermal curtains, ceiling fans and runs a window unit. At night she tries to do skin-to-skin touch to regulate the baby’s body temperature. When the back door opens in the afternoon, she said, the indoor temperature jumps a degree.

“All of those are just to take the edge off, it’s not enough to actually make it cool. It’s enough to keep us from dying,” she said.

She got estimates from four different companies for installing a cooling system, but every project was between \$20,000 and \$25,000, she said. Even with subsidies she can’t afford it.

“I’m finding that you have to afford the project in the first place and then it’s like having a bonus coupon to take \$5,000 off of the sticker price,” she said.

Lucy Molina, a single mom in Commerce City, one of Denver’s poorest areas, said her home has reached 107 degrees without air conditioning. Nearby, Molina’s two teenage children slurped popsicles to cool off, lingering in front of the open freezer.

For Molina, who bustled around her kitchen on a recent day when temperatures reached 99 degrees outdoors, it’s hard to see any path to a cooling respite.

“We’re just too poor,” she said.

Giuliani and other Trump allies of widespread election fraud. Pak, who had been appointed by Trump in 2017, reported back that he had found no evidence of such fraud.

In August 2021, Pak told the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, which was investigating Trump's post-election actions, that he resigned on Jan. 4, 2021, after learning from Department of Justice officials that Trump did not believe enough was being done to investigate allegations of election fraud and wanted him gone as U.S. attorney.

Mar-a-Lago worker charged in Trump's classified documents case to make first court appearance

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — An employee of Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, Carlos De Oliveira, is expected to make his first court appearance Monday on charges accusing him of scheming with the former president to hide security footage from investigators probing Trump's hoarding of classified documents.

De Oliveira, Mar-a-Lago's property manager, was added last week to the indictment with Trump and the former president's valet, Walt Nauta, in the federal case alleging a plot to illegally keep top-secret records at Trump's Florida estate and thwart government efforts to retrieve them.

De Oliveira faces charges including conspiracy to obstruct justice and lying to investigators. He's scheduled to appear before a magistrate judge in Miami nearly two months after Trump pleaded not guilty in the case brought by special counsel Jack Smith.

The developments in the classified documents case come as Trump braces for possible charges in another federal investigation into his efforts to cling to power after he lost the 2020 election. Trump has received a letter from Smith indicating that he is a target of that investigation, and Trump's lawyers met with Smith's team last week.

An attorney for De Oliveira declined last week to comment on the allegations. Trump has denied any wrongdoing and said the Mar-a-Lago security tapes were voluntarily handed over to investigators. Trump posted on his Truth Social platform last week that he was told the tapes were not "deleted in any way, shape or form."

Prosecutors have not alleged that security footage was actually deleted or kept from investigators.

Nauta has also pleaded not guilty. U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon had previously scheduled the trial of Trump and Nauta to begin in May, and it's unclear whether the addition of De Oliveira to the case may impact the case's timeline.

The latest indictment, unsealed on Thursday, alleges that Trump tried to have security footage deleted after investigators visited in June 2022 to collect classified documents Trump took with him after he left the White House.

Trump was already facing dozens of felony counts — including willful retention of notional defense information — stemming from allegations that he mishandled government secrets that as commander-in-chief he was entrusted to protect. Experts have said the new allegations bolster the special counsel's case and deepen the former president's legal jeopardy.

Video from Mar-a-Lago would ultimately become vital to the government's case because, prosecutors said, it shows Nauta moving boxes in and out of a storage room — an act alleged to have been done at Trump's direction and in effort to hide records not only from investigators but Trump's own lawyers.

Days after the Justice Department sent a subpoena for video footage at Mar-a-Lago to the Trump Organization in June 2022, prosecutors say De Oliveira asked a information technology staffer how long the server retained footage and told the employee "the boss" wanted it deleted. When the employee said he didn't believe he was able to do that, De Oliveira insisted the "boss" wanted it done, asking, "What are we going to do?"

Shortly after the FBI searched Mar-a-Lago and found classified records in the storage room and Trump's office, prosecutors say Nauta called a Trump employee and said words to the effect of, "someone just

Denmark seeks to legally prevent burnings of Quran or other religious scriptures

By JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Denmark's foreign minister said Sunday the government will seek to make it illegal to desecrate the Quran or other religious holy books in front of foreign embassies in the Nordic country.

Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said in an interview with the Danish public broadcaster DR that the burning of holy scriptures "only serves the purpose of creating division in a world that actually needs unity."

"That is why we have decided in the government that we will look at how, in very special situations, we can put an end to mockery of other countries, which is in direct conflict with Danish interests and the safety of the Danes," he said.

A recent string of public Quran desecrations by a handful of anti-Islam activists in Denmark and neighboring Sweden have sparked angry demonstrations in Muslim countries.

Løkke Rasmussen said the Cabinet of Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is determined to find "a legal tool" to prohibit such acts without compromising freedom of expression, but he acknowledged that would not be easy.

"There must be room for religious criticism, and we have no thoughts of reintroducing a blasphemy clause," he told DR. "But when you stand up in front of a foreign embassy and burn a Quran or burn the Torah scroll in front of the Israeli embassy, it serves no other purpose than to mock."

His comments followed a statement issued late Sunday by the Danish government saying freedom of expression is one of the most important values in Danish society.

But, it added, the desecration of the Muslim holy book in Denmark has resulted in the nation being viewed in many places around the world "as a country that facilitates insult and denigration of the cultures, religions, and traditions of other countries."

The government repeated its condemnation of such desecrations, say they are "deeply offensive and reckless acts committed by few individuals" and "do not represent the values the Danish society is built on."

In Sweden, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said Sunday on Instagram that his government is analyzing the legal situation regarding desecration of the Quran and other holy books, given the animosity such acts are stirring up against Sweden.

"We are in the most serious security policy situation since the Second World War," Kristersson said.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has called an emergency remote meeting Monday to discuss the Quran burnings in Sweden and Denmark.

The 'Barbie' bonanza continues at the box office, 'Oppenheimer' holds the No. 2 spot

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A week later, the "Barbenheimer" boom has not abated.

Seven days after Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" and Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer" conspired to set box office records, the two films held unusually strongly in theaters. "Barbie" took in a massive \$93 million in its second weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday. "Oppenheimer" stayed in second with a robust \$46.2 million. Sales for the two movies dipped 43% and 44%, respectably — well shy of the usual week-two drops.

"Barbenheimer" has proven to be not a one-weekend phenomenon but an ongoing box-office bonanza. The two movies combined have already surpassed \$1 billion in worldwide ticket sales. Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for data firm Comscore, call it "a touchstone moment for movies, moviegoers and movie theaters."

"Having two movies from rival studios linked in this way and both boosting each other's fortunes — both box-office wise and in terms of their profile — I don't know if there's a comp for this in the annals of box-

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office history," said Dergarabedian. "There's really no comparison for this."

Following its year-best \$162 million opening, the pink-infused pop sensation of "Barbie" saw remarkably sustained business through the week and into the weekend. The film outpaced Nolan's "The Dark Knight" to have the best first 11 days in theaters of any Warner Bros. release ever.

"Barbie" has rapidly accumulated \$351.4 million in U.S. and Canadian theaters, a rate that will soon make it the biggest box-office hit of the summer. Every day it's played, "Barbie" has made at least \$20 million.

And the "Barbie" effect isn't just in North America. The film made \$122.2 million internationally over the weekend. Its global tally has reached \$775 million. It's the kind of business that astounds even veteran studio executives.

"That's a crazy number," said Jeff Goldstein, distribution chief for Warner Bros. "There's just a built-in audience that wants to be part of the zeitgeist of the moment. Wherever you go, people are wearing pink. Pink is taking over the world."

Amid the frenzy, "Barbie" is already attracting a lot of repeat moviegoers. Goldstein estimates that 12% of sales are people going back with friends or family to see it again.

For a movie industry that has been trying to regain its pre-pandemic footing — and that now finds itself largely shuttered due to actors and screenwriters strikes — the sensations of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" have showed what's possible when everything lines up just right.

"Post-pandemic, there's no ceiling and there's no floor," Goldstein said. "The movies that miss really miss big time, and the movies that work really work big time."

Universal Pictures' "Oppenheimer," meanwhile, is performing more like a superhero movie than a three-hour film about scientists talking.

Nolan's drama starring Cillian Murphy as atomic bomb physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer has accrued \$174.1 million domestically thus far. With an additional \$72.4 million in international cinemas, "Oppenheimer" has already surpassed \$400 million globally.

Showings in IMAX have typically been sold out. "Oppenheimer" has made \$80 million worldwide on IMAX. The large-format exhibitor said Sunday that it will extend the film's run through Aug. 13.

The week's top new release, Walt Disney Co.'s "Haunted Mansion," an adaptation of the Disney theme park attraction, was easily overshadowed by the "Barbenheimer" blitz. The film, which cost about \$150 million, debuted with \$24 million domestically and \$9 million in overseas sales. "Haunted Mansion," directed by Justin Simien ("Dear White People," "Bad Hair") and starring an ensemble of LaKeith Stanfield, Tiffany Haddish, Owen Wilson, Danny DeVito and Rosario Dawson, struggled to overcome mediocre reviews.

"Talk to Me," the A24 supernatural horror film, fared better. It debuted with \$10 million. The film, directed by Australian filmmakers Danny and Michael Philippou and starring Sophie Wilde, was a midnight premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in January and received terrific reviews from critics (95% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes). It was made for a modest \$4.5 million.

While theaters being flush with moviegoers has been a huge boon to the film industry, it's been tougher sledding for Tom Cruise, the so-called savior of the movies last summer with "Top Gun: Maverick." "Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning Part I," which debuted the week before the arrival of "Barbenheimer," grossed \$10.7 million in its third weekend. The film starring Cruise and directed by Christopher McQuarrie, has grossed \$139.2 million domestically and \$309.3 million overseas.

Instead, the sleeper hit "Sound of Freedom" has been the best performing non-"Barbenheimer" release in theaters. The Angel Studios' release, which is counting crowdfunding pay-it-forward sales in its box office totals, made \$12.4 million in its fourth weekend, bringing its haul thus far to nearly \$150 million.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Barbie," \$93 million.
2. "Oppenheimer," \$46.2 million.
3. "Haunted Mansion," \$24.2 million.
4. "Sound of Freedom," \$12.4 million.

5. "Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part One," \$10.7 million.
6. "Talk to Me," \$10 million.
7. "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," \$4 million.
8. "Elemental," \$3.4 million.
9. "Insidious: The Red Door," \$3.2 million.
10. "Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani," \$1.6 million.

Customers want instant gratification. Workers say it's pushing them to the brink

By ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Six straight days of 12-hour driving. Single digit paychecks. The complaints come from workers in vastly different industries: UPS delivery drivers and Hollywood actors and writers.

But they point to an underlying factor driving a surge of labor unrest: The cost to workers whose jobs have changed drastically as companies scramble to meet customer expectations for speed and convenience in industries transformed by technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated those changes, pushing retailers to shift online and intensifying the streaming competition among entertainment companies. Now, from the picket lines, workers are trying to give consumers a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to produce a show that can be binged any time or get dog food delivered to their doorstep with a phone swipe.

Overworked and underpaid employees is an enduring complaint across industries — from delivery drivers to Starbucks baristas and airline pilots — where surges in consumer demand have collided with persistent labor shortages. Workers are pushing back against forced overtime, punishing schedules or company reliance on lower-paid, part-time or contract forces.

At issue for Hollywood screenwriters and actors staging their first simultaneous strikes in 40 years is the way streaming has upended entertainment economics, slashing pay and forcing showrunners to produce content faster with smaller teams.

"This seems to happen to many places when the tech companies come in. Who are we crushing? It doesn't matter," said Danielle Sanchez-Witzel, a screenwriter and showrunner on the negotiating team for the Writers Guild of America, whose members have been on strike since May. Earlier this month, the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists joined the writers' union on the picket line.

Actors and writers have long relied on residuals, or long-term payments, for reruns and other airings of films and television shows. But reruns aren't a thing on streaming services, where series and films simply land and stay with no easy way, such as box office returns or ratings, to determine their popularity.

Consequently, whatever residuals streaming companies do pay often amount to a pittance, and screenwriters have been sharing tales of receiving single digit checks.

Adam Shapiro, an actor known for the Netflix hit "Never Have I Ever," said many actors were initially content to accept lower pay for the plethora of roles that streaming suddenly offered. But the need for a more sustainable compensation model gained urgency when it became clear streaming is not a sideshow, but rather the future of the business, he said.

"Over the past 10 years, we realized: 'Oh, that's now how Hollywood works. Everything is streaming,'" Shapiro said during a recent union event.

Shapiro, who has been acting for 25 years, said he agreed to a contract offering 20% of his normal rate for "Never Have I Ever" because it seemed like "a great opportunity, and it's going to be all over the world. And it was. It really was. Unfortunately, we're all starting to realize that if we keep doing this we're not going to be able to pay our bills."

Then there's the rising use of "mini rooms," in which a handful of writers are hired to work only during pre-production, sometimes for a series that may take a year to be greenlit, or never get picked up at all.

Sanchez-Witzel, co-creator of the recently released Netflix series "Survival of the Thickest," said television shows traditionally hire robust writing teams for the duration of production. But Netflix refused to allow her to keep her team of five writers past pre-production, forcing round-the-clock work on rewrites with just one other writer.

"It's not sustainable and I'll never do that again," she said.

Sanchez-Witzel said she was struck by the similarities between her experience and those of UPS drivers, some of whom joined the WGA for protests as they threatened their own potentially crippling strike. UPS and the Teamsters last week reached a tentative contract staving off the strike.

Jeffrey Palmerino, a full-time UPS driver near Albany, New York, said forced overtime emerged as a top issue during the pandemic as drivers coped with a crush of orders on par with the holiday season. Drivers never knew what time they would get home or if they could count on two days off each week, while 14-hour days in trucks without air conditioning became the norm.

"It was basically like Christmas on steroids for two straight years. A lot of us were forced to work six days a week, and that is not any way to live your life," said Palmerino, a Teamsters shop steward.

Along with pay raises and air conditioning, the Teamsters won concessions that Palmerino hopes will ease overwork. UPS agreed to end forced overtime on days off and eliminate a lower-paid category of drivers who work shifts that include weekends, converting them to full-time drivers. Union members have yet to ratify the deal.

The Teamsters and labor activists hailed the tentative deal as a game-changer that would pressure other companies facing labor unrest to raise their standards. But similar outcomes are far from certain in industries lacking the sheer economic indispensability of UPS or the clout of its 340,000-member union.

Efforts to organize at Starbucks and Amazon stalled as both companies aggressively fought against unionization.

Still, labor protests will likely gain momentum following the UPS contract, said Patricia Campos-Medina, executive director of the Worker Institute at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University, which released a report this year that found the number of labor strikes rose 52% in 2022.

"The whole idea that consumer convenience is above everything broke down during the pandemic. We started to think, 'I'm at home ordering, but there is actually a worker who has to go the grocery store, who has to cook this for me so that I can be comfortable,'" Campos-Medina said.

Some renters may get relief from biggest apartment construction boom in decades, but not all

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When viewed through a wide lens, renters across the U.S. finally appear to be getting some relief, thanks in part to the biggest apartment construction boom in decades.

Median rent rose just 0.5% in June, year over year, after falling in May for the first time since the pandemic hit the U.S. Some economists project U.S. rents will be down modestly this year after soaring nearly 25% over the past four years.

A closer look, however, shows the trend will likely be little comfort for many U.S. renters who've had to put an increasing share of their income toward their monthly payment. Renters in cities such as Cincinnati and Indianapolis are still getting hit with increases of 5% or more. Much of the new construction is located in just a few metro areas, and many of the new units are luxury apartments, which rent for well north of \$2,000.

Median U.S. rent has risen to \$2,029 this June from \$1,629 in June 2019, according to rental listings company Rent, which tracks rents in 50 of the largest U.S. metropolitan areas. Demand for apartments exploded during the pandemic as people who could work remotely sought more space or decided to relocate to another part of the country.

The steep rent increases have left tenants like Melissa Lombana, a high school teacher who lives in the South Florida city of Miramar, with progressively less income to spend on other needs.

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The rent on her one-bedroom apartment jumped 13% last year to \$1,700. It climbed another 6% to \$1,800 this month when she renewed her lease.

"Even the \$1,700 was a stretch for me," said Lombana, 43, who supplements her teaching income with a side job doing educational testing. "In a year, I will not be able to afford living here at all."

Lombana's rent is now gobbling up nearly half her monthly income. That puts her in a category referred to as "cost-burdened" by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, denoting households that pay 30% or more of their income toward rent. Last year, the average rent-to-income ratio per household rose to 30%. This March, it was 29.6%.

Lombana hasn't had any luck finding a more affordable apartment. While South Florida is one of the metropolitan areas seeing a rise in apartment construction, the units are mostly high-end and not a viable option.

That scenario is playing out across the nation. Developers are rushing to complete projects that were green-lit during the pandemic-era surge in demand for rentals or left in limbo by delays in supplies of fixtures and building materials. Nearly 1.1 million apartments are currently under construction, according to the commercial real estate tracker CoStar, a pace not seen since the 1970s.

Increasing the supply of apartments tends to moderate rent increases over time and can give tenants more options on where to live. But more than 40% of the new rentals to be completed this year will be concentrated in about 10 high job growth metropolitan areas, including Austin, Nashville, Denver, Atlanta and New York, according to Marcus & Millichap. In many areas, the boost to overall inventory will be barely noticeable.

Even within metros where there'll be a notable increase in available apartments, such as Nashville, most of it will be in the luxury category, where rents average \$2,270, nationally. Some 70% of the new rental inventory will be the luxury class, said Jay Lybik, national director of multifamily analytics at CoStar.

That will leave most tenants unlikely to see a big enough reduction in rent to make a difference, industry experts and economists say.

"I think we're in a period of rent flattening for 12 or 18 months, but it's certainly not a big rent decline," said Hessam Nadji, CEO of commercial real estate firm Marcus & Millichap.

"We're building a multi-decade record number of units," Nadji said. "It's going to cause some softening and some pockets of overbuilding, but it's not going to fundamentally resolve the housing shortage or the affordability problem for renters across the U.S."

The surge in rents has made it difficult for workers to keep up with inflation despite solid wage gains the past few years and exacerbated a long-term trend. Between 1999 and 2022, U.S. rents soared 135%, while income grew 77%, according to data from Moody's Analytics.

Realtor.com is forecasting that rents will drop an average of 0.9% this year. But while down nationally, rents are still rising in many markets around the country, especially those where hiring remains robust.

In the New York metro area, the median rent climbed 4.7% in June from a year earlier to \$2,899, according to Realtor.com. In the Midwest, rents surged 5.6% in the Cincinnati metro area to \$1,188, and 6.9% to \$1,350 in the Indianapolis metro area.

The current spike in apartment construction alone isn't going to be enough to address how costly renting has become for many Americans.

"For the rest of the 2020s rents will continue to grow because millennials are such a big generation and we're very much in the hole in terms of building housing for that generation," said Daryl Fairweather, chief economist at Redfin. "It will take many good years of new construction to build adequate housing for millennials."

The bigger challenge is building more work force housing, because the cost of land, labor and navigating the government approval process incentivize developers to put up luxury apartments buildings.

Expanding the supply of modestly priced rentals would help alleviate the strain from so many new apartments targeting renters with high incomes, "although additional subsidies will be needed to make housing affordable to households with the lowest incomes," researchers at Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies wrote in a recent report.

Despite the overall pullback in U.S. rents, Joey Di Girolamo, in Pembroke Pines, Florida, worries that he'll face more sharp rent increases in coming years.

Last year, the web designer left a two-bedroom, two-bath townhome he rented for \$2,200 a month to avoid a \$600 a month increase. This year, his rent went up by \$200, a nearly 10% jump.

"That blew me away," said Di Girolamo, 50. "I'm just kind of dreading what it's going to be like next year, but especially 3 or 4 years from now."

Facing legal peril, Trump calls on GOP to rally around him and focus on investigating Biden

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — At a moment of growing legal peril, Donald Trump ramped up his calls for his GOP rivals to drop out of the 2024 presidential race as he threatened to go after Republican members of Congress who fail to focus on investigating Democratic President Joe Biden.

Trump also urged a halt to Ukrainian military aid until the White House cooperates with congressional investigations into Biden and his family.

"Every dollar spent attacking me by Republicans is a dollar given straight to the Biden campaign," Trump said at a rally in Erie, Pennsylvania, on Saturday night.

The former president and GOP front-runner said it was time for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and others he dismissed as "clowns" to clear the field, accusing them of "wasting hundreds of millions of dollars that Republicans should be using to build a massive vote-gathering operation" to take on Biden in November.

The comments came two days after federal prosecutors unveiled new criminal charges against Trump as part of the case that accuses him of illegally hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago club and refusing to turn them over to investigators. The superseding indictment unsealed Thursday alleges that Trump and two staffers sought to delete surveillance at the club in an effort to obstruct the Justice Department's investigation.

The case is just one of Trump's mounting legal challenges. His team is currently bracing for additional possible indictments, which could happen as soon as this coming week, related to his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election brought by prosecutors in both Washington and Georgia. Trump already faces criminal charges in New York over hush money payments made to women who accused him of sexual encounters during his 2016 presidential campaign.

Nevertheless, Trump remains the dominant early figure for the Republican nomination and has only seen his lead grow as the charges have mounted and as his rivals have struggled to respond. Their challenge was on display at a GOP gathering in Iowa Friday night, where they largely declined to go after Trump directly. The only one who did — accusing Trump of "running to stay out of prison" — was booed as he left the stage.

In the meantime, Trump has embraced his legal woes, turning them into the core message of his bid to return to the White House as he accuses Biden of using the Justice Department to maim his chief political rival. The White House has said repeatedly that the president has had no involvement in the cases.

At rallies, Trump has tried to frame the charges, which come with serious threats of jail time, as an attack not just on him, but those who support him.

"They're not indicting me, they're indicting you. I just happen to be standing in the way," he said in Erie, adding, "Every time the radical left Democrats, Marxists, communists and fascists indict me, I consider it actually a great badge of honor.... Because I'm being indicted for you."

But the investigations are also sucking up enormous resources that are being diverted from the nuts and bolts of the campaign. The Washington Post first reported Saturday that Trump's political action committee, Save America, will report Monday that it spent more than \$40 million on legal fees during the first half of 2023 defending Trump and all of the current and former aides whose lawyers it is paying. The total is more than the campaign raised during the second quarter of the year.

"In order to combat these heinous actions by Joe Biden's cronies and to protect these innocent people

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from financial ruin and prevent their lives from being completely destroyed, the leadership PAC contributed to their legal fees to ensure they have representation against unlawful harassment," said Trump's spokesman Steven Cheung.

At the rally, in a former Democratic stronghold that Trump flipped in 2016, but Biden won narrowly in 2020, Trump also threatened Republicans in Congress who refuse to go along with efforts to impeach Biden. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said this past week that Republican lawmakers may consider an impeachment inquiry into the president over unproven claims of financial misconduct.

Trump, who was impeached twice while in office, said Saturday that, "The biggest complaint that I get is that the Republicans find out this information and then they do nothing about it."

"Any Republican that doesn't act on Democrat fraud should be immediately primaries and get out — out!" he told the crowd to loud applause. "They have to play tough and ... if they're not willing to do it, we got a lot of good, tough Republicans around ... and they're going to get my endorsement every single time."

Trump, during the 2022 midterm elections, made it his mission to punish those who had voted in favor of his second impeachment. He succeeded in unseating most who had by backing primary challengers.

At the rally, Trump also called on Republican members of Congress to halt the authorization of additional military support to Ukraine, which has been mired in a war fighting Russia's invasion, until the Biden administration cooperates with Republican investigations into Biden and his family's business dealings — words that echoed the call that led to his first impeachment.

"He's dragging into a global conflict on behalf of the very same country, Ukraine, that apparently paid his family all of these millions of dollars," Trump alleged. "In light of this information," Congress, he said, "should refuse to authorize a single additional payment of our depleted stockpiles ... the weapons stockpiles to Ukraine until the FBI, DOJ and IRS hand over every scrap of evidence they have on the Biden crime family's corrupt business dealings."

House Republicans have been investigating the Biden family's finances, particularly payments Hunter, the president's son, received from Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company that became tangled in the first impeachment of Trump.

An unnamed confidential FBI informant claimed that Burisma company officials in 2015 and 2016 sought to pay the Bidens \$5 million each in return for their help ousting a Ukrainian prosecutor who was purportedly investigating the company. But a Justice Department review in 2020, while Trump was president, was closed eight months later with insufficient evidence of wrongdoing.

Trump's first impeachment by the House resulted in charges that he pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to dig up dirt on the Bidens while threatening to withhold military aid. Trump was later acquitted by the Senate.

Ukraine again reported bringing war deep into Russia with attacks on Moscow and border region

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukraine brought the war far from the front line into the heart of Russia again Sunday in drone penetrations that Russian authorities said damaged two office buildings a few miles (kilometers) from the Kremlin and a pig breeding complex on the countries' border.

The attacks, which Ukraine didn't acknowledge in keeping with its security policy, reflected a pattern of more frequent and deeper cross-border strikes the Kyiv government has launched since starting a counteroffensive against Russian forces in June. A precursor and the most dramatic of the strikes happened in May on the Kremlin itself, the seat of power in the capital, Moscow.

Sunday's was the fourth such strike on the capital region this month and the third this week, showing Moscow's vulnerability as Russia's war in Ukraine drags into its 18th month.

The Russian Defense Ministry said three drones targeted the city in an "attempted terrorist attack by the Kyiv regime." Air defenses shot down one drone in Odintsovo in the surrounding Moscow region, while two others were jammed and crashed into the Moscow City business district.

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Photos and video showed that a drone had ripped off part of the facade of a modern skyscraper, IQ-Quarter, located 7.2 kms (4.5 miles) from the Kremlin. When the drone hit, sparks, flames and smoke spewed from the building, with debris falling on the sidewalk and street. Windows were blown out, and metal window frames were mangled. A security guard was injured, Russia's state news agency Tass reported, citing emergency officials. Russia's Ria-Novosti news agency reported the building's tenants included several government agencies.

Flights were temporarily suspended at Moscow's Vnukovo airport, and the airspace over Moscow and the outlying regions was temporarily closed.

President Vladimir Putin, who was in his hometown of St. Petersburg at the time of the attempted attacks for meetings with African leaders and a naval celebration, was briefed, his spokesman said.

Ukrainian officials didn't acknowledge the attacks but President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address: "Gradually, the war is returning to the territory of Russia — to its symbolic centers and military bases, and this is an inevitable, natural and absolutely fair process."

A Ukrainian air force spokesman also didn't claim responsibility but said the Russian people were seeing the consequences of Russia's war in Ukraine.

"All of the people who think the war 'doesn't concern them' — it's already touching them," spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat told journalists Sunday.

"There's already a certain mood in Russia: that something is flying in, and loudly," he said. "There's no discussion of peace or calm in the Russian interior any more. They got what they wanted."

Ihnat also referenced an early Sunday drone attack on Crimea, Ukrainian territory which Russia occupied and illegally annexed in 2014. The Russian Defense Ministry announced it had shot down 16 Ukrainian drones and neutralized eight others through electronic jamming. No casualties were reported.

Zelenskyy has vowed to take back all land Russian forces have occupied, including Crimea, and his efforts have been strengthened by the receipt and deployment of increasingly advanced Western weapons.

In the earlier attacks on Moscow, Russia's Defense Ministry reported shooting down a Ukrainian drone outside the city on Friday. Four days earlier, two drones struck the Russian capital, one of them falling in the center of the city near the Defense Ministry's headquarters along the Moscow River about 3 kilometers (2 miles) from the Kremlin. The other drone hit an office building in southern Moscow, gutting several upper floors.

In another attack on July 4, the Russian military said air defenses downed four drones on Moscow's outskirts and jammed a fifth that was forced down.

Russia has also blamed Ukrainian forces for attacking border areas, and on Sunday, the governor of one such region, Bryansk, said a Ukrainian strike damaged a pig breeding complex and injured three people.

In Ukraine, the air force reported Sunday it had destroyed four Russian drones above the Kherson and Dnipropetrovsk regions. Information on the attacks could not be independently verified.

Meanwhile, a Russian missile strike late Saturday killed two people and wounded 20 in the city of Sumy in northeast Ukraine. A four-story vocational college building was hit, the Ukrainian Interior Ministry said. Local authorities said that dormitories and teaching buildings were damaged in the blast and a fire that followed.

While the attacks continued on the war front, so did the war of words. Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, issued his latest nuclear war threat in a Telegram post Sunday. In it, he claimed Russian forces were preventing a nuclear war. He contended that if Ukraine, with NATO countries' support, succeeded in its counteroffensive, including if "they seized part of our land," then Russia would "go for the use of nuclear weapons." Western leaders have repeatedly warned of the dangers of making such statements.

Joe Biden, America's oldest sitting president, needs young voters to win again. Will his age matter?

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

At 24, Alberto Rodriguez has grandparents younger than Joe Biden. But he's more interested in the 80-year-old president's accomplishments than his age.

"People as young as me, we're all focusing on our day-to-day lives and he has done things to help us through that," Rodriguez, a cook at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, said of Biden's support among young voters. Rodriguez pointed specifically to federal COVID-19 relief payments and government spending increases on infrastructure and other social programs.

Voters like him were a key piece of Biden's winning 2020 coalition, which included majorities of young people as well as college graduates, women, urban and suburban voters and Black Americans. Maintaining their support will be critical in closely contested states such as Nevada, where even small declines could prove consequential to Biden's reelection bid.

His 2024 campaign plans to emphasize messages that could especially resonate with young people in the coming weeks as the anniversary of the sweeping Inflation Reduction Act approaches in mid-August. That legislation includes provisions that the White House will embrace to argue that Biden has done more than any other president to combat climate change.

Such efforts, however, could collide with Biden's personal reality — like when he recalled that, while attending a St. Patrick's Day parade at age 14, he appeared in a photo with President Harry S. Truman.

"Purely by accident — I assume it was an accident — the photographer from the newspaper got a picture of me making eye contact with Harry Truman," Biden said to chuckles last week at the Truman Civil Rights Symposium in Washington.

In 2020, 61% of voters under age 30 — and 55% of those between 30 and 44 — supported Biden, according to AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of the electorate.

It's an age group with which Republicans hope to make inroads. Former President Donald Trump, who is the early front-runner in the GOP presidential primary and is only 3 1/2 years younger than Biden, said Friday, "We are hitting the young person's market like nobody's ever seen before."

Kevin Munoz, a spokesman for Biden's campaign, referred to Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement in arguing that "young people are acutely impacted by the issues front and center in this election, driven by the extreme MAGA agenda." He said that included inaction on climate change, gun violence and student debt.

"We will meet younger Americans where they are and turn their energy into action," Munoz said in a statement.

That might not defuse questions about age, though, when it comes to Biden or Trump.

"There's a frustration and exhaustion that they feel with the rematch," Terrance Woodbury, co-founder & CEO of the Democratic polling firm HIT Strategies, said of young voters.

"That's more of a problem than either of those two candidates individually, is that a system can just keep reproducing," Woodbury added. "And I think a lot of people just find that untenable."

An April poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that just 25% of Democrats under 45 said they would definitely support Biden in a general election, compared with 56% of older Democrats. A majority of Democrats across age groups said they would probably support him as the party's nominee, however.

Biden's campaign is relying heavily on the Democratic National Committee, which during last year's midterms, hired campus organizers in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and other battleground states and offered weekly youth coordinating meetings to encourage in-class contacts and "dormstorms." The DNC sees young people as some of the most critical voters it will need to reach in 2024 and promises "significant investments" to mobilize them. Plans are underway to expand on its work last cycle, including trainings it held on how best to turn out voters.

The Republican National Committee is trying to use Biden's age against him, posting online videos of

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Biden seeming frail or making verbal gaffes, such as when he declared in June "God save the queen," nearly nine months after the death of England's Queen Elizabeth II.

Rodriguez shrugged off online attacks, "People can make all the hit pieces and memes and TikToks all they want."

A starker contrast might be between the president and rising Democrats such as 46-year-old California Rep. Ro Khanna and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, 41, one of Biden's primary rivals in 2020. Neither seriously entertained running for the White House in 2024 and have backed Biden's reelection.

"The only thing that really matters is your ability to do the job," Buttigieg, who was 37 when he launched his 2020 presidential bid, said recently on CNN. Khanna told Fox News Channel that age will "obviously" be a 2024 factor, but suggested that Biden's staff "overprotects" him and "the more he's out there, the better."

Other top young Democrats have lined up to back Biden. Florida Democratic Rep. Maxwell Frost, who was elected to Congress last year at 26, is on the Biden campaign's advisory board, as is Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, 44. New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, 33, recently endorsed Biden.

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, a progressive who says strong turnout among young voters helped him win a runoff election this spring, said Biden's policies transcend his age. Johnson noted that the president's work "around climate justice speaks not just to this generation, but generations to come."

"The excitement that I believe that we're going to have is going to speak to the incredible work and organizing that we are committed to doing as a party," said Johnson, 47. "And we're looking forward to working with the president over the course of his next four years."

Still, Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, acknowledged that even the president's supporters understand how demanding the White House can be.

"People worry about Joe Biden. They worry like you would worry about a beloved father or grandfather," said Weingarten, 65. "What you normally hear from Democrats is this sense of, 'OK, I just want him to be OK.' And you're hearing just the consternation of, 'This is a hard job.'"

Biden said he "took a hard look" at his age while deciding to seek a second term. But he's also tried to suggest his age and experience are assets rather than liabilities by joking repeatedly about them. That's a departure from 2020, when Biden called himself a "transition candidate" and pledged to be a "bridge" to younger Democrats.

Santiago Mayer, the founder of Voters of Tomorrow, which has 20-plus chapters nationwide and works to increase political engagement among young voters, argues that Biden is not defying his past promise by running for reelection, but keeping it.

"He just needs more time," said Mayer, who graduated from California State University at Long Beach in May. "I think the second term is a very important part of that pledge. He's building a progressive future for young people and he can't actually pass the baton until that's done."

One key policy piece of Biden's efforts to appeal to young voters, providing student debt relief, was recently struck down by the Supreme Court. The White House has launched a new effort, but it will take longer.

"Of course it's going to dampen some of that because people are disappointed," Weingarten said of the ruling's effect on enthusiasm for Biden. But she said the decision could also motivate young Biden supporters anxious show their support for the president's alternative plan.

"It is also about the fight," Weingarten said "not just about the results."

Today in History: July 31, Bill Russell and Nichelle Nichols die on same day

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, July 31, the 212th day of 2023. There are 153 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 31, 1777, during the Revolutionary War, the Marquis de Lafayette, a 19-year-old French nobleman, was made a major-general in the American Continental Army.

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In 1715, a fleet of Spanish ships carrying gold, silver and jewelry sank during a hurricane off the east Florida coast; of some 2,500 crew members, more than 1,000 died.

In 1919, Germany's Weimar Constitution was adopted by the republic's National Assembly.

In 1945, Pierre Laval, premier of the pro-Nazi Vichy government in France, surrendered to U.S. authorities in Austria; he was turned over to France, which later tried and executed him.

In 1953, Sen. Robert A. Taft of Ohio, known as "Mr. Republican," died in New York at age 63.

In 1957, the Distant Early Warning Line, a system of radar stations designed to detect Soviet bombers approaching North America, went into operation.

In 1970, "The Huntley-Brinkley Report" came to an end after nearly 14 years as co-anchor Chet Huntley signed off for the last time; the broadcast was renamed "NBC Nightly News."

In 1971, Apollo 15 crew members David Scott and James Irwin became the first astronauts to use a lunar rover on the surface of the moon.

In 1972, Democratic vice-presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton withdrew from the ticket with George McGovern following disclosures that Eagleton had once undergone psychiatric treatment.

In 1981, a seven-week-old Major League Baseball strike ended.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in Moscow.

In 2003, the Vatican launched a global campaign against gay marriages, warning Catholic politicians that support of same-sex unions was "gravely immoral" and urging non-Catholics to join the offensive.

In 2020, a federal appeals court overturned the death sentence of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, saying the judge who oversaw the case didn't adequately screen jurors for potential biases. (The Supreme Court later reimposed the sentence.)

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama's national security team acknowledged for the first time that, when investigating one suspected terrorist, it could read and store the phone records of millions of Americans. Voters in Zimbabwe went to the polls in national elections that were won by President Robert Mugabe amid opponents' allegations of fraud.

Five years ago: Jury selection began in the trial of Paul Manafort, President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman; he was accused of failing to report tens of millions of dollars in Ukrainian political consulting fees. (Manafort was sentenced to a total of seven and a-half years in prison after being convicted at trial in Virginia and pleading guilty in Washington to two conspiracy counts.) Actor Alan Alda revealed that he has Parkinson's disease, telling "CBS This Morning" that he'd been diagnosed three and a half years ago.

One year ago: Bill Russell, the NBA great who anchored a Boston Celtics dynasty that won 11 championships in 13 years — the last two as the first Black head coach in any major U.S. sport — and marched for civil rights with Martin Luther King Jr., died at age 88. Nichelle Nichols, who broke barriers for Black women in Hollywood when she played communications officer Lt. Uhura on the original "Star Trek" television series, died at 89.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Don Murray is 94. Jazz composer-musician Kenny Burrell is 92. Actor France Nuyen is 84. Actor Susan Flannery is 84. Singer Lobo is 79. Actor Geraldine Chaplin is 79. Former movie studio executive Sherry Lansing is 79. Singer Gary Lewis is 78. Actor Lane Davies is 73. Actor Susan Wooldridge is 73. International Tennis Hall of Famer Evonne Goolagong Cawley is 72. Actor Barry Van Dyke is 72. Actor Alan Autry is 71. Jazz composer-musician Michael Wolff is 71. Actor James Read is 70. Actor Michael Biehn is 67. Rock singer-musician Daniel Ash (Love and Rockets) is 66. Actor Dirk Blocker is 66. Entrepreneur Mark Cuban is 65. Rock musician Bill Berry (R.E.M.) is 65. Actor Wally Kurth is 65. Actor Wesley Snipes is 61. Country singer Chad Brock is 60. Musician Fatboy Slim is 60. Rock musician Jim Corr is 59. Author J.K. Rowling is 58. Actor Dean Cain is 57. Actor Jim True-Frost is 57. Actor Ben Chaplin is 54. Actor Loren Dean is 54. Actor Eve Best is 52. Actor s(pah-REES') is 48. Country singer-musician Zac Brown is 45. Actor-producer-writer B.J. Novak is 44. Actor Eric Lively is 42. Singer Shannon Curfman is 38. NHL center Evgeni Malkin is 37. Hip-hop artist Lil Uzi Vert is 29. Actor Reese Hartwig is 25. Actor Rico Rodriguez is 25.