

# Groton Daily Independent

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## 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.

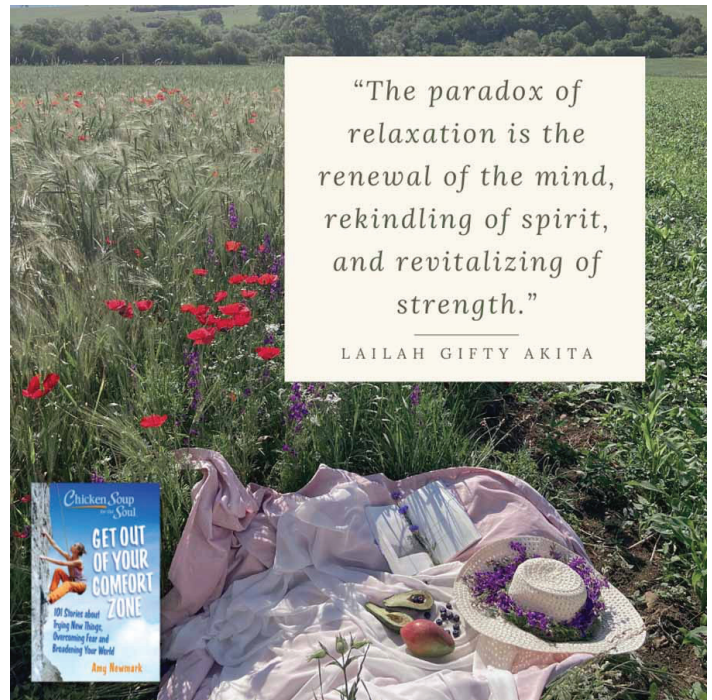
## Monday, Aug. 21

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.

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



*"The paradox of relaxation is the renewal of the mind, rekindling of spirit, and revitalizing of strength."*

LAILAH GIFTY AKITA

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.

**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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**Girls Coach Chris Kucker**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Soccer photos from the St. Thomas More games



**Jerica Locke**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Ryelle Gilbert**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Elizabeth Flihs**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



# Groton Daily Independent

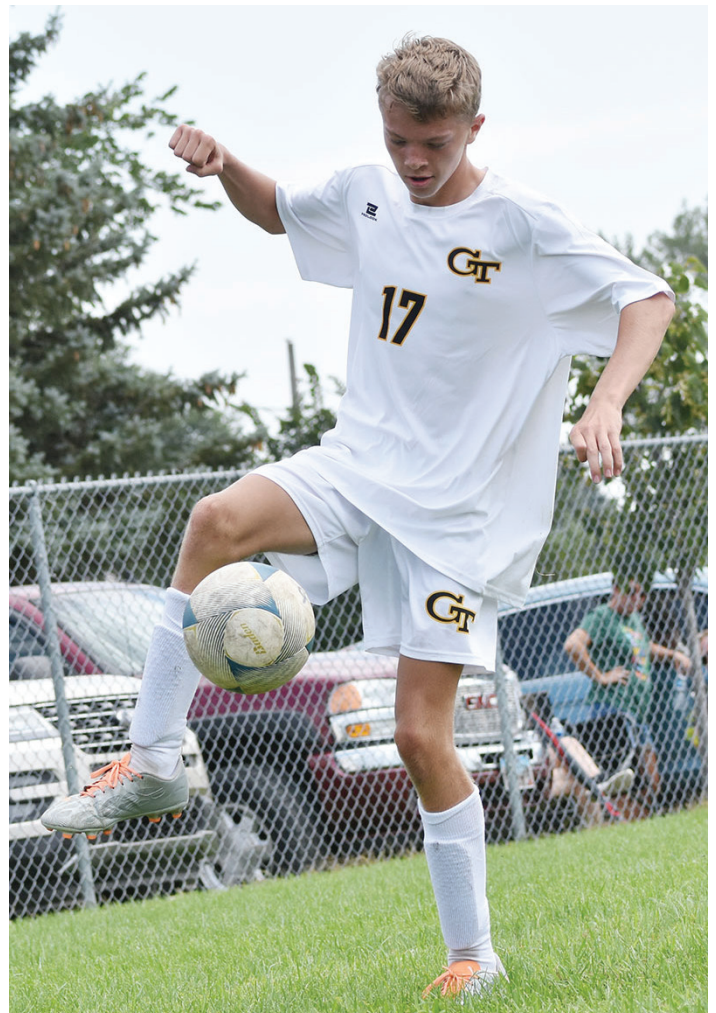
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**Brooklyn Hansen**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Karson Zak**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Easton Weber**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Laila Roberts**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



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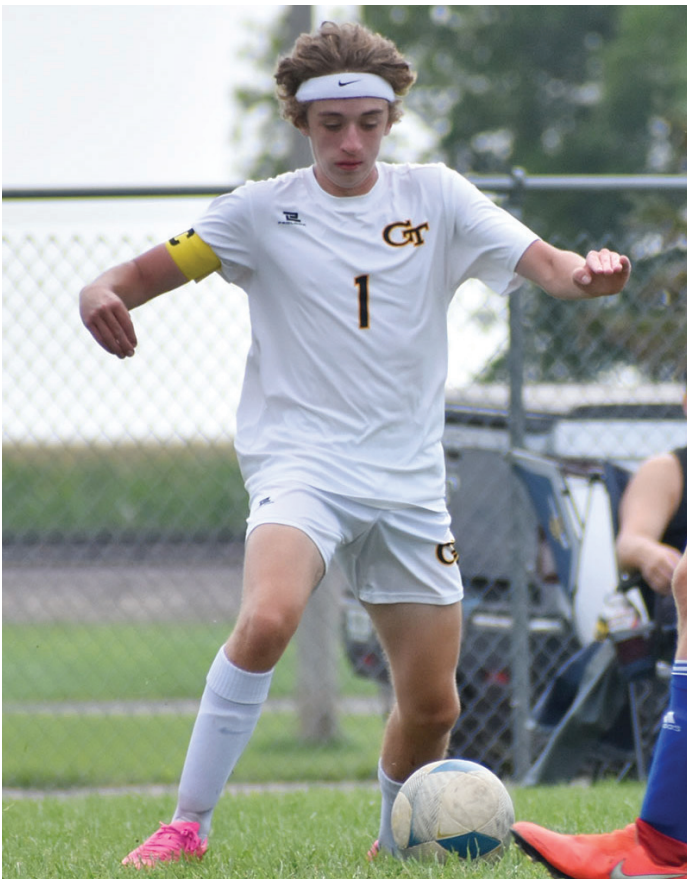
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**Gage Sippel**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Austin Aberle**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Braxton Imrie**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



## Soccer teams win 3 of 4 home games

Groton Area soccer teams won three of the four games played Friday and Saturday in Groton.

On Friday, the girls defeated Belle Fourche, 6-0, and on Saturday, the girls defeated St. Thomas More, 4-1, where Jerica Locke scored two goals in the second half to help pull Groton Area away from St. Thomas More.

The boys lost to Belle Fourche on Friday, 6-0, and then defeated St. Thomas More on Saturday, 2-1, with Jacob Zak scoring two goals and Braxton Imrie having an assist.

Both teams will travel to Vermillion on Saturday with the girls playing at 1 p.m. and the boys at 2:30 p.m.

The boys are 1-2 on the season while the girls are tied with Tea Area for the number one spot in the state with an undefeated record of 4-0.



**Logan Ringgenberg**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



## Brookings County Fatal Crash

What: Fatal crash

Where: S.D. Hwy 13, MM 125, Elkton, S.D.

When: 7:06 p.m., Friday, Aug 18, 2023

Car Occupant No. 1: Under investigation, fatal injuries

Car Occupant No. 2: Under investigation, fatal injuries

Vehicle No. 1: 2011 Kia Sorrento

BROOKINGS COUNTY, S.D.- Two people died Friday night in a car versus train collision in Elkton, S.D.

The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2011 Kia Sorrento was traveling southbound on S.D. Highway 13. For an unknown reason, the Sorrento crashed through the warning arm of the train crossing and struck the train that was crossing S.D 13. The Sorrento caught fire and the two occupants were trapped inside. It is currently not known which occupant in the Sorrento was the driver and which was the passenger.

The train derailed and crashed into a grain elevator.

SD Hwy 13 was closed for several hours and then reopened.

Cornell Avenue will be closed for the next several days while derailed train cars are removed.

Both occupants of the car were pronounced deceased at the scene.

South Dakota's Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

## Names released in Minnehaha County Fatal Crash

What: Multiple-vehicle fatal crash

Where: I-90 MM 382, 13 miles west of Sioux Falls, S.D.

When: 4:16 p.m., Monday, Aug 14, 2023

Driver No. 1: Oday Qabsees, 32, Oakdale, MN., fatal injuries

Vehicle No. 1: 2014 Ram 3500

Driver No. 2: Stephen Hudson, 58, Grand Bay, AL., fatal injuries

Vehicle No. 2: 2018 Thor Motor Coach Outlaw Toy Hauler RV

Passenger No. 2: Brenda Hudson, 60, Grand Bay, AL., fatal injuries

Minnehaha County, S.D.- A Minnesota man and two Alabama residents have been identified as the three people who died Monday afternoon in a multiple-vehicle crash 13 miles west of Sioux Falls, S.D.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2014 Ram 3500 was traveling westbound on I-90 near mile marker 382. The Ram sideswiped multiple vehicles before crossing into the eastbound lane and crashing head on into a 2018 Thor Motor Coach RV. Both vehicles were engulfed in fire destroying identifying features and documents.

Both lanes of traffic on I-90 in the vicinity of the crash scene were temporarily closed down and rerouted to alternate routes.

The driver of the 2014 Ram 3500, Oday Qabsees, age 32, sustained fatal injuries.

The driver of the 2018 Thor Motor Coach RV, Stephen Hudson, age 58, sustained fatal injuries.

The passenger of the RV, Brenda Hudson, age 60, sustained fatal injuries.



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## *Kory is turning 40*

**Come join in on the fun  
Saturday, August 26, 2023  
At 4:00 at the Other Place Bar in Andover, SD**





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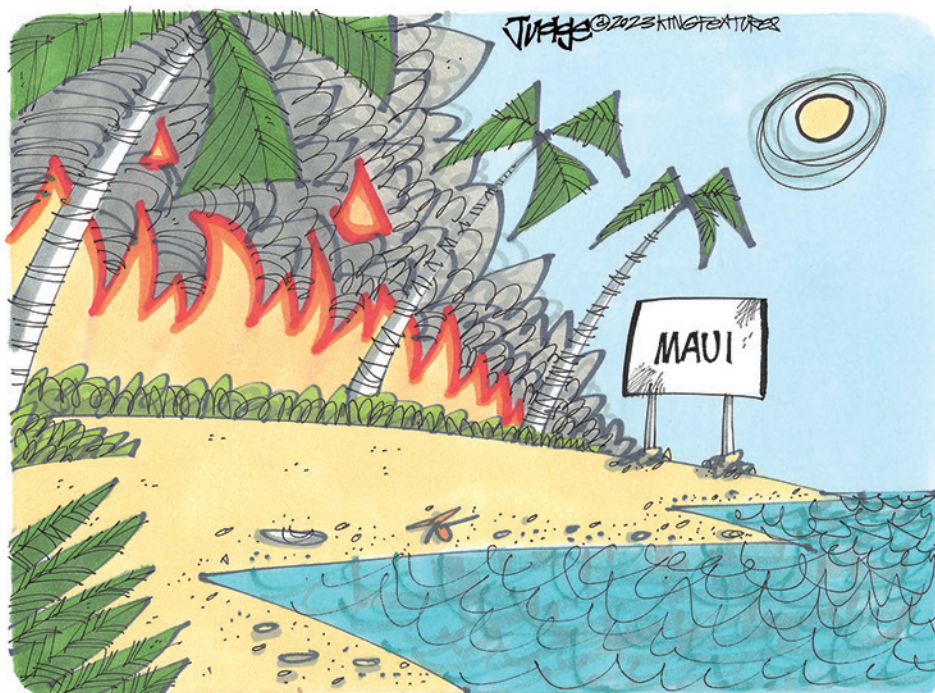
## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*...They learn to be idle,  
wandering about from  
house to house, and not  
only idle but also gossips  
and busybodies, saying  
things which they  
ought not.*

1 TIMOTHY 5:13



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PARADISE LOST





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

2. Which book may be summarized as “Yes, salvation is by faith, but faith without action is useless”? *Romans, Titus, James, Jude*

3. Who platted the crown of thorns that Jesus wore? *Herod, Soldiers, Pontius Pilate, Priests*

4. From Ecclesiastes 3, there is a time to weep and a time to? *Laugh, Hate, Speak, Lose*

5. In Jeremiah 3:8, to whom did God give a bill of divorce? *Adam/Eve, Egypt, Boaz/Ruth, Israel*

6. Paul was born in Tarsus of ...? *Cilicia, Berea, Cana, Gath*

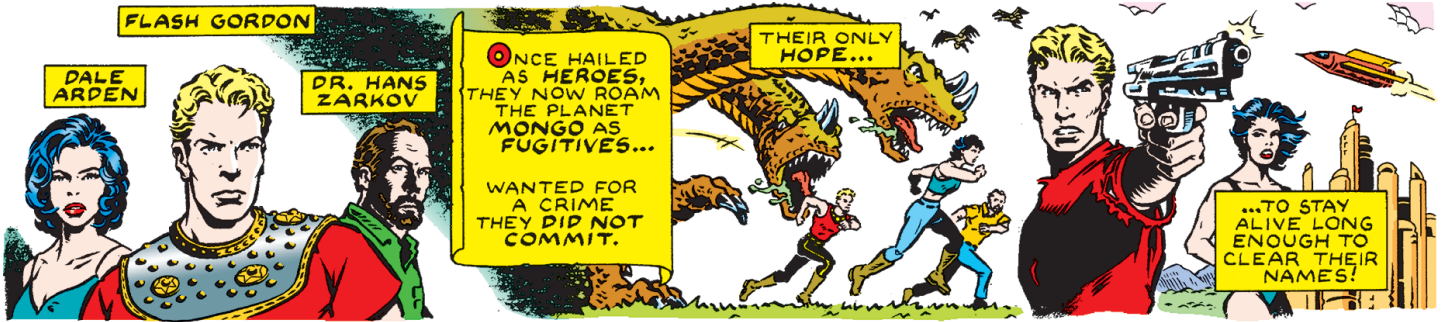
ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) James, 3) Soldiers, 4) Laugh, 5) Israel, 6) Cilicia

*Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit [www.TriviaGuy.com](http://www.TriviaGuy.com).*



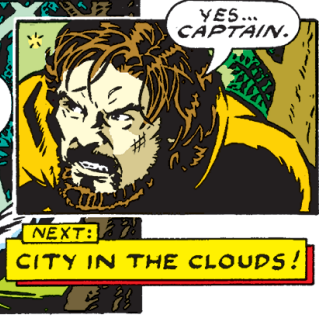
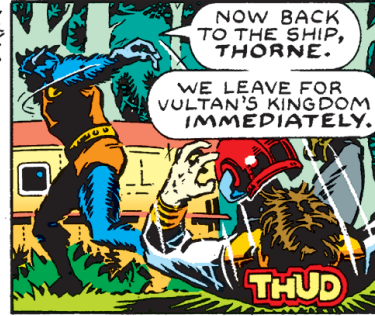
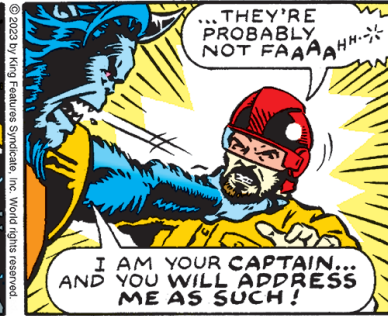
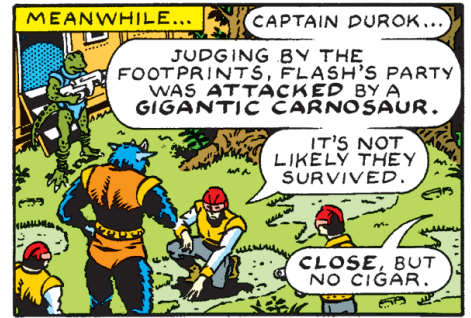
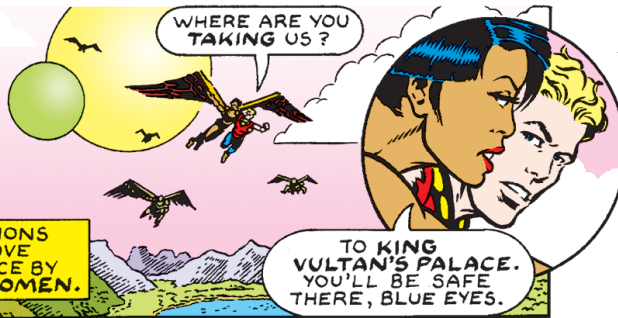
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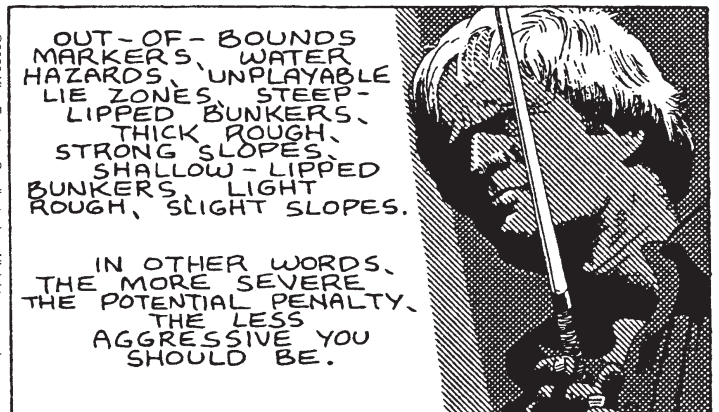
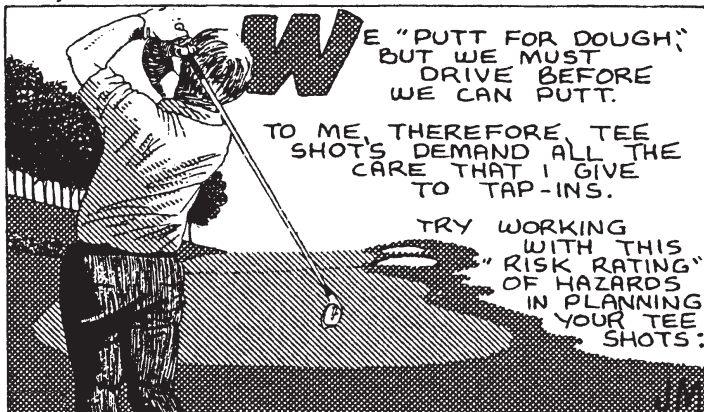


BY JIM KEEFE 8-20

FLASH AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE CARRIED FAR ABOVE PLANET MONGO'S SURFACE BY THE MYSTERIOUS HAWKWOMEN.



## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS







## Most Common Cause Behind Teary Eyes Are Dry Eyes

**DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 74-year-old woman who loves to read the newspaper every morning. I have a problem that's not serious, just annoying. My eyes tear up frequently while I read, causing me to wipe them. After I'm done reading, the problem stops. I see my ophthalmologist every year and have my vision glasses updated as needed. I am not yet a candidate for cataract surgery. Could you enlighten me about a probable cause for this irritating problem? — A.H.G.**

**ANSWER:** By all means, ask your ophthalmologist at your next visit, but the most common cause I see for watery, tearing eyes are ... dry eyes! This apparent paradox is caused by the fact that your eyes have three different fluids.

One of them, called meibum, is a long-lasting, oily material secreted by the meibomian glands, found around the edges of the eyelids near the eyelashes. This covers the eye and prevents fluid from evaporating quickly. Without this fluid, the lacrimal gland (near the temple above each eye) then has to make a lot of its watery secretions, which cause symptoms of tearing.

Most commonly, the meibomian glands get clogged up by secretions becoming dry. Gently cleansing the eyelash area with warm water and baby shampoo helps many people

lubricate the eye and will reduce the symptoms of watery eyes (and maybe some eye irritation, too, which you might not have mentioned).

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH: I am about to undergo gallbladder removal due to recurring pain from gallbladder sludge. Should I be taking replacements for the bile salts that I will no longer be able to produce, and if so, what is the best type of replacement? — S.C.**

**ANSWER:** Your liver makes bile salts, which are necessary for fat absorption. The gallbladder doesn't make them at all; it just stores the bile until you eat a meal, at which point the gallbladder contracts and the bile salts are released into the small intestine to help you digest fat. Most bile salts will be reabsorbed later at the end of the small intestine, recirculating them for reuse.

In people without a gallbladder, the liver itself will continuously release bile salts into the small intestine, rather than on an as-needed basis by the gallbladder. Sometimes, the ability of the terminal ileum (the part of the intestine where bile salts are reabsorbed) gets overwhelmed, and bile acids enter the colon, causing diarrhea.

This is very common in the first few weeks after gallbladder surgery, but the small intestine usually "learns" to absorb more bile salts. The colon also learns to live with bile salts, and the diarrhea mostly goes away. However, some people continue to have diarrhea after surgery, and medication to restrain bile salts (such as cholestyramine) can make a huge difference.

After surgery, avoiding a high-fat diet is prudent for a month or so to minimize the amount of bile needed.

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

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"Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves" (PG-13) -- Chris Pine leads this fantasy-action film based on the role-playing board game Dungeons & Dragons. Pine plays a widower named Edgin, who's also the leader of a band of thieves, including a barbarian (Michelle Rodriguez), a sorcerer (Justice Smith) and a con artist (Hugh Grant). Edgin is so desperate to bring his wife back from the dead by stealing a "Tablet of Reawakening" that he's ultimately imprisoned and loses his daughter. After he escapes prison with the help of his barbarian bestie, the pair stop at nothing until they can find the tablet and get Edgin's daughter back. The film hits streaming on Aug. 25, after a slight underperformance at the box office. (Amazon Prime Video)

**Zaara Kuttemperoor, left, and Sadie Sandler star in "You Are So Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah."** Courtesy of Netflix

"You Are So Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah" (PG-13) -- It's a Sandler family affair for this new comedy film premiering Aug. 25! While Adam Sandler's daughters, Sadie and Sunny, have made appearances throughout his many movies, Sunny takes center stage here in the lead role of Stacy Friedman. Stacy is a preteen girl who does everything with her best friend, Lydia, and they're obsessed with planning their upcoming bat mitzvahs. However, when Lydia accidentally steals the boy Stacy's been crushing on, Stacy reaches her first true test before her rite of passage, as her world feels like it's come crashing down on her. Adam, Jackie and Sadie Sandler also star in this wholesome coming-of-age film, along with Idina Menzel and "Saturday Night Live's" Sarah Sherman. (Netflix)

"BS High" (NR) -- On Aug. 29, 2021, a high school football game between Bishop Sycamore High School and IMG Academy was televised on ESPN that ended with a final score of 58-0. After such a blowout occurred and certain conditions of the game were called into question, an investigation was launched into Bishop Sycamore, where the Ohio Department of Education ruled that the school actually didn't exist! The team operated under the guise of representing a "school" without a real campus, teachers or trainers, incurring thousands of dollars in debt from housing the players in hotels. How Bishop Sycamore had even begun to pull this stunt off gets explored in this documentary film premiering Aug. 23. (Max)

"Transfusion" (R) -- In this Australian crime film premiering Aug. 24, Sam Worthington -- from the "Avatar" films -- lays down all his token grittiness for the role of ex-special forces operative Ryan Logan. After losing his wife in a car accident, Ryan was left to raise his son, Billy, by himself, but Billy increasingly gets into trouble with the law. When the question of Billy remaining in his custody is brought up, Ryan takes rash action to join his former superior officer, now turned criminal, for a quick cash grab that spins out of control. While "Transfusion" is promoted as a thriller, the title of "crime drama" would be better suited, as the characters' narratives remain the true focal point of the film. (Hulu)

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1. What is "Big Yellow Taxi" about?
2. Name the group that released "Gimme Three Steps."
3. Who released "Secret Lovers"?
4. Where and when did the Stray Cats get their first and only No. 1 song?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "You want to trust her, Then somebody hangs up when you answer the phone."

## Answers

1. The song, written and released by Joni Mitchell in 1970, addresses environmental problems. It was written while on a Hawaiian vacation when she looked out the room window and expected to see tropical sights, and instead she saw a paved parking lot.
2. Lynyrd Skynyrd, in 1973. The song is about a guy asking for a head start in escaping out of a bar after he's caught dancing with another man's girlfriend.
3. Atlantic Starr, in 1985. The Barbara Weathers and David Lewis duet topped the Billboard chart in 1986. A cover version was done in 2008 by Alexander O'Neal and Mica Paris.
4. In Finland in 1980 with "Runaway Boys."
5. "When You're in Love With a Beautiful Woman," by Dr. Hook, in 1979. The group was called Dr. Hook & the Medicine Show until 1975. Their first hit was " Sylvia's Mother" in 1972.

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## GRIN and BEAR IT <sup>Wagner</sup>



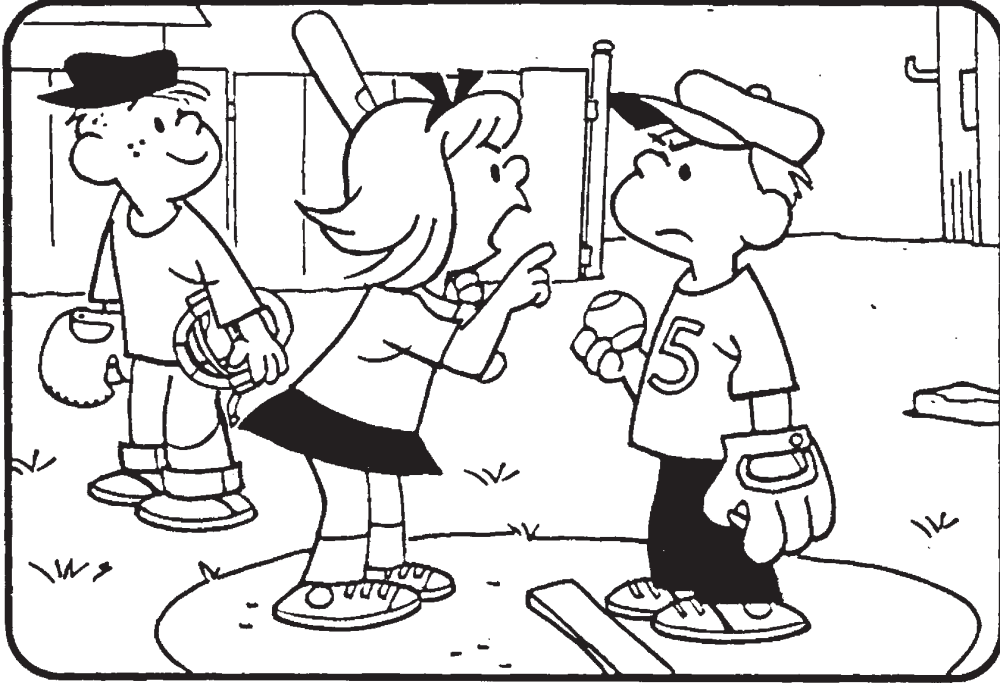
"And no more 'Hi, Moms' when the TV cameras come by, Bentley!"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs <sup>by Dave T. Phipps</sup>

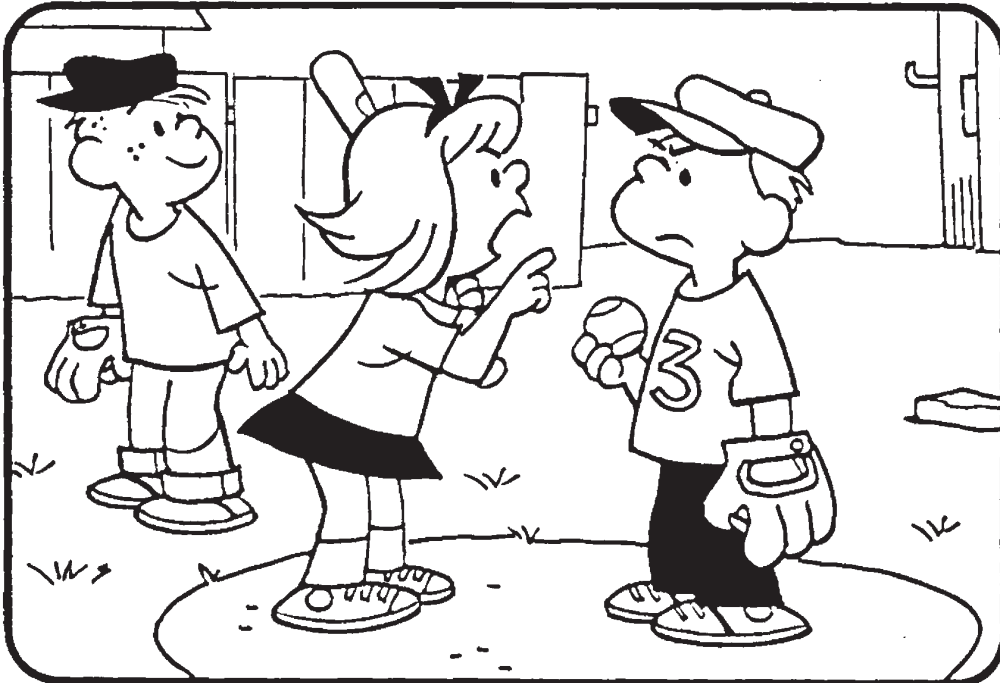


## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Glove is different. 2. Mask is missing. 3. Bat is shorter. 4. Post is missing. 5. Number is different. 6. Pitching slab is missing.



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\* R.L. in Utah writes: "Do onions make you cry? Tip: Cut off root first. Cut off top second. Remove outer skin and discard the first outer layer of the onion. Slice/dice/rings. Works great." How do you cut your onions, and what helps to keep your eyes from watering? Write to us with your onion tips!

\* You may not think to do this often, but you should: Clean your laptop! Not just the screen or keys, but the exterior as well. Get a microfiber cloth, spritz the cloth (never the machine itself) with a bit of isopropyl alcohol and rub away dirt and grime.

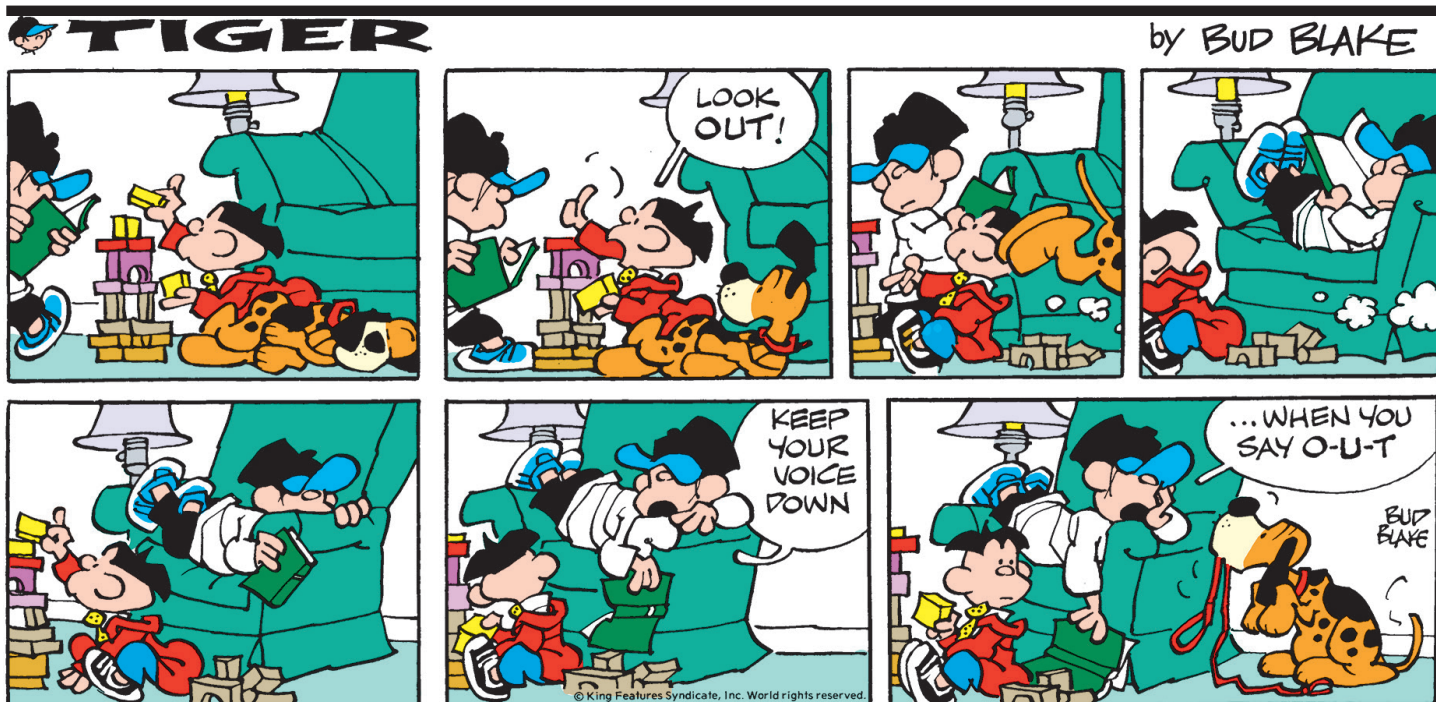
\* "Grass stains can be removed from kids' clothing by rubbing the stains with a bar of Ivory soap. (I keep one just for stains.)" -- M.F. in Washington

\* Special for S.P. in California. To remove ball point ink from leather, your best weapon is a cotton swab and some rubbing alcohol. Be sure to test first in an inconspicuous spot, as not all leathers are equal. Certain synthetic leathers that are dyed may experience color loss in a spot cleaning with alcohol. Work slowly and don't rub too hard. Condition afterward to protect the leather.

\* It's important to include only approved materials when recycling curbside, but conserving space allows the trucks to fit more per load, which is another great way to help the environment. A reader in North Carolina had something to say about this! They sent a great tip about nesting steel cans inside one another to compact space. You should also cut cardboard to smaller sizes and break down boxes, as well as crush plastic bottles and replace the caps.

\* Making a smoothie with banana in it? When you're done with that peel, chop it up (you can use a rinsed-out blender bottle) and chuck the pieces in your garden to provide food to plants and beneficial bugs. Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Rescue
- 5 Ozone, for one
- 8 Protracted
- 12 Carolina college
- 13 Roswell sighting
- 14 Falco of "The Sopranos"
- 15 "Game on!"
- 17 Snitch
- 18 Service charge
- 19 Rowing need
- 20 Road curves
- 21 Schlep
- 22 Deity
- 23 Everglades wader
- 26 Cure-all
- 30 Bump into
- 31 "Terrif!"
- 32 Astronaut Armstrong
- 33 Tennis tactic
- 35 Tea biscuit
- 36 Present location?
- 37 Expected
- 38 Thesaurus compiler
- 41 Drone
- 42 Airline to Sweden
- 45 Awestruck
- 46 "We should discuss this"
- 48 Actress Gilpin

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15				16					17			
18				19				20				
			21				22					
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38	39	40				41				42	43	44
45					46				47			
48					49				50			
51					52				53			

- 49 Env. insert
- 50 Hybrid fruit
- 51 Adolescent
- 52 Bonfire residue
- 53 Inlets
- 9 Rhyming tributes
- 10 Egyptian river
- 11 Hair goops
- 16 Sulk
- 20 A billion years
- 21 Words at the start of a lesson
- 22 Talk on and on
- 23 Ambulance VIP
- 24 Earth (Pref.)
- 25 Gym unit
- 26 Skillet
- 27 Biz bigwig
- 28 Aachen article
- 29 Pub pint
- 31 Repair
- 34 Cauldron
- 35 Totals
- 37 Hollanders
- 38 Engrossed
- 39 Curved molding
- 40 Impale
- 41 Coop group
- 42 Long tale
- 43 Friend
- 44 Aspen gear
- 46 Meadow
- 47 Vat

### DOWN

- 1 Narcissist's love
- 2 Sheltered
- 3 Cast a ballot
- 4 Em halves
- 5 Soviet labor camp
- 6 Miles away
- 7 Tofu source
- 8 #1 hit by



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## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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

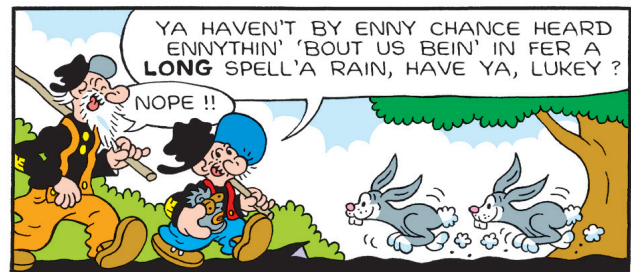
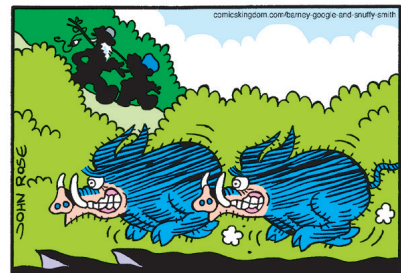
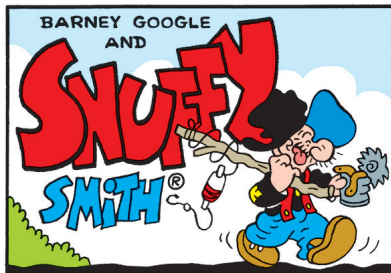
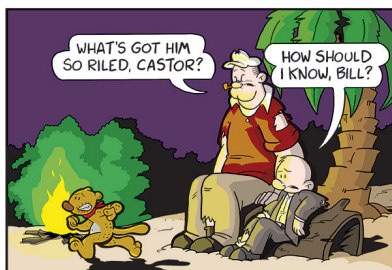
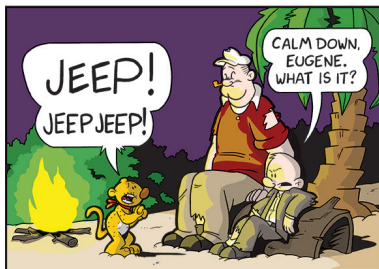
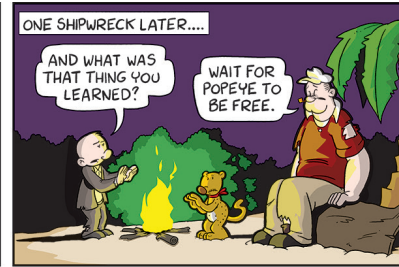
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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Hal Foster's **Prince Valiant**  
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

INVESTIGATING THE KIDNAPPING OF LORD GRUNYARD, VAL AND GAWAIN MUST ESTABLISH RESPECT WITH THE AGGRESSIVE GUARDS OF GRUNYARD'S DISTANT FIEFDOM.

BUT BEFORE THE KNIGHTS FROM CAMELOT CAN DO SERIOUS DAMAGE, THE GUARDS' CAPTAIN RIDES UP AND CRIES "HOLD!"

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"FORGIVE MY MISTAKE - LOCKBRAMBLE IS SORE BESET BY FOREST BRIGANDS. I CAN SEE NOW THAT YOU ARE OBVIOUSLY FAIR KNIGHTS FROM THE COURT OF ARTHUR HIMSELF. TO WHAT DO WE OWE THIS VISIT?"

VAL SMILES PLEASANTLY AND OFFERS: "THERE WAS NO HARM DONE," ALL THE WHILE THINKING: "THIS MAN SEEMS HONESTLY BEMUSED BY OUR PRESENCE. I BELIEVE HE HAS NO IDEA HIS LORD IS KIDNAPPED." HE DECIDES TO GAMBLE ON A LIE...

... "LORD GRUNYARD HAS REQUESTED THAT WE REVIEW THE STATE OF HIS LANDS AND REPORT BACK TO HIM." THE CAPTAIN SEEMS MILDLY SURPRISED ...

YEATES 6/24/12

... BUT OFFERS NO OBJECTIONS: "OF COURSE, I AM BARMUS DRAMFELL - I'LL TAKE YOU TO SIR ROGER RUNETYNNE, WHO RULES IN GRUNYARD'S ABSENCE."

NEXT:  
Roger's  
regimen

3933

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

GRANDPA, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON THE NET?

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ONLY WHEN I FALL DOWN ON THE FISHING BOAT.

PICKERING

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Preparing for Another Winter

Winter isn't even close, and already we're seeing an increase in illnesses.

They're calling it a tripledemic, and it includes the regular flu, RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) and our enemy Covid. Instead of the cold driving us indoors (and around others who can pass along an illness to us), we've been pushed indoors by the heat as we seek cooler temperatures.

The flu by itself always hits seniors hard. RSV does as well. There are vaccines for both, with the one for RSV being approved in May. Unfortunately, people with RSV can pass the virus to others in the first few days when they don't know they're ill, and then stay contagious for three to eight days.

And now we have a new variant of Covid, a subvariant of XBB, which was a variant of omicron, which they've labeled EG.5 -- and nicknamed "Eris" on social media. It's becoming the dominant strain. While there is no specific booster for it, the new booster that is being made for last year's variant is said to have enough overlap to protect from the new EG.5 -- when it's finished being manufactured. The estimate at this point is that it will be available in October.

That means we'll be offered three shots, at different times.

Some suggestions to get through the winter:

Check your stock of masks. If you need more, order them now, before others clear the available stock.

Check your supply of antibacterial hand soap and get more if you need to. Stock up on sanitizing wipes as well, for countertops and doorknobs.

Call your doctor and ask if you should have one, two or three of the available shots, and make appointments to get those.

And don't forget to plan for fun over the winter. New books, hobby supplies, games, new recipes, different senior workout videos on YouTube, online language classes, etc.

We can do this.

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1. Financial services company UBS estimated that \$377 million worth of medical costs would be incurred by Americans in 2023 as a result of injuries from what recreational sport?

2. What solo, nonstop, around-the-world yacht race first took place in 1989 and has been held every four years since 1992?

3. What driver suffered serious burns and other injuries in a multi-car crash at the start of the 1973 Indianapolis 500?

4. Dean Biasucci, a placekicker for the Indianapolis Colts (1984-94) and St. Louis Rams (1995), appeared as himself in what 1996 sports comedy film?

5. What stadium in Little Rock is the secondary home field of the University of Arkansas Razorbacks football team?

6. Baseball executive Buzzie Bavasi resigned from the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1968 to become president and minority owner of what Major League Baseball expansion team?

7. In August 1875, swimmer and stuntman Matthew Webb was the first recorded person to successfully swim -- without artificial aids -- across what body of water?



by Ryan A. Berenz

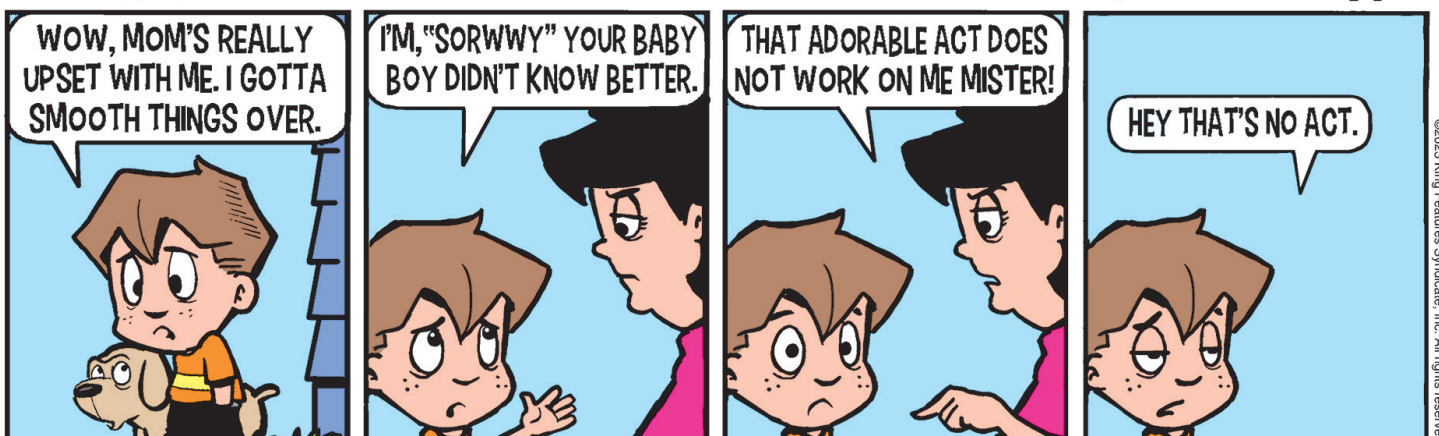
## Answers

1. Pickleball.
2. The Vendee Globe.
3. David "Salt" Walter.
4. "Jerry Maguire."
5. War Memorial Stadium.
6. The San Diego Padres.
7. The English Channel.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Dog's Food Guarding Aggression Is Getting Worse

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I adopted an energetic, bouncy little Terrier mix a few months ago from a friend who had found him abandoned and wandering near his farm. Eddie is around 1 year old, and according to the vet he was likely abused or in a puppy mill situation. He's now caught up on his shots, neutered, has put on weight and is pretty happy. However, he is an absolute terror if anyone, including me, approaches him while he's eating. He snarls and snaps. And he's gotten worse. He even nipped my hand once, and ran off in fear when I yelled. How can I stop this behavior? -- Jack H. in Newton, Massachusetts

DEAR JACK: Resource guarding is certainly an undesirable behavior, and it is sadly a common one in dogs coming from stressful, overpopulated or abusive situations. Because Eddie is really aggressive, even toward you, consider contacting a professional trainer and working with the vet to develop a long-term solution. Training along with a prescribed anti-anxiety medicine can work wonders, but it will take time.

In the short term, you'll need to make sure Eddie won't bite you or anyone else. Feed him in a location away from foot traffic and other pets. If you use a kennel cage, you can feed him in the cage. Feed him at consistent times each day. Don't let anyone else attempt to feed him, even with treats.

The ASPCA has a helpful article with training exercises to start helping Eddie relax when you're near him during feeding time. Find it here: [www.aspc.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/food-guarding](http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/food-guarding)

However, they also recommend working with a trainer. Resolving a resource guarding behavior can be tricky, but the long-term benefit is a happy, healthy companion.

Send your tips, comments or questions to [ask@pawscorner.com](mailto:ask@pawscorner.com).

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

\* A microwaved baseball will fly much farther than a frozen one, as warmer balls weigh less and move faster due to less air resistance.

\* Each strand of a human hair can contain traces of 14 elements, including gold.

\* During a period in his artistic career, Pablo Picasso primarily used shades of blue in his paintings, reflecting his melancholic state at the time.

\* It's not just humans who use "baby talk" with their offspring: Mother bottlenose dolphins have been observed altering their whistle pitch and range when communicating with their calves.

\* Hawaii had no mosquitoes until the 19th century, when they were accidentally introduced by trading ships.

\* A law student at Spain's University of Malaga once etched tiny notes into the sides of blue Bic pens before taking an exam. While points could perhaps be awarded for the learner's creativity, it also resulted in a repeat of their entire academic year.

\* The world record for nonstop video gaming -- 138 hours and 34 seconds -- was set by Carrie Swidecki in 2015, when she beat her own previous world record.

\* Hamburger University, established by McDonald's to train restaurant managers and owner-operators, has a lower acceptance rate than Harvard University and awards its graduates a Hamburgerology degree.

\* A Eulachon's flesh is so oily that this fatty fish will burn like a candle when dried.

\* From the "too much of a good thing" files: A 41-year-old man from the Netherlands referred to only as "Jonathan" was banned from donating sperm after fathering over 550 children.

\* Cheetos were invented by USDA military scientists during World War II as a result of their being tasked with finding a way to utilize surplus cornmeal.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "The only way to have a life is to commit to it like crazy." -- Angelina Jolie

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**The Garden Bug** Garden craft ideas for kids

- Light-catching bead hangers
- Twig star ornaments
- Painted clay pots
- Jar made into hanging vase or lantern using wire, string or ribbon
- Twigs glued to can or jar, tied with raffia bow
- Paint stepping stones with chalkboard paint
- Decorate bird, frog or bee houses - Brenda Weaver

Source: [mothernatured.com](http://mothernatured.com)



by Freddy Groves

## Stand Down Season Is Still Going

Stand Downs are going on across the country, and have been since early spring. The good news is that while summer will be wrapping up soon, the Stand Downs won't be. Depending on the state, some of the events will go on all the way through October and even into November.

Stand Downs are the one-, two- or three-day events for homeless veterans and those who are at risk for homelessness. Depending on the length of the event and where it's held, the services provided can

be wide-ranging. Government agencies, veteran service groups and others come together to provide a long list of services, including: legal advice, mental health counseling referrals, clean clothes and showers, haircuts, medical screenings and dental care -- all the way to employment search assistance, benefits counseling for VA and Social Security, referrals for drug abuse and more.

Go online to [www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp) and find your state in the drop-down menu. If you're near a state line, check both states. If no events are listed yet, keep going back to look, as new events are still being added. When you find an event near you, give the contact person a call to verify time and place. If you need a ride to an event, tell them.

If you would like to volunteer to help, either by yourself or as a member of a veteran service group, let the Stand Down organizers know. Are you a restaurant cook and can take a day off to help? Retired barber who can give haircuts? Have a truck and can haul set-up gear? Let them know.

If you are a homeless veteran or are about to become homeless, or you know a veteran who needs help, don't wait until a Stand Down to reach out. Call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838. They staff the phones 24/7 and will have people who can help. You can also call the nearest VA medical center and ask for the homeless coordinator.

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## Wishing Well®

6	3	6	8	5	2	8	2	3	2	4	2	4
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O	O	K	E	R	S	E	Y	H	N	E	D	R
2	4	2	6	4	3	4	3	2	4	6	2	2
T	E	H	G	R	A	E	S	E	D	Y	R	S

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

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1. MOVIES: In which U.S. state does the movie "Field of Dreams" take place?
2. FOOD & DRINK: What is sauerkraut?
3. ACRONYMS: What phrase does the acronym GPS stand for?
4. GEOGRAPHY: The country of Guyana lies on which continent?
5. TELEVISION: What is the pub where characters in "The Office" gather after work?
6. SCIENCE: How many karats are in pure gold?
7. PSYCHOLOGY: What is the fear represented by autophobia?
8. ANIMAL KINGDOM: How big is a newborn kangaroo?
9. AD SLOGANS: What product is advertised as "the snack that smiles back"?
10. LITERATURE: Who wrote "The Canterbury Tales"?

### Answers

1. Iowa.
2. Pickled cabbage.
3. Global positioning system.
4. South America.
5. Poor Richard's.
6. 24.
7. Fear of being alone.
8. About 1 inch or less.
9. Goldfish.
10. Geoffrey Chaucer.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



**South Dakota:** *Under God, the People Rule*

## **A Note to Self: Called to Love**

In the Gospel of John, shortly before Jesus is arrested, He says “my command is this: love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Jesus and His disciples teach the significance of love throughout the New Testament. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus gives us what has become known as “the golden rule” – “do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31).

We learn these things as children. We learn to be kind to be kind to ourselves so that we can be kind to one another. We learn to treat others how we want to be treated. But as we grow up, those important lessons are too often forgotten.

Forgetting to love ourselves and to love each other as Jesus loves us can have dire consequences. My Department of Social Services has launched a new campaign focused on eliminating the stigma around behavioral health concerns. The campaign is called “Notes to Self,” and it is encouraging folks to take an active role in their own mental health, as well as the mental health of their loved ones.

Through tv, radio, and online ads, as well as billboards and other efforts across the state, the campaign will educate South Dakotans and promote the resources that we have readily available for those in need. These “Notes to Self” reminders focus on behavioral health needs that are common in South Dakota – needs that our communities can resonate with.

The goal of the “Notes to Self” campaign is to provide those struggling with the resources they need. Even if someone does not need these resources now, or isn’t ready to ask for help yet, we want them to know that they’re there for them.

The first “Notes to Self” ad features a farmer who’s family leaves kind notes for him. The ad ends with a surprise meal celebrating 100 days of recovery. This is a very real situation for many families. The “Notes to Self” campaign is a reminder to check in on those around you. A seemingly small act of kindness like a phone call, a homemade meal, or an encouraging note can make a huge difference to someone struggling with their behavioral health.

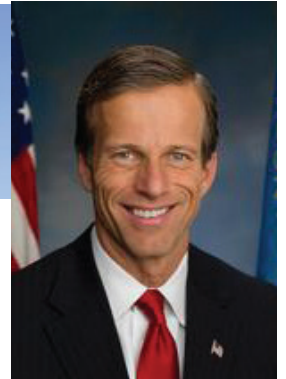
In the state of South Dakota, we have our Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. When you dial 988 from a 605-area code, you will be connected to the Helpline Center. A group of individuals with advanced degrees and experience in behavioral health will be available to talk you through whatever situation you may be facing. The Helpline Center provides follow-up calls to individuals and helps to end the stigma toward those seeking access to mental health care. Text and chat services are also available through 988 for anyone who does not feel comfortable speaking on the phone about their behavioral health concerns.

The campaign also strives to help folks to feel comfortable starting the conversation. Sometimes for those in need, all it takes is a reminder that they have someone who cares about them. We’ve often called these “buddy checks.” If you notice a change in a loved one, reach out and ask them how they’re doing, then refer them to any resources they may need.

We are called to love. “Notes to Self” serves as a reminder that it doesn’t have to be complicated. By simply checking in with ourselves – and with those we love to let them know that we care about them – we are doing exactly what Jesus commands.



**John Thune**  
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



## Another Day, Another Regulation

From the plains to the pine forests, South Dakota's land is intertwined with our way of life. Farmers and ranchers produce the nation's food on this land. Critical minerals and energy are extracted from it. And hunters, hikers, and campers use it for recreation. South Dakotans know its value and the importance of conserving our land for the next generation. Unfortunately, a new and unnecessary regulation may restrict how South Dakotans interact with it, particularly the hundreds of thousands of acres that are available to the public.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) oversees 274,000 surface acres of land in South Dakota, and it manages another 1.7 million acres of subsurface minerals in the state. A multiple-use approach to land management enables these lands to be used for livestock grazing, mineral extraction, timber, and recreation. Instead of preserving that process, the Biden administration has decided to create a new framework for "protection and restoration activities" that could prevent land from being used for 10 years or more. Like many South Dakotans, I oppose this unnecessary and redundant rule.

The Biden administration's new rule seems to suggest that land use and conservation are mutually exclusive. The fact is that conservation is a key element of land management practices. No one knows the importance of conservation better than the rancher who wants to pass his operation on to the next generation or the hunter who wants her children to hunt the same land she hunts today. In fact, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act recognizes that public lands should be managed in a way that recognizes the need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber. This rule departs from the decades-old multiple-use approach, and it would allow BLM to close off lands for 10 years or more, keeping out hikers, hunters, grazing livestock, and energy and mineral development.

I support a true multiple-use approach to federal lands, and I've taken action to oppose this rule, which was promulgated without a single public meeting in the state of South Dakota. Sen. Mike Rounds, Rep. Dusty Johnson, and I have asked BLM to rescind its misguided proposal. And I support legislation to block the regulation from going into effect, which I hope the Senate will consider soon.

In South Dakota, we know the value of our lands and the importance of preserving them for the next generation, and I am working to include provisions in the 2023 farm bill that support South Dakota's farmers and ranchers. One of the things I'm working on is securing improvements to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP plays an important role in improving soil health and water quality, as well as providing wildlife habitat, but the program's current structure limits potential forage benefits for producers. Among other improvements, I'm working to make the program a more working lands-oriented option for producers and landowners through greater haying and grazing flexibilities.

I'm grateful for the South Dakotans who earn their living by working the land and who help feed America and the world. I'll continue working to support this important way of life and ensure that South Dakota's lands remain healthy, workable, accessible, and free of unnecessary regulations from Washington.

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



## We Can Help

This month, my office was awarded the Democracy Award for Outstanding Constituent Service by the Congressional Management Foundation. Only one Republican and one Democrat office is selected for each award category. This award honors congressional offices for their non-legislative achievement and performance. My office has excelled at helping South Dakotans with their requests and inquiries, and this award recognizes my team's hard work.

It's not the first time my team has won a Democracy Award. In 2021, we won in the Constituent Transparency and Accountability category for holding frequent town halls, both in person and over the phone.

Federal agencies are covered in red tape, slowing down processes and making it difficult to get in touch with the right contact to resolve your issue. One of the main responsibilities of members of Congress is to help people like you navigate these processes.

Every day my team helps people with passports, tax returns, veterans' benefits, and more. We act as liaisons, bridging the gap between the federal government and citizens of South Dakota. We're constantly advocating for our constituents and are committed to getting answers for them.

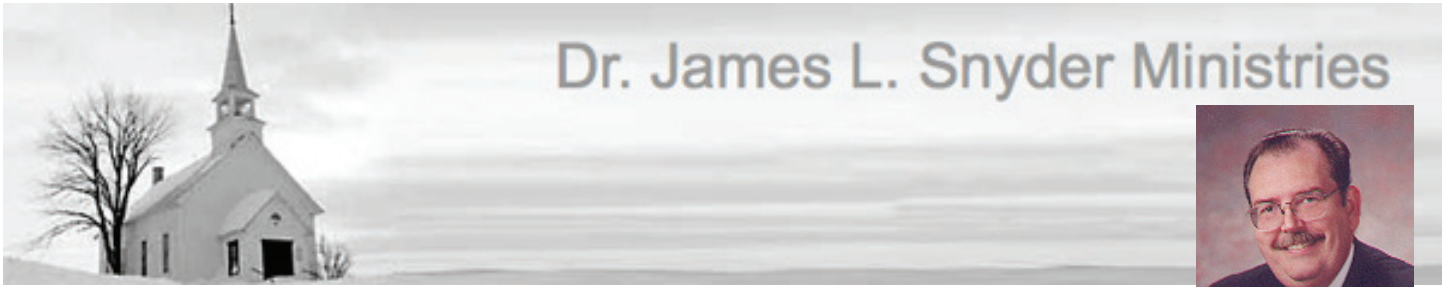
My team has created efficient and effective systems to streamline processes, ensuring constituents receive timely responses. Our casework staff sends quarterly casework review surveys to people they have helped. In 2022, 96% of constituents had a positive experience with our office, 97.4% of constituents reported having a positive experience in 2021, and 95.5% had a positive interaction in 2020.

I'm proud of the hard work my staff completes day in and day out. We want Washington to work for you. This recognition isn't the end—we'll only work harder to help people like you.



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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



## Memories Can Be So Memorable

In growing older, I noticed a strange phenomenon. The older I get, the more I forget. I remember things that happened in my youth and the pressure of those memories is, are they true, or am I just making them up? I have nobody to verify those memories.

I don't think I will try to verify those memories because it may get me into trouble I don't need to.

Last week, for example, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage stumped me with one of her infamous questions.

"Do you know what next Monday is?"

I looked at her, smiled, scratched my head, and said, "No, who's birthday is it?"

Keeping up with family birthdays is not my strong suit. My wife has 11 siblings, and I have 2 siblings; with all their children and grandchildren, there must be hundreds of birthdays. I have trouble remembering my birthday at times, let alone family members.

"You don't know what next Monday is?"

"Oh," I said, "I just remembered, it's our daughter's birthday."

I didn't like the look she threw in my direction, but I caught it, and she said, "Her birthday was last week."

Okay, I'm in trouble. I have no idea whose birthday it is, and I have no way of finding out. I must succumb to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's agenda.

"What is next Monday's celebration?" I said with a worried look.

"You really don't know, do you?" She looked at me as though I had committed the unpardonable sin.

Thinking about it, I said, "I don't have another doctor's appointment on Monday, do I?"

Then she did something that I'd never seen her do before. She flashed her wedding ring in my direction.

"Oh no," I said in desperation, "it isn't our wedding anniversary is it?"

"Yes it is, and do you know which one?"

I can balance my checkbook but cannot balance wedding dates. Looking at her with a smile, I said, "Is it our 30th anniversary?"

"If you don't get your act together it might just be our last!"

Then she said, "Let me give you a clue. Our oldest daughter just turned 51. Does that ring a bell?"

I did remember that she was born one year after our wedding, so I turned to my wife with a smile and said, "Oh, my dear, it must be our 52nd wedding anniversary."

It is incredible how fast time flies, particularly when you are busy.

I met my future wife at a Bible Institute I attended in September 1970. That seems such a long time ago. Then in December of that year, we went to a function with schoolmates, and coming home, we sat in the back part of the bus. We were chattering and having a good time.

Then this young girl looked at me and said, "Wouldn't it be great to get married?"

Not being girl-smart, I didn't get the drift of that conversation, but I smilingly said, "That sure would be very great." Then we laughed all the way home. She got the joke, but I did not.

Walking down the school hall one week later, many people looked at me, smiled and said, "Congratulations." I had no idea what they were talking about.

Then one of them said, "I guess you're happy that your girlfriend is getting married." Then he laughed as he walked away.

I was happy she was getting married, but what about our relationship? I thought we had something.

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Now what do I do?

Someone else congratulated me, and I finally said, "Who is she marrying?"

"Oh you silly boy, she's going to be marrying you." Then they walked away laughing as though it was the joke of the week.

Why was I the last one to know I was getting married?

Later that week, I spent time with her and said, "Have you heard the rumor that is going around about you?"

"Yes, I have; I'm the one who started it."

"Well," I said hesitantly, "maybe you should've told me first."

"Oh, you silly boy," she said, "don't you remember we talked about it on our way back from that event in December?"

I had to stop and think because I wasn't quite sure what she was talking about.

"Don't you remember we both agreed that it would be great to get married?"

I then remembered that conversation; I didn't understand its meaning at the time. Silly me, I thought getting married meant you made a proposal and were conscious of it.

The story develops and on February 14, 1971, I officially proposed marriage and gave her the engagement ring. The wedding took place on August 14 of that year. We barely knew each other a year before we tied the knot and got married. Maybe that's why it lasted so long.

It is hard to believe that was 52 years ago.

Reflecting on this memory, I remembered what Solomon said. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." (Proverbs 31:10-11).

I don't think it was an accident when I found the woman that was to be my wife. It was a work of the Lord in both our lives. For 52 years, not only have we been married, but we have also been serving the Lord together.



## EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that spam email takes a huge toll on the environment? – P.L., Bern, NC

If you are among the 92 percent of Americans who use email as a means of communication, you are a recipient of unsolicited batch emails called “spam.” Every day, upwards of 14.5 billion spam emails are sent globally. They may seem harmless on the surface, but the storage, sorting and transmission of unnecessary spam emails consume copious amounts of energy, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

Emails may seem to appear somewhat magically on a phone or laptop, but any kind of electronic request actually requires a physical touchpoint, called a data center, for the information to be transmitted. Data centers need enormous amounts of electricity to function. Everything, from the servers to the infrastructure to cool the extensive computer systems, is powered by electricity. In 2014, data centers in the United States consumed 70 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity which is equivalent to around two percent of all annual American electricity consumption (the amount of electricity that data centers consume today is likely far higher). Electricity is frequently generated from fossil fuels, and fossil fuels release greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere when burned. A high demand for electricity from data centers significantly contributes to the high volume of greenhouse gas emissions.

Therefore, every email sent and received has a carbon footprint. Mike Berners-Lee, a professor at Lancaster University, determined that each spam email has a carbon footprint of 0.3g of carbon dioxide. While a spam email’s carbon footprint is actually less than the average non-spam email’s carbon footprint, spam email accounts for the majority of all emails sent, according to some reports—and volume matters. One spam email has the same carbon footprint as driving just three feet in a car, but the total annual volume of spam has the same carbon footprint as driving around the world 1.6 million times.

Between the energy required to harvest addresses, store unread messages in data centers for long periods of time, filter spam and complete basic processing and transmission of messages, spam email is estimated to consume 22 billion kilowatt-hours annually. The same amount of energy could power 2.3 million homes in the United States. And assuming the electricity is coming from fossil fuel sources, 2.6 billion trees would have to be planted every year to offset the pollution.

Luckily, spam is unnecessary and there are steps you can take to limit its presence in your own inbox, and to make your inbox greener. Deleting emails, clearing your spam inbox regularly, and unsubscribing from unwanted subscriptions reduces the amount of data volume being transmitted between servers and stored, which reduces demand for electrical energy. You can also choose a cloud provider, like Gmail or Microsoft Outlook, that has pledged to make their data centers carbon neutral or more environmentally friendly. Green cloud providers use a renewable electricity source or have vastly improved the electrical efficiency of their data centers. In choosing your cloud provider, take a look at Brainwave’s ranking of the “Greenest Clouds.” The impact of some of the more major cloud providers going green has had a tangible impact: while the volume of spam email has significantly increased over time, the amount of electricity spam email consumes annually has remained relatively consistent in the past few years.



**The storage, sorting and transmission of unnecessary spam emails consume copious amounts of energy, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.** Credit: Pexels.com.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### COMMENTARY

#### Law school should extend recruitment program to bar exam reform

**JUN BYUNG PARK**

In a recent report to the State Bar of South Dakota, Knudson School of Law Dean Neil Fulton noted that law school applications “have been dropping nationwide for three consecutive years” and the “recent downward trend in applications is just beginning ... we are projected to see a ten-year decline.”

To combat the low enrollment problem at the law school, Fulton is charting a course to create a “pathways program” to encourage enrollment at the University of South Dakota law school. He notes that this program evolved as a recommendation of the State Bar Strategic Planning Committee. The pathways program, as he described it, will extend efforts aimed at recruiting students “from college to middle school.” The program is designed to attract young students’ attention to the prospect of becoming a lawyer, hoping they will apply for admission to the law school.

I was encouraged to see this discussion of a pathways program to bolster law school applications, and it caused me to wonder: Why not extend the pathways concept to bar licensure?

The concept of “alternative pathways” is gaining recognition across the United States. Prospective lawyers can become licensed through “curriculum-based licensure” as well as apprenticeship programs.

South Dakota adheres to the controversial National Conference of Bar Examiners examination process, which multiple legal scholars have determined fails to provide a neutral and fair assessment of knowledge and skills over a diverse population of test takers.

For many decades, South Dakota enjoyed a 90-100% licensure rate for graduates of the law school. But beginning with the law school class of 2016, the bar passage rate dropped to 39% for first-time takers, with minimal improvement since. The most recent data, as compiled by the Legislative Research Council, reports that over the past three years (2020-2022), 58% of USD’s law school graduates (116 of 199) have become licensed to practice law in South Dakota.

I have been personally affected by this issue. I’m from Seoul, South Korea. I attended the University of Buffalo, State University of New York. I received my bachelor’s degree in political science (with a concentration in international politics and minors in history, philosophy and sociology) in 2013. I was admitted to the USD law school in 2014 and graduated in May 2017.

I did well in law school but struggled with the multiple choice portion of the South Dakota Bar Exam. I passed the essay and professional responsibility (ethics) portions. I did not pass the multiple choice section, which consists of 200 questions. English is my second language, and I had difficulty ascertaining the meaning of the questions and attempting to answer them in the time limit imposed.

I traveled from Seoul, South Korea, on two occasions to retake the exam. I sought to retake the exam again in 2020 but was denied permission.

I have been told that I have at least one job waiting for me in South Dakota if I can become licensed. I have formed many friendships there and truly love the state. It is my heart’s desire to live and practice law in South Dakota.

I respectfully submit that South Dakota should expand its pathways program — designed to entice young students to apply to law school — to the bar licensure process.

*Jun Byung Park resides in Seoul, South Korea. He is a 2017 graduate of the Knudson School of Law at the University of South Dakota, where he served as assistant law librarian.*



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## Carbon pipeline company's water-rights application sparks opposition State recommends approval, but some who saw the public notice have concerns

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 20, 2023 6:00 AM

State officials are recommending a water-rights permit for a carbon dioxide pipeline company, but some nearby residents who use the same aquifer fear they could be negatively affected.

A corporate entity affiliated with Summit Carbon Solutions, called Redfield SCS Capture, has applied to drill a well that could take up to 21 million gallons of water per year from the Dakota Aquifer, which is an amount equivalent to about 32 Olympic-sized pools.

The well would be about 1,100 feet deep and located a few miles north of Redfield, in the same area as the Redfield Energy ethanol plant, which is a partner in the Summit pipeline project.



**Pheasant City Drive-In is located 1 mile north of Redfield on Highway 281, about a mile south of a proposed well for the Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline.** (Courtesy of Stacey Marlow)

The state Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources said in a written statement to South Dakota Searchlight that the water will be used for "non-contact cooling." The department provided no further information, and Summit did not respond to multiple Searchlight messages. Other sources interviewed for this story speculated the water will be used to cool pipes carrying pressurized carbon dioxide.

After its use, the water would be discharged into a local waterway, DANR's report says. The report does not say which body of water, but the site is near Turtle Creek and the James River.

Summit Carbon Solutions wants to capture carbon dioxide emitted from ethanol plants in five states. The gas would be pressurized into a liquid form and transmitted via pipelines to North Dakota for storage underground, to prevent the gas from trapping heat in the atmosphere. For its purported value in helping to fight climate change, the \$5 billion project would be eligible for up to \$1.5 billion in annual federal tax credits.

Neither DANR nor Summit responded to questions about whether Summit will apply for new water rights and wells at other locations.

The water source, the Dakota Aquifer, is a porous rock and sand formation where water gets stored as it trickles underground. It underlies about 66,500 of South Dakota's 77,000 square miles of land. A 1982 report cited by the state indicated the aquifer held about 124 trillion gallons of "recoverable water storage" east of the Missouri River in South Dakota.

In a June 29 staff report, state Chief Engineer Eric Gronlund recommended approving the application, saying there's enough water available for it, it's unlikely to harm existing water users and it's for a useful purpose.

### Permit gets contested

Because some nearby residents sent opposition comments to the state during a public comment period, the proposed permit will be the subject of a contested case hearing this fall.

One of those nearby residents is Debra Curtis, who ranches about 2.5 miles from the proposed Summit well and fears it would "reduce the water pressure and flow of my well."

Dave and Stacey Marlow wrote to the department that their drive-in theater "will not have adequate

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water pressure to continue business” if the project is permitted.

“I was told that much water being extracted will create a cone-shaped vacuum into the aquifer,” Dave Marlow told South Dakota Searchlight. “And for wells only a mile or so away, like ours, there’s just not enough pressure.”

Jay Gilbertson manages the East Dakota Water Development District, based in Brookings. He said Marlow was referring to a “cone of depression,” a term describing the shape that forms in the water table around a well when water is pumped out – like drinking a milkshake through a straw.

“When water is pumped out of a well, the water level closer to the well goes down,” Gilbertson said. “If too much water is taken out, it can cause problems for the wells in the surrounding area.”

Gilbertson also referenced language in the state staff report that says if problems with existing residential systems occur, the company has to stop or at least reduce its usage.

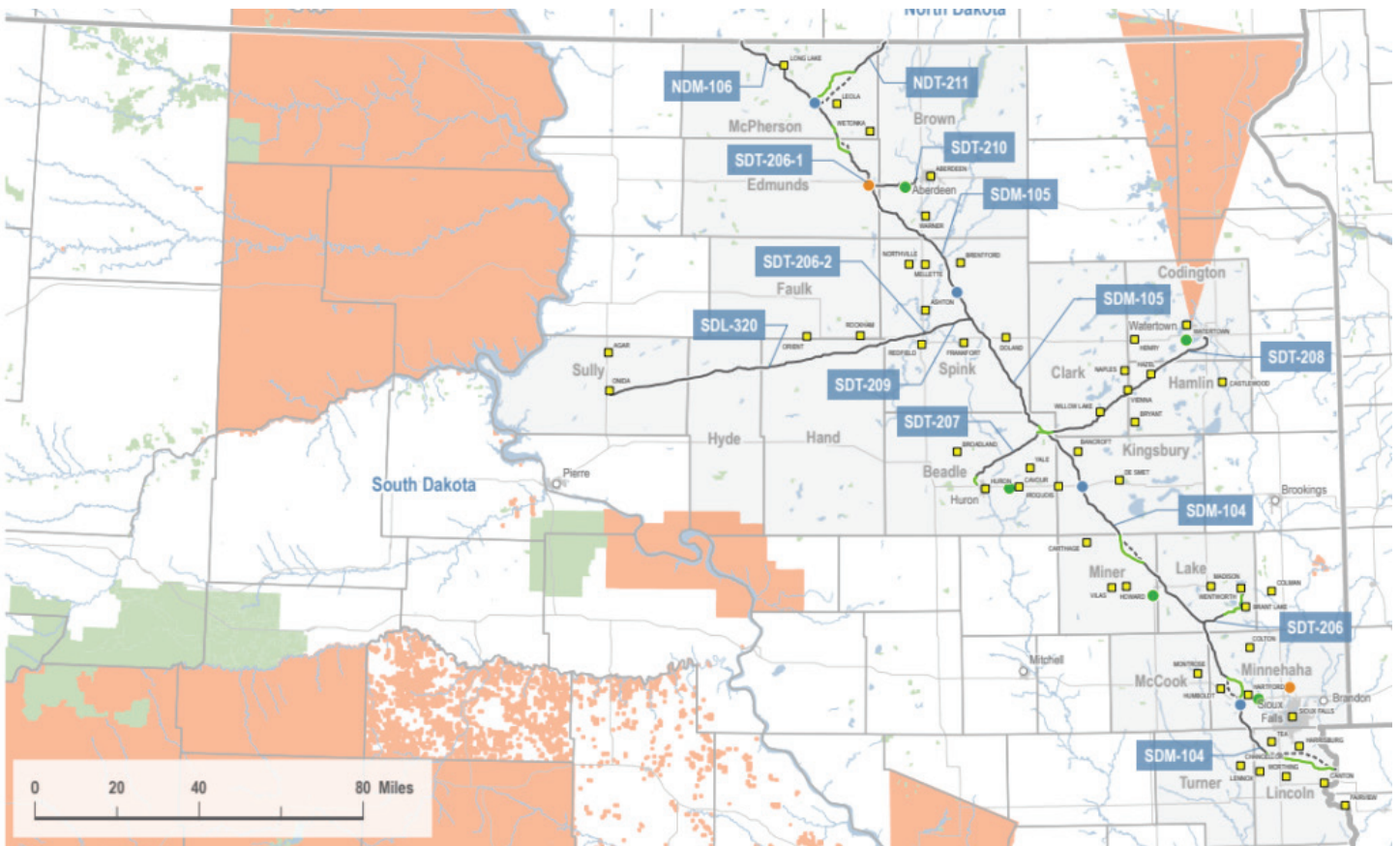
## Bureaucratic processes

Dave Marlow said a state employee told him he could “see a drastic decline in pressure” and that a lot of paperwork and bureaucracy would stand in the way of stopping Summit Carbon Solutions from pumping.

“I know the guy’s name but I really don’t want to give it out,” Marlow said.

Debra Curtis said a state employee she declined to identify told her something similar. But when she tried to contact the employee again, she was unable and was later referred to Ian Fury, the governor’s spokesperson.

“He assured me that as a resident, we’d have priority over the company,” Curtis said. But she remains skeptical about how long it would take to force a large pipeline company to stop pumping water.



**The Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline route in South Dakota.** (Courtesy of South Dakota Public Utilities Commission)



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The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources did not immediately respond to Searchlight questions regarding the claims from Marlow and Curtis about the state employee who spoke with them.

Marlow said he and his wife only found out about Summit's water-rights permit application by reading the legal section of their local paper.

"Most people have no idea what's going on or that it's even happening, and I think they're going to have a big problem coming down the road," Marlow said. "Nobody reads the notices in the paper anymore."

To oppose the application, comments had to be filed with the state's Water Rights Program by July 24.

South Dakota Searchlight sent the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources questions about the proposed permit on July 11, July 13 and Aug. 10, but didn't get a response until Aug. 11.

"The public notice period for this application has closed," department spokesperson Brian Walsh wrote.

He added that three people or entities — Curtis, the Marlows and another rural Redfield resident, Brad Hekrdle — filed comments that automatically triggered a contested case hearing, which will take place Oct. 4 in Pierre before the state Water Management Board.

Meanwhile, the state Public Utilities Commission's hearing on Summit's pipeline permit application will begin Sept. 11 and is scheduled to run 13 days at the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre.

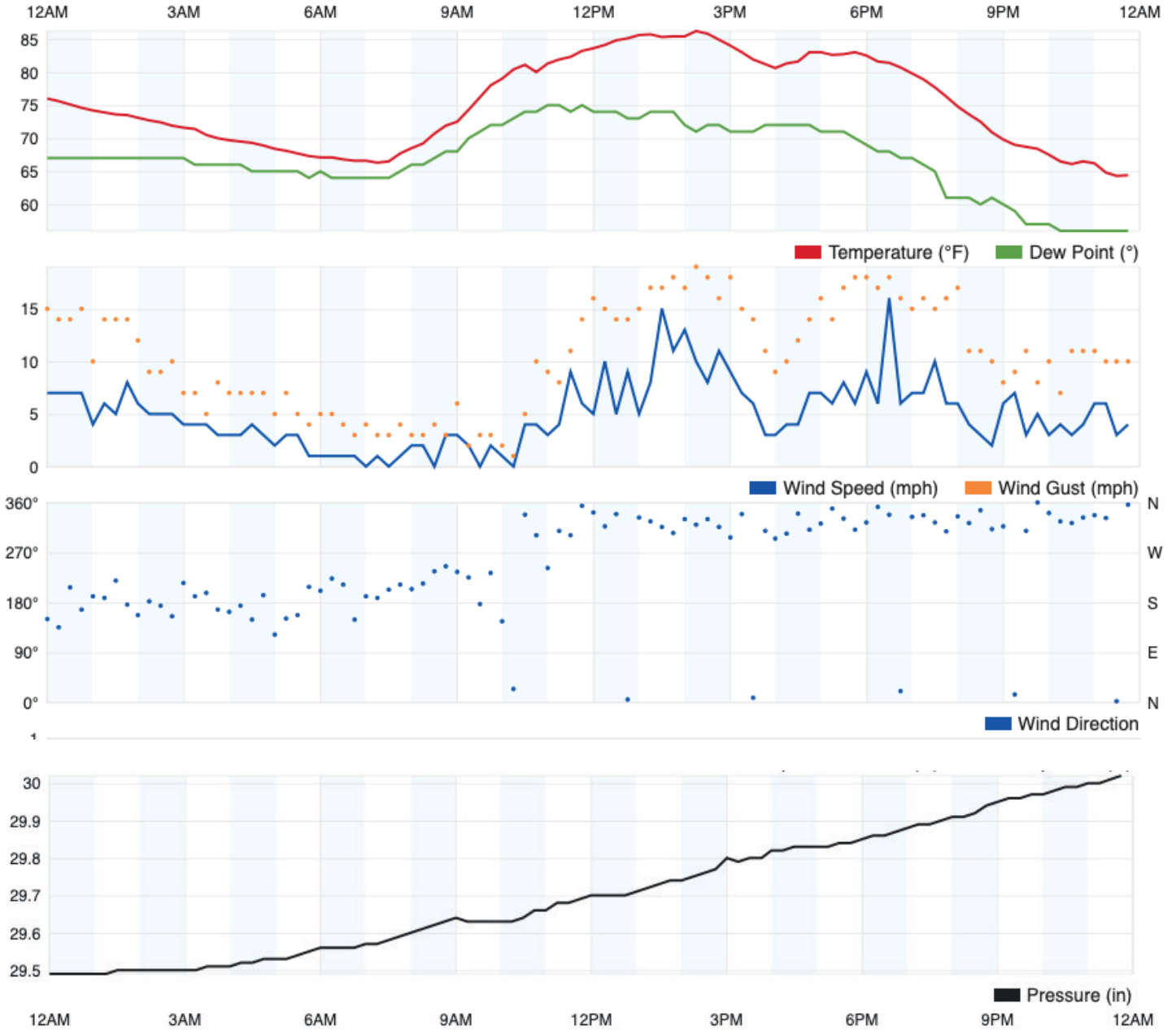
The commission has already conducted hearings on another carbon pipeline, proposed by Navigator CO2, and is expected to issue a decision on that project soon.

*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.*

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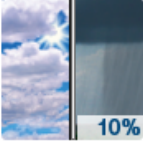






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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Decreasing Clouds	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 73 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 87 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 94 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 94 °F

## Cooler Today, Heat Returns Monday

Today



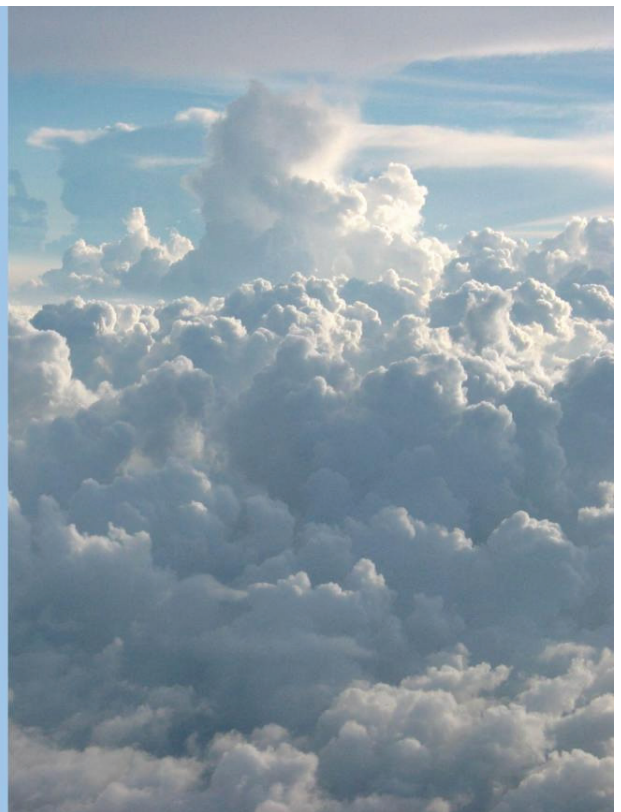
70-79°F

Showers and thunderstorms possible this morning in central SD, north of Hwy 12 in afternoon

Monday



84-100°F



It will feel much cooler outside today, and there is a possibility of a shower or thunderstorm for those in central SD this morning and those north of Hwy 12 this afternoon. Temperatures will be much higher Monday.



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	Maximum Heat Index Forecast																										
	8/21 Mon									8/22 Tue									8/23 Wed								
	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm			
<b>Aberdeen</b>	61	60	63	71	84	92	92	79	72	67	66	79	95	103	102	89	75	71	71	86	97	101	101	89			
<b>Britton</b>	59	60	63	70	82	86	86	74	68	67	66	79	92	98	97	84	72	70	70	84	95	96	96	83			
<b>Brookings</b>	66	64	65	78	92	99	97	89	79	76	75	91	99	102	101	90	81	78	76	89	97	98	95	87			
<b>Chamberlain</b>	67	66	67	85	98	105	104	90	81	78	77	93	103	106	105	91	83	78	78	93	102	103	102	92			
<b>Clark</b>	64	63	64	75	90	98	98	86	77	74	72	86	95	98	97	87	79	77	75	88	96	99	97	87			
<b>Eagle Butte</b>	61	60	62	72	83	89	89	78	71	67	67	83	92	96	96	85	74	72	71	85	91	92	92	84			
<b>Ellendale</b>	59	58	60	66	76	82	82	72	67	64	64	74	88	96	97	79	72	69	68	79	93	96	96	84			
<b>Eureka</b>	59	59	60	68	76	84	84	72	67	64	64	77	91	96	96	79	72	69	69	83	93	96	95	83			
<b>Gettysburg</b>	61	60	61	72	87	94	93	77	70	67	66	82	94	97	97	85	73	70	70	85	94	97	96	85			
<b>Huron</b>	66	65	66	78	95	101	101	89	79	75	74	91	101	104	104	92	83	78	78	92	101	102	101	91			
<b>Kennebec</b>	68	66	69	86	100	104	102	88	78	75	76	92	101	103	102	91	82	75	75	90	100	101	101	90			
<b>McIntosh</b>	59	57	58	67	76	83	82	73	66	63	63	74	87	93	93	79	70	67	68	78	89	92	91	79			
<b>Milbank</b>	61	60	61	73	85	96	98	79	72	70	69	88	98	103	102	89	76	74	74	90	98	102	99	88			
<b>Miller</b>	64	63	64	77	94	102	102	86	73	71	71	87	100	103	103	89	78	75	75	89	99	101	102	90			
<b>Mobridge</b>	62	62	63	72	81	88	89	76	70	67	66	78	92	97	96	85	73	71	69	84	95	97	96	85			
<b>Murdo</b>	66	65	67	85	96	100	99	86	77	73	75	91	100	102	100	88	81	75	75	89	99	98	97	86			
<b>Pierre</b>	68	66	68	83	94	100	99	89	77	72	72	90	102	105	104	93	83	75	74	90	101	102	101	91			
<b>Redfield</b>	64	63	64	75	90	99	100	87	74	69	68	85	97	103	104	90	77	74	73	88	99	102	102	91			
<b>Sisseton</b>	60	60	61	70	78	86	87	76	70	67	66	83	94	98	98	86	75	73	73	87	96	97	97	85			
<b>Watertown</b>	63	62	64	75	90	98	98	86	76	73	72	88	96	100	99	87	79	76	75	89	98	101	99	88			
<b>Webster</b>	62	61	62	72	82	90	91	79	73	71	69	85	93	97	95	84	75	74	74	86	93	96	95	85			
<b>Wheaton</b>	60	60	61	71	78	85	86	75	70	67	66	83	92	97	98	83	72	69	69	86	94	97	97	85			

Heat indices starting Monday are expected to meet or exceed 100 degrees in portions of central and eastern SD. Please take precautions if you are planning to spend time outside.

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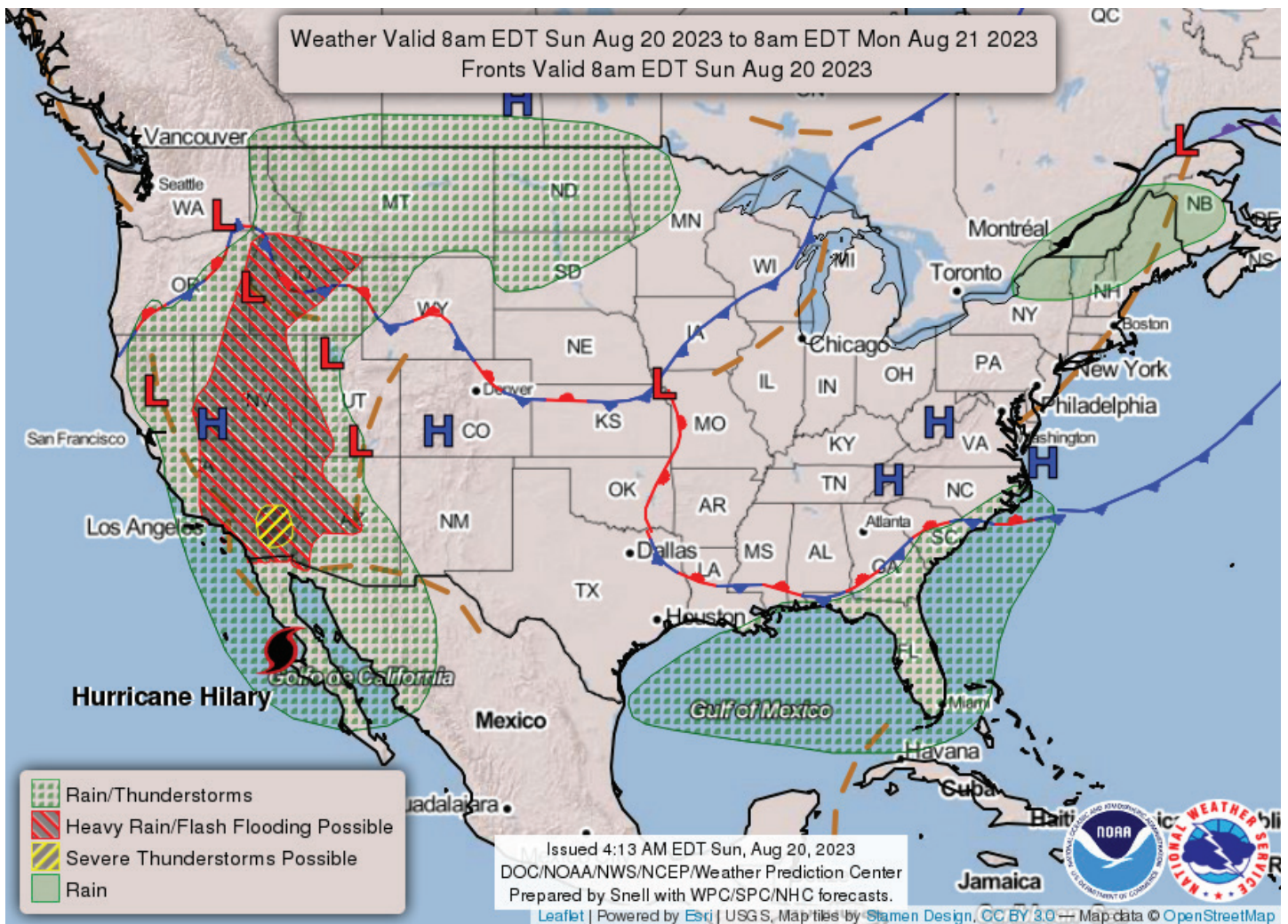
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 86 °F at 2:13 PM**  
**Low Temp: 64 °F at 11:27 PM**  
**Wind: 19 mph at 11:48 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 13 hours, 55 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1976  
Record Low: 33 in 1950  
Average High: 82  
Average Low: 56  
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.44  
Precip to date in Aug.: 5.92  
Average Precip to date: 15.54  
Precip Year to Date: 18.59  
Sunset Tonight: 8:33:43 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:39:03 AM



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## Today in Weather History

August 20, 1904: A destructive, estimated F4 tornado moved ESE from 7 miles WNW of Willow Lake, through the town, and on into Bryant in Hamlin County, South Dakota. Most of the damage occurred in those two towns. All buildings on at least three farms were blown away. One woman died in Bryant as the tornado swept across the residential west side of town. Another man was killed just west of Willow Lake, as his farm house was scattered for miles.

1886: The 1886 Indianola Hurricane destroyed the town of Indianola, Texas and as such had a significant impact on the history and economic development of Texas. The storm ended the rivalry between Galveston and Indianola as the chief port of Texas. With the abandonment of Indianola and the unwillingness of the former residents to rebuild close to shore, Galveston became the essential Texan port until the 1900 Galveston Hurricane led to the rise of Houston as a major port. It was the fifth hurricane of the 1886 Atlantic hurricane season and one of the most intense hurricanes ever to hit the United States.

1910: The Great Fire of 1910 finally came to an end in Idaho. A record dry August fueled 1736 fires that burned three million acres destroying six billion board feet of timber. The fires claimed the lives of 85 persons, 78 of which were firefighters, and consumed the entire town of Wallace. The smoke spread a third of the way around the world producing some dark days in the U.S. and Canada. The forest fires prompted federal fire protection laws.

1928: A tornado estimated at F4 intensity initially touched down in Winnebago County, Iowa, moved to Freeborn County, Minnesota, and hit the south side of Austin, MN. Five of the six deaths were in Austin with 60 injuries.

1987 - Half a dozen cities in the Central Plains Region reported record high temperatures for the date, including Pueblo CO with a reading of 102 degrees, and Goodland KS with a high of 104 degrees. Hill City KS reached 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Sheridan, WY, reported a record hot temperature reading of 100 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail near Fortuna ND, and wind gusts to 70 mph near Webster SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Early morning thunderstorms produced heavy rain in southeast Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma, with up to six inches reported around Tulsa OK. Some roads in the Tulsa area were closed by water 10 to 12 feet deep. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in northern Oklahoma and southern Kansas. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 75 mph in Major County OK, and hail two inches in diameter at Jennings KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### THROUGH IS NOT THE END

A patient, waiting for his appointment, began leafing through a copy of Who's Who in America. After several moments he closed the book appearing to be confused. A patient seated next to him asked, "Are you looking for your name or someone you know?"

"No," he replied, sadly. "I'm listed in 'Who's Through.'"

Obviously, he did not know the Lord. For anyone who turns to Him at any time will be met with open arms, given a new identity, and an opportunity to embark on a new beginning.

David made this abundantly clear when he wrote, "I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire, . . . set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along."

People who do not know God often think that they have to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." But what God did for David He can and will do for everyone!

This powerful Psalm describes what God can do for anyone at any time in any place. God will not only rescue us from the depths of our despair but place us on solid ground, steady us with His strength, clear the path before us as we begin a new walk with Him. He will also give us a new song to sing as we walk along the path that He has prepared for us.

Prayer: How grateful we are, Father, that no one is ever beyond Your love or unfit for your mercy and salvation. May we accept Your grace to redeem and rescue us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. Psalm 40



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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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.18.23

10 20 29 44 66 11

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$33,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.23

4 22 29 32 39 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$8,540,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.23

7 16 34 35 42 13

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 55 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.23

4 8 19 26 27

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.23

19 26 39 65 68 12

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.19.23

1 25 27 38 62 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$291,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **Tribal courts across the country are expanding holistic alternatives to the criminal justice system**

By HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

Inside a jail cell at Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico, Albertyn Pino's only plan was to finish the six-month sentence for public intoxication, along with other charges, and to return to her abusive boyfriend.

That's when she was offered a lifeline: An invitation to the tribe's Healing to Wellness Court. She would be released early if she agreed to attend alcohol treatment and counseling sessions, secure a bed at a shelter, get a job, undergo drug testing and regularly check in with a judge.

Pino, now 53, ultimately completed the requirements and, after about a year and a half, the charges were dropped. She looks back at that time, 15 years ago, and is grateful that people envisioned a better future for her when she struggled to see one for herself.

"It helped me start learning more about myself, about what made me tick, because I didn't know who I was," said Pino, who is now a case manager and certified peer support worker. "I didn't know what to do."

The concept of treating people in the criminal justice system holistically is not new in Indian Country, but there are new programs coming on board as well as expanded approaches. About one-third of the roughly 320 tribal court systems across the country have aspects of this healing and wellness approach, according to the National American Indian Court Judges Association.

Some tribes are incorporating these aspects into more specialized juvenile and family courts, said Kristina Pacheco, Tribal Healing to Wellness Court specialist for the California-based Tribal Law and Policy Institute. The court judges association is also working on pilot projects for holistic defense — which combine legal advocacy and support — with tribes in Alaska, Nevada and Oklahoma, modeled after a successful initiative at the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Montana.

"The thought and the concept will be different from tribe to tribe," said Pacheco. "But ultimately, we all want our tribal people ... to not hurt, not suffer."

People in the program typically are facing nonviolent misdemeanors, such as a DUI, public intoxication or burglary, she said. Some courts, like in the case of Pino, drop the charges once participants complete the program.

A program at the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe in Washington state applies restorative principles, and assigns wellness coaches to serve Native Americans and non-Natives in the local county jail, a report released earlier this year by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation outlined. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma has a reintegration program that includes financial support and housing services, as well as cultural programming, career development and legal counsel. In Alaska, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's wellness court helps adults in tribal and state court who are battling substance abuse and incorporates elements of their tribe's culture.

"There's a lot of shame and guilt when you're arrested," said Mary Rodriguez, staff attorney for the court judges association. "You don't reach out to those resources, you feel that you aren't entitled to those resources, that those are for somebody who isn't in trouble with the law."

"The idea of holistic defense is opening that up and reclaiming you are our community member, we understand there are issues," Rodriguez said. "You are better than the worst thing you've done."

The MacArthur Foundation report outlined a series of inequities, including a complicated jurisdictional maze in Indian Country that can result in multiple courts charging Native Americans for the same offense. The report also listed historical trauma and a lack of access to free, legal counsel within tribes as factors that contribute to disproportionate representation of Native Americans in federal and state prisons.

Advocates of tribal healing to wellness initiatives see the approaches as a way to shift the narrative of someone's life and address the underlying causes of criminal activity.

There isn't clear data that shows how holistic alternatives to harsh penalization have influenced incar-

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ceration rates. Narrative outcomes might be a better measure of success, including regaining custody of one's children and maintaining a driver's license, said Johanna Farmer, an enrolled citizen of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota and a program attorney for the court judges association.

Some tribes have incorporated specific cultural and community elements into healing, such as requiring participants to interview their own family members to establish a sense of rootedness and belonging.

"You have the narratives, the stories, the qualitative data showing that healing to wellness court, the holistic defense practices are more in line with a lot of traditional tribal community practices," Farmer said. "And when your justice systems align with your traditional values or the values you have in your community, the more likely you're going to see better results."

While not all of these tribal healing to wellness programs have received federal funding, some have.

Between 2020 and 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice distributed more than a dozen awards that totaled about \$9.4 million for tribal healing to wellness courts.

This year, the Quapaw Nation in Oklahoma started working on a holistic defense program after seeing a sharp increase in cases following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that said a large area of eastern Oklahoma remains a Native American reservation.

So far this year, about 70 cases have been filed, up from nearly a dozen in all of 2020, said Corissa Milard, tribal court administrator.

"When we look at holistic approaches, we think, what's going to better help the community in long term?" she said. "Is sending someone away for a three-year punishment going to be it? Will they reoffend once they get out? Or do you want to try to fix the problem before it escalates?"

For Pino, the journey through Laguna Pueblo's wellness court wasn't smooth. She struggled through relapses and a brief stint on the run before she found a job and an apartment to live in with her son nearby in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her daughters live close by.

She largely credits the wellness court staff for her ability to turnaround her life, she said.

"They were the ones that stood by me, regardless of what I was choosing to do; that was the part that brought me a lot of hope," she said. "And now where I'm at, just to see them happy, it gets emotional, because they never let go. They never gave up on me."

## Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

Arlington 50, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 12

Hot Springs 55, Redfield 0

Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian 52, Hill City 14

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

## South Dakota Democratic Party ousts state chair who was accused of creating hostile work environment

FORT PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Democratic Party ousted Jennifer Slight-Hansen as state chair on Saturday amid accusations that she violated party rules and created a hostile work environment for staff.

The party's State Central Committee voted 57-0, with two abstentions, to remove Slight-Hansen. She can appeal. If her appeal is rejected, a new election for chair will be held Sept. 16 in Rapid City.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported that Slight-Hansen did not attend the meeting in Fort Pierre. She did not respond to the newspaper's requests for comment on whether she would challenge the recall vote.

Since Slight-Hansen became chair in May, office-holders and party activists accused her of not properly communicating with the 11 lawmakers who make up the Democratic caucus in the statehouse, improperly



hiring and firing staff, and creating a new job position without notifying the executive board. Some also objected to how the state party joined the Biden Victory Fund, which was not included in the party's budget or approved by the board. Several donors threatened to withhold contributions.

Former state Sen. Susan Wismer, of Britton, called Slaight-Hansen a dedicated member of the party but said she believed the allegations stemmed from "the fact that she stepped on a lot of toes."

Democrats are a distinct minority in South Dakota. Republicans hold all statewide offices, including the state's two U.S. Senate and one House seat, and overwhelmingly control both chambers of the Legislature, 94-11 overall. No Democratic presidential candidate has carried the state since President Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Shane Merrill, who was vice chair, will serve as interim chair until the election in September.

"This has been a long difficult process for all of us," Merrill said. "(My) phone's been ringing off the hook every day, but I do have reason to be hopeful."

## **Zelenskyy vows retaliation for Chernihiv attack that killed seven people and wounded almost 150**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday vowed stern retaliation for a Russian missile strike in the center of the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv that killed seven people and wounded almost 150 others the day before.

"I am sure our soldiers will respond to Russia for this terrorist attack. Respond tangibly," Zelenskyy said in a video address published in the early hours of Sunday at the end of a visit to Sweden, his first foreign trip since attending a NATO summit in Lithuania last month.

He identified a 6-year-old girl named Sofia as among the dead in the attack and confirmed that the wounded included 15 children.

The governor of the Chernihiv region, Vyacheslav Chaus, said Sunday that the total number of people confirmed to have been wounded had risen to 148.

Further east, Russian forces shelled the city of Kupiansk on Sunday morning, seriously wounding a man, according to Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov.

Zelenskyy arrived in the Netherlands on Sunday, two days after the country said the United States had given its approval for Dutch and Danish authorities to deliver F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine's air force.

Zelenskyy is meeting Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte at a military air base in the southern city of Eindhoven.

The U.S. approval Friday for the Netherlands and Denmark to deliver American-made F-16s to Ukraine was seen as a major boost for Kyiv, even though the fighter jets won't have an impact any time soon on the almost 18-month war.

In Russia on Sunday, five people were wounded when a Ukrainian drone hit a train station in the city of Kursk, regional Gov. Roman Starovoit said. Kursk is the capital of the western region of the same name, which borders Ukraine.

According to Starovoit, the drone crashed into the roof of the railway station building, with a fire subsequently breaking out on the roof.

Russian air defenses jammed a drone flying towards Moscow early Sunday causing it to crash. Russia's Defense Ministry called it "an attempt by the Kyiv regime to carry out a terrorist attack."

Moscow's Vnukovo and Domodedovo airports briefly suspended flights, but no victims or damage were reported.

Ukrainian authorities, which generally avoid commenting on attacks on Russian soil, didn't say whether it launched the attacks.

Drone strikes on the Russian border regions are a fairly regular occurrence. Attacks deeper inside Russian territory have been on the rise since a drone was destroyed over the Kremlin in early May. Successful strikes have exposed the vulnerabilities of Moscow's air defense systems.

## Talks between regional bloc and Niger's junta yield little, an official tells The Associated Press

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — Mutinous soldiers in Niger are under pressure from regional sanctions as they refuse to reinstate the country's president whom they toppled nearly a month ago while being fearful of attacks from France, an official said.

The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity after Saturday's meeting between Niger's new military regime and a delegation from the West African regional bloc, ECOWAS.

He said the roughly two-hour discussion aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the country's deepening crisis, yielded little with no clarity on the next steps. It was the first time head of the junta, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, met with the delegation after rebuffing previous attempts.

Saturday's meeting was a last-ditch diplomacy scramble by the bloc to resolve the crisis peacefully and followed last week's announcement that 11 of its 15 member states had agreed to intervene militarily if democratically-elected President Bazoum was not released from house arrest and reinstated.

The bloc's three other countries under military rule following coups, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso, were not included. The latter two had previously warned they would consider intervention in Niger an act of war.

On August 10, ECOWAS ordered the deployment of a "standby force" to go into Niger and restore constitutional rule. It's unclear if and when the troops would intervene.

During the talks, Tchiani pushed for the lifting of economic and travel sanctions imposed by ECOWAS after the coup, saying Niger's population was suffering because of them, but he was unwilling to give much in return, said the official. The junta said they were under pressure, at times striking a conciliatory tone and apologizing for past disrespect towards the bloc, while also defiantly standing by its decision to overthrow Bazoum and unequivocal about him not returning to power, the official added.

Tchiani also repeatedly expressed concerns that its former colonial ruler France — which has some 1,500 troops in the country and had been providing training and conducting joint operations with Niger's military — was actively planning an attack, said the official.

Niger was seen by many Western countries as the last democratic partner in the region it could work with to beat back a growing jihadi insurgency by militant groups linked with al-Qaida and the Islamic State. France, the United States and other European nations have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into shoring up Niger's army and the coup has been seen as a major setback.

Sahel experts say it's not surprising that nothing came from Saturday's meeting as each party is trying to show they're open to discussions, yet the chances of an agreement are slim because their positions are starkly different.

"ECOWAS and the rest of the international community want to restore President Bazoum and the junta is not on this agenda," said Seidik Abba, a Nigerien researcher and Sahel specialist and president of the International Center for Reflection on the Sahel, a think tank based in Paris. "The next step will be military confrontation ... What we don't know is when this confrontation will take place, how it will go, and what the consequences will be," he said.

Shortly after the meetings Saturday, Tchiani went on state television and laid out a roadmap for the country, saying it would return to civilian rule within three years and that details for the plan would be decided within 30 days through a national dialogue set to launch immediately.

"I am convinced that we will find solutions to all the challenges we face and that we will work together to find a way out of the crisis, in the interests of all," he said.

Transitions for Niger's multiple previous coups were shorter, so a three-year timeline is unprecedented said Aneliese Bernard, a former U.S. State Department official who specializes in African affairs and is now director of Strategic Stabilization Advisors, a risk advisory group. "What we're seeing in the region is the emergence of trends just to military rule," she said.

But some Nigerien soldiers don't think Tchiani will last three months, let alone several years.

A soldier who worked directly with Bazoum before the coup, and did not want to be named for fear of

his safety, told the AP Saturday that there are deep divisions within the presidential guard — the unit that overthrew Bazoum — and within the junta itself.

Of the nearly 1,000 soldiers at the base on the presidential complex, the majority would flee if ECOWAS attacked, he said. He gave Tchiani a few months before he too is overthrown.

Tchiani is widely unpopular in security circles within Niger and seen as having reached his current post because of former president Mahamadou Issoufou's patronage, rather than through his own connections and battlefield achievements, said Andrew Lebovich, a research fellow with the Clingendael Institute.

"While the (junta) has presented a unified public face, it is a partnership of branches of the armed forces that have competed for status and resources in the recent past and further," he said.

## Japan's Kishida visits Fukushima plant to highlight safety before start of treated water release

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant Sunday and said an impending release of treated radioactive wastewater into the Pacific Ocean cannot be postponed.

He said the move is safe but his government will do its utmost to support fishing communities from the potential impact of damaging rumors during the decades-long project.

Kishida made his trip hours after returning from a summit with U.S. and South Korean leaders at the American presidential retreat of Camp David. Before leaving Washington on Friday, Kishida said it is time to make a decision on the treated water's release date, which has not been set due to the controversy surrounding the plan.

Kishida on Sunday saw wastewater filtering and dilution facilities and met with the plant and company executives. He told reporters that he confirmed their commitment to safely carrying out the upcoming water discharge. To make room for new facilities needed for the progress of the decommissioning, the treated water needs to be disposed of and tanks removed to make room.

The treated water discharge "by no means can be postponed for the decommissioning and Fukushima's recovery," Kishida said.

He said he hoped to meet with representatives of fisheries organizations on Monday before his ministers decide the start date at a meeting next week. It is widely expected to be the end of August.

Kishida said the water release is a long-term project and that he is aware of the importance of recognizing the concerns and needs of local fishing groups. "I hope to convey the government position directly to the fisheries representatives," he said.

Since the government announced the release plan two years ago, it has faced strong opposition from Japanese fishing organizations, which worry about further damage to the reputation of their seafood as they struggle to recover from the accident. Groups in South Korea and China have also raised concerns, turning it into a political and diplomatic issue.

The government and the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., or TEPCO, say the water must be removed to make room for the plant's decommissioning and to prevent accidental leaks from the tanks because much of the water is still contaminated and needs further treatment.

Japan has obtained support from the International Atomic Energy Agency to improve transparency and credibility and to ensure the plan by TEPCO meets international safety standards. The government has also stepped up a campaign promoting the plan's safety at home and through diplomatic channels.

The IAEA, in a final report in July, concluded that the TEPCO plan, if conducted strictly as designed, will cause negligible impact on the environment and human health, encouraging Japan to proceed.

While seeking understanding from the fishing community, the government has also worked to explain the plan to neighboring countries, especially South Korea, to keep the issue from interfering with their relationship-building. Japan, South Korea and the U.S. are working to bolster trilateral ties in the face of



growing Chinese and North Korean threats.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's government recently showed support for the Japanese plan, but he faces criticism at home. During a joint news conference at Camp David, Yoon said he backs the IAEA's safety evaluation of the plan but stressed the need for transparent inspection by the international community.

Kishida said Sunday that the outreach efforts have made progress, and that the decision will factor in safety preparations and measures for possible reputational damage to the fisheries. He said the government has provided scientific explanation to counter unscientific criticism, including from China.

A massive March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and contaminating their cooling water. The water is collected, filtered and stored in around 1,000 tanks, which will reach their capacity in early 2024.

The water is being treated with what's called an Advanced Liquid Processing System, which can reduce the amounts of more than 60 selected radionuclides to government-set releasable levels, except for tritium, which the government and TEPCO say is safe for humans if consumed in small amounts.

Scientists generally agree that the environmental impact of the treated wastewater would be negligible, but some call for more attention to dozens of low-dose radionuclides that remain in it.

## Hilary weakens to Category 1 hurricane as storm moves within striking distance of Mexican peninsula

By IGNACIO MARTINEZ and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

CABO SAN LUCAS, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Hilary moved closer to the coast of Mexico early Sunday on a continued path to the Baja California peninsula as a weakened but dangerous Category 1 hurricane, which the National Weather Service said was likely to bring "catastrophic and life-threatening" flooding to the region and cross into the southwestern U.S. as a tropical storm.

The National Weather Center in Miami said in the most recent advisory at 2 a.m. that the storm was about 30 miles (45 kilometers) south of Punta Eugenia, Mexico, and 385 miles (625 kilometers) from San Diego, California. The maximum sustained wind speed remained unchanged at 85 mph while spreading "heavy rains" northward over the peninsula.

Meteorologists warned that despite weakening, the storm remained treacherous.

One person drowned Saturday in the Mexican town of Santa Rosalia, on the peninsula's eastern coast, when a vehicle was swept away in an overflowing stream. Rescue workers managed to save four other people, said Edith Aguilar Villavicencio, the mayor of Mulege township.

It was not immediately clear whether officials considered the fatality related to the hurricane, but video posted by local officials showed torrents of water coursing through the town's streets.

Forecasters said the storm was still expected to enter the history books as the first tropical storm to hit Southern California in 84 years, bringing flash floods, mudslides, isolated tornadoes, high winds and power outages. The forecast prompted authorities to issue an evacuation advisory for Santa Catalina Island, urging residents and beachgoers to leave the tourist destination 23 miles (37 kilometers) off the coast.

Elizabeth Adams, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service San Diego office, said rain could fall up to 3 inches (7.62 centimeters) an hour across Southern California's mountains and deserts, from late Sunday morning into the afternoon. The intense rainfall during those hours could cause widespread and life-threatening flash floods.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency, and officials had urged people to finish their preparations before sundown Saturday. It would be too late by Sunday, one expert said.

The hurricane is the latest major climate disaster to wreak havoc across the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Hawaii's island of Maui is still reeling from last week's blaze that killed over 100 people and ravaged the historic town of Lahaina, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century. In Canada, firefighters on Saturday continued to battle blazes during the nation's worst fire season on record.

Hilary brought heavy rain and flooding to Mexico and the southwestern U.S. on Saturday, ahead of the

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storm's expected Sunday border crossing. Forecasters warned it could dump up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) — a year's worth of rain for some areas — in southern California and southern Nevada.

"This does not lessen the threat, especially the flood threat," Jamie Rhome, the U.S. National Hurricane Center's deputy director, said during a Saturday briefing to announce the storm's downgraded status. "Don't let the weakening trend and the intensity lower your guard."

Meteorologists also expected the storm to churn up "life-threatening" surf and rip currents, including waves up to 40 feet (12 meters) high, along Mexico's Pacific coast. Dozens sought refuge at storm shelters in the twin resorts of Los Cabos at the southern tip of the Baja peninsula, and firefighters rescued a family in San Jose del Cabo after the resort was hit by driving rain and wind.

In Tijuana, fire department head Rafael Carrillo voiced the fear at the back of everyone's mind in the border city of 1.9 million people, particularly residents who live in homes on steep hillsides.

"If you hear noises, or the ground cracking, it is important for you to check it and get out as fast as possible, because the ground can weaken and your home could collapse," Carrillo said.

Tijuana ordered all beaches closed Saturday, and set up a half dozen storm shelters at sports complexes and government offices.

Mexico's navy evacuated 850 people from islands off the Baja coast, and deployed almost 3,000 troops for emergency operations. In La Paz, the picturesque capital of Baja California Sur state on the Sea of Cortez, police patrolled closed beaches to keep swimmers out of the whipped-up surf.

The U.S. hurricane center posted tropical storm and potential flood warnings for Southern California from the Pacific coast to interior mountains and deserts. The San Bernardino County sheriff issued evacuation warnings for several mountain and foothill communities ahead of the storm, while Orange County sent out its own alert for anyone living in a wildfire burn scar in the Santa Ana Mountains' Silverado and Williams canyons.

Authorities in Los Angeles scrambled to get the homeless off the streets and into shelters, and officials ordered all state beaches in San Diego and Orange counties closed.

Across the region, municipalities ran out of free sandbags and grocery shelves emptied out as residents stockpiled supplies. The U.S. National Park Service closed California's Joshua Tree National Park and Mojave National Preserve to keep visitors from becoming stranded amid flooding.

Major League Baseball rescheduled three Sunday games in Southern California, moving them to Saturday as part of split doubleheaders, and SpaceX delayed the launch of a satellite-carrying rocket from a base on California's central coast until at least Monday.

The White House said President Joe Biden had been briefed on the latest preparedness plans ahead of the hurricane's turn to the U.S. "I urge everyone, everyone in the path of this storm, to take precautions and listen to the guidance of state and local officials," he said.

Hilary on Friday had rapidly grown into an exceedingly dangerous Category 4 major hurricane, with its top sustained winds peaking at 145 mph (230 kph). Its winds dropped to 115 mph (185 kph) early Saturday as a Category 3 storm, before further weakening to 100 mph (161 kph) as a Category 2.

By late afternoon Saturday, it was centered 600 miles (965 kilometers) south-southeast of San Diego, California. Moving north-northwest at 17 mph (28 kph), the storm was expected to turn more toward the north and pick up forward speed.

The hurricane was expected to brush past Punta Eugenia on the Pacific coast before making a nighttime landfall along a sparsely populated area of the peninsula about 200 miles (330 kilometers) south of the Pacific port city of Ensenada.

## **A tanker believed to hold sanctioned Iran oil starts offloading near Texas despite Tehran's threats**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — An American-owned oil tanker long suspected of carrying sanctioned Iranian crude oil began offloading its cargo near Texas late Saturday, tracking data showed, even as Tehran has threatened to target shipping in the Persian Gulf over it.

Ship-tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press showed the Marshall Islands-flagged Suez Rajan was undergoing a ship-to-ship transfer of its oil to another tanker, the MR Euphrates, near Galveston, some 70 kilometers (45 miles) southeast of Houston.

The fate of the cargo aboard the Suez Rajan has become mired in the wider tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic Republic, even as Tehran and Washington work toward a trade of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets in South Korea for the release of five Iranian-Americans held in Tehran.

Already, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has warned that those involved in offloading the cargo "should expect to be struck back." The U.S. Navy has increased its presence steadily in recent weeks in the Mideast, sending the troop-and-aircraft-carrying USS Bataan through the Strait of Hormuz in recent days and considering putting armed personnel on commercial ships traveling through the strait to stop Iran from seizing additional ships.

U.S. officials and the owners of the Suez Rajan, the Los Angeles-based private equity firm Oaktree Capital Management, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The saga over the Suez Rajan began in February 2022, when the group United Against Nuclear Iran said it suspected the tanker carried oil from Iran's Khargh Island, its main oil distribution terminal in the Persian Gulf.

For months, the ship sat in the South China Sea off the northeast coast of Singapore before suddenly sailing for the Gulf of Mexico without explanation. Analysts believe the vessel's cargo likely has been seized by American officials, though there still were no public court documents early Sunday involving the Suez Rajan.

In the meantime, Iran has seized two tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, including one with cargo for U.S. oil major Chevron Corp. In July, the top commander of the Revolutionary Guard's naval arm threatened further action against anyone offloading the Suez Rajan, with state media linking the recent seizures to the cargo's fate.

"We hereby declare that we would hold any oil company that sought to unload our crude from the vessel responsible and we also hold America responsible," Rear Adm. Alireza Tangsiri said at the time. "The era of hit and run is over, and if they hit, they should expect to be struck back."

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment over the offloading of the Suez Rajan. The state-run IRNA news agency acknowledged this AP story, but did not elaborate. Western-backed naval organizations in the Persian Gulf in recent days also warned of an increased risk of ship seizures from Iran around the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers saw it regain the ability to sell oil openly on the international market. But in 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord and re-imposed American sanctions. That slammed the door on much of Iran's lucrative crude oil trade, a major engine for its economy and its government. It also began a cat-and-mouse hunt for Iranian oil cargo — as well as series of escalating attacks attributed to Iran since 2019.

The delay in offloading the Suez Rajan's cargo had become a political issue as well for the Biden administration as the ship had sat for months in the Gulf of Mexico, possibly due to companies being worried about the threat from Iran.

In a letter dated Wednesday, a group of Democratic and Republican U.S. senators asked the White House for an update on what was happening with the ship's cargo, estimated to be worth some \$56 million. They said the money could go toward the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund, which compensates those affected by the Sept. 11 attacks, the 1979 Iran hostage crisis and other militant assaults.



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"We owe it to these American families to enforce our sanctions," the letter read.

The U.S. Treasury has said Iran's oil smuggling revenue supports the Quds Force, the expeditionary unit of the Revolutionary Guard that operates across the Mideast.

Claire Jungman, the chief of staff at United Against Nuclear Iran, praised the transfer finally happening.

"By depriving the (Guard) of crucial resources, we strike a blow against terrorism that targets not only American citizens but also our global allies and partners," Jungman told the AP.

On Sunday, Iranian state media released still images from video that showed the USS Bataan with small Guard fast boats trailing it as it traveled through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of the world's oil passes. One image appeared to have been taken from a drone above the Bataan.

Cmdr. Rick Chernitzer, a spokesman for the U.S. Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, acknowledged to the AP that the Bataan had transited through the strait in recent days. He declined to elaborate.

## US, Japan and Australia plan joint navy drills in disputed South China Sea, Philippine officials say

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The United States, Japan and Australia are planning a joint navy drill in the South China Sea off the western Philippines this week to underscore their commitment to the rule of law in the region after a recent show of Chinese aggression in the disputed waters, Filipino security officials said Sunday.

On Aug. 5, Chinese coast guard ships used water cannons against Philippine vessels in the contested waterway where disputes have long been regarded as a potential flashpoint and have become a fault line in the rivalry between the U.S. and China in the region.

The drill will include three aircraft and helicopter carriers sailing together in a show of force and undertaking joint drills. Their commanders are set to meet with Filipino counterparts in Manila after the offshore drills, two Philippine security officials told The Associated Press.

Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not allowed to publicly discuss details of the planned drills.

The U.S. plans to deploy an aircraft carrier, the USS America, while Japan would send one of its biggest warships, the helicopter carrier JS Izumo. The Royal Australian Navy would send its HMAS Canberra, which also carries helicopters, one of the two officials said, adding that the joint drill was planned a few months ago.

The Philippines would not be part of this week's drills due to military logistical limitations but is open to becoming a participant in the future, the official said.

The United States, Japan and Australia were among several countries that immediately expressed support for the Philippines and concern over the Chinese action following the tense stand-off earlier this month.

Philippine officials said six Chinese coast guard ships and two militia vessels blocked two Philippine navy-chartered civilian boats taking supplies to the Philippine forces stationed at the Second Thomas Shoal. One supply boat was hit with a powerful water cannon by the Chinese coast guard while the other managed to deliver food, water, fuel and other supplies to the Filipino forces guarding the shoal, the Philippine military said.

The Chinese coast guard acknowledged its ships used water cannons against the Philippine vessels, which it said strayed without permission into the shoal, which Beijing calls Ren'ai Jiao.

"In order to avoid direct blocking and collisions when repeated warnings were ineffective, water cannons were used as a warning. The on-site operation was professional and restrained, which is beyond reproach," the Chinese coast guard said. "China will continue to take necessary measures to firmly safeguard its territorial sovereignty."

The Philippine military said on Saturday that it would again attempt to deliver basic supplies to its forces

in the Second Thomas Shoal, but didn't provide further details.

The mission "to the shoal is a clear demonstration of our resolve to stand up against threats and coercion and our commitment in upholding the rule of law," the Armed Forces of the Philippines said in a statement.

Following the incident, Washington renewed a warning that it is obliged to defend its longtime treaty ally if Philippine public vessels and forces come under armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

## Firefighters curb blazes threatening 2 cities in western Canada but are 'not out of the woods yet'

By DAVID SHARP, JIM MORRIS and MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Firefighters kept wildfires at bay near the capital of Canada's Northwest Territories as well as a threatened city in British Columbia, though no one claimed victory as forecasters warned that drier and windier weather was coming.

For Saturday at least, the weather was milder, providing some help for fire teams battling to contain the flames of Canada's worst fire season on record that destroyed structures, fouled the air with thick smoke and prompted evacuation orders for tens of thousands of residents.

Officials said a huge wildfire again had been kept from advancing closer than 15 kilometers (9 miles) to Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories that was left virtually empty when nearly all of its 20,000 residents fled for safety.

"We're by no means out of the woods yet," Mike Westwick, wildfire information officer for the city, told The Associated Press. "We still have a serious situation. It's not safe to return."

To the south, in British Columbia, raging flames were also kept away from Kelowna, a city of 30,000 people about 150 kilometers (90 miles) north of the United States border.

The Kelowna fire is among more than 380 blazes across the province, with 150 burning out of control. The blaze near Yellowknife is one of 237 wildfires burning in the Northwest Territories.

At a Saturday evening news conference, Shane Thompson, the minister of environment and climate change for the Northwest Territories, said the fires near Yellowknife had not grown very much in the past few days thanks to breaks in the weather.

"But I want to be clear, a little bit of rain doesn't mean it's safe to come back home," he said. Others warned that incoming hot weather would make the battle more challenging.

Yellowknife Mayor Rebecca Alty encouraged residents to stay away to ensure their safety and help with firefighting efforts. She assured people that patrols were monitoring streets and homes to protect against looting.

The city has become a virtual ghost town since residents fled following an evacuation order issued Wednesday evening. Long caravans of cars choked the main highway and people lined up for emergency flights to escape the blaze. The last 39 hospital patients were flown out Friday night on a Canadian Forces plane, officials said.

On Saturday, officials said the escape route out of Yellowknife was safe, for the time being. About 2,600 people remained in town, including emergency teams, firefighters, utility workers and police officers, along with some residents who refused to leave.

Charlotte Morrith was among those who left Thursday, reaching that decision because of the unbearable smoke that she feared would be unhealthy for her 4-month-old son.

Morrith, a journalist with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and her son took an evacuation flight some 1,500 kilometers (950 miles) west to safety in Whitehorse, Yukon, while her partner stayed behind to monitor their property and help create firebreaks and fight fires.

"We knew it was only a matter of time," said Morrith, who had been following media updates and satellite images of the approaching wildfires.

Air tankers dropped water and fire retardant to keep the flames from Yellowknife. A 10-kilometer (6-mile) fire line was dug, and firefighters deployed 20 kilometers (12 miles) of hose and a plethora of pumps.

Canada has seen a record number of wildfires this year that have caused choking smoke in parts of

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the U.S. All told, there have been more than 5,700 fires, which have burned more than 137,000 square kilometers (53,000 square miles) from one end of Canada to the other, according to the Canadian Inter-agency Forest Fire Centre.

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Eby told reporters Saturday that the situation was "grim" and warned that the "situation changes very quickly."

He said he was restricting non-essential travel to fire-affected areas to free up accommodations such as hotels, motels and campgrounds for displaced residents and firefighters.

Ian Stewart and his wife made the "anxiety-producing" decision Friday to evacuate Kelowna with their 4-year-old border collie and drive 335 kilometers (210 miles) to the British Columbia town of Clearwater.

"The smoke was really oppressive and there were big chunks of ash falling everywhere," he said Saturday. They packed a couple of suitcases, passports, laptop computers and dog food, and drove in bumper-to-bumper traffic to escape.

A shift in the wind carried smoke and haze from British Columbia into the Seattle area on Saturday, said Dustin Guy, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. The Puget Sound region was just recovering from record heat, and air quality could reach unhealthy levels Saturday night through Monday, Guy said.

## Guatemalans head to the polls, hoping their new leader will bring real change

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN and SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — After a tumultuous campaign, Guatemalans head to the polls on Sunday to elect a new president, hoping that the country's next leader will provide relief from rising prices and get a handle on crime and corruption.

The two candidates offer starkly different paths forward. Former first lady Sandra Torres became an ally of outgoing, deeply unpopular President Alejandro Giammattei in her third bid for the presidency. Her opponent, Bernardo Arévalo, with the progressive Seed Movement, rode a wave of popular resentment toward politics to his surprise spot in the runoff.

Central America's most populous country and the region's largest economy continues to struggle with widespread poverty and violence that have driven hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans to emigrate in recent years.

The first round of voting on June 25 went relatively smoothly until results showed Arévalo had landed an unexpected spot in the runoff. The fact that the preliminary results were dragged into Guatemala's co-opted justice system has raised anxiety among many Guatemalans that voters will not have the final word Sunday.

Guatemala's Attorney General's Office is investigating Arévalo's party for allegedly gathering fraudulent signatures for its registration years earlier. The party has dismissed the accusations as politically motivated.

Torres, in her closing campaign event Friday in Guatemala City's sprawling central market, suggested she would not accept a result that didn't go her way. "We're going to defend vote by vote because today democracy is at risk (and) because they want to steal the elections," she said.

Arévalo, a lawmaker and former diplomat, is the son of former President Juan José Arévalo, the first leftist president of Guatemala's democratic era. The elder Arévalo is still revered by many for establishing fundamental elements of Guatemalan society such as social security and labor regulations.

But Torres has painted her opponent as a radical leftist who threatens Guatemalans' conservative values on issues including sexual identity and abortion.

"We're not going to let them influence our children with strange and foreign ideologies," she said Friday.

Having run largely populist campaigns, capitalizing on her oversight of the government's social programs



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A spokesperson for Maui County, Mahina Martin, said Saturday that authorities involved in the search effort were working to compile a list of the missing and continued to vet the information being gathered.

The only publicly available list has been compiled by good Samaritans hoping to link family with loved ones, but isn't always up-to-date.

President Joe Biden is scheduled to visit Lahaina on Monday to survey the devastation and meet with survivors and local officials.

Earlier this week, Police Chief John Pelletier said authorities would do their best to track down the missing. "But I can't promise that we're going to get them all," he said.

On the day before the fire, Po'omaika'i Estores-Losano, a 28-year-old father of two, wished aloha to his ohana, the Hawaiian word for family. "Another beautiful day in Hawaii," he wrote on Facebook, ending his post by urging his circle to "have fun, enjoy," and to never be "unhappy and grumpy."

He was among the scores still missing Saturday. His family has scoured the island looking for him, checking hospitals and shelters. Without a car, Estores-Losano would have had to outrun the fire and smoke.

"We don't want him to think we stopped looking for him," said Ku'ulei Barut, who last spoke to her brother the day before he went missing.

His mother, Leona Castillo, wants to hang on to the possibility that her son is still alive, but she knows she may have to face a reality she's not yet ready to accept. Last week, as the talk of body counts intensified, she got herself swabbed for DNA.

She wants him found, no matter how and where.

"We don't want him to be lost," she said. "If we don't get his body back, he'll just be lost."

In the days after the fire, there was chaos and confusion, with so many families looking for missing loved ones. Castillo said she was relieved for friends and neighbors who were reunited with loved ones.

But she wondered when would it be her turn.

"I just want closure," she said.

Ace Yabes is also waiting for word about his relatives — nine in all who are missing, including Angelica Baclig, whose family lived next door to an aunt and her family, five of whom have yet to be found.

Kevin Baclig was at work as a nurse at a skilled nursing facility when the fire raced down from the hills and into town, igniting nearly everything in its path.

"I've been searching all the shelters, hotels, possible places they might go — I've gone to all of them. I've gone to the houses of their friends," he said. "I've reported them missing to the MPD (Maui Police Department), to the FBI. I've been showing their pictures."

Baclig, who is staying with friends in Kahalui on the northern flank of the island, holds out hope as he searches.

Maybe in their haste to flee, none had the time to grab their cellphones — which might explain why Baclig has yet to get a call. Maybe they are looking for him, too, and unsure about his whereabouts.

Amid anguish and uncertainty, and as he nears the end of his efforts, he continues to pray for help.

"Lord, guide me in everything," he wrote Thursday on Facebook. "I don't know what to do."

## **Ecuadorians choosing a new president amid increasing violence that may scare away voters**

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (AP) — Ecuador is holding a special election Sunday to pick a new president, with police and soldiers on guard against unprecedented violence, including the assassination of a candidate this month.

Front-runners include an ally of exiled former President Rafael Correa and a millionaire with a security background promising to be tough on crime.

Authorities have deployed more than 100,000 police and soldiers to protect the vote against more violence. Some Ecuadorians still said they would not even leave home for the election, even though skipping

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the trip to the polls could result in a fine.

"I don't think the election will change anything," said pharmacist Leidy Aguirre, 28, who has gradually stopped going out with friends over the past three years, out of fear of being robbed. "Not even politicians are safe."

Candidate Fernando Villavicencio was assassinated Aug. 9 as he left a campaign rally in Quito, the capital of the once calm South American country. The killing heightened people's fears of spending time outside home and becoming victims of robberies, kidnappings, extortions, homicides or any of the other crimes that have become commonplace.

Villavicencio's slaying was the third and most prominent in a string of killings of political leaders this year. Interior Minister Juan Zapata said this past week that the only restriction people will face when voting will be the inspection of backpacks. Street vendors will not be allowed near voting centers.

The election was called after President Guillermo Lasso, a conservative former banker, dissolved the National Assembly by decree in May to avoid being impeached over allegations that he failed to intervene to end a faulty contract between the state-owned oil transport company and a private tanker company. He decided not to run in the special election.

The ballots were printed before another candidate could substitute for Villavicencio. So they include the name of the late candidate, who was not among the top contenders.

The frontrunner in polling was Luisa González, a lawyer and former lawmaker whose campaign has highlighted her affiliation with the party of Correa, the former president who in 2020 was found guilty of corruption and sentenced in absentia to eight years in prison. He has been living in his wife's native Belgium since 2017.

Trailing González, the only female presidential candidate, were millionaire Jan Topic, whose promise of heavy-handed tactics against criminals earned him the nickname "Ecuadorian Rambo;" and Otto Sonnenholzner, who led part of the country's response to the pandemic while serving as the third vice president during the administration of President Lenín Moreno.

Also running was Yaku Pérez, an Indigenous man promising to defend the environment and water from mining and oil extraction.

To win outright, a candidate needs 50% of the votes, or at least 40% with a 10-point lead over the closest opponent. If needed, a runoff election would take place Oct. 15. The winner will govern only for the remainder of Lasso's unfinished term, meaning less than two years.

Voters were also electing a new National Assembly and deciding two ballot measures — one addressing whether to stop oil extraction in a portion of the Amazon jungle and the other asking whether to authorize the exploitation of minerals such as gold, silver and copper in forests of the Andean Choco around Quito.

Voting is mandatory in Ecuador for people ages 18 through 64. Those who don't comply face a fine of about \$45.

Six Colombian men have been arrested in connection with Villavicencio's killing.

Candidates have increased their security and Pérez appeared at a campaign rally Thursday wearing a bulletproof vest. That same day, Topic's supporters were bused to a campaign rally at the convention center in Guayaquil. They left purses and backpacks in the buses and entered through makeshift gates manned by private security guards.

In addition to a universal demand for safety, the new president will need to address an economy that is still struggling with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The country's Central Bank reduced its growth expectation for 2023 from 3.1% to 2.6%, an annual economic performance that analysts forecast will be even lower.

Data from the Ministry of Finance say state coffers received \$991 million from oil between January and July. That's less than half the \$2.3 billion received during the same period last year. Meanwhile, tax collections this year fell by \$137 million.

Sandra Jarrín lost her receptionist job four years ago along with about two dozen other colleagues due to staff cuts at the Quito company where they worked. She has not managed to find a new position since then.

"Now everything is virtual, that reduces workspaces," said Jarrín, 52. In addition to unemployment, she worries about insecurity. "We are not safe outside, or in our homes."

## Georgia made it easier for parents to challenge school library books. Almost no one has done so

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

CUMMING, Ga. (AP) — When Allison Strickland urged a suburban Atlanta school board in June to remove four books from school libraries, she was following a path cleared by Georgia's Republican lawmakers.

But after the bitterly debated Georgia law took effect Jan. 1, The Associated Press found few book challengers are using it.

One key element restraining complaints: The law only allows parents of current students to challenge books.

Although not new, book challenges have surged since 2020, part of a backlash to what kids read and discuss in public schools. Conservatives want to stop children from reading books with themes on sexuality, gender, race and religion that they find objectionable. PEN America, a group promoting freedom of expression, counted 4,000 instances of books banned nationwide from July 2021 to December 2022.

But while fights are ongoing in Forsyth County, where Strickland was protesting, at least 15 other large Georgia districts surveyed by AP said they have received no demands to remove books under the law.

Georgia conservatives last year aimed to ease book challenges. But lawmakers knew a parents-only restriction would also limit them.

"We are not going to turn this bill into a weapon for every taxpayer to harass the school system," said state Rep. James Burchett, a Republican from Waycross, during a 2022 hearing.

Still, some books are disappearing. Kasey Meehan, PEN America's Freedom to Read director, said some schools are removing books even before parents ask. That's happened in Forsyth County, where documents obtained by AP show a librarian "weeded" two books Strickland was protesting from another high school's library, just before they were challenged there.

Those who object to books say Georgia's law is being interpreted too narrowly and removing books should be easier. In most states anyone can challenge a book, not just parents, Meehan said. But some districts elsewhere also limit protests over books to parents.

The Georgia law may be preventing widespread challenges by a handful of conservative activists. Research has found complaints nationwide are largely driven by just a few people — who sometimes aren't parents.

Forsyth County, a fast-growing suburb with 54,000 students, has been a hotbed for conservative agitation over public education.

A parent of two West Forsyth High School students, Strickland complained in March about sexually explicit books, attaching excerpts from BookLooks. The conservative website highlights passages that its writers consider objectionable. Strickland was working with the Mama Bears, a group recruiting book challengers.

Strickland targeted four novels: "Dime," by E.R. Frank, in which a girl is lured into prostitution; "Tilt," by Ellen Hopkins, in which a 17-year-old girl gets pregnant and a 16-year-old boy falls in love with an HIV-positive boy; "Perfect," another Hopkins book about teens facing unrealistic expectations; and "Oryx and Crake," by Margaret Atwood, about a plague that kills most humans.

The principal examined the books, as legally required. In April, a Forsyth principal sided with a complaint, removing "The Nerdy and the Dirty" by B.T. Gottfred. But the West Forsyth principal concluded the books Strickland targeted should remain on shelves. She appealed to the school board.

"There is not one educational thing to be had from any of these books," Strickland told board members, saying the books "run the gamut of child prostitution, forced rape, pedophilia, bestiality, sodomy, drug and alcohol abuse, all of very young minor children, often with adult partners."

Others dissented, including T.J. McKinney, a departing teacher at a Forsyth middle school. She said students need to see their struggles reflected in books, and it's pointless to shield older students from



vulgarity or sex.

"The book is not introducing kids to sex. If you're in high school, they're having sex," McKinney said. "They are not learning this from books."

Forsyth Superintendent Jeff Bearden supported the principal's recommendation to keep the books, as he did twice earlier. But the law requires the board to decide.

In April, board members backed administrators, retaining "Endlessly Ever After," a choose-your-own-adventure fairy tale. But in May, the board overruled Bearden and required advance parental consent before students could read Gottfred's "The Handsome Girl & Her Beautiful Boy."

Faced with Strickland's challenges in June, board members also required parental approval for the four books. The compromise left many unhappy.

"Members of the board, I ask you, are you really going to compromise on child pedophilia?" asked Mama Bears leader Cindy Martin before the vote. "If the answer is yes, then what will you compromise on next?"

"I see it as a loss," McKinney said after the meeting. "The students still don't have a right to choose their own books."

Forsyth County was once a rural locale where white mobs terrorized the Black minority into fleeing in 1912. But suburban growth made it well-educated, affluent and diverse. Only 47% of Forsyth students were white and non-Hispanic last year.

But it's also heavily Republican, and crowds attacked the system's diversity, equity and inclusion plan in 2021. Agitation bled over into book protests. Officials pulled eight books from libraries in early 2022. They would later return all except "All Boys Aren't Blue," George M. Johnson's memoir of growing up queer.

Opponents organized against the bans. High school student Shivi Mehta said she wants libraries to "stay whole."

"I don't want to have some books locked away," Mehta said. "I don't want to have books that I can't read or can't have access to because a group of politicians said I couldn't."

Critics continued reading explicit book excerpts at board meetings, urging removal. After telling a Mama Bears member to stop, the board banned her from speaking at meetings. The Mama Bears sued, and in November, a federal judge ruled the policy unconstitutionally restricted free speech. The district paid \$107,000 in lawyer's fees.

Others complained to the U.S. Department of Education that the district was excluding stories about people not white or straight. In a May warning, the department agreed, saying Forsyth schools may have created a hostile environment violating federal laws against race and sex discrimination, "leading to increased fears and possibly harassment" among students.

The district settled the complaint, agreeing to explain the book removal process, offer "supportive measures" and survey students about the issue.

But while federal government concerns may restrain administrators, the fight isn't over.

"I think the momentum to ban or restrict books is not going away anytime soon," Mehta said.

## Canadian firefighters wage epic battle to save communities after mass evacuations

By DAVID SHARP, JIM MORRIS and MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Firefighters battling wildfires in western Canada received help from reinforcements and milder weather Saturday, after the nation's worst fire season on record destroyed structures, fouled the air with thick smoke and prompted evacuation orders for tens of thousands of residents.

Flames were being held at bay 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, and weary firefighters had a reprieve around Kelowna in British Columbia. But the firefighters were nowhere close to declaring victory, especially with drier and windier weather forecast for the coming days.

"We're by no means out of the woods yet," Mike Westwick, wildfire information officer for Yellowknife, told The Associated Press. "We still have a serious situation. It's not safe to return."

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The fires near Kelowna, about 90 miles (150 kilometers) north of the U.S. border, are among more than 380 blazes across the province, with 150 burning out of control, according to the Canadian Press. Another 236 fires are burning in the Northwest Territories.

At a Saturday evening news conference, Shane Thompson, the province's minister of environment and climate change, said the fires near Yellowknife had not grown very much in the past few days thanks to breaks in the weather.

"But I want to be clear, a little bit of rain doesn't mean it's safe to come back home," he said. Others warned that incoming hot weather would make the battle more challenging.

Yellowknife Mayor Rebecca Alty encouraged residents to stay away from the town to ensure their safety and help with firefighting efforts. She assured people that patrols were monitoring the streets and homes to protect against looting.

"This fire's taking a nap. Its going to wake up and we still got a serious situation to handle here," Westwick said.

Yellowknife has been a virtual ghost town since a majority of the city's 20,000 residents started to flee following an evacuation order issued Wednesday evening, officials said. Long caravans of cars choked the main highway for days and those who couldn't take to the road lined up for emergency flights out of the city. The last 39 hospital patients were flown out Friday night on a Canadian Forces plane, officials said.

On Saturday, officials said the escape route out of Yellowknife was safe, for the time being. About 2,600 people remained, including emergency teams, firefighters, utility workers and police officers, along with some residents who refused to leave.

Charlotte Morrith was among those who left Thursday, reaching that decision because of the unbearable smoke that she feared would be unhealthy for her 4-month-old son.

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Canada has seen a record number of wildfires this year that have caused choking smoke in parts of the U.S. All told, there have been more than 5,700 fires, which have burned more than 137,000 square kilometers (53,000 square miles) from one end of Canada to the other, according to the Canadian Inter-agency Forest Fire Centre.

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A shift in the wind carried smoke and haze from British Columbia into the Seattle area on Saturday, said Dustin Guy, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. The Puget Sound region was just recovering from record heat, and air quality could reach unhealthy levels Saturday night through Monday, Guy said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who met Friday with some of the Yellowknife evacuees who traveled south to Edmonton, Alberta, on Saturday shared on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter:

during the presidency of her then-husband Álvaro Colom, Torres drifted sharply rightward this time, abandoning the social democratic history of her National Unity of Hope party and launching unsubstantiated attacks at Arévalo that she herself suffered during earlier failed campaigns.

Torres picked the capital's main market as the local heart of her populist pitch, starting and ending her campaign in this hub of commerce. But some vendors there said they see a greater chance for change in Arévalo.

One of them is Enrique Velásquez, who sells thread, yarn and other supplies.

The 29-year-old is part of a youth boom in a country where the average age is 26, compared to 38 in the United States. He hopes an Arévalo administration would generate more confidence in the country's politics and make real changes rather than just promises.

As for Torres' attempts to paint Arévalo as a threat to Guatemalan families, Velásquez said that she is really only talking about defending one kind of family, the one with a mother, a father and children. But, he added, there are single mothers and single fathers, grandparents raising grandchildren, divorcees and widows from the country's violence. "They wouldn't take those people into account."

Gays, lesbians and transgender people aren't trying to influence anyone's children, he went on. "Times have changed."

Arévalo told supporters in the capital's central plaza Wednesday night that misinformation and fearmongering, "is the work of those who don't want Guatemala to change."

## Hope is hard to let go after Maui fire, as odds wane over reuniting with still-missing loved ones

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — The days of waiting have become harder and harder as the odds grow longer and longer, but Kevin Baclig remains undeterred in his search for his wife and her parents, missing since Aug. 8 when a wildfire engulfed and flattened the Hawaiian town of Lahaina.

He has gone looking from one shelter to another, hoping strangers might recognize the faces on the flyers he brings with him. Baclig, 30, has driven back and forth to Lahaina, desperately scouting for anything that might lead him to his wife, Angelica, and her parents, Joel and Adela Villegas. Six other relatives who lived next door also remain unaccounted for.

"I'm not going to give up until I see them," he said. "Of course I'm hoping to find them alive. ... What else can I do?"

Even as he tries to sound optimistic, his voice is subdued.

"I've been searching and searching — in Lahaina, everywhere," Baclig said, speaking in Ilocano, a dialect of the northern Philippines.

The blaze took scores of lives and destroyed hundreds of homes, including the house Baclig's family bought three years ago on Kopili Street, about a 15-minute walk to historic Front Street, once a bustling tourist center but now a bleak avenue of flattened buildings lined with charred vehicles.

The remains of 114 people have been found, most of them yet to be identified. Hawaii Gov. Josh Green has said the death toll will likely rise in the days to come as the painstaking search for remains continues in the heaps of rubble and ash in Lahaina, a seaside community of 12,000 and a tourist hotspot on Maui.

Officials acknowledge they don't have a firm number on the missing. Many initially listed as unaccounted for have since been located.

Crews have sifted through about 60% of the fire zone, FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell said Saturday.

"We are making progress, and we will continue to be with the people of Hawaii every step of the way," Criswell said. The agency approved nearly \$7 million to aid more than 2,000 households, including \$3 million in rental assistance.

More than 1,000 federal personnel are on Maui, nearly half of whom are assigned to help in the search for remains, the White House said.



"We've got your back."

Trudeau praised firefighters, police, military personnel, the Red Cross and others who responded to the fires and other natural disasters this summer.

"Terrible loss, increased extreme weather events. And all through it, we've seen Canadians step up," he told reporters in Edmonton.

## **Leader of Niger's junta says it will restore civilian rule within 3 years, but gives no details**

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — The leader of mutinous soldiers who ousted Niger's democratically elected president said Saturday night that they will return the country to civilian rule within three years.

Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani gave no details on the plan, saying on state television only that the principles for the transition would be decided within 30 days at a dialogue to be hosted by the junta.

"I am convinced that ... we will work together to find a way out of the crisis, in the interests of all," Tchiani said, commenting after his first meeting with a regional delegation seeking to resolve the West African nation's crisis.

The delegation from the ECOWAS bloc, headed by former Nigerian head of state Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, also met separately with toppled President Mohamed Bazoum. It joined reconciliation efforts by Leonardo Santos Simao, the U.N. special representative for West Africa and the Sahel, who arrived Friday.

ECOWAS on Aug. 10 ordered the deployment of a "standby force" to restore constitutional rule in Niger. On Friday, the ECOWAS commissioner for peace and security, Abdel-Fatau Musah, said 11 of its 15 member states had agreed to commit troops to military intervention, saying they were "ready to go."

The soldiers who overthrew Bazoum last month have quickly entrenched themselves in power, rebuffed most dialogue efforts and kept Bazoum, his wife and son under house arrest in the capital.

The 11 member states that agreed to intervene militarily don't include the bloc's three other countries under military rule following coups: Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso. The latter two have warned they would consider any intervention in Niger an act of war. On Friday, Niger's state television said that Mali and Burkina Faso had dispatched warplanes in a show of solidarity.

Friday's announcement was the latest in a series of so far empty threats by ECOWAS to forcefully restore democratic rule in Niger, conflict analysts say. Immediately after the coup, the bloc gave the junta seven days to release and restore Bazoum, a deadline that came and went with no action.

"The putschists won't be holding their breath this time over the renewed threat of military action," said Ulf Laessing, head of the Sahel program at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a think tank.

The junta leaders are cementing their rule and appointing loyal commanders to key units while ECOWAS has no experience with military action in hostile territory and would have no local support if it tried to intervene, he said.

"Niger is a very fragile country that can easily turn, in case of a military intervention, into a failed state like Sudan," said Laessing.

ECOWAS used force to restore order in 2017 in Gambia when longtime President Yahya Jammeh refused to step down after he lost the presidential election. That move involved diplomatic efforts led by the then-presidents of Mauritania and Guinea, while Jammeh appeared to be acting on his own after the Gambian army pledged allegiance to the winner of the election, Adama Barrow.

Also on Saturday, the new U.S. ambassador to Niger, Kathleen FitzGibbon, arrived in the capital, said Matthew Miller, spokesman for the State Department. The U.S. hasn't had an ambassador in the country for nearly two years.

FitzGibbon will focus on advocating for a diplomatic solution that preserves constitutional order in Niger and for the immediate release of Bazoum, his family, and all those unlawfully detained, said Miller. Her arrival does not reflect a change in the U.S. policy position, he said.

On the streets of the capital Saturday, many residents said they were preparing to fight back against an

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ECOWAS military intervention.

Thousands of people in the capital of Niamey lined up outside the main stadium to register as fighters and volunteers to help with other needs in case the junta requires support. Some parents brought their children to sign up.

Some people said they'd been waiting since 3 a.m., while groups of youths boisterously chanted in favor of the junta and against ECOWAS and the country's former colonial ruler France.

"I am here for the recruitment to become a good soldier. We are all here for that," said Ismail Hassan, a resident waiting in line to register. "If God wills, we will all go."

Events organizer Amsarou Bako claimed the junta was not involved in recruiting volunteers to defend the coup, although it is aware of the initiative. Hours after the drive started, the organizers said it would be postponed, but didn't explain why.

The humanitarian situation in the country is also on the agenda of the U.N.'s West Africa and Sahel special representative.

Before the coup, nearly 3 million people were facing severe food insecurity and hundreds of thousands were internally displaced, according to CARE, an international aid group. Economic and travel sanctions imposed by ECOWAS after the coup, coupled with the deteriorating security, will have dire consequences for the population, CARE said.

Prior to the coup, Western countries had seen Niger as one of the last democratic nations they could partner with to beat back a growing jihadi insurgency linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, and poured millions of dollars of military aid and assistance into shoring up Niger's forces.

Since the coup, former jihadis have told The Associated Press that militants have been taking advantage of the freedom of movement caused by suspended military operations by the French and the U.S. and a distracted Nigerien army that is focusing efforts on the capital.

Last week, at least 17 soldiers were killed and 20 wounded in an ambush by militants. It was the first major attack against Niger's army in six months. A day later, at least 50 civilians were killed in the Tillaberi region by extremists believed to be members of the Islamic State group, according to an internal security report for aid groups seen by the AP.

"While Niger's leaders are consumed by politics in the capital, the drumbeat of lethal jihadist attacks goes on in the countryside," said Corinne Dufka a political analyst who specializes in the Sahel region.

"The recent attacks should motivate all parties to work for as speedy and inclusive a transition as possible so they can get back to the crucial business of protecting civilians from the devastating consequences of war," she said.

Record-setting temperatures forecast in Dallas as scorching heat wave continues to bake the US

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The summer of 2023 may be drawing to a close — but the extreme heat is not: More record-shattering temperatures — this time across Texas — are expected Saturday and Sunday as the U.S. continues to bake.

Highs of 109 degrees Fahrenheit (42.8 degrees Celsius) forecast for Saturday and 110 F (43.3 C) on Sunday in Dallas would break the current record of 107 F (41.7 C) each day, both set in 2011, and would come after a high of 109 F (42.8 C) on Thursday broke a record of 107 F set in 1951, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Tom Bradshaw.

"There really is no relief in sight, there is some hint by the end of August, maybe Labor Day, high temperatures will begin to fall below 100," Bradshaw said. "It's possible to see 100-degree-plus temperatures through the first half of September, at least off and on."

The heat wave causing misery in Texas this weekend is just the latest to punish the U.S. this year.

Scientists have long warned that climate change, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, by deforestation and by certain agricultural practices, will lead to more and prolonged bouts of extreme weather including hotter temperatures.

The entire globe has simmered to record heat both in June and July. And if that's not enough, smoke

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from wildfires, floods and droughts have caused problems globally.

Just days ago, daily high temperatures in the Pacific Northwest broke records. At Portland International Airport, the daily high temperature Monday of 108 degrees Fahrenheit (42.2 Celsius) broke the previous daily record of 102 degrees (38.9 C), the National Weather Service said. It was also the first time in 130 years of recorded weather that Seattle had three days in a row with lows of 67 degrees (19.4 C) or warmer.

Last month, the Phoenix area broiled under a record-setting 31 days of daily high temperatures of 110 F (43.4 C) or above. The historic heat began blasting the region in June, stretching from Texas across New Mexico and Arizona and into California's desert. The previous record was 18 straight days, set in 1974. In July, the continental United States set a record for overnight warmth, providing little relief from daytime heat for people, animals, plants and the electric grid, meteorologists said.

Meanwhile, in Waco, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) south of Dallas, there has been no rainfall for a record-tying 49 straight days, since only a trace amount on July 1.

"There's no sign that's going to change anytime soon ... Waco is on track to be driest summer on record," Bradshaw said.

In Oklahoma City, the high is expected to reach 106 F (41.1 C) degrees, tying a record set in 1934 and in Topeka, Kansas, the high is forecast to reach 108 F (42.2 C), one degree shy of the record set in 1936.

An excessive heat warning is in place from south Texas, western Louisiana across eastern Oklahoma, eastern Kansas and all of Missouri. Excessive heat warnings were also issued for parts of Arkansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Nebraska, Illinois and Iowa.

In Minneapolis where the average daily high is 81.7 F (27.6 C) degrees, the high is to reach 95 F (35 C), before a cold front drops temperatures into the mid-80s on Sunday, according to the weather service.

A heat advisory was issued for Sunday for parts of southern Wisconsin and high ozone levels are to affect air quality in Indiana where temperatures are expected to reach the mid-90s by Wednesday, the weather service reported.

A high of 95 F (35 C) is forecast by midweek in Chicago, 12 degrees above normal.

More scorching temperatures baked most of Louisiana on Saturday. The Shreveport area Saturday saw temperatures as high as 110 F (43.3 C) while New Orleans hit the 101 F (38.3 C) mark.

Megan Williams, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Slidell, said residents through Sunday could expect heat index values — or what outside feels like — between 108 to 113 F (42.2 to 45 C) — and in some cases greater than 113 F.

"The most vulnerable people are at both ends of the age spectrum," Penn State University Prof. W. Larry Kenney told The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate.

"So infants, because they're really at the mercy of their parents to keep them cool and keep them well hydrated, are vulnerable to temperature extremes," Kenney said. "And then people over the age of 65 are vulnerable. A lot of elderly don't have access to places with air conditioning. And as we get older, our body is less able to tolerate those conditions of high heat and humidity."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports just 600 to 700 heat deaths annually in the United States, but experts say the mishmash of ways that more than 3,000 counties calculate heat deaths means we don't really know how many people die in the U.S. each year.

## **Suspected Palestinian shooting attack at West Bank car wash kills 2 Israelis**

By SAM MCNEIL and NASSER NASSER Associated Press

HAWARA, West Bank (AP) — Two Israelis were killed in a suspected Palestinian shooting attack on a car wash in a volatile stretch of the occupied West Bank on Saturday, the latest outburst of violence to rock the region.

The Israeli military said it was searching for suspects and setting up roadblocks near the town of Hawara, a flashpoint area in the northern West Bank, which has seen repeated attacks including one deadly shooting that triggered a rampage by Jewish West Bank settlers who torched Palestinian property.

Saturday's shooting attack came after Palestinian medics reported that a 19-year-old Palestinian died of



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wounds sustained in an Israeli military raid into the West Bank on Wednesday.

The latest attack is part of a relentless spiral of violence that has fueled the worst fighting between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank in nearly two decades. Since spring last year, Israel has launched near-nightly raids in Palestinian towns in response to deadly Palestinian attacks.

Nearly 180 Palestinians have been killed since the start of this year and some 29 people have been killed by Palestinian attacks against Israelis during that time, according to a tally by The Associated Press. Israel says most of the Palestinians killed were militants. But stone throwing youths protesting the incursions and those not involved in the confrontations have also been killed.

Israeli paramedics said that when they arrived at the Hawara car wash, two Israeli males, aged 60 and 29, were found unconscious with gunshot wounds. Israeli media reported the two were father and son and identified them as Shay Silas Nigreka and his Aviad Nir from the southern Israeli city of Ashdod.

Underscoring the severity of the attack, the country's military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, visited the scene.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent his condolences to the family and vowed that the military would track down the shooter.

"The security forces are working diligently to find the murderer and settle accounts, just as we have done with all the murderers so far," Netanyahu said.

Videos circulating online showed Israeli soldiers walking across a pool of blood at the car wash to help move two bodies on stretchers to awaiting ambulances.

Several Israelis have been killed in Hawara in the current round of fighting. The death of two brothers, residents of a nearby settlement, last February set off a rampage by settlers through the town. Crowds of settlers torched dozens of cars and homes in some of the worst such violence in decades.

Similar settler mob violence has taken place elsewhere in the West Bank since. Israeli rights groups say settler violence has worsened and that radical settlers have become emboldened because Israel's far-right government has settler leaders in key positions who have vowed to take an especially hard line against the Palestinians.

After the deadly February shooting in Hawara, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, a firebrand settler supporter, called for Israel to "erase" the town from the map. He later walked back the remark after fierce criticism.

Palestinian militant groups praised the shooting attack, with Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad congratulating the perpetrators. Hamas spokesman Abdel Latif Al-Qanou called the attack a "heroic shooting operation." But the groups stopped short of claiming responsibility for the attack.

Also on Saturday, 19-year-old Palestinian militant Mohammad Abu Asab died of a gunshot wound to the head suffered Wednesday during an Israeli military raid on the Balata refugee camp near the northern West Bank city of Nablus, the Palestinian Red Crescent said. At the time, the Israeli military had said that it raided Balata seeking to destroy an underground weapons factory when a gunfight erupted. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed offshoot of the secular Fatah party, claimed Abu Asab as a member.

Israel says the raids are meant to dismantle militant networks and thwart future attacks. Palestinians say the raids undermine their security forces, inspire more militancy and entrench Israeli control over lands they seek for a hoped-for future state.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Some 700,000 Israelis live in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, while Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. The Palestinians seek those territories for their hoped-for independent state.

## England women's team unites fans as once-ignored squad eyes nation's first World Cup title since '66

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — It's easy to understand why Gail Newsham can't stop grinning as she prepares for England's soccer team to play in the final of the Women's World Cup.

Newsham, 70, grew up at a time when women in England were banned from the sport — called football here — and helped lead a resurgence in the game once those restrictions were lifted. Now she's getting ready to watch Sunday's game against Spain on TV and hoping to see her team bring home the world championship.

"I'll be wearing my shirt, I'll be having a sausage roll and a glass of bubbles," Newsham said, already sporting her blue England jersey. "That's what I've done every match, so I'm going to do it again on Sunday and just, you know, cheer the girls on."

She won't be alone.

When the Lionesses take to the field, they will be backed by hordes of girls rooting for their heroes, mothers and grandmothers celebrating the progress that has been made since they were denied a chance to play the game. They and rabid male and female fans from all backgrounds hope this football-mad nation can finally win a World Cup after 57 years of frustration. England's only World Cup title came in 1966 when the men won.

If last year's European Women's Championship final is any indication, much of the nation will be watching. More than 23 million people, or about 42% of the population, tuned in to see England beat Germany that day. Prince William will be watching the final, too. He posted a video on social media apologizing for his inability to attend, and wishing the team well. His daughter, Princess Charlotte, 8, sat beside him with a ball on her lap and chimed in "Good Luck Lionesses!"

Once again this summer, the success of 23 young English women and their Dutch coach has been a bit of good news in a nation struggling under the weight of crippling inflation, a health service in crisis and seemingly endless political squabbling.

Newspaper front pages were filled with pictures of England players Lauren Hemp and Alessia Russo after they helped power the team to a 3-1 victory over Australia in Wednesday's semifinal.

"I feel like the Lionesses give us hope — to all of us, boys and girls, women and men," said Huda Jawad, a feminist and member of a fan group known as the Three Hijabis for their traditional Muslim headscarves. The team provides "something to look forward to and to be proud of and to show that actually football, like society, can be joyous, it can be equal, it can be hopeful, that we can have community and friendship and solidarity."

That hasn't always been the story of English football.

In a nation that sees itself as the birthplace of the world's most popular sport, people expect to win. But the men's national team has disappointed fans at every major tournament following 1966.

That frustration boiled over in 2021 when England's men lost to Italy in the final of the European Championship at Wembley Stadium in London. Vandalism and clashes with police after the game led to dozens of arrests, and three Black players were bombarded with racist abuse after missing their shots in the penalty shootout that ended the contest.

But in 2022, the women won their own Euros, wowing spectators with pinpoint passing and flashy goals that attracted record crowds, burgeoning TV ratings and adoring coverage.

After a second year of success characterized by smiles and hugs and more booming goals, the team is described as almost a model sisterhood. Jawad, whose group campaigns against discrimination in football, sees the team as an antidote to the stereotype of rowdy English football hooligans, though more needs to be done to increase diversity in a largely white squad.

"The Lionesses give us an opportunity to rewrite that story and say that actually the England team reflects a younger and more hopeful and more international kind of global outlook that wants to embrace diversity, equality and really wants to give people a sense of values ..." Jawad said. "It sets the cultural

tone for our country in a way that our politics doesn't, unfortunately."

But winning the Women's World Cup would take things to a new level. Some are already demanding a public holiday if the Lionesses win.

Little girls — and quite a few big girls — are proudly wearing their England shirts.

Pubs and specially erected fan zones around the country are expected to be overflowing on Sunday morning, despite the 11 a.m. local start time required by a nighttime game in Australia.

At St. Mary's Sunbury-on-Thames, west of London, Vicar Andrew Downes decided to shorten his Sunday service so the congregation could watch a livestream of the match in the parish hall.

Cold bubbly and hot bacon rolls will be served — not exactly bread and wine, but perhaps more appropriate for the fans.

"We will be praying like mad that the referee is a lover of the Lionesses," Father Andrew said. "I mean, Jesus saves. Let's just hope our goalie saves and we come home with the cup!"

That would provide an emphatic moment of redemption for women who lived through the long and sometimes controversial history of women's football in England.

Newsham helped tell that story when she wrote a book about Dick, Kerr Ladies Football Club, which flourished during and for a few years after World War I, when women filled the sporting gap left after top men's players went off to the trenches. Women's teams, many organized at munitions plants, attracted large crowds and raised money for charity. One match in 1920 attracted 53,000 spectators.

But that popularity triggered a backlash from the men who ran the English Football Association. In 1921, the FA banned women's teams from using its facilities, saying "the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged."

The ban remained in place for the next 50 years.

That didn't stop Newsham from playing street football with the boys in her hometown of Preston. And after the ban was lifted, she spent two decades playing for Preston Rangers on substandard pitches, often without changing rooms or even proper toilets.

The FA took over responsibility for the women's game in 1993, beginning the slow process of improving funding and facilities. Football writer Carrie Dunn, who has chronicled the success of the team most recently with the book "Reign of the Lionesses: How European Glory Changed Women's Football in England," remembers going to England press conferences that were held in cafes because too few reporters were interested in speaking to the manager.

Things accelerated after the 2012 London Olympics, when authorities began to recognize there was a global audience for the women's game.

"It's about time," Dunn said. "So, yes, people might be noticing a change now, but hopefully that change will be something that we see forever from now on."

Newsham is beyond excited about the prospect of winning the World Cup.

"It's meant to be," she said. "It's like a Greek tragedy, but with a happy ending. That's how I feel. It was a huge injustice in 1921, and it's taken its time to get back to where we are. So I'm really looking forward to Sunday."

## Russian missile attack kills 7 in northern Ukrainian city as Zelenskyy visits NATO candidate Sweden

By EFREM LUKATSKY, KARL RITTER and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

CHERNIHIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian missile attack in the center of a northern Ukrainian city on Saturday killed seven people and wounded over a hundred others, including children, Ukrainian officials said.

The attack in Chernihiv happened as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived in Sweden on his first foreign trip since attending a NATO summit in Lithuania last month.

Images of the aftermath showed badly damaged buildings including a theater with its roof blown away, mangled cars and survivors walking amid the debris with bloodstained clothes. The dead in the daytime strike included a 6-year-old girl, while 15 children were among the 129 wounded, Ukraine's Interior Minister



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Ihor Klymenko said.

The square in front of the theater building had been bustling with life, with people returning from church after celebrating the Apple Feast of the Savior religious holiday, baskets of consecrated apples in hand, Klymenko said. Following the strike, debris from the theater roof littered the square, along with shattered glass from the windows of nearby cars and restaurants.

The strike hit the theater during a gathering of drone manufacturers and aerial reconnaissance training schools, organizer Mariia Berlinska confirmed. Berlinska said that the event was officially agreed in advance with both the local authorities and the venue. The Chernihiv City Council denied that they had approved the event or issued any permits.

Zelenskyy said the attack showed Russia was a "terrorist state" and that the world must unite against it. "A Russian missile hit right in the center of the city, in our Chernihiv," he wrote on Telegram. "A square, the polytechnic university, a theater. An ordinary Saturday, which Russia turned into a day of pain and loss."

Chernihiv was surrounded by Russian forces at the start of the war but they withdrew after Ukrainian forces retook control of areas north of Kyiv in April last year.

Zelenskyy arrived in Sweden on an unannounced visit Saturday — his first to the Scandinavian country since the start of the full-scale invasion. The war prompted Sweden to abandon its longstanding policy of military nonalignment to support Ukraine with weapons and apply for NATO membership, though it is still waiting to join the alliance.

At a joint news conference, Zelenskyy and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson announced the two countries had agreed to cooperate on the production, training and servicing of Swedish CV90 infantry fighting vehicles. Zelenskyy said Ukraine would start manufacturing the vehicles as part of the deal.

He also encouraged Kristersson to "share" Sweden's Gripen fighter aircraft with Ukraine.

"We do not have superiority in the air, and we do not have modern aircraft. In reality, the Swedish Gripen is the pride of your country, and I believe that the prime minister could share this pride with Ukraine," Zelenskyy said.

Sweden has said it will allow Ukrainian pilots to test the Gripen planes but has so far ruled out giving any to Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said "appropriate actions" would be taken in coming weeks to help Ukraine obtain "appropriate aircraft."

"I will also have negotiations with several other states tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. I am confident that we, together with our partners, will do everything and achieve the appropriate result in the sky so that the Russians do not have an advantage there," he said.

Denmark and the Netherlands said Friday that the United States had given its approval for the countries to deliver U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine.

Sweden says it has provided 20 billion kronor (1.7 billion euros) in military support to Ukraine, including Archer artillery units, Leopard 2 tanks and CV90 armored vehicles.

Zelenskyy met with Kristersson and other Swedish officials at Harpsund, the prime minister's official summertime residence, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Stockholm. He and first lady Olena Zelenska later met Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia at a palace in the area.

Kristersson expressed his condolences to Zelenskyy for the attack in Chernihiv. He called the Russian missile strike an "act of brutality" which "only reinforces the need for us to stand with you in all your struggles."

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin visited top military officials in the city of Rostov-on-Don near the Ukrainian border.

The Kremlin said that Putin listened to reports from Valery Gerasimov, the commander in charge of Moscow's operations in Ukraine, and other top military brass at the headquarters of Russia's Southern Military District.

The exact timings of his visit were not confirmed, but state media published video footage that appeared to be filmed at night, showing Gerasimov greeting Putin and leading him into a building. The meeting itself was held behind closed doors.

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It was Putin's first visit to Rostov-on-Don since the Wagner mercenary group's attempted mutiny in June, when the group's fighters briefly took control of the city.

During June's short-lived revolt, Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin repeatedly denounced Gerasimov, who serves as chief of the general staff of the Russian armed forces, and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu for denying supplies to his fighters in Ukraine.

Prigozhin claimed that the uprising was not aimed at Putin but at removing Gerasimov and other top brass who he accused of mismanaging the war in Ukraine.

Kyiv this week has claimed counteroffensive gains on the southeastern front, regaining control of the village of Urozhaine in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region on Wednesday.

The leader of the Russian battalion fighting to maintain control of Urozhaine called for "freezing the front" on Thursday, saying his troops "cannot win" against Ukraine.

"Can we bring down Ukraine militarily? Now and in the near future, no," Alexander Khodakovsky said in a video posted to Telegram.

Overnight into Saturday, Ukraine's air force said it shot down 15 out of 17 Russian drones targeting northern, central and western regions.

The deputy governor of the western Khmelnytskyi region, Serhii Tiurin, said two people were wounded and dozens of buildings damaged by an attack.

In the northwestern Zhytomyr region, a Russian drone attack targeted an infrastructure facility and caused a fire, but no casualties were reported, said Gov. Vitalii Bunechko.

## **A raid on a Kansas newspaper likely broke the law, experts say. But which one?**

By JOHN HANNA and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — A central Kansas police chief was not only on legally shaky ground when he ordered the raid of a weekly newspaper, experts said, but it may have been a criminal violation of civil rights, a former federal prosecutor added, saying: "I'd probably have the FBI starting to look."

Some legal experts believe the Aug. 11 raid on the Marion County Record's offices and the home of its publisher violated a federal privacy law that protects journalists from having their newsrooms searched. Some believe it violated a Kansas law that makes it more difficult to force reporters and editors to disclose their sources or unpublished material.

Part of the debate centers around Marion Police Chief Gideon Cody's reasons for the raid. A warrant suggested that police were looking for evidence that the Record's staff broke state laws against identity theft and computer crimes while verifying information about a local restaurant owner. But the police also seized the computer tower and personal cellphone belonging to a reporter who had investigated Cody's background.

The raid brought international attention to the newspaper and the small town of 1,900 — foisted to the center of a debate over press freedoms. Recent events have exposed roiling divisions over local politics and the newspaper's aggressive coverage. But it also focused an intense spotlight on Cody in only his third month on the job.

The investigation into whether the newspaper broke state laws continues, now led by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. State Attorney General Kris Kobach has said he doesn't see the KBI's role as investigating the police's conduct, and that prompted some to question whether the federal government would get involved. Spokespersons for the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice declined to comment.

Stephen McAllister, a U.S. attorney for Kansas during former President Donald Trump's administration, said the raid opened Cody, the city and others to lawsuits for alleged civil right violations. And, he added, "We also have some exposure to federal criminal prosecution."

"I would be surprised if they are not looking at this, if they haven't already been asked by various interests to look at it, and I would think they would take it seriously," McAllister, a University of Kansas law professor who also served as the state's solicitor general, said of federal officials.





"Either they violated the shield law or they probably violated the federal law," Jackson said. "Either way, it's a mess."

## Local governments are spending billions of pandemic relief funds, but some report few specifics

By DAVID A. LIEB and KAVISH HARJAI Associated Press

Joplin officials say they have big plans for \$13.8 million of pandemic relief funds the tornado-ravaged southwestern Missouri city received under a two-year-old federal law. Yet the latest federal records show none of the money has been spent — or even budgeted.

In fact, about 6,300 cities and counties — nearly 1 in 4 nationwide — reported no expenditures as of this spring, according to an Associated Press analysis of data released by the U.S. Treasury Department. About 5,100 of those listed no projects — either planned or underway.

So what gives? Is the money not needed? Are cities just sitting on it?

Local and federal officials told the AP in interviews that the publicly available data is misleading — pock-marked by differing interpretations over exactly what must be reported, lagging in timeliness and failing to account for some preliminary planning. Critics contend it's an indication of a flawed pandemic response.

Federal officials estimate that governments have spending commitments for more than 80% of the funds, even if that's hard to tell from their reporting requirements.

Joplin, for example, plans to spend its pandemic aid on housing projects, high-speed internet, streets, a bicycle park, public safety equipment and more. The City Council approved the plan last month. But it won't show up on federal reports until October.

The city, which was devastated in 2011 by one of deadliest tornadoes in U.S. history, took a deliberate approach with its pandemic aid to develop "really transformational projects," said Leslie Haase, the city's finance director.

Over the past couple years, it leveraged the pandemic aid to win millions of additional dollars of state grants. With the combined funds, it plans to relaunch an expired post-tornado program that helps people make down-payments on homes. The city also plans to spend millions of dollars to repair or demolish old houses.

"I think by the time 2026 rolls around, Joplin will be a better community," Haase said.

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan — passed in 2021 by a Democratic-led Congress and signed by President Joe Biden — contained \$350 billion of flexible aid to states, territories, tribes, counties, cities and towns. The Biden administration says the money was intended to provide both immediate aid amid a health crisis and a longer-term boost for communities.

Governments must obligate that money for projects by the end of next year and spend it by the close of 2026.

As of their April reports, more 26,500 governments collectively had spent 43% of their funds and approved plans for spending 77% of the money, according to the AP's analysis.

The actual amount of spending commitments likely is well over 80% when accounting for lag times and different reporting approaches taken by local governments, said Gene Sperling, the White House American Rescue Plan coordinator.

"What you see across the country is that counties, cities, states overwhelmingly have committed these funds, are using them, are on track to meet their legal deadlines to have all the funds obligated by the end of 2024," Sperling said.

But Republicans and fiscal conservatives have questioned whether the spending is necessary, noting that most states rebounded quickly from an initial tax plunge during the pandemic to post large budget surpluses.

"Although the Left claimed their \$2 trillion bill was designed to fight COVID, they wasted hundreds of billions of Americans' hard-earned tax dollars on ridiculous things," Republican U.S. Rep. Jason Smith, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said in a statement to the AP.

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Among other things, the money helped finance an upscale hotel in Florida, a minor league baseball stadium in New York and prisons in Alabama — drawing outrage from some members of Congress.

Some governments waited to do anything with the money until the Treasury Department finalized its rules in April 2022. Details are lacking on how some governments are using their funds because the Treasury relaxed reporting requirements for any money categorized by state or local officials as a replacement for lost revenues.

According to the AP's analysis, more than 6,000 local governments categorized their entire federal allotment as "revenue replacement" — often taking advantage of a Treasury rule that allows up to \$10 million of assumed revenue loss without having to prove it.

Though they can provide more details if they choose, governments categorizing all their federal aid as replacement revenue only have to report it as one project, the Treasury told the AP.

But some didn't even do that.

The Denver suburb of Lakewood, Colorado, claimed its entire \$21.6 million allotment as a revenue replacement, since it had dipped into reserves to pay police during the pandemic. It reported no projects.

Yet the federal aid helped the city to construct sidewalks, replace computer software, upgrade the police radio system and make fire and safety improvements to a civic center, among other things, said Lakewood Chief Financial Officer Holly Bjorklund.

Those were "essential things that really needed to be done and would cost more if we waited longer to address them," she said.

Maryland's capital city of Annapolis also described no projects in its April report. But Annapolis already has used \$1.2 million of its \$7.6 million allotment as a revenue replacement for its depleted public transit funds, said city spokesperson Michelle Stephenson. It expects to tap more of the federal aid for city operations in the 2024 budget.

The Treasury's guidance about how to report revenue replacement funds used for government services wasn't very clear, said Katie Buckley, federal funding assistance program director for the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. But Buckley said she advised local officials to report it all as one project for government services, and then list what that included.

Counting the federal money as replacement funding for government services shouldn't relieve local officials of describing what they did with it — even if it just went toward salaries or office supplies, said Sean Moulton, senior policy analyst at the nonprofit Project on Government Oversight.

"This is taxpayer money, and a lot of it," said Moulton, adding: "There should be accountability that follows it."

There are no particular repercussions for reporting things incorrectly. There also are no immediate penalties for not reporting at all — though Treasury's guidance says "a record of late reporting" could lead to the "development of a corrective action plan, or other consequences."

Ascension Parish, Louisiana, which received \$24.6 million, reported no expenses or projects as of April — though the Parish Council had approved a project list last year.

A financial tracking document provided by the parish to the AP shows a purchase order was initiated last October for a \$1 million improvement project at Youth Legacy Duplessis Park. The materials were delivered for the project in mid-March, before the Treasury's reporting deadline. But most of the parish's other projects weren't underway yet by the April report.

"We've haven't spent a lot of the money, but we've got a lot contracts, a lot of design work," said Patrick Goldsmith, the parish's chief financial officer.

He said the projects should be included when the next quarterly reports are released.

While many governments have made "steady progress" using pandemic relief funds, some waited until closer to the July start of their fiscal years to approve spending plans, said Teryn Zmuda, chief economist and research officer at the National Association of Counties.

"We don't want to rush these funds," Zmuda said. "While the intent of the dollars was to respond to the pandemic, it was also to very intentionally build your community based on its specific needs."

## Kids Again: MLB makes strides in attracting younger fans, ticket buyers in growing the game

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Bryce Harper wants to get to Cooperstown.

Sure, what baseball player, especially a two-time NL MVP such as Harper, doesn't dream of induction into the Hall of Fame. But Harper's hopes extend well beyond a call to the Hall -- the Philadelphia Phillies slugger would love for Major League Baseball to stick one of its yearly attraction games -- akin to recent "Field of Dreams" and London trips -- in Cooperstown, New York, as part of Hall of Fame weekend.

"I think it's pretty cool being able to play in different areas and different countries," Harper said. "The next one we were all talking about would be a Hall of Fame Game. ... I grew up playing in Cooperstown, at Cooperstown Dreams Park. That was the travel ball place to go, kind of like Williamsport. It's a little bit of a different level than Williamsport, but it's pretty cool."

Harper and the Phillies hit Williamsport, Pennsylvania, on Sunday to play the Washington Nationals in the annual Major League Baseball Little League Classic at 2,366-seat Historic Bowman Field. The field is just a 6-mile trip from the complex where the Little League World Series is underway with kids full of big league dreams, many of whom will attend the game ready to mingle with today's stars and — perhaps like Harper did — find their way from one of youth baseball's biggest summer stages to MLB.

The Classic and games like it are part of MLB's outreach efforts to draw more fans, preferably ones closer in age to 21-year-old stars such as Jordan Walker and Elly De La Cruz.

MLB says the efforts are working: Ticket-buyers are younger, more teens are watching the game (yes, on old-fashioned TV), social media accounts such as Jomboy Media generate big-traffic numbers with kids looking for snappy highlight breakdowns, and an education on the game's greats comes on a deep dive from a few hours playing MLB: The Show.

Baseball has boosted efforts to reverse declines in participation among underprivileged communities and among young Black players, and has vowed to diversify the game from the grassroots level to the highest levels of team and league decision makers.

Hall of Famer Ken Griffey Jr. has served MLB as a youth ambassador and hosted Division I baseball players from HBCUs around this season's All-Star game. Other programs across the country aimed to increase and diversify the sport's reach such as the MLB Youth Academy, DREAM Series and the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program.

Tony Reagins, a former scout and GM, has been tasked with bumping those numbers in his role as MLB's chief baseball development officer. He's pledged to build participation at all levels and has found recent signs of growth encouraging.

"Once they have that connection and positive experience with the sport, the chances of them becoming a fan are greatly enhanced," he said.

Baseball's biggest hits these days are the numbers found on TikTok and YouTube that have ballooned the sport to a wider audience. With kids these days holding the attention span of a home run trot, Major League Baseball introduced a slate of rules designed to speed the pace of play, notably with the introduction of the pitch clock. The average time of game this season is 2 hours, 38 minutes, trimmed from 3:03 last season and 3:10 in 2021.

MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred said the median age of ticket-buyers this season has dipped to 43 years old, which is down from 46 last year and 49 years old in 2021.

"We've talked a lot about younger audiences and how significant they are for the future of the game," Manfred said.

MLB says national and local TV viewership for teens ages 12-17 is up 11% from last year and noted that 86% of people ages 18-24 and 25-34 said they are more likely to watch MLB games due to the rules changes.

Young fans or old ones, ballparks are filling up this season with the average attendance of 29,277 up 9% vs. 2022 and total attendance is already 4.38 million higher than 2022.



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Reagins said the shift in how young people watch baseball — more in short bursts — has forced the league to adjust at all levels in how it attracts new fans.

“The important part is that they are consuming the game,” he said.

Perhaps, though, the addiction to the highlight-reel has lessened the bond between young fans and the need to root, root, root for the home team.

Take the kids attending the Little League World Series.

Jacob MacKinnon, 11, from Springfield, Ohio, attended the Little League World Series and said he didn't have a favorite baseball team.

“I just watch highlight videos on social media,” he said.

Twelve-year-old Grayson Leinart from Waco, Michigan, was also in South Williamsport as a fan. The Milwaukee Brewers are his favorite MLB team, but again noted, 2½-hour games or not, “I watch highlights because it's more interesting.”

They're not alone. Bowman Field will be packed with Little Leaguers watching the Phillies and Nationals but perhaps just as likely catching a sparkling defensive play from an earlier game on their phones.

Last year, the Orioles and Red Sox were greeted at the airport by smiling Little Leaguers and they signed autographs -- yes, even the 12-year-olds signed jerseys and balls for the big leaguers -- and watched some of the early Little League World Series games.

Nationals first baseman Dominic Smith wishes he could take more than a day trip to the Little League World Series. The 28-year-old Smith grew up in Los Angeles and is the co-founder of a nonprofit, the BaseballGenerations Foundation, that helps provide resources for underprivileged youth involved in the sport. He played in the Little League Classic previously with the Mets and said it's important for kids to discover that major leaguers are just like them.

“Those couple hours that we get to spend with them, I think they'll have a better understanding on how we're regular human beings, how we have probably the same common interests,” Smith said. “It makes them more hungry, makes them want to work harder so they can get up here and be in our shoes.”

Making it to Williamsport as a kid was never the top priority for Washington's 58-year-old, Brooklyn-born manager, Dave Martinez.

“I just thought about playing as much as I could possibly play, whether it was Little League, whether it was a pickup game. Back when I was growing up in New York we played a lot of stickball,” Martinez said. He was excited about the trip and connecting with the next wave of baseball fans.

“I want to pick their brains, too, see what drives kids these days, why they love the game,” Martinez said. He might want to pass his findings on to the braintrust at MLB.

## Would a Texas law take away workers' water breaks? A closer look at House Bill 2127

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

As unrelenting heat set in across Texas this summer, opponents of a sweeping new law targeting local regulations took to the airwaves and internet with an alarming message: outdoor workers would be banned from taking water breaks.

Workers would die, experts and advocates said, with high temperatures topping 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) and staying there for much of the past two months.

But a closer look at the law, and the local ordinances requiring water breaks, reveals a more complicated picture.

At least one political analyst said the dispute is less about worker protection and more about politics, as conservative Republicans and progressive Democrats battle for control of local governments.

House Bill 2127, passed by the Republican-dominated Legislature in April and set to take effect Sept. 1, blocks local governments from enforcing legislation clashing with existing state law. Cities and counties would be required to demonstrate that their policies are in compliance.

Proponents say it will help Texas to live up to its pro-business reputation by eliminating red tape created

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by a slew of ordinances that may differ city-by-city.

"This legislation will streamline regulations so Texas job creators can have certainty," said Republican state Sen. Brandon Creighton, a co-sponsor of the bill.

Democrats, in contrast, have nicknamed the bill the "Death Star" for the breadth of its potential impact on a wide array of ordinances regulating natural resources, agriculture and labor. Houston and San Antonio are suing to block it.

The law's opponents have particularly homed in on the fact it does not expressly mandate water breaks for outside workers. That has struck a chord during a summer when the state and other areas of the U.S. are baking under historically high temperatures.

"The water break narrative is ... especially compelling as Texas experiences a heat wave," said Mark Jones, of Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.

But, he added, there is no evidence that most employers don't already provide water breaks, and it's not clear cities with such regulations even enforce them.

"The narrative that somehow the Republican Legislature is going to prohibit workers from being able to take water breaks is not accurate," he said.

David Chincanchan begs to differ. The policy director of the Workers Defense Project, a nonprofit state-wide organization advocating for migrant workers' rights, said Austin and Dallas have "clear enforcement mechanisms" and penalties for failing to meet water break requirements.

Republican legislators intended specifically to eliminate water breaks, adding language to that effect to later versions of their bill, he said.

"It can't be called an unintentional consequence when they knew exactly what would happen and refused every opportunity to prevent it from happening," Chincanchan said.

Jones said the bill is more about politics than policies. He noted the loudest opposition has come from cities where progressive Democrats are in control and said the bill is designed to take autonomy from those cities.

"This is part of the growing tension between the blue cities and counties in the major urban areas and the Republican-controlled state government," he said.

Leaders of the Texas AFL-CIO, a labor federation of 240,000 union members in the state, acknowledge most employers already provide more water breaks than what is required by ordinances in Dallas and Austin, according to spokesperson Ed Sills. He has not seen local enforcement of water breaks.

But minimal standards are still important on "an issue of life or death," Sills said.

"If a law is on the books, it still influences behavior," he said, adding that some of the other targeted ordinances deal with tenant rights, predatory lending and excessive noise.

Workers Defense Project spokesperson Christine Bolaños agrees. She said employers in Texas cities with water break requirements often provide more breaks than those in cities without them.

Bolaños, who has spoken with workers about their heat illnesses, added that Spanish-speaking and migrant construction workers can be especially vulnerable because language barriers may prevent them from fighting for their rights or joining a union that could protect them. As a result, she said, their experiences with heat illness are more likely to go undocumented.

The absence of a specific regulation mandating rehydration work pauses wouldn't mean all supervisors give fewer breaks, Bolaños said.

"But it will be on a case-by-case basis and that floor of protection will no longer be in place," Bolaños said. "Construction workers are now going to be left at the mercy of the level of morality of their employers."

Statistics show heat can kill. There have been at least 436 work-related deaths from environmental heat exposure in the U.S. from 2011-2021, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

With legal challenges pending, the full effect of the bill is untested for now.

That could take years, said Ryan Marquez, a clinical associate professor at the University of House Law Center.

"This bill is broad," Marquez said. "It's hard to say exactly how far it will go."

## Thousands more Mauritians are making their way to the US, thanks to a route spread on social media

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ, PATRICK ORSAGOS and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Aissata Sall was scrolling through WhatsApp in May when she first learned about the new route to the United States. For Ibrahima Sow, the discovery came on TikTok a few weeks later.

By the time their paths crossed at the tidy one-story brick house in Cincinnati, they had encountered hundreds of other Mauritians, nearly all of them following a new path surging in popularity among younger migrants from the West African nation, thanks largely to social media.

“Four months ago, it just went crazy,” said Oumar Ball, who arrived in Cincinnati from Mauritania in 1997 and recently opened his home to Sow, Sall and more than a dozen other new migrants. “My phone hasn’t stopped ringing.”

The spike in migration was made possible by the discovery this year of a new route through Nicaragua, where relaxed entry requirements allow Mauritians and a handful of other foreign nationals to purchase a low-cost visa without proof of onward travel.

As word of the entry point spreads, travel agencies and paid influencers have taken to TikTok to promote the trip, selling packages of flights that leave from Mauritania, then connect through Turkey, Colombia and El Salvador, and wind up in Managua, Nicaragua. From there, the migrants, along with asylum seekers from other nations, are whisked north by bus with the help of smugglers.

“The American dream is still available,” promises a video on TikTok, one of dozens of similar posts from French-speaking “guides” that help Mauritians make the trip. “Don’t put off tomorrow what you can do today.”

“We wish you success. Nicaragua loves you very much,” a man working for a travel agency says in Spanish in another video.

The influx of Mauritians has surprised officials in the U.S. It came without a triggering event — such as a natural disaster, coup or sudden economic collapse — suggesting the growing power of social media to reshape migration patterns: From March to June, more than 8,500 Mauritians arrived in the country by crossing the border illegally from Mexico, up from just 1,000 in the four months prior, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data.

The new arrivals likely now outnumber the estimated 8,000 foreign-born Mauritians previously living in the U.S., about half of whom are in Ohio. Many arrived in the 1990s as refugees after the Arab-led military government began expelling Black citizens.

Some who left say they’re again fleeing state violence directed against Black Mauritians. Racial tensions have increased since the May death of a young Black man, Oumar Diop, in police custody, with the government moving aggressively to crush protests and disconnect the country’s mobile internet.

The nation was one of the last to criminalize slavery, and the practice is widely believed to persist in parts of the country. Several Mauritians who spoke to The Associated Press said police targeted them because of anti-slavery activism.

“Life is very difficult, especially for the Black Mauritanian population,” said Sow, 38, who described himself as an activist in the country. “The authorities became threatening and repressive.”

It became difficult to fight, he said, and his life was threatened. So he fled via the new route to Cincinnati, where he’d heard a thriving Mauritanian community was helping new arrivals get on their feet.

Previously, applying for asylum in the U.S. meant flying to Brazil, then risking a dangerous trek through the dense jungle of the Darien Gap. The new route through Nicaragua bypasses that link.

The trip can cost \$8,000 to \$10,000, a hefty sum that some families manage by selling land or livestock. With economic growth over the past decade, Mauritania has moved into the lower ranks of middle-income countries, according to the U.N. refugee agency, but the poverty rate remains high, with 28.2% living below the poverty line.

The Nicaragua route also allows migrants to avoid the boat voyages to Europe that have killed tens of thousands in the past decade. Mauritanian and Spanish authorities have cracked down on boats crossing



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the Atlantic for Spain's Canary Islands, and people are increasingly being intercepted after trekking to North Africa to try to cross the Mediterranean. Flying to Nicaragua is legal, and the rest of the trip is on land — attractive options for Mauritians and others who want to leave Africa.

The new passage presents a rare opportunity to a generation yearning for a better life, said Bakary Tandia, a Mauritanian activist living in New York: "No matter what is your burning desire to come, if there is no route, you will not even think about it. The reality is: People are seeing a window of opportunity, that's why they are rushing."

Still, some who've followed the Nicaragua route say they were misled about potential dangers and the future awaiting them in the U.S. This month, a bus carrying migrants tumbled down a steep hillside in Mexico, killing 18 people, including one Mauritanian. Two other Mauritians were hospitalized.

Sall, a 23-year-old nurse, said she was robbed of her remaining money on a bus in Mexico by men dressed as police officers. After crossing the border, she was hospitalized with dehydration.

"On WhatsApp they say, 'Oh, it's not very difficult.' But it's not true," she said. "We confront so much pain along the way."

Ibrahim Dia, a 38-year-old who owns a cleaning company in the Mauritanian city of Nouadhibou, said his brother left the country in June, following the Nicaragua trip he'd seen countless others take in recent months. But he was detained at the border and remains jailed at a Texas detention site, Dia said.

Many Mauritians enter the U.S. in Yuma, Arizona. Some are dropped off on a Mexican highway by smugglers for a roughly two-hour walk through a knee-deep river and flat desert shrub and rocks. They surrender to Border Patrol agents in Yuma waiting under stadium lights where a wall built during Donald Trump's presidency abruptly ends.

After a period of detention and screening that could last hours or days, they may enter the country to await a court date, a process that can take years. Others are kept in detention for weeks, or placed on a small number of flights deporting them back to Mauritania.

Human rights groups have called on the Biden administration to grant Temporary Protected Status to Mauritania, pointing to reports of abuse against Black residents who are deported after fleeing.

Those who can enter are often put in touch with a close-knit group of American and Mauritanian-born advocates who connect them to housing and help pay for flights across the U.S. Some head to Philadelphia, Denver, Dallas or New York, where an overwhelmed shelter system has left migrants — many from Mauritania and elsewhere in Africa — sleeping on the sidewalk.

Ohio remains the most common destination. Several thousands have found their way to Cincinnati, settling in with the small but vibrant existing community. A group of volunteers, led by longtime resident Ball, help with paperwork and adjustments to the country. Some days, Ball makes multiple trips to the airport to pick up people coming from the border, bringing them to his home or a block of apartments rented out by the community.

On a recent Friday evening, more than a dozen Mauritians carpoled to a nearby mosque to pray. After the service, they piled into the living room of another friend's house for dinner: steaming bowls of lamb and couscous served on the floor, with cans of Coca-Cola. A women's World Cup game played as the group discussed their pasts and futures.

Sall, the one-time nurse, said she wants to go back to school. She's taken on an unofficial role as cook in the house she shares with others new to Ohio. She hopes to stay in Cincinnati with the community that's embraced her and many others.

"The Mauritanian people gave me a big welcome," she said. "And they gave me hope."

## Trump looms large over Iowa State Fair, but many GOP voters still mulling their caucus choices

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The loop Donald Trump's private jet made above the Iowa State Fair before his visit last weekend was more than just a gesture to the hundreds of supporters — and a few rival candidates — on the ground. It was a reminder that the four-time indicted former president casts a Boeing 757-sized shadow over the race for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

That's where agreement about Trump seems to end. With less than five months before Iowans cast the first votes in the GOP contest, conversations with more than 40 Republicans at the time-honored presidential campaign ritual suggest the party is far from unified on much of anything else.

Most voters say that until the winter chill sets in, they're keeping an open mind, honoring the state's tradition of vetting all candidates. Still, many GOP voters say they can't help but weigh their intense feelings about Trump as they consider their choices.

In line to view the life-sized cow sculpted from butter, around booths selling deep-fried Twinkies and Oreos and throughout this annual tribute to Midwestern agriculture, some Republicans who plan to attend the Jan. 15 caucuses said they will support Trump even if he's a convicted felon. Others are just as adamant that the time has come to pivot from the figure who reshaped their party.

Many are conflicted, yearning to turn the page but not disowning the former president. They like what he did in office and support his policy priorities — and yet they worry that what they view largely as political persecution could hobble him both as the Republican nominee and as president.

"President Trump — he's just got a lot of distractions, and you know his bedside manner's not good," said Des Moines Republican Frank Miller, who was excited about the candidates he heard from at a barbecue stop near the animal barns.

"There's a lot of people in this country that think that's more important than the policy," added Miller, who works for an insurance company and is undecided on whom he'll support. "I'm not one of those."

Loyalty to Trump runs deep in Iowa, a state he comfortably carried twice and where he is the heavy favorite in early polls for the Republican caucuses. Still, it's apparent from talking to voters that already-complicated assessments of Trump could shift during months of televised debates, relentless advertising and more intense campaigning — never mind court proceedings in the series of criminal indictments he faces from New York to Florida.

And GOP voters in this predominantly white, largely rural state are paying attention.

The only circumstances that would keep Connie Lamberti from again supporting Trump in the caucuses are his withdrawal or a physical ailment that makes him unable to run.

Not on her list: a conviction in any of four criminal indictments Trump faces. Lamberti thinks they're all politically motivated.

"I believe I would still caucus for him," said the 70-year-old retired communications administrator from Ankeny while attending a candidate interview series led by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. "I believe it's intentional on his opponents' part."

Trump's brief Aug. 12 stop at the fair only stoked his celebrity status. He waved a porkchop as he waded through a crush of fans and media. He introduced Florida U.S. House members who had endorsed him, a shot at Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a 2024 rival who was touring the fair with his family.

It was a sign of Trump's staying power with Republicans, and the headwinds competing candidates face, that even Iowans open to Trump alternatives are waiting to see them prove themselves.

But a recent New York Times/Siena College poll in Iowa shows candidates other than Trump have room to grow. Close to half of potential Republican caucus voters backing Trump say they're open to other candidates, while only about 3 in 10 of those who don't choose Trump say they would consider supporting him.

Plenty of fair-goers were happy to identify qualities they like in the others.

Voters say DeSantis has a strong record on GOP priorities; former Vice President Mike Pence is a solid conservative and a decent man. South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott displays integrity with an upbeat style.

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Businessman Vivek Ramaswamy, whose rap to Eminem floored fairgoers, has a youthful appeal. And former U.N. Ambassador and South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has a common touch and global experience.

Trump will not be able to count on Republican Abbey Sindt, a 37-year-old mental health nurse from small-town Story City. She voted for Trump previously but was at the fair in part to size up Pence.

"The Republican Party has changed," she said, seeking shade near a livestock barn. "And there are reasons. It's because Trump has become a distraction, and not a healthy distraction."

Yet, even some voters who are weighing alternatives say they might end up backing Trump on caucus night.

Keith Hoksbergen grabbed Scott's campaign signs from the Iowa Republican Party's booth, but the 65-year-old factory worker from Pella says Trump and others remain options.

Hoksbergen sees Trump as imperfect but tested. He attributes concerns about Trump's viability to what he views as news media bias. "It's only the negative stuff that everybody talks about," he said. "I look past a lot of that."

Wesley Rose, a corn and soybean farmer in the Mississippi River valley, views the former president as a friend to agriculture. In his mind, the need to oust President Joe Biden eclipses other concerns.

"There are some things that he says that ain't right, but I just don't like what's going on with Biden right now," said Rose, 53, of Clinton, adding "time will tell" who he'll support.

It wouldn't be the first time animosity toward Biden and the Democrats led Republican voters to swallow concerns about their own candidates. In the 2022 midterm elections, most GOP voters who didn't consider themselves fans of Trump-backed Republican candidates, were motivated by opposition to the Democrats.

Just as some Trump skeptics remain open to him, longtime die-hards like Bob Heckert said the weight of what he called unfair prosecutions — not Trump's alleged acts — had rendered him too politically damaged.

"I don't think he can get elected," Heckert, a 72-year-old retired Ottumwa maintenance engineer who had supported Trump previously, said after viewing the butter cow. "There's so much controversy against him, prejudice I guess you might want to say, that I don't think if he did happen to get elected that he could accomplish anything."

Trump's actions after his 2020 defeat were too much for some voters.

"Jan. 6 was absolutely horrible," said Bob Stephany, a 61-year-old Council Bluffs salesman and former Trump supporter, as his family was buying ice cream. The 2021 insurrection by a mob of Trump supporters "stained everything that was positive, and there were lots of positive things in his presidency," Stephany said.

Those interviewed praised Trump's record in office, many noting his success seating conservative Supreme Court justices who helped overturn the landmark 1973 abortion case, *Roe v. Wade*, last year.

Others cited his move of the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, a long-sought goal of evangelical Christians. His effort to build a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico, even if he didn't complete it, is viewed by many as evidence of Trump's commitment to stemming illegal immigration.

But Trump's divisiveness was also frequently cited, including by some who praised his record. The need for healing is reason enough for some to move on.

"I don't think he represents the values personally that people can get behind," said Barbara Collins, a 67-year-old financial adviser from Bellevue. "And I think his ship has passed."

As Samona Yentes' friends awaited her at the Dairy Barn, Yentes wavered.

Yes, she conceded, it's possible that Trump's time has come and gone. But the former president of Iowa's leading anti-abortion group quickly pivoted, expressing astonishment that Trump is still "going out and fighting the battle."

"That's the part of me that goes, he's kind of unstoppable," she said.

So where does that leave her heading into the fall campaign?

"I haven't landed," she said. "And I've got five months to think about it."



## How a family's choice to donate a body for pig kidney research could help change transplants

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and SHELBY LUM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Mary Miller-Duffy was dazed and grieving. Her brother suddenly collapsed and days later was brain-dead. Now she faced a tough question: Would she donate his body for research?

That's how the body of Maurice "Mo" Miller started its journey to a sunny corner of NYU Langone Health's intensive care unit — and became part of the quest to one day ease the nation's transplant shortage with organs from animals.

"He always wanted to help people," said Miller-Duffy, who struggled with the choice but is proud of her brother's last act. "This tragic death, this fast short death — something good has come out of it."

Surgeons replaced Miller's kidneys with one from a genetically modified pig on July 14. Then doctors and nurses cared for the deceased man like they would a living patient while anxiously ticking off the days.

Remarkably, over a month later the new organ is performing all the bodily functions of a healthy kidney — the longest a pig kidney has ever worked in a person. Now the countdown is on to see if the kidney can last into September, a second month.

The Associated Press got an inside look at the challenges of experiments with the dead that may help bring animal-to-human transplants closer to reality.

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Getting an organ transplant today is a long shot. More than 100,000 people are on the national waiting list, most who need a kidney. Thousands die waiting. Thousands more who could benefit aren't even added to the list.

"I had seven cardiac arrests before I even was sick enough" to qualify for a new heart, said Dr. Robert Montgomery, chief of NYU Langone's transplant institute. He's a kidney transplant surgeon — and was lucky enough to get his own heart transplant in 2018.

Filling the gap, he's convinced, will require using animal organs.

After decades of failed attempts, now pigs genetically modified so their organs are more humanlike are renewing interest in so-called xenotransplantation. Last year, University of Maryland surgeons tried to save a dying man with a pig heart — and he survived for two months.

Montgomery is getting more practice in the dead before taking a chance with a living patient. A handful of prior experiments at NYU and the University of Alabama at Birmingham have kept pig kidneys and hearts working in donated bodies for a few days to a week, avoiding the immediate rejection that doomed many earlier attempts.

But the most common kind of organ rejection develops over a month. That pig heart in Maryland worked great for nearly 50 days until abruptly faltering. Watching how pig kidneys reach those timepoints in donated bodies could offer vital lessons — but how long could Montgomery expect a family to turn over their loved one?

"I'm in awe of someone who can make a decision like that at, you know, one of the worst moments in their lives and really think about ... humanity," he said.

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In Newburgh, New York, an ambulance had raced Miller to the hospital after he collapsed, a mass in his brain. He never woke up from the biopsy, brain-dead at just 57. Next steps were up to his sister, his closest relative.

Miller-Duffy asked about donating his organs but he didn't qualify. That biopsy had found cancer.

Only then did the organ agency broach whole-body donation. Miller-Duffy wasn't familiar with that, but the goal of improving kidney transplants, "that kind of struck a chord." Another brother had died of kidney disease as a toddler. Other relatives have kidney-damaging illnesses or even died on dialysis.

Flipping through family photos, Miller-Duffy recalled how her brother would adopt animals and once took care of a terminally ill friend. Still, she had questions.

In a video call, Montgomery explained the pig transplant to Miller-Duffy and her wife, Sue Duffy — and

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why it could make a difference. Montgomery's compassion won them over.

"His body is not being hurt, you know," Duffy said. "It's just an incubation for the study to be done."

The experiment served as a rehearsal for one day operating in a living patient. Montgomery finished removing Miller's own kidneys as a helicopter headed for the hospital's riverside landing pad. Drs. Jeffrey Stern and Adam Griesemer, fellow NYU surgeons, raced in kidneys they'd removed from a pig bred by Blacksburg, Virginia-based Revivacor.

Sewing a pig kidney into a donated body isn't much different than a regular transplant, Stern said. Post-surgery immune-suppressing drugs are standard, too.

One twist: Tacked onto the pig's kidney was its thymus, a gland that trains immune cells — and thus might help protect the organ.

Lots of extra steps come before and after surgery.

First, what pig to use: Some have up to 10 genetic changes but Montgomery is betting one is enough — removal of a single porcine gene that triggers an immediate immune attack.

While the pigs are housed in a germ-free facility, researchers performed extra testing for any hidden infection. Everyone in the operating room must have certain vaccinations and undergo blood tests of their own.

Surgery over, doctors wheeled Miller's body into the same ICU room where five years earlier Montgomery had recovered from his heart transplant.

Next came more intense testing than living patients could tolerate. Every week doctors biopsy the kidney, putting samples under the microscope to spot any hints of rejection. Blood is continually monitored, the spleen got a peek, and nurses keep close watch that the body is being properly maintained on the ventilator.

The first few weeks, Griesemer checked lab test results and vital signs multiple times a day: "You're like, OK, hopefully things are still good — but is this the day it starts to turn?"

And they're shipping biopsy samples to research partners across the country and as far away as France.

"Our staff doesn't sleep that much," said Elaina Weldon, a nurse practitioner who oversees the transplant research. But with each passing week, "everybody is really now at the point of, what more can we do? How far can we push?"

She knows firsthand the huge interest: NYU quizzed community groups and religious leaders before embarking on research with donated bodies that might have sounded "a little bit more on the sci-fi side of things."

Instead, many people wanted to know how soon studies in the living could start, something the Food and Drug Administration will have to decide. Dozens have written Montgomery, eager to participate.

## Today in History: August 20, Civil War formally declared over

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Aug. 20, the 232nd day of 2023. There are 133 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 20, 1866, President Andrew Johnson formally declared the Civil War over, months after fighting had stopped.

On this date:

In 1862, the New York Tribune published an open letter by editor Horace Greeley calling on President Abraham Lincoln to take more aggressive measures to free the slaves and end the South's rebellion.

In 1882, Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" had its premiere in Moscow.

In 1910, a series of wildfires swept through parts of Idaho, Montana and Washington, killing at least 85 people and burning some 3 million acres.

In 1940, exiled Communist revolutionary Leon Trotsky was assassinated in Coyoacan, Mexico by Ramon Mercader. (Trotsky died the next day.)

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In 1953, the Soviet Union publicly acknowledged it had tested a hydrogen bomb.

In 1955, hundreds of people were killed in anti-French rioting in Morocco and Algeria.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act, a nearly \$1 billion anti-poverty measure.

In 1968, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations began invading Czechoslovakia to crush the "Prague Spring" liberalization drive.

In 1986, postal employee Patrick Henry Sherrill went on a deadly rampage at a post office in Edmond, Oklahoma, shooting 14 fellow workers to death before killing himself.

In 1988, a cease-fire in the war between Iraq and Iran went into effect.

In 1989, 51 people died when a pleasure boat sank in the River Thames (tehms) in London after colliding with a dredger.

In 2020, accepting the Democratic presidential nomination, Joe Biden vowed to move the nation past the chaos of Donald Trump's tenure and return it to its leadership role in the world.

Ten years ago: A Pakistani court indicted former president and army chief Pervez Musharraf on murder charges stemming from the assassination of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Qatar-based Al-Jazeera Media Network launched its U.S. cable news outlet, Al-Jazeera America. Crime novelist Elmore Leonard died in Bloomfield Township, Michigan at age 87.

Five years ago: In a letter to Catholics worldwide, Pope Francis vowed that "no effort must be spared" to root out sex abuse by priests and cover-ups by the Catholic Church. Afghan forces rescued nearly 150 people, hours after the Taliban ambushed a convoy of buses and abducted them; the militants escaped with 21 captives. The Recording Industry of America said The Eagles' greatest hits album had surpassed Michael Jackson's "Thriller" to become the best-selling album of all time in the U.S.

One year ago: President Joe Biden called Finland and Sweden "our allies of the high north," acknowledging the two nations whose addition to NATO could bring military and territorial advantages to the Western defense alliance. Dorli Rainey, who became a symbol of the Occupy protest movement after she was pepper-sprayed by Seattle police in 2011, died at age 95. The fast-food chain Wendy's said it was pulling lettuce from sandwiches in its restaurants in Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania after people eating them there reported falling ill amid an E. coli outbreak.

Today's Birthdays: Boxing promoter Don King is 92. Former Sen. George Mitchell, D-Maine, is 90. Former U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, is 88. Former MLB All-Star Graig Nettles is 79. Broadcast journalist Connie Chung is 77. Musician Jimmy Pankow (Chicago) is 76. Actor Ray Wise is 76. Actor John Noble is 75. Rock singer Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin) is 75. Country singer Rudy Gatlin is 71. Singer-songwriter John Hiatt is 71. Actor-director Peter Horton is 70. TV weatherman Al Roker is 69. Actor Jay Acovone is 68. Actor Joan Allen is 67. Movie director David O. Russell is 65. TV personality Asha Blake is 62. Actor James Marsters is 61. Rapper KRS-One is 58. Actor Colin Cunningham is 57. Actor Billy Gardell is 54. Rock singer Fred Durst (Limp Bizkit) is 53. Actor Ke Huy Quan is 53. Actor Misha Collins is 49. Rock singer Monique Powell (Save Ferris) is 48. Jazz/pop singer-pianist Jamie Cullum is 44. Actor Ben Barnes is 42. Actor Meghan Ory is 41. Actor Andrew Garfield is 40. Actor Brant Daugherty is 38. Actor-singer Demi Lovato is 31. Actor Christopher Paul Richards is 20.