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Monday, Aug. 28

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzini, mixed vegetables, honey fruit salad, lettuce salad with dressing, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, green beans.

Girls Soccer at Mitchell, 4 p.m.

Boys Soccer at Mitchell, 6 p.m.

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner starting at noon.

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

Tuesday, Aug. 29

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, green beans, sunset salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

School Lunch: Hot dogs at elementary, bratwurst at MS/HS, baked beans.

Boys Golf at Lee Park Golf Course, Aberdeen, 10 a.m.

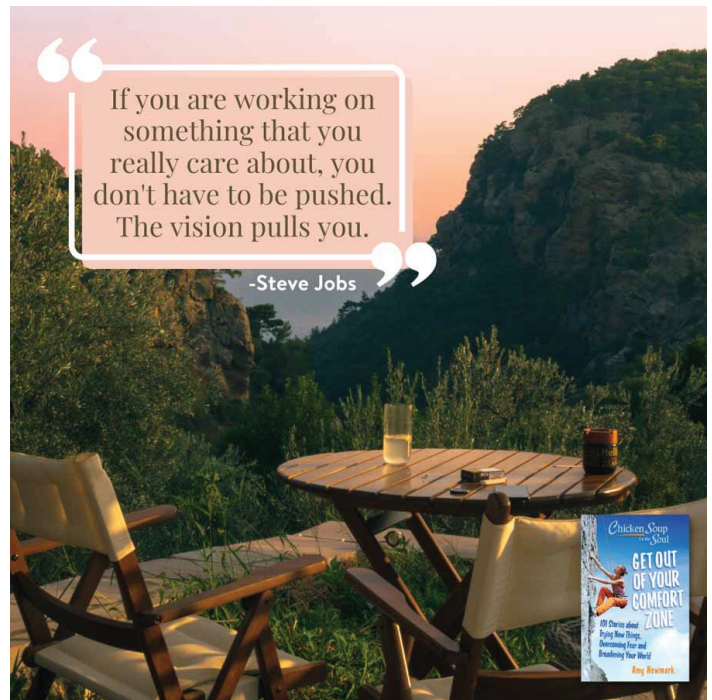
Volleyball at Ipswich, 6 p.m.

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

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N

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

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.



Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 30

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Cheese nachos.

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked sweet potatoes, creamed peas, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

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

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

Thursday, Aug. 31

School Breakfast: Pop tarts.

School Lunch: Sloppy Joes (new recipe), tater tots.

Senior Menu: Breaded chicken breast on bun, sliced tomato, fruit, cucumber salad, Mandarin oranges.

Cross Country at Redfield, 10 a.m.

Volleyball hosts Sisseton, 6 p.m.

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Groton Area boys soccer team loses to Vermillion

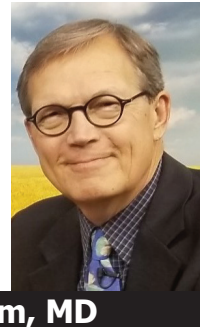
The boys soccer team lost to Vermillion on Saturday, 10-0. According to Coach Jesse Zak, "Everyone played and got good minutes. We could have played for a lower score, but then others don't play. It was a learning experience." The game went 77 minutes, almost a full game, before the mercy rule kicked in on the 10th goal.

"Writing as therapy"

During the South Dakota Festival of Books, I listened to a group of five successful novelists discussing the art of writing and what they gained from creating those words. They all seemed to agree with journalist Malcolm Gladwell, who said that it takes some talent, but more importantly, about 10,000 hours of practice to become good at anything. They each also said that writing has given them joy and humor, an understanding about life and a sense of meaning.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Late Richard P. Holm, MD

Hearing all this, I reflected on how much room I have for improvement in my own writing. On the other hand, I realized my compositions are not for a novel but for self-help, and the goal of my latest book, *Life's Final Season*, is to help people during their aging and dying process. As opposed to a novel, my writing has a different purpose. I also thought how therapeutic my writing has been for me since my cancer diagnosis.

There is a lot out there about writing as therapy. Orthopedic surgeon Dr. David Hanscom, in his book *Back in Control*, provides for us a writing method to help people in chronic pain. He advises those in pain to write down any random thoughts for ten to thirty minutes once or twice a day for at least several months. Hanscom reports the theory that when pain becomes chronic, the signals change from damage pain activity in one part of the brain to an emotional (fear and anxiety) response in a different part of the brain. Hanscom asserts that the daily writing exercise truly helps people break the pain cycle when nothing else helps.

Professor Dr. Gillie Bolton also recommends a daily writing program for chronic pain. She says not to worry about grammar, style or spelling and advises starting by unloading and dumping negative thoughts followed by expressive and explorative writing about any topic. She suggests focusing on the writing without distraction, finding time to do it once or twice daily and doing it for yourself (not others). Her contention: writing helps us illuminate our own suppressed feelings thereby helping people deal with chronic pain, depression and the miseries of life.

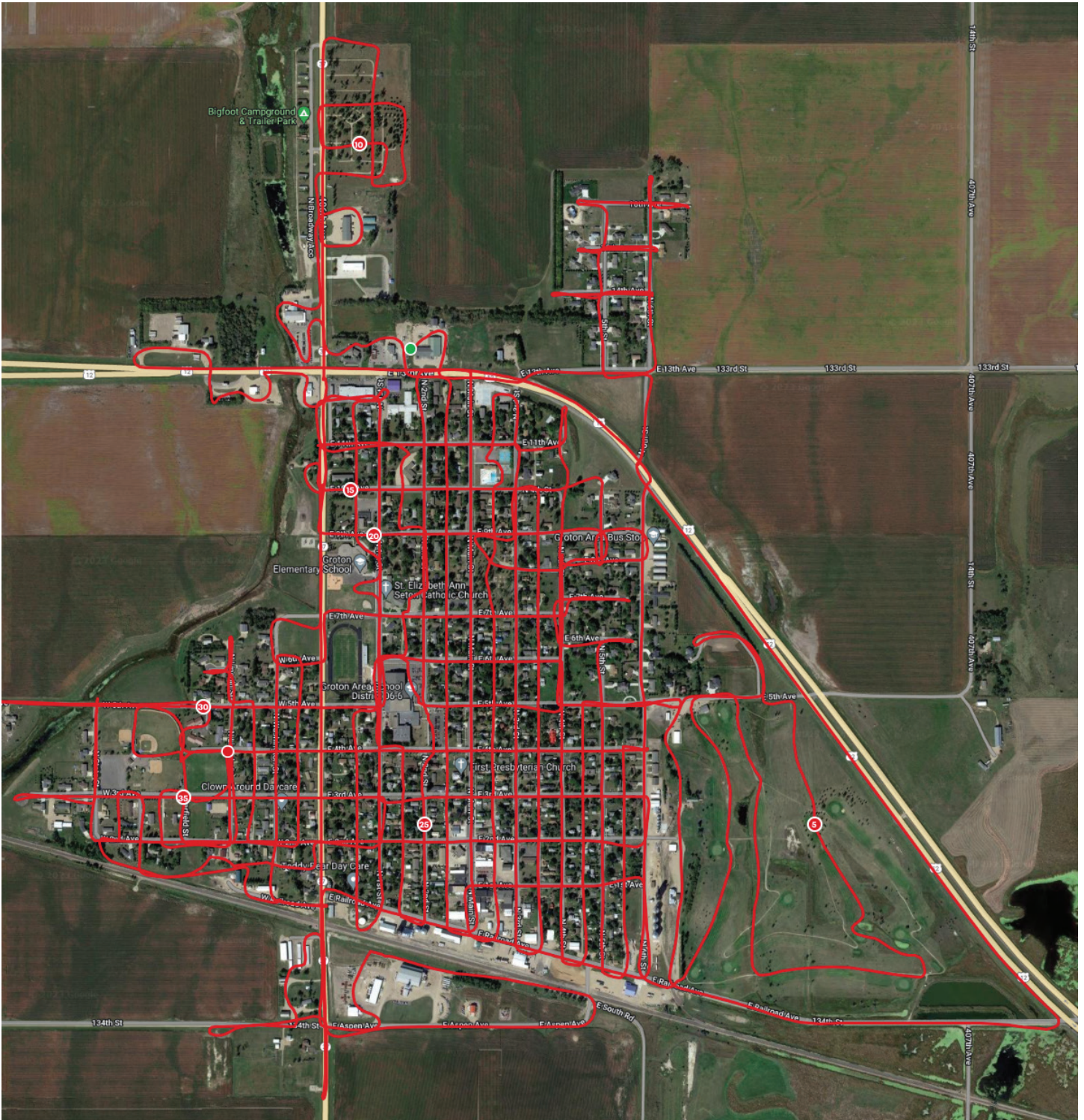
I truly hope my book helps caregivers and people who are aging and dying, but my writing has had the added benefit of helping me cope with a deadly diagnosis. A daily writing exercise may just help you too.

Richard P. Holm, MD, passed away in March of 2020 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "*Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace*" available on Amazon. Dr. Holm's legacy lives on through his Prairie Doc® organization. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook, featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. Central.

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Groton City conducts adult mosquito control Sunday evening



Thirty-six miles were driven with 10 gallons of Perm-X UL 4x4 being used. Wind was light out of the SSE. Temperature was in the 70s.

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Weekly Vikings Recap - Preseason Week 3

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

Similar to last week's preseason game, the Minnesota Vikings came into their third and final preseason game of the 2023 season after practicing all week against their opponent, this week the Arizona Cardinals. The Cardinals appear to have already embraced the tank this season by trading away two of their starters last season, offensive tackle Josh Jones and linebacker Isaiah Simmons. The reports coming out of this week's joint practices were positive for the Vikings as the offense carved up the Cardinals' decimated defense, and newcomer Byron Murphy intercepted his former team multiple times throughout the joint practices.

The Vikings stuck to their guns in the final preseason game, resting all their starters yet again. However, this time head coach Kevin O'Connell also decided to rest his backup quarterback,

Nick Mullens, thus opening the door for rookie quarterback Jaren Hall to play the entire game. Hall looked good and confident to start the game, leading the Vikings to two touchdowns in their two opening drives to start the game. Hall, who offers a unique athleticism that Kirk Cousins does not, had a nice play where he avoided pressure and rolled out to his right to find Jalen Reagor on the sideline for a 14-yard gain.

Sadly, the success for Hall quickly stopped after that as the Vikings would only be able to earn three points the rest of the game and Hall would throw an interception in the fourth quarter. For Hall, he does appear to show flashes of possible future success but his biggest area for improvement going forward will be to maintain consistency at the quarterback position.

The big play of the game came from rookie safety Jay Ward, who strip-sacked Cardinals quarterback Clayton Tune in the first quarter after a nice blitz off the edge on third down. Ward, who came into the preseason as a fourth-round pick out of LSU, seems to have ensured a spot on the final roster come this Tuesday. Not only is his versatility something that excites the Vikings front office, but Kevin O'Connell said after the game that Ward had the best training camp of all of the players on the Vikings.

Despite all of this, the Vikings fell to the Cardinals in yet another preseason loss for Kevin O'Connell. His preseason career record now moves to 0-6, which means completely nothing once the regular season starts for the Vikings on September 10.

Final Score: Cardinals 18 - Vikings 17

Looking ahead, the Vikings will have to trim their roster from 90 players to the final 53 by Tuesday. Right now, several players were on the team last year that appear to be on the bubble. One player is running back and kick returner, Kene Nwangwu, who looked poised to compete for the backup running back spot coming into this season, might be on the outside looking in come Tuesday. Although Nwangwu has elite speed, he was hurt all training camp and might not be a player the Vikings can count on for their running back room as they head into the season.

A player that will not be concerned whether he makes the final roster on Tuesday is linebacker, Ivan Pace Jr. Pace, who went undrafted this offseason, seems to have locked up not only a roster spot for the Vikings but possibly a starting spot. Like all the other starters on the Vikings, Pace did not dress for Saturday's preseason game against the Cardinals. Despite Kwesi Adofo-Mensah's less-than-ideal track record of drafting players so far in his tenure as the Vikings' general manager, the Ivan Pace undrafted signing might be the best move of his career so far.

After the final roster is set on Tuesday, the Vikings will have twelve days to start preparing for their week one matchup against Baker Mayfield and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Vikings will likely enter that game as 6-point favorites to win the game. If everything goes according to plan, the Vikings will begin the season 1-0.

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That's Life by Tony Bender

Another back to school pop quiz

Hey, kids, how's tricks? By now, we should all be settled in. When school started, my mother used to say, "Now my vacation begins." By the way, it was her birthday last week. Forward your cash gifts to me, I'll see that she gets them. OK, on to our Back to School Quiz. Whether or not it goes on your permanent record directly relates to the size of your tax-deductible cash gift to my beloved mother.

1. How do the Bender Kids address their mother?

- a. Mama Pajama
- b. Cassius Mom
- c. On bended knee
- d. Her Royal Meanness

2. Where does the phrase "How's tricks?" come from?

- a. Nautical term
- b. Naughty term
- c. Halloween delinquents
- d. Cheap Trick cover band

3. How was Doug Burgum injured before the GOP debate?

- a. Landed on his spurs after spectacular 360° dunk
- b. Kicking butt in the polls
- c. Tripped over his tongue
- d. Shot by Donald Trump on Fifth Avenue

4. How did Yevgeny Prigozhin die?

- a. Natural causes
- b. Wasn't the apple of Putin's eye
- c. All we know is his last words were "Hold my beer."
- d. Shot by Donald Trump on Fifth Avenue

5. Former ND Governor Ed Schafer's SUV was stolen from the KFGO parking lot last week by:

- a. Joel Heitkamp in a blatant attempt to frame Scott Hennen
- b. News Director Paul Jurgens in a blatant attempt to boost ratings
- c. A parolee who needed to get to an appointment with his parole officer
- d. O.J.

6. Last week, Donald Trump weighed in at 215 pounds and won a Bedminster tournament with a 67. How?

- a. With God all things are possible.
- b. Ours is not to question.
- c. "Do you believe in Miracles!?"
- d. Measuring in Celsius

7. What is wrong with Ron DeSantis?

- a. Glitch in the Matrix
- b. Positronic emotion chip short circuit
- c. The Body Snatchers
- d. In concussion protocol

8. One of the concerns of striking Hollywood actors is AI because:

- a. No need to bring veterinarians into this
- b. Would rather do it the old fashioned way
- c. May produce presidential candidates
- d. Everyone's seen 2001: A Space Odyssey.

9. Main reason Hunter Biden must be impeached:

- a. Got \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia
- b. That insurrection at Mustang Ranch
- c. Received 41 fast-tracked trademarks from China
- d. Met with Russians in Biden Tower in downtown Manhattan

10. What we've learned from 400+ mass shootings so far this year.

- a. Good guys with guns in short supply
- b. If they didn't have guns we'd have mass stab-bings.
- c. Binary triggers may be a problem but only because of possible LGBTQ connections.
- d. It's the video games, namely Angry Birds.

BONUS: The cause of unprecedented global forest fires?

- a. Forests
- b. Antifa
- c. Not climate change
- d. Electric cars

Answers: 1. c; 2. d; 3. b; 4. b; 5. a; 6. d; 7. b; 8. a; 9. a; 10. b; Bonus: c. Grades: 9-11 correct: No fair using Google. 6-8 correct: Dang, no Taylor Swift tickets for you. 3-5 correct: This teacher shortage is for reelz, peeps. 0-2 correct: Take two Kool-Aids and call me in the morning.

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EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: I hear there is a legal challenge brewing regarding a recent Biden administration decision lauded by environmentalists to stop the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay? --Robert E., via email

Bristol Bay is a relatively small but nevertheless important body of water in Southwestern Alaska. It is known for plentiful salmon and blossoming wildlife and has been home to native tribes for centuries. They've witnessed the brightest of days and darkest of nights.

However, in the early 21st century a mining operation named "Pebble Mine" wished to lay claims on the area. Spearheaded by Northern Dynasty Minerals, their goal was to extract valuable copper ores that resided in the bay.

Despite a 10+ year battle with Northern Dynasty Minerals and their supporters, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) put their foot down with a section 404(c) veto on the proposed operation in January of 2023, "ending" a long-standing feud between two strikingly different groups. The veto was issued on the grounds of how valuable Bristol Bay was to the country, as it creates a staggering \$2.2 billion in revenue, 15,000 jobs and 80+ million fish. The tremendous wealth and prosperity Bristol Bay provided to the nation was too valuable, according to the EPA, to not protect.

So, the EPA ruled that the "Pebble Mine" operation be forced to shut down. Happily, ever after, right? Not quite. Although all of the EPA's previous 14 section 404(c) vetoes have never been overturned, the fight is not exactly in the history books yet. Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor has requested the U.S Supreme Court review the EPA's decision, claiming it unlawful. The state argues that by issuing orders on their state land, the EPA "usurps the State's ability and responsibility to protect its own natural resources." Northern Dynasty Minerals further insists that their operation is necessary for creating supply chain independence. Supporters of "Pebble Mine" call the move a necessity to push back against "tyranny," while opponents of the operation insist it's a last-minute prayer to prevent financial losses.

No official Court ruling has been reached yet—understandably as the request is very recent—but both sides will certainly be on their toes should conflict rekindle. Alaska's overturn request is grounded in state sovereignty, and may get assistance from a conservative Supreme Court.

The operation would extract precious copper and minerals out of the bay, but at the expense of the enormous salmon industry, precious natural resources, and innocent native tribes. Which is more valuable? The answer will come from the federal government.



The Pebble Mine Project in Alaska's Bristol Bay is still brewing as backers challenge Biden shut-down in the legal system. Credit: Joseph, FlickrCC



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State doesn't inspect or license growing IV hydration clinics

Head of Health Department runs medical spa offering IV therapy

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - AUGUST 27, 2023 7:00 AM

The South Dakota Department of Health doesn't inspect or license IV hydration clinics, which are increasingly popular places to treat ailments such as hangovers, fatigue and jet lag with supplements delivered intravenously.

The clinics have appeared as retail storefronts, medical spas and Sturgis Rally vendor booths in South Dakota. The IV cocktails can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$300 with ingredients such as Vitamin C, magnesium or folic acid.

The state's oversight is limited to administrative rules for medical professionals, a set of elective IV infusion guidelines from the South Dakota Board of Nursing and a statute declaring that only licensed medical professionals, such as nurse practitioners or physicians, can start IVs.

That concerns some medical professionals in South Dakota. Dan Somsen, a member of the state Board of Pharmacy and a retired retail and hospital pharmacist, broached the subject of IV hydration at the board's recent meeting and expressed concern about the lack of regulation.

"IV hydration means you're bypassing the skin, which is a major protection from any adverse infections," Somsen told South Dakota Searchlight. "I just feel there needs to be some control and responsibilities to maintain proper sterile technique. That's my concern."

The federal Food and Drug Administration does not regulate the elective treatment, which isn't typically covered by insurance. According to a report published by the FDA in October 2021, the agency has become increasingly aware of insanitary conditions where drugs are being mixed, particularly in IV hydration clinics, medical spas and mobile IV services.

That has long been a topic of concern for health care professionals who say medical facilities require proper oversight and inspections to ensure safety, sterile environments and infection control. Medical experts also say the treatments need more study.

"Patients can be significantly harmed when drugs are compounded in a way in which sterility or quality cannot be assured," according to the FDA. "In addition, sterile compounding activities being performed by business entities such as IV hydration clinics present risk and require continued evaluation."

State Department of Health Secretary Melissa Magstadt is an advanced practice registered nurse and is listed as the CEO and founder of SG Essentials in Watertown, a medical spa offering IV hydration services. The department did not respond to requests from South Dakota Searchlight for an interview with Magstadt.

Denise Hanisch, president of the South Dakota State Medical Association, said clients should only seek

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retail medical care if they've talked about it with their physician.

"A person should know who is administering it and whether they are qualified," Hanisch said in an emailed statement. "Ideally, there should be a physician there so if something were to go wrong, there is appropriate care and infrastructure to respond effectively."

Somsen would like to see the state Department of Health expand its authority and license IV hydration clinics. Kari Shanard-Koenders, executive director of the Board of Pharmacy, mentioned during the board's June meeting that the department licenses and routinely inspects other medical facilities in the state.

"It's just one of those gray areas we have to get resolved," Shanard-Koenders said.

In email correspondence with South Dakota Searchlight, a spokesperson for the state Department of Health did not say if the department is looking to expand its authority. Such a move, either by law or rule changes, would require the Legislature's approval, according to the department.

However, the department said IV hydration clinic operators — such as nurses, doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners — are regulated by their respective licensing boards. But that only concerns professional licensing and complaints. The professional boards don't inspect facilities like the Board of Pharmacy, which inspects each pharmacy in the state.

Legislators serving on the Administrative Rules Committee will hold a public hearing on proposed rule changes for the Board of Nursing in October, some of which would "modernize" intravenous therapy practices, said Executive Director Linda Young at the board's Aug. 25 meeting.

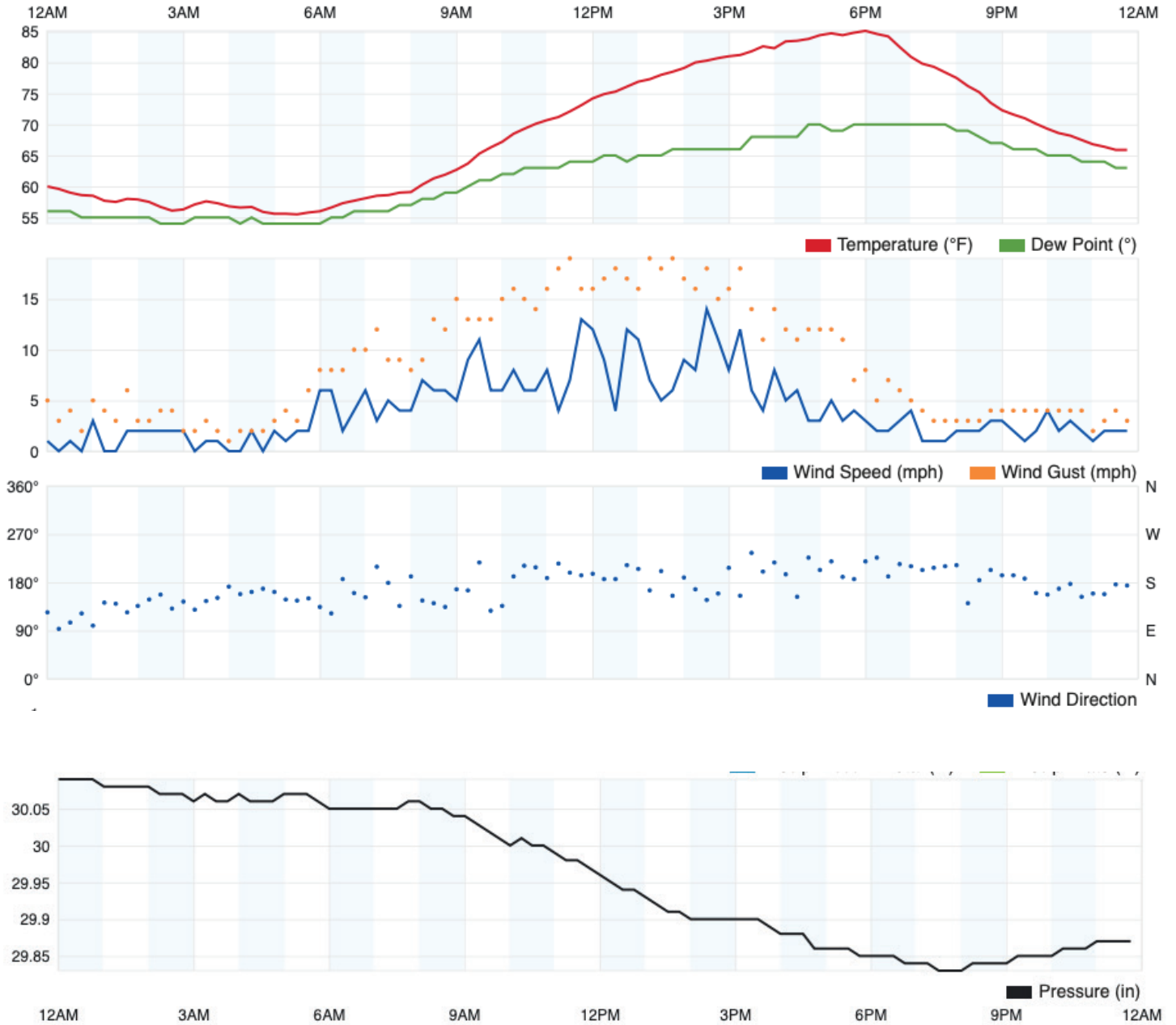
Lindsay Olson, board staff, nursing practice consultant and the Center for Nursing Workforce director for the state Department of Health, added later in the meeting that states across the country lack a standard of regulation regarding IV elective services.

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

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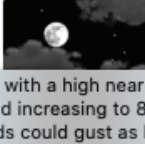
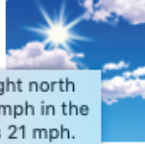




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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
<p>Today: Sunny, with a high near 84. Light north northwest wind increasing to 8 to 13 mph in the morning. Winds could gust as high as 21 mph.</p>						
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy	Sunny and Breezy then Sunny
High: 84 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 83 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 84 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 87 °F



Mostly Dry w/ Increasing Temperatures

August 28, 2023
4:12 AM

Today	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
	SMOKE 		
Highs: 80-88°	High Smoke Highs: 80-88° Lows: 56-59°	Windy Highs: 82-93° Lows: 56-60°	Windy Highs: 84-93° Lows: 62-67°



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A steady warming trend for the start of the work week will be followed by a prolonged period of a week or more with readings 5 to 15 degrees above average. We will see windy conditions mid-week as well, and the potential for periods of both elevated and near surface smoke from fires to the north and west.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 5:54 PM

Low Temp: 56 °F at 4:55 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 12:17 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 32 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1937

Record Low: 31 in 1893

Average High: 81

Average Low: 54

Average Precip in Aug.: 2.03

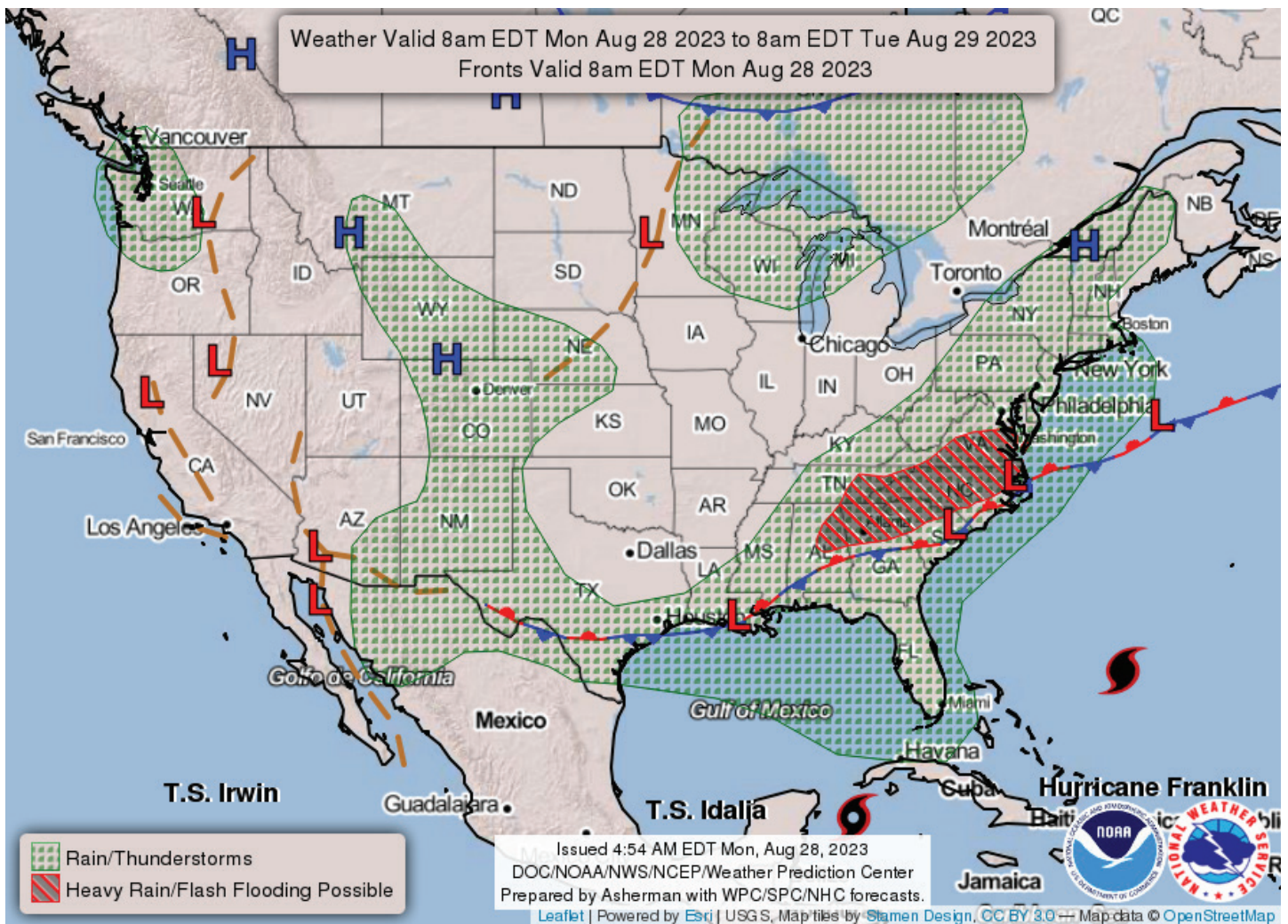
Precip to date in Aug.: 5.92

Average Precip to date: 16.13

Precip Year to Date: 18.59

Sunset Tonight: 8:19:39 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:48:49 AM



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Today in Weather History

August 28, 2011: Several thunderstorms tracking southeast across the region brought large hail along with damaging winds to parts of the area. Golf ball hail broke some windows on several homes and the church in Herried in Campbell County. Colossal hail up to three inches in diameter caused some vehicle and siding damage in Tolstoy, in Potter County. In Redfield, seventy mph winds downed a tree along with many large tree branches. Also, the metal on a roof was peeled back.

1898 - Torrents of rain accompanied by a furious wind upset the rain gage at Fort Mohave AZ. However, water in a wash tub set out on the mesa, clear of everything, measured eight inches after the 45 minute storm. (The Weather Channel)

1911 - Saint George, GA, was deluged with 18.00 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1959 - Lieutenant Colonel William Rankin bailed out of his plane at a height of 46,000 feet into a violent thunderstorm, and lived to write about the 45 minute journey (which normally would have been a thirteen minute descent). He described it as one of the most bizarre and painful experiences imaginable. (The Weather Channel)

1971 - Heavy rains from Tropical Storm Doria caused devastating floods in central and northeast New Jersey resulting in 138 million dollars damage. In southeastern Pennsylvania, high winds downed trees and power lines, and in New York City, heavy rains flooded streets and subways. (David Ludlum)

1973: An F4 tornado touched down near Canaan, New York, and moved to western Massachusetts. Three people were killed in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts when a truck stop was destroyed, and another person died in a ruined house nearby.

1986 - The temperature at Apalachicola, FL, dipped to 62 degrees to shatter their previous August record by four degrees, having tied their August record high of 99 degrees on the 2nd of the month. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Severe thunderstorms broke the heat in the southeastern U.S. and the Gulf Coast Region, but not before seven cities reported record high temperatures for the date. The severe thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 80 mph downing large trees around Horse Shoe NC, and pelted southeastern Meridian MS with hail two inches in diameter. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Tropical Storm Chris spawned a tornado near Manning, SC, which killed one person, and spawned three tornadoes in North Carolina. Chris produced one to two foot tides, and three to six inch rains, over coastal South Carolina. Severe thunderstorms in New York State and Vermont, developing ahead of a cold front, spawned a tornado which killed one person at Hector NY, produced tennis ball size hail at Brandon VT, and produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Lyndonville VT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Early morning thunderstorms in Nebraska produced 4.50 inches of rain around McCook, and 4.65 inches near Auburn and Brownville. Showers in Montana pushed the rainfall total for the month at Havre past the previous August record of 3.90 inches. (The National Weather Summary)

1990: Between 3:15 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. a devastating F5 tornado ripped a 16.4 mile-long path through portions of Kendall and Will counties in northern Illinois. A total of 29 people were killed, and 350 more were injured. An estimated \$160 million in damages occurred. The tornado's path width ranged from 200 yards to half a mile. A total of 470 homes were destroyed, and another 1000 homes were damaged. Sixty-five thousand customers lost power.

2005: Hurricane Katrina attained Category 5 status on the morning of August 28 and reached its peak strength at 1800 UTC that day, with maximum sustained winds of 175 mph and a minimum central pressure of 902 mbars (26.6 inHg).

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

TODAY IS NOT TOMORROW

Abraham Lincoln spent years as a circuit-riding lawyer. On one of his trips, he and a friend were faced with crossing the dangerous Fox River. While traveling through a small village he decided to ask a minister about the best place to cross it.

"Well," said the minister, "it's always pretty bad. And I am familiar with all its dangers. But I have one fixed rule that I never change: I never cross it until I reach it."

Planning for tomorrow is time well spent. But worrying about what might happen tomorrow is a foolish use of our time. When we worry, we close our eyes and ears and cannot see or hear our Heavenly Father at work in our lives. So what do we do?

First, we must release the problem to the Lord in prayer. We must hand the problem to Him as a quarterback hands off the football to a running back. The football can only get to its final destination when it is let go. So, in prayer, we must "let go and let God!"

Second, we must fix our thoughts on the power of God to solve the problem that came from God. We must allow His Spirit to guide us and give us His insight to solve His problem.

Third, we must activate our faith and believe that God will lead us to the solution that He has for us - not necessarily the solution we want. To combat worry and anxiety we must take God's promises at face value. If we are willing to let Him do "His thing" He will in His time.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to believe that You will solve our problems and take away our anxieties when we look to You in faith believing. Help us see Your will in our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today." Matthew 6:33-34



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
- 09/08/2023 Family Fun Fest 3:30-5:30pm
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/09-10/2023 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 09/10/2023 Emmanuel Lutheran Church Sunday School Rally 9:00am
- 09/10/2023 7th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 4-6pm
- 09/15/2023 Homecoming Parade
- 10/13/2023 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes, Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.25.23

12 23 26 31 38 2

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$67,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 18
DRAW: Mins 31 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.23

8 21 38 43 51 1

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$8,970,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 33 Mins 31
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.27.23

38 41 42 45 46 12

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 48 Mins
DRAW: 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.23

1 9 14 17 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$26,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 48
DRAW: Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.23

1 19 54 63 64 15

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 17 Mins 30
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.23

20 22 26 28 63 5

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$363,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 17 Mins 30
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Tropical Storm Idalia takes aim at Gulf of Mexico on a possible track toward the US, forecasters say

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Idalia was near the coast of Cuba Monday on a potential track to come ashore as a hurricane in the southern U.S., the National Hurricane Center said.

At 4 a.m. CDT Monday, the storm was about 125 miles (200 kilometers) off the western tip of Cuba with maximum sustained winds of 65 mph (100 kmh). The storm was stationary at the time, the hurricane center said.

The center's update also included a hurricane advisory for the Cuban province of Pinar Del Rio.

Forecasters said they expected Idalia to become a hurricane on Tuesday in the Gulf of Mexico and then curve northeast toward the west coast of Florida.

Idalia could approach Florida on Wednesday with winds of up to 100 mph (160 kph), according to the latest forecasts from the Hurricane Center. That would make it a Category 2 hurricane.

Along a vast stretch of Florida's west coast, up to 11 feet (3.4 meters) of ocean water could surge on shore, raising fears of destructive flooding.

At a Sunday afternoon briefing, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis noted that much uncertainty remains in the forecast.

"This thing hasn't even gotten to Cuba yet, and the water in the Gulf is very, very warm and so that will provide some fuel for this thing to pick up some more speed," DeSantis said.

Large parts of the western coast of Florida are at risk of seawater surging onto land and flooding communities when a tropical storm or hurricane approaches. That part of Florida is very vulnerable to storm surges, Jamie Rhome, deputy director of the National Hurricane Center, said Sunday.

"So it will not take a strong system or a direct hit to produce significant storm surge," he said. "So if you're anywhere along the Florida Peninsula, western Florida Peninsula, so let's say from about Fort Myers northward to the Panhandle, you've really got to be paying attention."

In Cedar Key, a fishing village that juts out into the Gulf of Mexico, a storm surge is among the greatest concerns, said Capt. A.J. Brown, a fishing guide who operates A.J. Brown Charters. The concern is that if the storm strikes Florida just to the north, Cedar Key would get the powerful surge that comes from being on the southeastern side of the storm.

There are worries in Cedar Key about a storm surge of two to five feet of ocean water, Brown said, and if the storm surge reaches five feet "it would cover most everything downtown."

At the popular Bridge Tender Inn in Bradenton Beach, a large tent covering the tiki bar area where musicians play might have to be taken down in preparation for Idalia, assistant manager Shannon Dunnan said Sunday.

"If we get a big storm that hits, it would probably rip that tent in half," she said.

But at this point, plans are for the establishment to stay open, Dunnan said.

Mexico's National Meteorological Service on Sunday warned of intense to torrential rains showering the Yucatan Peninsula, with winds as fast as 55 mph (89 kph).

It said the storm could cause anything from powerful waves to flooding in southern Mexico, mainly around coastal cities in the Yucatán and Quintana Roo states. It asked citizens to stay alert.

Florida emergency officials on Sunday urged residents to keep their vehicle gas tanks at least half-full in case they need to evacuate.

"This will ensure you can evacuate tens of miles inland to a safe location should the need arise," the Florida Division of Emergency Management said on social media.

Florida has mobilized 1,100 National Guard members, and "they have at their disposal 2,400 high-water vehicles, as well as 12 aircraft that can be used for rescue and recovery efforts," said DeSantis, the Republican governor who is a candidate for the GOP presidential nomination.

"If you are in the path of this storm, you should expect power outages," he added. "So please prepare for that, particularly if this storm ends up coming in the Tallahassee region, there's a lot trees that are going to get knocked down, the power lines are going to get knocked down – that is just going to happen, so just be prepared for that and be able to do what you need to do."

Thirty-three Florida counties are under a state of emergency, the state emergency management agency said.

So far this year, the U.S. East Coast has been spared from cyclones. But in the West, Tropical Storm Hilary caused widespread flooding, mudslides and road closures earlier this month in Mexico, California, Nevada and points to the north.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently said the 2023 hurricane season would be far busier than initially forecast, partly because of extremely warm ocean temperatures. The season runs through Nov. 30, with August and September typically the peak.

Jacksonville killings refocus attention on the city's racist past and the struggle to move on

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

By some measures, the city was making strides to emerge from its racist past. But the killing of three Black people Saturday by a young, white shooter was a painful and startling reminder that the remnants of racism continue to fester in Jacksonville, Florida.

What happened in Jacksonville, said longtime resident Rodney Hurst, 79, "could have happened anywhere, except it did happen in Jacksonville."

The shooting occurred as the Jacksonville community prepared for an annual commemoration of what is known as Ax Handle Saturday. In an unforgettable exhibition of brutality 63 years ago, a mob of white people used baseball bats and ax handles to club peaceful Black demonstrators protesting segregation at a downtown lunch counter on Aug. 27, 1960. Police first stood by but joined the white mob when the Black group began fighting back. Instead of collaring any white instigators, police arrested several Black people.

Hurst, who was 16 when the historic violence erupted, has been encouraged by progress following the Civil Rights movement, but worries racism once again has become normalized by the nation's divisive politics.

Even so, he said, "Jacksonville did not need anybody to help its racism along."

Jacksonville County Sheriff T.K. Waters said notes left by the 21-year-old shooter, Ryan Palmeto, made it clear he was targeting Black residents of a predominantly African American neighborhood in Jacksonville.

Palmeto used an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and a Glock handgun to kill his victims, Waters said, both weapons bought legally earlier this year despite his involuntarily committment for a 72-hour mental health examination in 2017.

He fatally shot Angela Michelle Carr, 52, as she sat in her car and chased A.J. Laguerre, 19, through a Dollar General store before shooting him. The third victim, Jerrald Gallion, 29, was killed as he entered the store.

Then the shooter killed himself.

Palmeto sent statements to federal law enforcement and the media suggesting his attack marked the fifth anniversary of a shooting at a video game tournament in Jacksonville that killed two people. That assailant also killed himself.

Somewhat puzzling is the apparent lack of a racial motive in the shooting five years ago, leaving questions about why Palmeto cited the attack in his writings.

Jacksonville is home to nearly 1 million people, about a third of them Black, just south of Florida's border with Georgia. The city is still coming to terms with its Southern heritage while trying to become more cosmopolitan in the shadows of the state's other major cities: Miami, celebrated for glitzy nightlife and inviting beaches, and Orlando, home to the world-renowned Disney World and Universal theme parks.

In recent years there were signs Jacksonville was changing, and it might still be.

Jacksonville elected its first Black mayor in 2011. A couple years later, there was another watershed

moment when a coalition of activists succeeded in persuading the school board, after years of failed attempts, to rename a high school honoring Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate general and the first grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

Since then, the city has continued to sever ties to the racist past by removing a Confederate soldier statue atop a memorial in a park bordering City Hall. The excision was finalized by Jacksonville's former mayor, a Republican who once served as his party's statewide chair.

Donald Trump took Duval County in the 2016 presidential election. Two years later, a Black Democratic candidate running for governor, Andrew Gillum, won the county but narrowly lost statewide to now-Gov. Ron Desantis. In 2020, Joe Biden carried Duval County thanks to a heavy turnout from Black voters — the first time a Democratic presidential candidate has won the county since Jimmy Carter in 1976.

Earlier this year, Democrat Donna Deegan, who is white, was elected mayor of Jacksonville. Waters, who is Black and a Republican, took the helm of the sheriff's office in January.

"It feels some days like we're going backward," Deegan said through tears Sunday while addressing a congregation at St. Paul AME Church, 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) from the site of the shooting.

Former state Sen. Audrey Gibson, who represented a mostly Black district in Jacksonville, said a single event should not define the community.

"I don't think you can use one person to say there's a racism issue in Jacksonville," she said, even if a historical pattern of racial divides persists today, particularly in wealth and the economy.

There are still many unknowns about the shooter's motives and why he chose that particular neighborhood, Gibson said, even though "it was obvious that he was trying to attack Black people regardless of who they were."

Social justice activists such as Michael Sampson, who founded the Jacksonville Community Action Committee, have long hoped for permanent change but continue waiting.

Saturday's shooting is "a reminder that we're still at the same place," he said.

Sampson recalled the killing of 10 Black people at a Buffalo supermarket in May 2022 by a white supremacist, who was sentenced to life in prison in February.

"This happened in Buffalo," Sampson said. "You had a racist killer indiscriminately trying to kill Black people, and now this happened in Jacksonville — it happened in Jacksonville — so there's a culture that needs to be addressed out there."

Ax Handle Saturday serves as a continuing reminder of Jacksonville's racist past, Sampson said, and the brutality against Black residents that repeated with the shooting and deaths of three people.

"That violence," he said, "is still something that we face every day."

Removing Fukushima's melted nuclear fuel will be harder than the release of plant's wastewater

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

OKUMA, Japan (AP) — At a small section of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant's central control room, the treated water transfer switch is on. A graph on a computer monitor nearby shows a steady decrease of water levels as treated radioactive wastewater is diluted and released into the Pacific Ocean.

In the coastal area of the plant, two seawater pumps are in action, gushing torrents of seawater through sky blue pipes into the big header where the treated water, which comes down through a much thinner black pipe from the hilltop tanks, is diluted hundreds of times before the release.

The sound of the treated and diluted radioactive water flowing into an underground secondary pool was heard from beneath the ground as media, including The Associated Press, toured the plant in northeastern Japan for the first time since the water release began.

"The best way to eliminate the contaminated water is to remove the melted fuel debris," said Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings spokesperson Kenichi Takahara, who escorted Sunday's media tour for foreign media.

But Takahara said the scarcity of information from inside the nuclear reactors makes planning and devel-

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opment of the necessary robotic technology and a facility for the melted fuel removal extremely difficult.

"Removal of the melted fuel debris is not like we can just take it out and be finished," he said.

The projected decades-long release of treated water has been strongly opposed by fishing groups and criticized by neighboring countries. China immediately banned imports of seafood from Japan in response. In Seoul, thousands of South Koreans rallied over the weekend to condemn the release, demanding Japan to keep it in tanks.

Japan's Foreign Ministry on Sunday issued a travel advisory to Japanese citizens to use extra caution while in China. It said act of harassment, including massive phone calls, have targeted to the Japanese embassy, consulate and Japanese schools in China, and it urged Japanese in China to stay away from those places and from protests of the water release, and not to talk loudly in Japanese to avoid attention.

Managing the ever-growing volume of radioactive wastewater held in more than 1,000 tanks has been a safety risk and a burden since the plant was wrecked by a massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. The tanks are already filled to 98% of their 1.37 million-ton capacity.

Releasing the water into the sea is a milestone for the decommissioning of the plant, which is expected to take decades. But it is just the beginning of the challenges ahead, such as the removal of the fatally radioactive melted fuel debris that remains in the three damaged reactors, a daunting task if ever accomplished.

The plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, started releasing the first batch of 7,800 tons from 10 of the group B tanks, among the least radioactive water at the plant.

They say the water is treated and diluted to levels that are safer than international standards, and so far, testing by TEPCO and government agencies has found no detectable radioactivity in seawater and fish samples taken after the release.

The Japanese government and TEPCO say releasing the water is an unavoidable step in the decommissioning of the plant.

Since the earthquake and tsunami destroyed the plant's cooling systems and caused three reactors to melt, highly contaminated cooling water applied to the damaged reactors has leaked continuously to the buildings' basements and mixed with groundwater. Some water is recycled to cool the nuclear fuel, while the rest is stored in the tanks.

The release started at the daily pace of 460 tons and moves slowly. TEPCO plans to release 31,200 tons of treated water by the end of March 2024, which would empty only 10 tanks because the site will continue to produce radioactive water.

The pace will quicken later and about 1/3 of the tanks will be removed over the next 10 years, freeing up space for the plant's decommissioning, said TEPCO executive Junichi Matsumoto, who is in charge of the treated water release. The water will be released over 30 years, but as long as melted fuel stays in the reactors, it requires cooling water under the current prospect.

About 880 tons of radioactive melted nuclear fuel remain inside the reactors. Robotic probes have provided some information but the status of the melted debris remains largely unknown, and the amount could be even larger, says Takahara, the TEPCO spokesman.

A trial removal of melted debris using a giant remote-controlled robotic arm is set to begin in Unit 2 later this year, though it will be a very small amount, Takahara said.

Spent fuel removal from the Unit 1 reactor's cooling pool is set to start in 2027. The reactor top is still covered with debris from the explosion 12 years ago and needs to be cleaned up after putting a protective cover to contain radioactive dust.

Inside the worst-hit Unit 1, most of its reactor core melted and fell to the bottom of the primary containment chamber and possibly farther into the concrete basement. A robotic probe sent inside the Unit 1 primary containment chamber has found that its pedestal — the main supporting structure directly under its core — was extensively damaged.

Most of its thick concrete exterior was missing, exposing the internal steel reinforcement, prompting regulators to ask TEPCO to make risk assessment.

The government has stuck to its initial 30-to-40-year target for completing the decommissioning, without defining what that means. Rushing the schedule could cause more radiation exposure to workers and more environmental damage. Some experts say it would be impossible to remove all the melted fuel debris by 2051 and would take 50-100 years, if achieved at all.

Foxconn's Terry Gou will seek Taiwan presidency as an independent, but he'll need signatures to run

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Terry Gou, who founded Apple supplier Foxconn, said Monday he will run as an independent candidate in Taiwan's presidential election, ending months of speculation.

At a news conference, Gou criticized the governing Democratic Progressive Party, saying its policies have "brought Taiwan into the risk of war" with China, which claims the self-ruled island democracy as part of its territory.

"I will definitely not allow Taiwan to become the next Ukraine," he added.

He said Taiwan also needs new approaches on the economy and other matters at home. "Domestically, the national policy direction is filled with all sorts of mistakes. There's no way to solve the difficulties of Taiwanese industry and people's livelihoods," he said.

Gou's Foxconn, formally known as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., is a major supplier to Apple and has many factories in China that manufacture iPhones.

Ideologically, Gou is most in line with the Kuomintang, the opposition party that is friendly to China. The party holds that Taiwan and China are part of one country, called the Republic of China. The Kuomintang ruled over China in the early half of the 20th century before they lost a civil war to the Communist Party. They retreated to Taiwan in 1949, where they vowed to one day retake the republic.

Gou has long had presidential aspirations. He lost in the Kuomintang primary in 2019 and tried again this year, but the party selected New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih as its candidate. Back in May, Gou said on his Facebook page that he would support Hou's candidacy.

Experts say Gou is unlikely to become a frontrunner.

Gou's speech emphasized unity because he has received criticism that he was splitting the vote, Hsiao Hsu-Tsen, a former deputy secretary-general of the presidential office who often comments on Taiwanese politics. This decision to run — "It's a demonstration of his political power."

Since he is running without the backing of a major political party, Gou must gather public signatures to qualify for the ballot.

That is a high barrier to meet, as it requires 1.5% of the voting population in Taiwan, which is about 290,000 signatures, said Yeh-lih Wang, a professor of politics at National Taiwan University.

The other candidates for the Jan. 13 election are former Taipei city mayor Ko Wen-je of the Taiwan People's Party and current Vice President Lai Ching-te of the ruling DPP. Incumbent President Tsai Ing-wen is serving her second term in office and cannot seek another.

Currently, Lai is the front-runner, with Ko and Hou trailing in various polls.

Gou meanwhile has never garnered more than 20% of support in polls that pit him against the other three, said Wang, the political science professor.

"He always thought that he could be the one who would unite the opposition," though that's unlikely, Wang said.

Gou said he felt he has something to contribute on the issues that matter to Taiwan's people.

"I have not seen substantive discussions of policy recently, especially on the topics of cross straits relations (with China), economic development or international relations," he said.

Gou said he would work for Taiwanese society's unity because unity was critical to Taiwan's future.

8 US Marines remain in a hospital after a fiery aircraft crash killed

3 during drills in Australia

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Eight U.S. Marines remained in a hospital in the Australian north coast city of Darwin on Monday after they were injured in a fiery crash of a tiltrotor aircraft that killed three of their colleagues on an island.

All 20 survivors were flown from Melville Island 80 kilometers (50 miles) south to Darwin within hours of the Marine V-22 Osprey crashing at 9:30 a.m. Sunday during a multinational training exercise, Northern Territory Chief Minister Natasha Fyles said.

All were taken to the Royal Darwin Hospital, and 12 had been discharged by Monday, she said.

The first five Marines to arrive at the city's main hospital were critically injured and one underwent emergency surgery.

Fyles said she would not detail the conditions of eight who remained in the hospital out of respect for them and their families.

"It's ... a credit to everyone involved that we were able to get 20 patients from an extremely remote location on an island into our tertiary hospital within a matter of hours," Fyles told reporters.

The Osprey that crashed was one of two that flew from Darwin to Melville on Sunday as part of Exercise Predators Run, which involves the militaries of the United States, Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and East Timor.

All 23 Marines aboard the lost aircraft were temporarily based in Darwin as part of the Marine Corps' annual troop rotation.

Around 150 U.S. Marines are currently based in Darwin and up to 2,500 rotate through the city every year. They are part of a realignment of U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific that is broadly meant to face an increasingly assertive China.

The bodies of the three Marines remained at the crash site, where an exclusion zone would be maintained, Northern Territory Police Commissioner Michael Murphy said.

The cause of the crash had yet to be explained and investigators would remain at the site for at least 10 days, Murphy said.

The Osprey, a hybrid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter but during flight can tilt its propellers forward and cruise much faster like an airplane, crashed into tropical forest and burst into flame.

Before Sunday, there had been five fatal crashes of Marine Ospreys since 2012, causing a total of 16 deaths.

The latest was in June 2022, when five Marines died in a fiery crash in a remote part of California east of San Diego. A crash investigation report last month found that the tragedy was caused by a mechanical failure related to a clutch.

There had been 16 similar clutch problems with the Marine Ospreys in flight since 2012, the report found. But no problems have arisen since February when the Marine Corps began replacing a piece of equipment on the aircraft, the report said.

Emergency responders were surprised the death toll from Sunday's crash was not higher.

"For a chopper that crashes and catches fire, to have 20 Marines that are surviving, I think that's an incredible outcome," Murphy said.

Defense Minister Richard Marles was also grateful that the toll was not worse.

"It's remarkable that in many ways, so many have survived," Marles told Nine News television. "This remains a very tragic incident and the loss of those lives are keenly felt," Marles added.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin paid tribute to dead Marines.

"These Marines served our country with courage and pride, and my thoughts and prayers are with their families today, with the other troops who were injured in the crash, and with the entire USMC family," Austin tweeted.

The U.S. Embassy in Australia issued a statement offering condolences to the families and friends of the dead Marines and thanking Australian responders for their help.

Top US and Chinese commerce officials express support for easier trade, but deep differences remain

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and her Chinese counterpart expressed a desire to improve trade conditions on Monday, as Raimondo began a visit to Beijing aimed at warming chilly relations, but neither side appeared willing to make concessions on the other's main demands.

Raimondo joined American officials including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in July who have visited China in the past three months. They expressed optimism about improving communication but have announced no progress on technology, security, human rights and other disputes that have plunged relations to their lowest level in decades.

For its part, Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government wants to revive foreign investor interest in China as it tries to reverse a deepening economic slump.

Beijing is ready to work together to "foster a more favorable policy environment for stronger cooperation" and "bolster bilateral trade and investment," Commerce Minister Wang Wentao told Raimondo. Wang gave no details of possible initiatives.

Raimondo said the two sides are working on establishing "new information exchanges" for "more consistent engagement."

"It is profoundly important that we have a stable economic relationship," she said. "I believe that we can make progress if we are direct, open and practical."

Beijing broke off dialogue with Washington on military, climate and other issues in August 2022 in retaliation for a visit to Taiwan by then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the House of Representatives. The mainland's ruling Communist Party claims the self-ruled island democracy as part of its territory and objects to foreign governments having contact with it.

The state press has given positive coverage to the American visits to Beijing, but China has given no indication it might change trade, strategic, market access and other policies that irk Washington and its Asian neighbors.

Raimondo told reporters before leaving Washington she was looking for "actionable, concrete steps" to move forward in commercial relations but gave no details. She said she was realistic that the "challenges are significant."

The visits take place under an agreement made by Xi and President Joe Biden during a meeting last November in Indonesia.

In June, Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Xi for 30 minutes during a visit that was postponed from February after a Chinese surveillance balloon entered U.S. airspace. The Chinese leader called on Washington to change policies on Taiwan and other issues and rebuffed a request to resume military-to-military cooperation.

Last week, on the day Raimondo's visit to Beijing was announced, Washington removed 27 Chinese companies from a blacklist that limits access to U.S. technology.

The decision "may have helped grease the wheels for Raimondo's trip," said Anna Ashton and Kylie Milliken of Eurasia Group in a report.

It suggests Washington "is making modest but measurable progress with Beijing in re-establishing limited government-to-government communication," Ashton and Milliken wrote. "Raimondo's visit could produce additional progress."

A key Chinese complaint is limits on access to processor chips and other U.S. technology that threaten to hamper the Communist Party's ambition to develop artificial intelligence and other industries, which the U.S. has imposed on security grounds. The restrictions crippled the smartphone business of Huawei Technologies Ltd., China's first global tech brand. Washington also has persuaded the Netherlands and Japan to join it in blocking Chinese access to tools for manufacturing advanced chips.

"In matters of national security, there is no room to compromise," but most U.S.-Chinese trade "does

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not involve national security concerns," Raimondo told Wang. "I'm committed to promoting trade and investment in those areas that are in our mutual best interest."

Raimondo defended the Biden administration's "de-risking" strategy of trying to increase domestic U.S. production of semiconductors and other high-tech goods and to create additional sources of supply to reduce chances of disruption. Beijing has criticized that as an attempt to isolate China and hamper its development.

"It is not intended to hinder China's economic progress. We believe a strong Chinese economy is a good thing," Raimondo told Wang. "We seek healthy competition with China. A growing Chinese economy that plays by the rules is in both of our interests."

Wang visited Washington in May. The U.S. government invited Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Washington, but plans for that have not been announced.

Raimondo also was due to meet China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and other officials.

The Biden administration also has taken steps that are likely to rankle Beijing.

In June, Biden added 59 Chinese companies including military contractors and semiconductor manufacturers to a list of entities Americans are prohibited from investing in.

Last week, Washington approved a \$500 million arms sale to Taiwan including infrared tracking systems for advanced F-16 fighter jets.

Workers exposed to extreme heat have no consistent protection in the US

By GABE STERN Associated Press/Report for America

RENO, Nev. (AP) — Santos Brizuela spent more than two decades laboring outdoors, persisting despite a bout of heatstroke while cutting sugarcane in Mexico and chronic laryngitis from repeated exposure to the hot sun while on various other jobs.

But last summer, while on a construction crew in Las Vegas, he reached his breaking point. Exposure to the sun made his head ache immediately. He lost much of his appetite.

Now at a maintenance job, Brizuela, 47, is able to take breaks. There are flyers on the walls with best practices for staying healthy — protections he had not been afforded before.

"Sometimes as a worker you ask your employer for protection or for health and safety related needs, and they don't listen or follow," he said in Spanish through an interpreter.

A historic heat wave that began blasting the Southwest and other parts of the country this summer is shining a spotlight on one of the harshest, yet least-addressed effects of U.S. climate change: the rising deaths and injuries of people who work in extreme heat, whether inside warehouses and kitchens or outside under the blazing sun. Many of them are migrants in low-wage jobs.

State and federal governments have long implemented federal procedures for environmental risks exacerbated by climate change, namely drought, flood and wildfires. But extreme heat protections have generally lagged with "no owner" in state and federal governments, said Ladd Keith, an assistant professor of planning and a research associate at the University of Arizona.

"In some ways, we have a very long way to catch up to the governance gap in treating the heat as a true climate hazard," Keith said.

There is no federal heat standard in the U.S. despite an ongoing push from President Joe Biden's administration to establish one. Most of the hottest U.S. states currently have no heat-specific standards either.

Instead, workers in many states who are exposed to extreme heat are ostensibly protected by what is known as the "general duty clause," which requires employers to mitigate hazards that could cause serious injury or death. The clause permits state authorities to inspect work sites for violations, and many do, but there are no consistent benchmarks for determining what constitutes a serious heat hazard.

"What's unsafe isn't always clear," said Juanita Constible, a senior advocate from the Natural Resources Defense Council who tracks extreme heat policy. "Without a specific heat standard, it makes it more challenging for regulators to decide, 'OK, this employer's breaking the law or not.'"

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Many states are adopting their own versions of a federal "emphasis" program increasing inspections to ensure employers offer water, shade and breaks, but citations and enforcement still must go through the general duty clause.

Extreme heat is notably absent from the list of disasters to which the Federal Emergency Management Agency can respond. And while regional floodplain managers are common throughout the country, there are only three newly created "chief heat officer" positions to coordinate extreme heat planning, in Miami-Dade County, Phoenix and Los Angeles.

Federal experts have recommended extreme heat protections since 1972, but it wasn't until 1997 and 2006, respectively, that Minnesota and California adopted the first statewide protections. For a long time, those states were the exception, with only a scattering of others joining them throughout the early 2000s.

But as heat waves get longer and hotter, the tide is starting to change.

"There are a lot of positive movements that give me some hope," Keith said.

Colorado strengthened existing rules last year to require regular rest and meal breaks in extreme heat and cold and provide water and shade breaks when temperatures hit 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26.7 degrees Celsius). Washington state last month updated 15-year-old heat safety standards to lower the temperature at which cool-down breaks and other protections are required. Oregon, which adopted temporary heat protection rules in 2021, made them permanent last year.

Several other states are considering similar laws or regulations.

Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs recently announced new regulations through the heat emphasis program and declared a state of emergency over extreme heat, allowing the state to reimburse various government entities for funds spent on providing relief from high temperatures.

Nevada also adopted a version of the heat emphasis program. But a separate bill that would define what constitutes extreme heat and require employers to provide protections ultimately failed in the final month of the legislative session.

The measure faltered even after the temperature threshold for those protections was increased from 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius) to 105 (40.5 degrees Celsius). Democratic lawmakers in Nevada are now trying to pass those protections through a regulatory process before next summer.

The Biden administration introduced new regulations in 2021 that would develop heat safety standards and strengthen required protective measures for most at-risk private sector workers, but the mandates are likely subject to several more years of review. A group of Democratic U.S. Congress members introduced a bill last month that would effectively speed up the process by legislating heat standards.

The guidelines would apply to all 50 states and include private sector and select federal workers, but leave most other public sector workers uncovered. Differing conditions across states and potential discrepancies in how the federal law would be implemented make consistent state standards crucial, Constible said.

For now, protections for those workers are largely at the discretion of individual employers.

Eleazar Castellanos, who trains workers on dealing with extreme heat at Arriba Las Vegas, a nonprofit supporting migrant and low-wage employees, said he experienced two types of employers during his 20 years of working construction.

"The first version is the employer that makes sure that their workers do have access to water, shade and rest," he said in Spanish through an interpreter. "And the second type of employer is the kind who threatens workers with consequences for asking for those kinds of preventative measures."

Heat protection laws have faced steady industry opposition, including chambers of commerce and other business associations. They say a blanket mandate would be too difficult to implement across such a wide range of industries.

"We are always concerned about a one-size-fits-all bill like this," Tray Abney, a lobbyist for the National Federation of Independent Businesses, told Nevada legislators.

Opinions vary on why the Nevada bill failed after passing the Senate on party lines. Some say it was a victim of partisan politics. Others say there were too many bills competing for attention in a session that meets for just four months every other year.

"It all comes down to the dollar," said Vince Saavedra, secretary-treasurer and lobbyist for Southern Nevada Building Trades. "But I'll challenge anybody to go work outside with any of these people, and then tell me that we don't need these regs."

The Ukraine war, propaganda-style, is coming to Russian movie screens. Will people watch?

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — The movie centers around a renowned violinist from Belgium arriving in Kyiv to perform. The date is February 2022, and his trip is upended as Russia starts bombing Ukraine. The musician survives a series of "inhuman crimes and bloody provocations by Ukrainian nationalists," and he wants to tell the world "what it was really like."

"The Witness" — a state-sponsored drama that premiered in Russia on Aug. 17 -- is the first feature film about the 18-month-old invasion. It depicts Ukrainian troops as violent neo-Nazis who torture and kill their own people. One even wears a T-shirt with Hitler on it; another is shown doing drugs. It also has the main character's young son wondering: "Isn't Ukraine Russia?"

It's the narrative the Kremlin has been promoting since the first days of the war — all packaged up in a motion picture.

The release of "The Witness" comes after Russian authorities announced a plan to boost production of movies glorifying Moscow's actions in Ukraine and is part of a growing number of propaganda films.

But in an era of instantaneous information and disinformation in wartime and other times, two questions present themselves: Are propaganda films actually effective? And are they any good?

WILL THE VIEWERS COME?

Whether such films will attract viewers is a big question. Similar movies have been box-office disasters. Plus, sociologists say the public interest in following the war has waned, and people these days mainly want to escape from the gloom and doom of news from Ukraine.

"We regularly hear (from respondents) that it's a huge stress, a huge pain," says Denis Volkov, director of the Levada Center, Russia's top independent pollster. Some Russians, he says, insist they "don't discuss, don't watch, don't listen" to the news about Ukraine in an effort to cope with that stress.

Film is an important medium that governments have used to shape patriotic messages — from the early days of the Soviet Union to wartime use by Nazi Germany and Italy, and even by the United States during and immediately after World War II. In more modern times, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung and his son and successor, Kim Jong Il, presided over a regular output of propaganda movies.

State-sponsored propaganda films have also been employed in the Middle East to varying degrees of success. Syria's civil war, for instance, became a focal point of Ramadan TV soap operas in the past decade, including some that were supportive of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Iran regularly funds films glorifying hard-liners and paramilitary forces it backs across the region.

In today's Russia, propaganda as fiction isn't a haphazard effort. Russian authorities speak openly about their intention to bring the Ukraine war — or, rather, the Russian narrative around it — to the big screen.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered the Culture Ministry to ensure theaters screen documentaries about the "special military operation," as the Kremlin calls its war in Ukraine. The ministry also has prioritized themes when allocating state funding for films. These include "heroism and selflessness of Russian warriors" in Ukraine and "battling modern manifestations of the Nazi and fascist ideology" — a false accusation Putin makes about Kyiv's leaders.

The state funding that makers of Russian films can tap into this year is more than ever: 30 billion rubles (about \$320 million) offered by two government bodies and a state-run nonprofit. That's a pivotal part of today's industry, which has been heavily dependent on state funding for years.

Russian film critic Anton Dolin describes it as a "vicious system when the state is the main and richest producer in the country." In an interview with The Associated Press, Dolin notes that all films have to get a screening license from the Culture Ministry. So "censorship mechanisms" work even for those who don't

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take money from the government.

HOW 'VERY DECENT CINEMA' WAS JOINED BY PROPAGANDA

That doesn't mean that Russian filmmakers who get state funding always produce propaganda. There is also "very decent cinema" out there, says critic and culture expert Yuri Saprykin.

Indeed, some Oscar nominees from Russia received state funding — for example, "Leviathan" by renowned film director Andrey Zvyagintsev, which was released in 2015 in Russia and later slammed by the Culture Ministry as "anti-Russian" for its critical depiction of Russian reality. And there were other numerous domestic hits: widely watched historical dramas, sci-fi blockbusters, portrayals of legendary Soviet athletes.

Generally, Russia's film industry until recently was "considered a good, culturally global citizen, producing good films, sometimes challenging the regime," says Gregory Dolgoplov, film and video production scholar at the University of New South Wales.

After Russia's brief war with Georgia in 2008, Russian state TV broadcast a film reflecting Moscow's version of how its neighbor started the conflict. Its storyline was somewhat similar to that of "The Witness": an American and his Russian friend witness the beginning of the war and embark on a mission to bring the truth to the world, while Georgian security forces try to stop them.

That happened again after the 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea — and this time, the Kremlin's narratives spilled into movie theaters.

The 2017 film "Crimea" justified Moscow's seizure of the peninsula and portrayed a popular uprising in Kyiv in 2014 that ousted Ukraine's pro-Kremlin president as pointlessly violent, with Ukrainians brutally beating and killing their compatriots. It was not only state-funded; its creators said the idea came from Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

A year later, a state-sponsored romantic comedy about Crimea — written by Margarita Simonyan, chief editor of the government-funded TV network RT — focused on a Putin pet project: a bridge linking the peninsula to the mainland. It depicted Crimea thriving under Russia's reign.

Both films were promoted by state media but bashed by independent critics for weak plots and flat characters. Both eventually failed at the box office. Several other films about the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which Moscow fueled while blaming Kyiv, were even less popular.

"Why would people go to see an ad for the state, the state they suffer from ... especially when they have an alternative?" Dolin wonders.

The alternative — Hollywood blockbusters — was always much more successful, no matter how hard the Kremlin tried to fuel anti-Western sentiment. So much so that at some point Russia's authorities started postponing releases of Hollywood hits that coincided with domestic movies they wanted to succeed.

Still, "any Spider-Man movie, any Marvel movie, any 'Star Wars', any American film earned a fortune in Russia," said Ivan Philippov, creative executive at AR Content, production company of renowned film producer Alexander Rodnyansky.

THE NUMBER OF PROPAGANDA FILMS IS EXPECTED TO GROW

Overall, the Russian industry over the years expressed little interest in making propaganda films about Moscow's conflict in Ukraine. Philippov notes that of hundreds of movies released in Russia every year, only about a dozen since 2014 have been dedicated to this topic.

He expects this number to grow and points to two in the works in addition to "The Witness." One, "The Militiaman," follows a Moscow artist who decides to join the Kremlin-backed separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine, abandoning his bohemian life in the Russian capital.

Another, "Mission 'Ganges'," is about Russian troops trying to save a group of Indian students trapped in a Ukrainian city as Moscow's "special military operation" unfolds. The city, the storyline says, is held by "Ukrainian nationalists," who "wreak havoc" and are trying to "hunt down" the students.

After major Hollywood studios halted their business in Russia last year, there are no Marvel movies to compete with these, though some movies still trickle through in the form of pirated copies and there are still certain European and lower-profile American movies available.

But other Russian films out there are proving popular among moviegoers seeking positive emotions.

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Even so, the survey suggests lots of people across political lines are open to seeing a younger face, a fresher one, or both, capture the public imagination.

Among them is Noah Burden, a 28-year-old communications consultant in Alexandria, Virginia. Despite a clear preference for Biden over Trump, he wishes the top contenders for the presidency were closer to his generation.

"They're too old overall," Burden said. That older generation represents "a sense of values and sense of the country and the world that just isn't accurate anymore. It can be dangerous to have that view."

Similarly, Greg Pack, 62, a past and possibly future Trump voter in Ardmore, Oklahoma, wishes Biden and Trump would both move along.

"Just watching and listening to Biden it's pretty self-evident he is not what he was," said Pack, a registered nurse.

Trump? "He is a lot sharper but at the end of his term, who knows?" Pack said, contemplating January 2029. "I'm just ready for someone younger." He's had about enough of a man who is "all about himself" and is "wearing his indictments like a badge of honor," but if that's who it takes to defeat Biden, so be it.

WHAT'S YOUR WORD?

The AP-NORC survey went beyond posing questions and presenting choices. It also had a word association exercise, asking people to offer the first word or phrase that comes to mind at the mention of each man.

The answers underscored how age is a particular drag for Biden across party lines, even when people aren't prompted to think about that, and how Trump largely escapes that only to draw disdain if not disgust on other fronts.

In those visceral responses, 26% mentioned Biden's age and an additional 15% used words such as "slow" or "confused." One Republican thought of "potato." Among Democrats, Biden's age was mentioned upfront by 28%. They preferred such terms over "president," "leader," "strong" or "capable." One who approves of his performance nevertheless called him "senile."

Only 3% in the survey came up with "confused" as the first descriptor for Trump, and a mere 1% used "old" or the like. Instead, the top words were those like "corrupt" or "crooked" (15%), "bad" and other generally negative terms (11%), words such as "liar" and "dishonest" (8%), along with "good" and other generally positive comments (8%).

Why the divergence between the two on public perceptions of their age?

"Biden just seems to be very compromised by age-related conditions," said Eric Dezenhall, 60, a corporate scandal-management consultant who has followed Trump's career and worked in Ronald Reagan's White House. "Even people who like him see him as being frail and not altogether 'there.'"

"Whatever Trump's negatives are, I don't think most people see them as being related to being disabled in an age-related way," he said. "In fact, the more you throw at him, the more he seems like a ranting toddler. Disturbing, sure, but elderly? Not necessarily. Trump has been ranting this way for almost eight decades, and it always drives him forward."

For Diego Saldana, 31, it hits close to home when he see Biden fumbling some words or taking halting steps.

"I see all the symptoms my grandpa had," he said. "You can't be ruling a country" that way. His granddad now is 94. Saldana supports Trump despite hesitancy over the criminal charges against him.

Eric Colwell, 34, an audit manager in Sacramento, California, came up with "old" for Biden and "incompetent" for Trump as his first-impression words. An independent who leans Democratic, he sounded a little embarrassed on the phone that the U.S. can't do better than these two.

"Sheer optics," he said. "Older gentlemen. You want your leaders, from a visual standpoint, to be spry and energetic. And we tend to fall short."

He views Trump, with all his hand gestures and animation, as "a larger figure, a little more lively, just his personality. That gives him that energetic appearance." But Colwell is certainly not going there.

"Biden was a good step to steady the water," he said. "Biden is more representative of the status quo and normalcy and that's probably what drew everyone initially to him" after the tumult of the Trump presidency.

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"Now you have a return to stability. But in terms of moving forward and having any measurable change on my generation, we're probably going to need younger leadership."

Alyssa Baggio, 32, is a Democratic-leaning independent in Vancouver, Washington, who works as a recruitment specialist for a homebuilder. She thought Biden was too old for the presidency before he started it. She's convinced of it now and open to voting next year for someone else, just not Trump.

"I don't think he's done a terrible job in office," she said of Biden, "but I think that's more because, as opposed to Trump, he surrounds himself with more experienced and logical people."

Not that she places great value in experience, except in foreign affairs. "D.C. is a swamp," she said, "and the more experience you have, the more you sink into the swamp."

Said Jose Tapia, 33, a tech-company videographer in Raleigh, North Carolina, "There's got to be a multitude of younger people who are also super qualified. There's no fresh faces at all."

Older Democrats are less negative than younger ones on Biden's decision to run again. In the poll, only 34% of Democrats under 45 want him running for reelection, compared with 54% of those older. Still, about three-quarters of younger Democrats say they'll at least probably support him if he's the nominee; others did not commit to that.

RESPECT YOUR ELDERS

All of this is dispiriting to S. Jay Olshansky, a public-health professor and aging expert at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He thinks age, when sizing up a presidential candidate, is no more relevant than eye color and the public's focus on it shortchanges the gift of wisdom and experience.

"It's sort of the classic ageism that we've been battling for the last 50 years," he said. "The age of the individual is irrelevant. It's the policies that they bring to the table that are important. And the number of times around the sun just doesn't cut it as an important variable at all."

From observing both men from afar and examining their medical records, Olshansky regards Biden and Trump as likely "super agers" despite signs of frailty from Biden and Trump's excess weight.

"Biden is likely to outlive Trump because he has fewer harmful risk factors and he does exercise quite notably, whereas Trump does not," he said. But overall, "they're both functioning at a very high level."

"If you don't like what they say," he added, "it's not because of how old they are. It's because you don't like what they say."

Trump lawyers back in DC court as two sides differ over trial date in election subversion case

By ERIC TUCKER, LINDSDAY WHITEHURST and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for Donald Trump are due back in court Monday as a federal judge considers radically conflicting proposals for a trial date in the case accusing him of working to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election in the run-up to the Jan. 6, 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Special counsel Jack Smith's team has proposed a Jan. 2, 2024 trial in federal court in Washington, one of four cities where Trump could face trial as soon as next year. Trump's lawyers, citing the time they say is needed to review 11.5 million pages of documents they've received from prosecutors, have asked for a trial in April 2026 — about a year and a half after the presidential election.

U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan is expected to set at least a tentative trial date during Monday's status conference.

Another potential agenda item could be additional discussion on any constraints on Trump in publicly discussing evidence in the case. Chutkan said at a hearing earlier this month that she would "take whatever measures are necessary to safeguard the integrity of the case" and warned that "inflammatory" statements about the proceedings could prompt her to move the case more quickly to trial to prevent witness intimidation or jury pool contamination.

The federal election subversion prosecution is one of four criminal cases against Trump. Smith's team has brought a separate federal case accusing him of illegally retaining classified documents at his Florida property, Mar-a-Lago, and refusing to give them back. That case is currently set for trial next May 20.

He also faces state cases in New York and Georgia. Manhattan prosecutors have charged him with falsifying business records in connection with a hush money payment to a porn actress who has said she had an extramarital affair with Trump, while prosecutors in Fulton County, Georgia have charged Trump and 18 others in a racketeering conspiracy aimed at undoing that state's 2020 election.

Trump surrendered Thursday in that case, posing with a scowling face for the first mug shot in American history of a former U.S. president.

Many big US cities now answer mental health crisis calls with civilian teams -- not police

By JENNIFER PELTZ and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press/Report for America

DENVER (AP) — Christian Glass was a geology geek, a painter and a young man beset by a mental health crisis when he called 911 for help getting his car unstuck in a Colorado mountain town last year.

When sheriff's deputies arrived, he refused to get out of the car after saying that supernatural beings were after him, body camera video shows. The officers shouted, threatened and coaxed. Glass made heart shapes with his hands and prayed: "Dear Lord, please, don't let them break the window."

They did, and the 22-year-old grabbed a small knife. Then he was hit with bean bag rounds, stun gun charges and, ultimately, bullets that killed him and led to a murder charge against one deputy and a criminally negligent homicide charge against another.

As part of a \$19 million settlement this spring with Glass' parents, Colorado's Clear Creek County this month joined a growing roster of U.S. communities that respond to nonviolent mental health crises with clinicians and EMTs or paramedics, instead of police.

The initiatives have spread rapidly in recent years, particularly among the nation's biggest cities.

Data gathered by The Associated Press show at least 14 of the 20 most populous U.S. cities are hosting or starting such programs, sometimes called civilian, alternative or non-police response teams. They span from New York and Los Angeles to Columbus, Ohio, and Houston, and boast annual budgets that together topped \$123 million as of June, The AP found. Funding sources vary.

"If someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, law enforcement is not what they need," said Tamara Lynn of the National De-Escalation Training Center, a private group that trains police to handle such situations.

There's no aggregate, comprehensive data yet on the programs' effects. Their scope varies considerably. So does their public reception.

In Denver, just an hour's drive from where Glass was killed, a program called STAR answered 5,700 calls last year and is often cited as a national model. Its funding has totaled \$7 million since 2021.

In New York, a more than \$40 million-a-year program dubbed B-HEARD answered about 3,500 calls last year, and mental health advocates criticize it as anemic.

Representatives from some other cities were frank about challenges — staffing shortages, acclimating 911 dispatchers to sending out unarmed civilians, and more — at a conference in Washington, D.C., this spring.

Still, officials in places including New York see no-police teams as an important shift in how they address people in crisis.

"We really think that every single B-HEARD response is just a better way that we, the city, are providing care to people," said Laquisha Grant of the New York Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health.

Federal data is incomplete, but various studies and statistics show that mentally ill people make up a substantial proportion of those killed by police. Often, the dead are people of color, though Glass was not.

The alternative approach dates back decades but gained new impetus from calls for wide-ranging police reform after the 2020 killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. There also were specific pleas for better responses to psychiatric crisis after such tragedies as the death of Daniel Prude that year in Rochester, New York. Prude was just out of a psychiatric hospital and running naked through snowy streets when he

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was suffocated by police who had been called to help him. He was Black, as was Floyd.

Reports of mental distress made up about 1% of police calls in a 2022 study involving nine police agencies; there's no nationwide statistic. A long-established civilian response program in Eugene, Oregon, says it diverts 3% to 8% of calls from police. The Vera Institute of Justice, a police reform advocacy group, suggests alternative teams could handle 19% if homelessness, intoxication and some other troubles were included.

In Denver, STAR teams arrive in vans stuffed with everything from medical gear to blankets to Cheez-Its. In one recent instance, they spent three hours — more time than police could likely have spent -- with a Denver newcomer who was living on the streets. The team helped him get a Colorado ID voucher, groceries, and medications and took him to a shelter.

"It's really about meeting the needs of the community and making sure we are sending the right experts, so we can actually solve the problem," says Carleigh Sailon, a former STAR manager who now works elsewhere.

STAR responded to 44% of calls deemed eligible last year, said Evan Thompkin, a STAR program specialist.

A Stanford University study found that petty crime reports fell by a third and violent crime stayed steady in areas that STAR served in its earliest phase. Throughout the program's three years, police have never been called for backup due to safety concerns but have helped direct traffic, Thompkin said.

Some observers wonder if safety worries will grow as non-police programs do. While there's an appeal to the idea of pulling cops out of psychiatric crisis calls, "the challenge is identifying those calls," said Stephen Eide, a senior fellow specializing in mental health issues at the conservative Manhattan Institute think tank.

In New York, dispatchers must gauge the potentially life-or-death risk of "imminent harm" while deciphering sometimes frantic 911 calls that often come from bystanders or relatives, not the person in crisis.

Officials say B-HEARD answered 53% of eligible calls in the last six months of 2022, the most recent data available. But that was 16% of all the mental health crisis calls within the program's limited territory.

Combined, staffers answered about 2% of the 171,000 such calls citywide throughout last year.

"Very unimpressive," says Ruth Lowenkron, an attorney involved in a federal lawsuit that seeks changes in B-HEARD.

Grant says the city is exploring whether more calls could qualify. Meanwhile, officials note that B-HEARD's social workers and EMTs resolve about half of calls by talking to people or taking them to social service or community health centers, rather than the hospitals where armed officers have traditionally brought people in crisis. Plans call for extending B-HEARD citywide.

Grant credits the program with "providing people with more options and letting people know that they can stay safely in their homes, in their communities, with the connection to the right resources."

John Barrett, however, wanted to go to a hospital to get some physical and mental health problems checked out one June day. He asked 911 for an ambulance, but police came, he said. Then two other people showed up unannounced, in bulletproof vests and face masks.

"They totally escalated the situation for me," recalled Barrett, 45, a former door technician. "Between them and the police being there, I was just totally terrified."

He said he learned only by asking that they were with B-HEARD. (Teams can be summoned by on-scene police, and staffers are allowed, but not required, to wear ballistic vests.)

Barrett said the two performed medical tasks such as taking his blood pressure, and eventually a social worker appeared in plain clothes and sought to talk with him, but he wasn't interested. An ambulance ultimately took him to a hospital.

The city mental health office said it couldn't discuss any individual responses.

Barrett said he went home from the hospital the next day, still shaken by the response to his call for help. "I'm saving money for an Uber next time," he said.

Simone Biles wins a record 8th US Gymnastics title a full decade

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after her first

By WILL GRAVES AP National Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Simone Biles is not going to explain herself. Part of this is by design. Part of this is because she simply can't.

When the gymnastics star is at her best, as she was on Sunday night while winning her record eighth U.S. championship, she feels like she's in a "fever dream." It's not autopilot exactly. It's more of a vibe. A flow.

It's in those moments that the doubts that still plague her almost daily even now, a decade into a run of unprecedented excellence, fade away.

There is no thinking. No overanalyzing. No "twisties." All of it recedes into the background. Her coach Laurent Landi calls it a skill. Biles, even at 26, won't go that far. Maybe because she simply doesn't want to.

She spent a long time, far too long, getting caught up in her head. She's intent on not doing it this around.

So yeah, she was smiling midway through a floor routine that made almost every other competitor on the floor stop what they were doing to watch and drew a standing ovation from a portion of the sellout SAP Center crowd. No, she can't explain why. When her coaches told her she'd nailed every tumbling pass, she was clueless.

"It just doesn't feel real for some reason," Biles said.

It is. Remarkably.

Ten years ago she was a teenage prodigy who doesn't remember much from her ascension to the top of her sport. She was always fixated on the next thing. World championships. Team camps. The Olympics.

Now she's a 26-year-old newlywed determined to enjoy this. For real. Six months ago she wasn't sure she was all in. Three weeks ago she returned to competition in Chicago feeling as if she was going to "throw up" every time she saluted the judges.

The woman who posted a two-day all-around total of 118.40 this weekend in northern California — four points clear of runner-up Shilese Jones and well ahead of Florida junior Leanne Wong in third place — is not ready to hit fast forward. She won. She's letting herself be happy this time. That didn't always happen before.

"We really try to celebrate our success individually and as a team just so that in a couple of years you can remember this," she said. "Because I really don't remember a lot from the past."

She knows that gymnastics won't last "forever" even if, for her in a way it has.

Peaks aren't supposed to last this long. Most elite gymnasts at 26 — at least the ones who haven't retired — are simply hoping to hold on to what they have.

The athlete who became the oldest woman to win a national title since USA Gymnastics began organizing the event in 1963 is not interested in that. Landi called Biles' floor routine in the finals the best he'd ever seen her do.

"I think it's maturity," he said.

Biles' eight crowns moved her past Alfred Jochim, who won seven between 1925-33 when the Amateur Athletics Union ran the championships and the men's competition included rope climbing.

Yes, really.

The sport has come a long way over the last century. No one has spent more time at the far end of the Bell curve than Biles, whose singular talents continue to push boundaries.

She's training smarter these days, her only real acquiescence to the miles she's put on it for the last 20 years. While she remains one of the most visible active athletes in the Olympic movement, she's making it a point not to let the world in on every single little thing as she eyes a trip to Paris next summer.

Biles joked it's because people are "nosy." The reality is, she'd just like a little privacy.

"I like to keep (my goals) personal, just so that I know what I'm aiming for," Biles said. "I think it's better that way. I'm trying to move a little bit differently this year than I have in the past. I think it's working so far, so I'm going to keep it secretive."

There appears to be more balance in her life, leaning into the "it's just gymnastics" mantra that helped fuel her rise.

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"Cheburashka," a fairy tale featuring the iconic Soviet cartoon character that was released during the New Year holidays this year, was a smashing success. It earned nearly 7 billion rubles (\$74 million) against the 850 million (roughly \$9 million) spent making it.

Philippov says no one in the industry could even imagine such earnings. But filmmakers are following suit, remaking Soviet classics and turning to fairy tales. "The industry drew one conclusion: Russians very much want to distract themselves from what constitutes their daily routine," Philippov says. "They very much don't want to watch (films) about the war."

As if to echo that sentiment, "The Witness" premiered in Russia without much fanfare and few mentions even in state media. At a movie theater in Moscow on a rainy Sunday afternoon last week, almost a dozen movie-goers said they came to see films other than "The Witness," though several said they planned on watching it at some point. By the time the showing began, there were only about 20 people in an auditorium large enough for 180.

During its first weekend, it had earned just over 6.7 million rubles — or about \$70,000.

That's not entirely surprising, if you ask Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a history professor at New York University who studies authoritarianism and propaganda.

"When an authoritarian is in a defensive position and is waging a war and it's not going well," she says, the films made for indoctrination purposes are "not often very good."

Biden is widely seen as too old for office, an AP-NORC poll finds. Trump's got other problems

By CALVIN WOODWARD and EMILY SWANSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans actually agree on something in this time of raw discord: Joe Biden is too old to be an effective president in a second term. Only a few years his junior, Donald Trump raises strikingly less concern about his age.

But they have plenty of other problems with Trump, who at least for now far outdistances his rivals for the Republican nomination despite his multiple criminal indictments. Never mind his advanced years — if anything, some say, the 77-year-old ought to grow up.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds much of the public oddly united in sizing up the one trait Biden cannot change.

The president has taken to raising the age issue himself, with wisecracks, as if trying to relax his audiences about his 80 trips around the sun.

Age discrimination may be banned in the workplace but the president's employers — the people — aren't shy about their bias.

In the poll, fully 77% said Biden is too old to be effective for four more years. Not only do 89% of Republicans say that, so do 69% of Democrats. That view is held across age groups, not just by young people, though older Democrats specifically are more supportive of his 2024 bid.

In contrast, about half of U.S. adults say Trump is too old for the office, and here the familiar partisan divide emerges — Democrats are far more likely to disqualify Trump by age than are Republicans.

What's clear from the poll is that Americans are saying out with the old and in with the young, or at least younger.

Democrats, Republicans and independents want to sweep a broad broom through the halls of power, imposing age limits on the presidency, Congress and the Supreme Court. In all about two-thirds of U.S. adults back an age ceiling on candidates for president and Congress and a mandatory retirement age for justices.

Specifically, 67% favor requiring Supreme Court justices to retire by a certain age, 68% support age ceilings for candidates for House and Senate, and 66% support age ceilings for candidates for president.

With elders mostly running the show and the Constitution to contend with, don't expect that to happen any time soon.

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Age hasn't caught up to her yet, though she played it relatively safe — by her standards — on Sunday. She tweaked her right ankle while drilling her electric Yurchenko double pike vault on Friday.

The 14.850 she received for her Cheng vault was still the highest of the night on the event. So was the 14.8 she earned on beam. That 15.400 on floor, too.

Next stop is Antwerp in late September, where Biles will try to add to the 25 world championship medals — 18 of them gold — she's captured so far.

Jones figures to be on the plane too. The 21-year-old is a marvel on bars, where she thrives despite being tall (5-foot-6ish) for someone who opts to do this for a living. The crowd erupted when she nailed her dismount, her 15.000 score was tops in the meet on the event and put 10 months filled with injuries that have slowed her training firmly behind her.

Who joins Jones and Biles at worlds remains very much up in the air.

Reigning Olympic champion Sunisa Lee, who has spent most of the year battling a kidney issue her doctors are still trying to get a handle on, could have a chance as a specialist.

Wong, one of several athletes trying to compete at the NCAA and elite levels at the same time, put together two stellar nights that included an elegant bars set and a floor exercise that makes up for in precision what it lacks in power.

Jade Carey and Jordan Chiles, teammates of Biles' at the 2020 Olympics, who have also spent the last two years splitting time between college and elite, weren't quite as sharp. Chiles fell off both the bars and beam. Carey finished in the top 10 on just one event — vault — where the Americans figure to be loaded.

Biles will lead the charge. She joked she asks herself every day why she's out there. The answer is simple. She feels like she owes it to herself.

"I still feel like I'm capable of doing it," she said.

It certainly looks that way.

DeSantis cancels SC campaign travel, returns to Florida facing tropical storm and shooting aftermath

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis canceled a day of presidential campaign appearances to deal with crises at home as his state mourns a racist fatal shooting in Jacksonville and prepares for a tropical storm.

A day after appearing in Iowa, DeSantis was back in the state capital of Tallahassee on Sunday for a news conference on Tropical Storm Idalia. He urged Floridians to heed the advice of emergency managers. He also offered condolences and condemned the killing of three Black people by a white man who authorities say left behind a suicide note, a will, and writings with racist material.

Later Sunday, DeSantis appeared at a vigil outside the Jacksonville store where the shootings occurred. The Republican governor, who was met with boos when he briefly addressed the crowd, called the gunman a "scumbag" and said there was no tolerance for racist violence in Florida.

DeSantis' campaign schedule had called for him to be in South Carolina Monday for a morning town hall in Kershaw and a barbecue with Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-S.C., in Anderson. But Sunday night, his campaign spokesman Bryan Griffin announced the governor was canceling his South Carolina travel. His wife, Casey DeSantis, is still expected to appear at the barbecue but the town hall in Kershaw was canceled.

"In light of the approaching hurricane, the Governor will be staying in Florida on Monday to assist with preparations," Griffin said.

Asked at his Sunday news conference whether he would be in Florida this week, Ron DeSantis responded, "I'm here. I'm here."

"We're locked in on this; we're going to get the job done. This is important. So people can rest assured," the governor said, adding that the state is staging personnel and equipment to prepare for the storm.

Duncan said in a statement that he was excited to have the first lady of Florida speak on behalf of DeSantis at the event expected to draw more than 2,000 people.

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"Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Florida and Ron as they prepare for this storm," Duncan said.

DeSantis has stumbled on the national stage since beginning his presidential campaign earlier this year and has at times struggled to connect with voters. He returned to Florida from Iowa, where he is campaigning extensively and hoping for a strong showing in the state's leadoff caucuses. He remains in a distant second place behind former President Donald Trump for the Republican nomination.

The storm is pointed toward Florida as the nation tries to make sense of another mass shooting Saturday, this time at a Dollar General store in Jacksonville, where a 21-year-old white man fatally shot three Black people. Federal authorities are investigating the attack as a hate crime.

"Perpetrating violence of this kind is unacceptable, and targeting people due to their race has no place in the state of Florida," DeSantis said.

DeSantis' policies around race and race-related teaching have been a flashpoint in his time as governor. In July, DeSantis faced criticism for his defense of new public school curriculum on Black history in Florida, which specified that teachers were required to instruct middle-school students that enslaved people "developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit."

DeSantis said his critics intentionally misrepresented one line of the sweeping curriculum, but it and his defense drew blowback from Florida teachers, civil rights leaders, the Biden White House and some Black Republicans, including Florida Rep. Byron Donalds and Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, who is running against DeSantis for the GOP nomination.

As governor, DeSantis has also banned critical race theory, a way of thinking about America's history through the lens of racism, from Florida classrooms and worked to restrict diversity, equity and inclusion programs in schools.

At the vigil in Jacksonville on Sunday, Democratic City Councilwoman Ju'Coby Pittman, who represents the neighborhood where the shooting happened, addressed DeSantis personally during her remarks.

"Governor, I know you're here," Pittman said. "And you know what? I'm glad you're here, because you can see the people and the impact it's had on the community."

A man somewhere in the crowd shouted: "He don't care!"

As DeSantis got up to speak, he was met with boos from the crowd of about 200 people.

Pittman took the microphone and asked people to listen to him, saying, "It ain't about parties today. A bullet don't know a party."

DeSantis, in his brief remarks, called the gunman a "major league scumbag."

"What he did is totally unacceptable in the state of Florida," DeSantis said. "We are not going to let people be targeted based on their race."

Later at the vigil, the Rev. Jeffrey Rumlin, pastor of The Dayspring Church in Jacksonville, addressed DeSantis' remarks.

"Respectfully, governor, he was not a scumbag," Rumlin said of the gunman. "He was a racist."

His remark got a loud cheer from the crowd.

Zimbabwe's opposition alleges 'gigantic fraud' in vote that extends the ZANU-PF party's 43-year rule

By FARAI MUTSAKA and GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe's main opposition leader on Sunday alleged "blatant and gigantic fraud" in the country's election after President Emmerson Mnangagwa was declared the winner and international observers reported an atmosphere of intimidation against voters.

The returns from the latest troubled vote in the southern African nation were announced Saturday night, two days earlier than expected. Opposition leader Nelson Chamisa's Citizens Coalition for Change party said it would challenge the results as "hastily assembled without proper verification."

"They stole your voice and vote but never your hope," Chamisa wrote in a post on X, formerly known as

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Twitter, in his first public reaction to the election's announced outcome. "It's a blatant and gigantic fraud." People in the country of 15 million were bound to view the results with suspicion but Mnangagwa, 80, dismissed allegations of vote fraud.

"I did not conduct these elections. I think those who feel the race was not run properly know where to go to complain. I am so happy," he said at a news conference Sunday, adding that the elections were run "transparently, fairly in broad daylight."

Mnangagwa was reelected for a second and final five-year term with 52.6% of the vote, according to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. Chamisa, 45, who also lost to Mnangagwa in a very close and disputed election five years ago, won 44% of the vote this time, the commission said.

International election observers have noted problems with the election, held Wednesday and Thursday, citing an atmosphere of intimidation against Chamisa's supporters. In the buildup to the vote, international rights groups reported a crackdown on opposition to Mnangagwa and the long-ruling ZANU-PF party.

"The vote will be challenged, it was fraught with unprecedented illegality," Chamisa said later Sunday in the capital, Harare. He described the results as "doctored" and "criminal."

The rights groups said the party, which according to the electoral commission retained its parliamentary majority, had used the police and courts to harass and intimidate opposition officials and supporters.

Before the election, Chamisa alleged in an interview with The Associated Press that his party's rallies had been broken up by police and his supporters had often been intimidated and threatened with violence.

The actual election was also problematic and voting was extended into an extra day Thursday because of a shortage of ballot papers, especially in the capital and other urban areas that are opposition strongholds. People slept at polling stations to make sure they were able to vote.

Mnangagwa's victory meant ZANU-PF retained the governmental leadership it has held for all 43 years of Zimbabwe's history since the nation was re-named following independence from white minority rule in 1980.

"This is a very happy occasion indeed," said Ziyambi Ziyambi, an election agent for Mnangagwa and a Cabinet minister. "Zimbabweans have shown confidence in our president and ZANU-PF."

Zimbabwe has a history of disputed and sometimes violent elections in the more than four decades of ZANU-PF rule, most notably under autocratic former president Robert Mugabe, who was leader for 37 years and oversaw a period of economic collapse that gained Zimbabwe international notoriety.

Mugabe's regime also resulted in the United States and the European Union applying sanctions on Zimbabwe for alleged human rights abuses. Those sanctions are largely still in place.

Mugabe was removed from power in a military-led coup in 2017 and replaced with Mnangagwa, his former vice president. The coup was widely popular and celebrated as a new dawn, but while Mnangagwa promised an era of freedom and prosperity, critics have alleged the former guerrilla fighter nicknamed "the crocodile" has become as repressive as his predecessor.

Zimbabwe has had just those two leaders in more than four decades of independence.

The 2023 election results were released around 11.30 p.m. Saturday night at the official results center in Harare, taking many by surprise. They came just 48 hours after polls closed in the delayed elections, when election officials had planned to announce the results five days after voting ended.

"We reject any results hastily assembled without proper verification," Promise Mkwanzani, a spokesperson for Chamisa's CCC party, said minutes after the results were announced. "We will advise citizens on the next steps as the situation develops."

While the outcome likely will be closely scrutinized, Chamisa's party didn't immediately announce if it would challenge them through the courts. Chamisa challenged his 2018 election loss to Mnangagwa, but that was rejected by the Constitutional Court.

The election observers said they had specific concerns in this vote over a ruling party affiliate organization called Forever Associates of Zimbabwe that they said set up tables at polling stations and took details of people walking into voting booths. The head of the African Union observer mission, former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, said the FAZ activities should be declared "criminal offenses."

More than 40 local vote monitors also were arrested on allegations of subversion that government critics said were trumped-up charges.

Ahead of Saturday's announcement of the results, dozens of armed police with water cannons guarded the national results center. It was the scene of deadly violence following the election five years ago, when soldiers killed six people during protests.

At the United Nations, a spokeswoman for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "concerned about the arrest of observers, reports of voter intimidation, threats of violence, harassment and coercion."

But Guterres also urges all factions "to reject any and all forms of violence, threats of violence, or incitement to violence, and to ensure that human rights and the rule of law are fully respected," said the statement from spokeswoman Florencia Soto Niño.

There was no sign of unrest early Sunday. Streets in Harare that would normally be bustling with late-night vendors were empty soon after the announcement Saturday night as people were digesting the results and another ZANU-PF victory, which would take the party's rule to nearly half a century.

Trump campaign reports raising more than \$7 million after Georgia booking

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For former President Donald Trump, a picture is worth ... more than \$7 million.

Trump's campaign says he has raised \$7.1 million since Thursday when he was booked at the Fulton County Jail in Georgia on charges that he illegally schemed to overturn the 2020 election in the state and became the first former president in U.S. history to ever have a mug shot taken.

Spokesman Steven Cheung said that, on Friday alone, the campaign brought in \$4.18 million — its highest-grossing day to date.

The record haul underscores how Trump's legal woes have been a fundraising boon for his campaign, even as his political operation has spent tens of millions on his defense. The mounting legal charges have also failed to dent Trump's standing in the Republican presidential primary, with the former president now routinely beating his rivals by 30 to 50 points in polls.

While Trump described his appearance Thursday as a "terrible experience" and said posing for the historic mug shot was "not a comfortable feeling," his campaign immediately seized on its fundraising power.

Before he had even flown home to New Jersey, his campaign was using it in fundraising pitches to supporters. Trump amplified that message both on his Truth Social site and by returning to X, the site formerly known as Twitter, for the first time in two-and-a-half years to share the image and direct supporters to a fundraising page.

Within hours, the campaign had also released a new line of merchandise featuring the image that began with t-shirts and now includes beer Koozies, bumper stickers, a signed poster, bumper stickers and mug shot mugs.

Cheung said that contributions from those who had purchased merchandise or donated without prompting skyrocketed, especially after Trump's tweet.

The new contributions, he said, had helped push the campaign's fundraising haul over the last three weeks to close to \$20 million. Trump in early August was indicted in Washington on felony charges related to his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election in the run-up to the violent riot by his supporters at the U.S. Capitol.

At the same time, Trump's political operation has been burning through tens of millions of dollars on lawyers as he battles charges in four separate jurisdictions. Recent campaign finance filing showed that, while Trump raised over \$53 million during the first half of 2023 — a period in which his first two criminal indictments were turned into a rallying cry that sent his fundraising soaring — his political committees have paid out at least \$59.2 million to more than 100 lawyers and law firms since January 2021.

Russia says it confirmed Wagner leader Prigozhin died in a plane crash

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian authorities on Sunday confirmed the death of Wagner Group chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, putting to rest any doubts about whether the wily mercenary leader turned mutineer was on a plane that crashed Wednesday, killing everyone on board.

Genetic testing on the 10 bodies recovered at the crash site “conform to the manifest” for the flight, Russian Investigative Committee spokeswoman Svetlana Petrenko said in a statement. Russia’s civil aviation authority had said Prigozhin and some of his top lieutenants were on the list of seven passengers and three crew members.

The Investigative Committee did not indicate what might have caused the business jet to plummet from the sky halfway between Moscow and St. Petersburg, Prigozhin’s hometown.

But the crash’s timing raised suspicions of a possible Kremlin-orchestrated hit, while Prigozhin’s chameleon-like background allowed for speculation that he wasn’t on the plane or had somehow escaped death.

Two months ago, Prigozhin, 62, mounted a daylong mutiny against Russia’s military, leading his mercenaries from Ukraine toward Moscow. Russian President Vladimir Putin decried the act as “treason” and vowed punishment for those involved.

Instead, the Kremlin quickly cut a deal with Prigozhin to end the armed revolt, saying he would be allowed to walk free without facing any charges and to resettle in Belarus. Questions remained about whether the former ally of Russia’s leader would face a comeuppance for the brief uprising that posed the biggest challenge to Putin’s authority of his 23-year rule.

A preliminary U.S. intelligence assessment concluded that an intentional explosion caused the plane to go down. As suspicions grew that the Russian president was the architect of an assassination, the Kremlin rejected them as a “complete lie.”

One of the Western officials who described the initial assessment said it determined that Prigozhin was “very likely” targeted and that an explosion would be in line with Putin’s “long history of trying to silence his critics.”

Prigozhin’s second-in-command, Dmitry Utkin, as well as Wagner logistics mastermind Valery Chekalov, also were killed in the crash. Utkin was long believed to have founded Wagner and baptized the group with his nom de guerre.

The fate of Wagner, which until recently played a prominent role in Russia’s military campaign in Ukraine and was involved in a number of African and Middle Eastern countries, is uncertain.

After the mutiny, the Kremlin said Prigozhin would be exiled in Belarus, and his fighters were offered three options: to follow him there, retire or enlist in Russia’s regular army and return to Ukraine, where Wagner mercenaries had fought alongside Russian troops.

Several thousand Wagner mercenaries opted to move to Belarus, where a camp was erected for them southeast of the capital, Minsk.

More than 600 firefighters backed by water-dropping aircraft struggle to control wildfires in Greece

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — More than 600 firefighters, including reinforcements from several European countries and backed by a fleet of water-dropping planes and helicopters, were tackling the remnants of three major wildfires in Greece Sunday, two of which have been raging for days.

Greece has been plagued by daily outbreaks of dozens of fires over the past week as gale-force winds and hot, dry summer conditions combined to whip up flames and hamper firefighting efforts. Across the country, firefighters were battling 105 wildfires on Sunday, with 46 of them having broken out in the 24 hours between Saturday evening and Sunday evening, the fire department said.

Authorities are investigating the causes of the blazes, with arson suspected in some.

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In Greece's northeastern regions of Evros and Alexandroupolis, a massive wildfire believed to have caused 20 of the 21 wildfire-related deaths in the past week, was burning for a ninth day.

The blaze, where smaller fires combined to form one of the largest single wildfires ever to have struck a European Union country, has decimated vast tracts of forest and burned homes in outlying areas of the city of Alexandroupolis.

On Sunday, 295 firefighters, seven planes and five helicopters were tackling flare-ups that were creating new fire fronts, triggering evacuation orders for two villages, one in the Evros region and another in the Rodopi region.

The wildfire has scorched 77,000 hectares (297 square miles) of land and had 120 active hotspots, the European Union's Copernicus Emergency Management Service said Sunday.

Copernicus is the EU space program's Earth observation component and uses satellite imagery to provide mapping data.

Pope Francis, addressing the public in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican on Sunday, said he wanted to express assurances that he is remembering "in prayer the victims of the fires that have burned in these days in northeast Greece." He also expressed "supportive closeness" to the Greek people.

On the northwestern fringes of the Greek capital, another major wildfire burning for days was now limited to flare-ups and was being tackled by 160 firefighters, one plane and three helicopters. The fire has already scorched homes and part of a national park on Mount Parnitha, one of the last green areas near Athens.

A third major wildfire started on Saturday on the Cycladic island of Andros and was still not under control Sunday, with 73 firefighters, two planes and two helicopters dousing the blaze. Lightning strikes are suspected of having sparked that wildfire. Flare-ups were also occurring in a large wildfire in the central region of Viotia, the fire department said.

With firefighting forces stretched to the limit, Greece has called for help from other European countries. Germany, Sweden, Croatia and Cyprus have sent aircraft, while dozens of Romanian, French, Czech, Bulgarian, Albanian, Slovak and Serb firefighters are helping on the ground.

With their hot, dry summers, southern European countries are particularly prone to wildfires. European Union officials have blamed climate change for the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires in Europe, noting that 2022 was the second-worst year for wildfire damage on record after 2017.

The causes of Greece's two largest fires have not yet been determined. For some of the smaller blazes, officials have said arson or negligence is suspected, and several people have been arrested.

On Saturday, fire department officials arrested two men, one on the island of Evia and one in the central Greek region of Larissa, for allegedly deliberately setting fire to dried vegetation to spark wildfires.

Greece imposes wildfire prevention regulations, typically from the start of May to the end of October, limiting activities such as the burning of dried vegetation and the use of outdoor barbecues.

By Friday, fire department officials had arrested 163 people on fire-related charges since the start of the fire prevention season, government spokesman Pavlos Marinakis said, including 118 for negligence and 24 for deliberate arson. The police had made a further 18 arrests, he said.

A US Marine Osprey crashes during drills in Australia, killing 3 and injuring 20, some critically

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — A United States Marine Corps aircraft with 23 Marines aboard crashed on a north Australian island Sunday, killing at least three and critically injuring at least five during a multinational training exercise, officials said.

Three had been confirmed dead on Melville Island and five were flown in serious condition 80 kilometers (50 miles) to the mainland city of Darwin for hospital treatment after the Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey aircraft crashed around 9:30 a.m., a statement from the Marines said.

"Recovery efforts are ongoing," the statement said, adding the cause of the crash was under investigation.

Aircraft had been sent from Darwin to retrieve more survivors from the remote location but no further

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details on the fate of the other 15 Marines on board had been released hours later.

A U.S. military official reported to Australian air traffic controllers a "significant fire in the vicinity of the crash site," according to an audio recording of the conversation broadcast by Nine News television.

Melville resident Shane Murphy was fishing from a beach when the Osprey crashed and told Australian Broadcasting Corp. he saw a "big mushroom of black smoke" rise from the wreckage.

Northern Territory Police Commissioner Michael Murphy said no one on board had escaped injury.

One of the injured was undergoing surgery at the Royal Darwin Hospital, Northern Territory Chief Minister Natasha Fyles said around six hours after the crash.

"We acknowledge that this is a terrible incident," Fyles said. "The Northern Territory government stands by to offer whatever assistance is required."

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said only Americans were injured in the crash during Exercise Predators Run, which involves the militaries of the United States, Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and East Timor.

"Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with the three U.S. service personnel who lost their lives, those who have been injured, the rest of the crew and indeed the entire United States armed forces," Albanese said in a statement.

"Australia will continue to provide assistance to our friends for as long as is required," he added.

Around 150 U.S. Marines are currently based in Darwin and up to 2,500 rotate through the city every year. They're part of a realignment of forces in the Asia-Pacific that's broadly meant to face an increasingly assertive China.

The 12-day exercise is scheduled to end Sept. 7. It involves troops on land, in the sea and in the air. The exercise has been paused since the crash.

The Osprey is a hybrid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter, but during flight can rotate its propellers forward and cruise much faster like an airplane. Versions of the aircraft are flown by the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force.

Before Sunday, there had been five fatal crashes of Marine Ospreys since 2012, causing a total of 16 deaths.

The latest was in June 2022, when five Marines died in a fiery crash in a remote part of California east of San Diego. A crash investigation report last month found that the tragedy was caused by a mechanical failure related to a clutch.

There had been 16 similar clutch problems with the Marine Ospreys in flight since 2012, the report found. But no problems have arisen since February when the Marine Corps began replacing a piece of equipment on the aircraft, the report said.

Melville is part of the Tiwi Islands, which along with Darwin are the focus of the exercise that involves 2,500 troops. It's Indigenous-owned land and is mostly covered by tropical woodland. Its population is around 1,000 mostly Indigenous people.

The Osprey that crashed was one of two that had flown from Darwin to Melville on Sunday, Murphy, the police commissioner, said.

Darwin is a large city by the standards of Australia's sparsely populated tropical north with a population of 150,000. But multiple casualty events can test its major hospital's resources. The hospital has been put on its highest possible emergency alert, which means treatment of less urgent medical cases could be affected, Fyles said.

The U.S. military was also taking part in a multinational military exercise in July when four Australia personnel were killed in an army MRH-90 Taipan helicopter crash off the northeast Australian coast.

Trump's drumbeat of lies about the 2020 election keeps getting louder. Here are the facts

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With Donald Trump facing felony charges over his attempts to overturn the 2020

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election, the former president is flooding the airwaves and his social media platform with distortions, misinformation and unfounded conspiracy theories about his defeat.

It's part of a multiyear effort to undermine public confidence in the American electoral process as he seeks to chart a return to the White House in 2024. There is evidence that his lies are resonating: New polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that 57% of Republicans believe Democrat Joe Biden was not legitimately elected as president.

Here are the facts about Trump's loss in the last presidential election:

REVIEWS AND RECOUNTS CONFIRM BIDEN'S VICTORY

Biden's victory over Trump in 2020 was not particularly close. He won the Electoral College with 306 votes to Trump's 232, and the popular vote by more than 7 million ballots.

Because the Electoral College ultimately determines the presidency, the race was decided by a few battleground states. Many of those states conducted recounts or thorough reviews of the results, all of which confirmed Biden's victory.

In Arizona, a six-month review of ballots in the state's largest county, Maricopa, that was commissioned by Republican state legislators not only affirmed Biden's victory but determined that he should have won by 306 more votes than the officially certified statewide margin of 10,457.

In Georgia, where Trump was recently indicted for his efforts to overturn the 2020 result there, state officials led by both a Republican governor and secretary of state recertified Biden's win after conducting three statewide counts. The final official recount narrowed Biden's victory in the state from just shy of 13,000 votes to just shy of 12,000 votes.

In Michigan, a committee led by Republican state senators concluded there was no widespread or systematic fraud in the state in 2020 after conducting a monthslong investigation. Michigan, where Biden defeated Trump by almost 155,000 votes, or 2.8 percentage points, was less competitive compared with other battleground states, although the result in Wayne County, home of Detroit, was targeted by Trump and his supporters with unfounded voter fraud claims, as were key urban jurisdictions across the country.

In Nevada, the then-secretary of state, Republican Barbara Cegavske, and her office reviewed tens of thousands of allegations of possible voter fraud identified by the Nevada Republican Party but found that almost all were based on incomplete information and a lack of understanding of the state's voting and registration procedures. For example, Cegavske's investigation found that of 1,506 alleged instances of ballots being cast in the name of deceased individuals, only 10 warranted further investigation by law enforcement. Similarly, 10 out of 1,778 allegations of double-voting called for further investigation. Biden won Nevada by 33,596 votes, or 2.4 percentage points.

In Pennsylvania, the final certified results had Biden with an 80,555-vote margin over Trump, or 1.2 percentage points. Efforts to overturn Pennsylvania's election failed in state and federal courts, while no prosecutor, judge or election official in Pennsylvania has raised a concern about widespread fraud. State Republicans continue to attempt their own review of the 2020 results, but that effort has been tied up in the courts and Democrats have called it a "partisan fishing expedition."

In Wisconsin, a recount slightly improved Biden's victory over Trump by 87 votes, increasing Biden's statewide lead to 20,682, or 0.6 percentage points. A nonpartisan audit that concluded a year after the election made recommendations on how to improve future elections in Wisconsin but did not uncover evidence of widespread voter fraud in the state, leading the Republican co-chair of the audit committee to declare that "the election was largely safe and secure." The state's Assembly speaker, a Republican, ordered a separate review, which a state judge said found "absolutely no evidence of election fraud."

AP INVESTIGATION FINDS MINIMAL VOTER FRAUD IN SWING STATES

An exhaustive AP investigation in 2021 found fewer than 475 instances of confirmed voter fraud across six battleground states — nowhere near the magnitude required to sway the outcome of the presidential election.

The review of ballots and records from more than 300 local elections offices found that almost every instance of voter fraud was committed by individuals acting alone and not the result of a massive, coordinated conspiracy to rig the election. The cases involved both registered Democrats and Republicans, and

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the culprits were almost always caught before the fraudulent ballot was counted.

Some of the cases appeared to be intentional attempts to commit fraud, while others seemed to involve either administrative error or voter confusion, including the case of one Wisconsin man who cast a ballot for Trump but said he was unaware that he was ineligible to vote because he was on parole for a felony conviction.

The AP review also produced no evidence to support Trump's claims that states tabulated more votes than there are registered voters.

Biden won Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and their 79 Electoral College votes by a combined 311,257 votes out of 25.5 million ballots cast. The disputed ballots represent just 0.15% of his victory margin in those states.

TRUMP'S OWN ADMINISTRATION FOUND NO WIDESPREAD FRAUD

Trump was repeatedly advised by members of his own administration that there was no evidence of widespread fraud.

Nine days after the 2020 election, the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued a statement saying, "The November 3rd election was the most secure in American history." The statement was co-written by the groups representing the top elections officials in every state.

Less than three weeks later, then-Attorney General William Barr declared that a Justice Department investigation had not uncovered evidence of the widespread voter fraud that Trump had claimed was at the center of a massive conspiracy to steal the election. Barr, who had directed U.S. attorneys and FBI agents across the country to pursue "substantial allegations" of voting irregularities, said, "To date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election."

The Jan. 6 House committee report details additional instances where administration officials and White House staff refuted Trump's various allegations of voter fraud.

COURTS HEARD TRUMP'S LEGAL CHALLENGES AND REJECTED THEM

The Trump campaign and its backers pursued numerous legal challenges to the election in court and alleged a variety of voter fraud and misconduct. The cases were heard and roundly rejected by dozens of courts at both state and federal levels, including by judges whom Trump appointed.

One of them, U.S. Circuit Judge Stephanos Bibas, was on a federal panel that declined a request to stop Pennsylvania from certifying its results, saying, "Voters, not lawyers, choose the president. Ballots, not briefs, decide elections."

The U.S. Supreme Court also rejected several efforts in the weeks after Election Day to overturn the election results in various battleground states that Biden won.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES ABOUT VOTING MACHINES WERE UNFOUNDED

Many of the claims Trump and his team advanced about a stolen election dealt with the equipment voters used to cast their ballots.

At various times, Trump and his legal team falsely alleged that voting machines were built in Venezuela at the direction of President Hugo Chavez, who died in 2013; that machines were designed to delete or flip votes cast for Trump; and that the U.S. Army had seized a computer server in Germany that held secrets to U.S. voting irregularities.

None of those claims was ever substantiated or corroborated. CISA's joint statement released after the election said, "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes or was in any way compromised."

Nonetheless, many of these and other unfounded claims were repeated on Fox News, both by members of the Trump team as well as by some of the network's on-air personalities. Dominion Voting Systems sued the network for \$1.6 billion, claiming the outlet's airing of these allegations amounted to defamation.

Records of internal communications at Fox News unearthed in the case showed that the network aired the claims even though its biggest stars, including Sean Hannity and Tucker Carlson, as well as the company's chairman, Rupert Murdoch, did not believe they were true.

Dominion and Fox News settled out of court for \$787.5 million.

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CLAIMS INVOLVING SUITCASES AND BALLOT MULES ARE DEBUNKED

Trump and his supporters also have claimed that a number of other factors contributed to a broader effort to steal the presidential election.

One theory advanced by both Trump and one of his lawyers, Rudy Giuliani, is that "suitcases" full of fraudulent ballots in Georgia cost Trump the election there.

Then-Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen told the Jan. 6 House committee that he personally reviewed the video purported to show the fraud allegation in question. He recounted telling Trump: "It wasn't a suitcase. It was a bin. That's what they use when they're counting ballots. It's benign."

State and county officials also had confirmed the containers were regular ballot containers on wheels, which are used in normal ballot processing.

But a week later, Trump publicly repeated the suitcase theory, saying, "There is even security camera footage from Georgia that shows officials telling poll watchers to leave the room before pulling suitcases of ballots out from under the tables and continuing to count for hours."

Richard Donoghue, the former acting deputy attorney general, told the Jan. 6 committee that, days later, he told Trump that "these allegations about ballots being smuggled in in a suitcase and run through the machine several times, it was not true. ... We looked at the video, we interviewed the witnesses." But Trump continued to repeat the false claim.

Another debunked claim spinning a tale of 2,000 so-called ballot mules was featured in a film that ran in hundreds of theaters last spring. The film alleges that Democrat-aligned individuals were paid to illegally collect and drop ballots in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. But the AP determined that the allegations were based on flawed analysis of cellphone location data and drop box surveillance footage.

Today in History: August 28, Martin Luther King Jr. delivers "I Have a Dream" speech

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Aug. 28, the 240th day of 2023. There are 125 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 28, 1955, Emmett Till, a Black teenager from Chicago, was abducted from his uncle's home in Money, Mississippi, by two white men after he had supposedly whistled at a white woman; he was found brutally slain three days later.

On this date:

In 1862, the Second Battle of Bull Run began in Prince William County, Virginia, during the Civil War; the result was a Confederate victory.

In 1922, the first radio commercial aired on station WEAJ in New York City. The 10-minute advertisement was for the Queensboro Realty Co., which had paid a fee of \$100.

In 1941, Japan's ambassador to the U.S., Kichisaburo Nomura, presented a note to President Franklin D. Roosevelt from Japan's prime minister, Prince Fumimaro Konoye, expressing a desire for improved relations.

In 1963, more than 200,000 people listened as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In 1968, police and anti-war demonstrators clashed in the streets of Chicago as the Democratic National Convention nominated Hubert H. Humphrey for president.

In 1988, 70 people were killed when three Italian stunt planes collided during an air show at the U.S. Air Base in Ramstein (RAHM'-shtyn), West Germany.

In 1996, the troubled 15-year marriage of Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana officially ended with the issuing of a divorce decree.

In 2005, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin ordered everyone in the city to evacuate after Hurricane Katrina grew to a monster storm.

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In 2016, six scientists completed a yearlong Mars simulation in Hawaii, where they emerged after living in a dome in near isolation on a Mauna Loa mountain.

In 2020, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, Shinzo Abe, said he was stepping down because a chronic illness had resurfaced. (Abe was assassinated in July 2022.)

Ten years ago: A military jury sentenced Maj. Nidal Hasan to death for the 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood that claimed 13 lives and left 30 people injured. Hasan had been convicted five days earlier, and did not present a case during his trial's penalty phase. On the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial, President Barack Obama stood on the same steps as he challenged new generations to seize the cause of racial equality.

Five years ago: A white former police officer, Roy Oliver, was convicted of murder for fatally shooting an unarmed black 15-year-old boy, Jordan Edwards, while firing into a car packed with teenagers in suburban Dallas; Oliver was sentenced the following day to 15 years in prison. Puerto Rico's governor raised the official death toll from Hurricane Maria in the U.S. territory from 64 to 2,975, after an independent study found that the number of people who died in the aftermath of the 2017 storm had been severely undercounted. Mourners filed into an African American history museum in Detroit for a public viewing for the late Aretha Franklin, part of a week of commemorations for the soul legend.

One year ago: Claims intensified between Russia and Ukraine of attacks at or near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest. The reports brought fears that the fighting could damage the plant, which Russia seized soon after the war between the two nations began. Ukrainian officials said Russian strikes had hit areas across the Dnieper River from the plant. A mint condition Mickey Mantle baseball card sold for \$12.6 million, a record for a piece of sports memorabilia. Taylor Swift won video of the year and Billie Eilish won song of the year at the MTV Video Music Awards.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Sonny Shroyer is 88. Actor Marla Adams is 85. Actor Ken Jenkins is 83. Former Defense Secretary William S. Cohen is 83. Actor David Soul is 80. Former MLB manager and player Lou Piniella (pihn-EHL'-uh) is 80. Actor Barbara Bach is 77. Actor Debra Mooney is 76. Singer Wayne Osmond (The Osmonds) is 72. Actor Daniel Stern is 66. Olympic gold medal figure skater Scott Hamilton is 65. Actor John Allen Nelson is 64. Actor Emma Samms is 63. Actor Jennifer Coolidge is 62. Movie director David Fincher is 61. Actor Amanda Tapping is 58. Country singer Shania (shah-NY'-uh) Twain is 58. Actor Billy Boyd is 55. Actor Jack Black is 54. Actor Jason Priestley is 54. Actor Daniel Goddard (TV: "The Young and the Restless") is 52. Olympic gold medal swimmer Janet Evans is 52. Actor J. August Richards is 50. Rock singer-musician Max Collins (Eve 6) is 45. Actor Carly Pope is 43. Country singer Jake Owen is 42. Country singer LeAnn Rimes is 41. Actor Kelly Thiebaud is 41. Actor Alfonso Herrera is 40. Actor Sarah Roemer is 39. Actor Armie Hammer is 37. Rock singer Florence Welch (Florence and the Machine) is 37. Actor Shalita Grant is 35. Country-pop singer Cassadee Pope (TV: "The Voice") is 34. Actor Katie Findlay is 33. Actor/singer Samuel Larsen is 32. Actor Kyle Massey is 32. Actor Quvenzhané (kwuh-VEHN'-zhah-nay) Wallis is 20. Reality TV star Alana Thompson, AKA "Honey Boo Boo," is 18.