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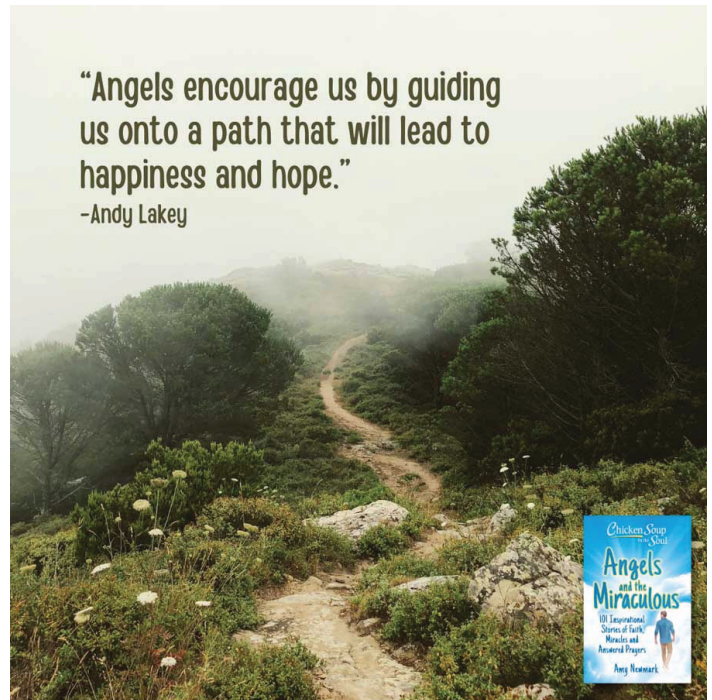
Tuesday, Sept. 26

Senior: Baked pork chop, cream noodles, California blend, apple sauce, Whole wheat bread.

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



"Angels encourage us by guiding us onto a path that will lead to happiness and hope."

-Andy Lakey

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

Volleyball hosts Great Plains Lutheran. C match at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity.

Youth Football vs. Ellendale at NSU (3rd/4th at 5:30 p.m., 5th/6th at 6:30)

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 27

9:30 a.m. Marching Band at Roncalli Marching Event

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

St. John's Lutheran Bible Study, 2:45 pm.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

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

CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

crossed into Armenia after Azerbaijan seized the territory.

Donald Trump's legal team argued that attempts to disqualify the former president from running for the White House under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment clause violate his freedom of speech, a filing posted in the Colorado court revealed.

British actor David McCallum, best known for his role in the 1960s spy dramas *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and *NCIS*, died at 90.

Former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson fell short of qualifying for the second Republican debate at Ronald Reagan's presidential library in California. Donald Trump will skip the event.

South Korea held its first large-scale military parade in a decade on Armed Forces Day, in a show of force as it takes a tougher approach against nuclear-armed North Korea. Seoul hosted top officials from China and Japan for a meeting to reassure Beijing as the U.S. allies forged deeper cooperation with Washington.

Canada's Sikh community staged small protests against the Indian government across some parts of the country as tensions escalated over the killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian officials have begun actively recruiting fresh brigades to conduct reconnaissance at "tactical depth," on the frontlines in Ukraine, but the Study of War notes that it "remains unclear" how the Kremlin intends to equip the new brigades..

TALKING POINTS

"For 30 years, I have withdrawn thousands of dollars in cash from my personal savings account, which I have kept for emergencies and because of the history of my family facing confiscation in Cuba. These were monies drawn from my personal savings account based on the income I have lawfully derived over those 30 years." New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez claimed his innocence and suggested he would not resign after he and his wife were indicted on bribery charges.

"I am grateful to our allies for fulfilling the agreements! We are looking for new contracts and expanding our supply geography," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said as the first U.S.-made M1 Abrams tanks arrived in Ukraine to help with the nation's counteroffensive against Russia.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

Leaders of the Pacific Islands are scheduled to join a business round table with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen a day after President Joe Biden kicked off a three-day summit in Washington, as the U.S. seeks to ramp up engagement to counter China's growing influence. The leaders will meet with Special Climate Envoy John Kerry.

It's a fairly busy day for corporate events, with Costco Wholesale Corp., Cintas Corp., Ferguson PLC, and Neogen Corp. scheduled to report quarterly earnings.

New home sales and S&P Case-Shiller home price index figures are due from 8:30 a.m. ET. Consumer confidence for September is expected at 10 a.m.

India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar will address the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, followed by meetings with top U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., between September 27 and 30.



Boys win Region 1A Golf Meet

The Groton Area boys golf team won the Region 1A team title at Sisseton on Monday. Pictured left to right are Logan Pearson, tied for 11th with a score of 86; Brevin Flieds, tied for second with a score of 80; Carter Simon, 10th place with a score of 85; Jace Johnson, ninth place with a score of 84; Jayden Schwan, 43rd, with a score of 105; and Coach Joel Guthmiller. Groton Area won the team title with a score of 47 followed by Sioux Valley with 50, Aberdeen Roncalli 56, Flandreau 59, Madison 61, Milbank 64, Dell Rapids 85, Tri-Valley 86 and Sisseton 135. The state tournament will be held October 1-2 at Hart Ranch in Rapid City. (Courtesy Photo)

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Gilbert places fourth at Groton Invite

Ryelle Gilbert placed fourth at the Groton Invitational cross country meet held Monday at the Olive Grove Golf Course. She ran the 5K race in 22:08.16. Sydney Holmes was 15th with a time of 24:45.92; Emily Clark was 24th with a time of 32:55.32.

In the boys division, Gavin Knoll finished 22nd with a time of 22:38.33; Nathan Unzen was 30th with a time of 23:58.33; Kason Oswald was 37th with a time of 29:37.21; and Logan Clocksene was 41st with a time of 36:41.82.

In the boys junior varsity 3K race, Garrett Schultz was 14th with a time of 13:54.37.

Munchkin Run Results

Grades K-2nd Girls

1st – Anna Fliehs

2nd – Maryn Sombke

3rd – Calli Wilkinson

Grades K-2nd Boys

1st – Freddy Cole

2nd – Bo Fliehs

3rd – Quinton Ronning

Grades 3-5 Girls

1st – Andi Iverson

2nd – Avery Huber

3rd – Ryan Hanson

Grades 3-5 Boys

1st – Henry Pharis

2nd – Knox Mulder

3rd – Rae Fliehs

A 28 volley features highlights Groton's win over Florence/Henry



Rylee Dunker

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Area's volleyball team avenged an earlier loss to Florence-Henry with a 3-0 win over the Falcons. The match was played Monday at Florence.

The first set featured a volley that lasted 1:40 with 28 volleys culminating with a kill at the net by Rylee Dunker that gave Groton a 17-14 lead. The set was tied nine times with six lead changes. Groton Area had an eight-point run to take a 21-14 lead and went on for the 25-29 win. The second set was tied four times with just the one lead change when Groton took a 2-1 lead and never trailed for the rest of the set en route to a 25-21 win. The third set was tied twice early on and Groton Area never trailed to post a 25-12 third set win.

Rylee Dunker was 22 of 24 in attacks with 10 kills and had one block; Sydney Liecht was 29 of 33 in attacks with 12 digs, had nine kills, was 18 of 21 in serving with three ace serves and had one block; Anna Fjeldheim had 10 digs, was 17 of 22 in attacks with nine kills, had two assists and one ace serve; Faith Traphagen had four kills; Chesney Weber had three kills and was 15 of 15 in serving with one ace serve; Elizabeth Fliehs had 33 assists and three kills; Carly Guthmiller had 14 digs and was 10 of 10 in serving with two ace serves, Laila Roberts had one kill and Jerica Locke had one ace serve.

Caylin Kelly, who had her 1,000th kill in a previous match, had 14 kills for Florence-Henry with 43 of 45 attacks and had two blocks. Taylor Watson had five kills and Kate Hulscher had four kills and five blocks.

Ryan Tracy provided the play-by-play calling on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bary Keith at Harr Motors, BK Custom Ts & More, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency and Locke Electric.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-10 and 25-6. Talli Wright had two kills and three ace serves, Emerlee Jones had three kills, Sydney Locke had two ace serves, Chesney Weber had two kills and two ace serves, Kella Tracy had three kills, one ace serve and one block, Jaedyn Penning had two kills and two ace serves and Emma Kutter had seven kills.

Ryan Tracy provided the commentary on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Brad and Pam Hanson.

Groton Area won the C match, 25-11 and 25-9. McKenna Tietz had two kills and two ace serves, Emerlee Jones had six kills and two ace serves, Estella Sanchez had one ace serve, Taryn Traphagen had one kill and two ace serves, Teagan Hanten had one kill and one ace serve, Liby Althoff had two kills and five ace serves, Hannah Sandness had two kills and three ace serves and Avery Crank had two ace serves. The Falcons had three kills and one ace serve during the match.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by the White House Inn.

The Tigers had a super clean-sweep with seventh and eighth grade wins as well.

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Anna Fjeldheim
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Elizabeth Flihs
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Sydney Leicht
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Carly Guthmiller
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)




Jerica Locke
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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JIM CAVIEZEL



S O U N D O F

FREEDOM

A FILM BY ALEJANDRO MONTEVERDE

BASED ON THE INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY

ANGEL STUDIOS PRESENTS A SANTA FE FILMS PRODUCTION AN EDUARDO VERÁSTEGUI PRODUCTION "SOUND OF FREEDOM" JIM CAVIEZEL WITH MIRA SORVINO AND BILL CAMP
CASTING BY DEANNA BRIGIDI, CSA MUSIC BY JAVIER NAVARRETE EDITED BY F. BRIAN SCOFIELD DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GORKA GÓMEZ ANDREU AEC PRODUCED BY EDUARDO VERÁSTEGUI
EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY JAIME HERNÁNDEZ WRITTEN BY ROD BARR & ALEJANDRO MONTEVERDE DIRECTED BY ALEJANDRO MONTEVERDE angel.com/freedom

ANGEL STUDIOS

Sunday, Oct. 1 - 6:30 p.m.
C & MA Church, 706 N. Main St., Groton
Tickets are \$5 at the door for Teens and Adults
A children's movie/activity will be provided
downstairs for ages 12 and under

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Groton Community Transit

P.O. Box 693
205 E. 2nd Ave.
Groton, SD 57445

Dear Groton family,

Thank you, Thank you, for your loyalty and support through all of these years! We appreciate everyone of you!!

Although we have tried our best to keep the expenses low, our operating costs have increased significantly due to global factors in recent times. After carefully reviewing the finances, we have made a tough decision of increasing our transportation prices.

The change will take effect on Oct. 1, 2023 our rides within the town of Groton will be \$2 per ride, \$4 roundtrip. And, medical rides to Aberdeen from Groton will be \$20 roundtrip. Until then, you can take benefit of the old prices. We will honor old prices till Sept. 30, 2023!

We also offer a discounted pass for \$30 which includes 22 one way rides within Groton area!

We are a non-profit transportation service for the needs of all age groups of people!

As always, thank you for your loyalty and we thank you for your understanding and continued support!

Sincerely,

Dam Hansen & Eugenia Strom

Groton Transit

Steve Smith, Sherry Koehler, Topper Tostad, Dick Kolker

The Pantry receives first Feeding South Dakota shipment

by Dorene Nelson

The Pantry has long been Nancy Larsen's dream for the City of Groton. "There has to be a place where folks can go to get some groceries for their family," Larsen insisted. "I am so excited that this dream became a reality in April, 2022!"

"Enrich Groton, LLC, is an organization that started the Pantry and Common Cents Community Thrift Store," she explained. "With the help of Enrich, funds are raised at the Thrift Store, with numerous clothing and household donations, financial donations from the Groton community, from local churches, and from financial support from Thrivent Financial."

"We have a thriving, safe place for families to come for groceries," Larsen added. "The store is staffed by volunteers on Monday's from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Tuesday's from 4 to 8 p.m."

"The Pantry is set up for folks to visit on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis, based upon their needs," she listed. "We have signs posted for quantities that can be selected on each visit, based upon family size. We are very thankful for fresh produce that has been provided by community members."



Standing on the tail gate of the truck is the driver Brian Samuelson

Standing by the truck are Diane Warrington, Pat Miller, David Miller, Nancy Larsen, Karen Babcock, Feeding South Dakota Relations Coordinator Karen Webber-Boyer, and Topper Tastad. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)

"The next project that we needed to start was getting involved with the Feeding South Dakota organization," Larsen stated. "We have been successful with getting the Senior Nutrition Boxes program to come to Groton for area senior citizens. This can include Conde, Ferney, Claremont, Andover, Bristol areas, etc."

"To qualify, you must be 60 years old and meet the income guidelines as set by the Feeding South Dakota program," she explained. "This has become a reality with the first delivery of Senior Boxes on September 25th. The delivery of these boxes will be occurring every month."

"We have also been able to order some foods through Feeding South Dakota to help support the Pantry," Larsen said. "The food varieties that can be ordered depend upon what is donated to the Feeding South Dakota program and from the Feeding America program."

The Groton Pantry is managed by Nancy Larsen (605-397-7097) and Pat Miller (605-397-7523) and Common Cents Community Thrift Store manager Diane Warrington (605-216-2350). If you have any questions on any of these programs, want to make a donation, or would like a tour, please contact any of these three individuals listed above.



Pat Miller, semitruck driver Brian Samuelson, and Nancy Larsen with the first delivery of senior boxes. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)

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Food donation to the Pantry from the Groton Senior Citizens organization.

Back Row: Julie Shilhanek, Bruce Shilhanek, Richard Donovan, David Kleinsasser, Sarge Likness, Tony Goldade, and Bev Sombke

Front Row: Marilyn Thorson, Elda Stange, Ruby Donovan, and Pat Larson

Absent: Darlene Fisher (Photo by Dorene Nelson)

Senior Citizens president Ruby Donovan presents a thank you gift to Dorene Nelson for securing additional funding from Thrivent Financial for their donations to the Pantry.



Service Notice: Helen "Pat" Nehls



Services for Helen Patricia "Pat" Nehls will be 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, September 27th at St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Craig Grams will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services.

Pat passed away September 20th at Avera St. Lukes Hospital, Aberdeen.

Helen Patricia was born on August 18, 1938 to Thelmer and Marie (Akre) Vig at the family farm near Veblen. She attended and graduated from Veblen High School. Pat continued her education at Northern State, where she earned her teaching degree. She taught elementary school for 46 years at Groton Area Elementary. Pat was united in marriage with Carroll Lee "Spike" Nehls and together they were blessed with two sons.

Pat was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. She will forever be remembered for her love of sweets, diet coke and her many years as a teacher. She touched the lives of countless children, as a first grade teacher. Pat and Spike were both avid sports fans and rarely missed a home game, whether that was basketball, baseball, football or track.

Celebrating her life are her sons, Scott (Susan) Nehls of Tucson, Arizona, Lance (Arlene) Nehls of Tucson, Arizona, four grandchildren, Alexa Brown, Lacey (Isaak) Matzdorff, Logan Nehls, Brock Nehls, and her sister, Karen (Kent) Elliott of Mina. Pat also leaves behind many dear friends, including Jan Hoffman, Deb McKiver and Lance & Kristie Hawkins.

Preceding her in death were her parents and her husband in 2021.

Honorary Casketbearers will be Pat's Grandchildren: Alexa Brown, Lacey Nehls., Logan Nehls and Brock Nehls.

Casketbearers will be Dennis Flihs, Dale Grenz, Lance Hawkins, Linn Vig, Neil Vig and Brad Elliott.

Family requests that Tiger gear be worn for the service.

www.paetznick-garness.com

The Life of Maxine Frances Voight 1928 – 2023



Born in Aberdeen, SD, Maxine Frances (Schott) Voight passed away peacefully on August 8, 2023, in Sunnyvale, CA. Maxine grew up near Groton, daughter of Walter and Rebecca (Daly) Schott, and sister to Frances. Her early childhood was spent on her grandparents' farm. She attended a local one-room schoolhouse (initially transported via horse and buggy) until her father became a bulk oil dealer, and the family moved into Groton. While her parents ran the local Mobil Oil business, Maxine spent many hours working at the gas station.

Upon graduation from Groton High School (1946), Maxine attended Northern State Normal College. She received a certificate to teach in country schools and taught seven children in first through fifth grades.

Maxine was married on August 20, 1948, to a local farmer, Duane A. Voight (Butch). She and Butch spent 56 years together living in New Mexico, farming in SD, and locating to Santa Clara, CA in 1956. After Butch's death in 2004 she lived independently until 2020 when she moved to a senior community. She had four children: Candy (Jim), Vaughn (Bucky), Bing and Drew (Donna); six grandchildren: Larrissa, Jerrod (Victoria), Bridget, Dustin (Kirsten), Lindsey (Christian) and Meghan (Alex); and three great-grandchildren: Kyndra, Isla and Mateo.

Maxine enjoyed community classes in tailoring, upholstery, flower arranging, and self-improvement. She loved cards, board games, bunco, and dancing a waltz, cha-cha or square dancing with Butch. She traveled to foreign countries, visited states from coast to coast, and frequently returned to her SD roots, family and friends.

As a homemaker and volunteer and advocate for schools, she was a 17-year PTA volunteer, President, and school volunteer, 4-H and Girl Scout leader; volunteer with YMCA, Little League, the Parkinson's Support Group, and election boards.

Maxine dedicated many hours preserving fruit and jams from fruit trees in the garden. She created delicious breads, pies and pastries, and kept the cookie jar fully stocked. She kept up daily with TV news and subscribed to local newspapers and the Groton Independent for hometown news.

Maxine recently celebrated her 95th birthday with a large celebration of family and friends.

Maxine was preceded in death by her parents, Walter and Rebecca, sister Frances Boyer, and beloved husband Butch. She will forever live in the hearts of all who were fortunate to know her. A celebration of life was held on September 2 at Los Gatos Memorial Cemetery, San Jose, CA.

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Week 5 SDFBCA Coaches Poll

11AAA

Sioux Falls Lincoln – 123 (24) 5-0
Bishop O’Gorman – 92 4-1
Sioux Falls Jefferson – 63 (1) 4-1
Harrisburg – 55 3-2
Brandon Valley – 37 3-2
RV: Sioux Falls Roosevelt 2

11AA

Pierre – 125 (25) 5-0
Yankton – 98 4-1
Tea Area – 71- 3-2
Watertown – 41 3-2
Spearfish – 25 4-1
RV: Aberdeen Central 9, Sturgis 2, Huron 1

11A

Dell Rapids – 125 (25) 5-0
West Central – 99 5-0
Canton – 67 3-2
Dakota Valley – 31 4-1
Sioux Falls Christian – 29 3-2
RV: Lennox 27

11B

Sioux Valley – 99 (9) 6-0
Winner – 95 (13) 5-0
Deuel – 34 6-0
Hot Springs – 33 (1) 5-1
Elk Point-Jefferson – 32 4-1
RV: W/WS/SC 16, Tri Valley 11, BEE 10, Aberdeen
Roncalli 3

9AA

1. Parkston (21) 104 6-0
2. Hamlin (1) 81 6-0
3. Howard (1) 64 5-1
4. Hanson 35 3-2
5. Elkton-Lake Benton 21 5-1
RV: Wall 16, Platte-Geddes 13

9A

1. Warner (15) 90 5-0
2. Canistota (5) 81 5-1
3. Philip 45 5-0
4. Alcester-Hudson 38 6-0
5. Harding Co./Bison 18 6-0
RV: Gregory 13, Wolsey-Wessington 9, Deu-
brook Area 5

9B

1. Faulkton Area (18) 101 5-1
2. De Smet (3) 91 4-1
3. Avon 58 5-1
4. Hitchcock-Tulare (2) 36 4-2
5. Dell Rapids St. Mary 33 4-2
RV: Corsica-Stickney 19, Herreid-Selby Area 11

Name Released in Jackson County Fatal Crash

What: Single-motorcycle fatal crash
Where: S.D. Highway 44, mile marker 122, 1 mile east of Interior, S.D.
When: 6:28 p.m., Thursday, September 21, 2023

Driver: Kent Kammerich, 62, Boonville, MO., Fatal injuries
Vehicle: 2006 Suzuki motorcycle

Jackson County, S.D.- A Boonville, Missouri man has been identified as the person who died Thursday evening in a single motorcycle crash 1 mile east of Interior, S.D.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2006 Suzuki motorcycle was traveling eastbound on S.D. Highway 44 near mile marker 122. The Suzuki failed to navigate a curve and left the roadway and struck a fence. The driver was separated from the motorcycle and sustained fatal injuries.

The driver of the Suzuki motorcycle, Kent Kammerich, age 62, of Boonville, MO., was pronounced deceased on the scene.
He was wearing a helmet.

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

Custer State Park to Host Annual Buffalo Roundup and Arts Festival

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) will host the 58th annual Buffalo Roundup and 30th annual Arts Festival in Custer State Park this week. The Buffalo Roundup begins at 9:30 a.m. MDT on Friday, Sept. 29. The Arts Festival will run from Thursday, Sept. 28, through Saturday, Sept. 30.

"It is going to be another awesome year for the Buffalo Roundup," said Lydia Austin, Visitor Services Coordinator for Custer State Park. "In addition to the Roundup itself, the Arts Festival, and the fall season in the park make for a fantastic week as a whole."

The parking areas for the Roundup, located near the corrals along the Wildlife Loop Road, open at 6:15 a.m. MDT and close at 9:30 a.m. MDT on Sept. 29. For safety reasons, spectators need to remain in the viewing areas until all the buffalo are corralled which typically occurs around noon.

The annual Arts Festival runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. MDT on Thursday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. The Arts Festival takes place near the State Game Lodge and features western and bluegrass entertainment along with numerous vendors.

A state park entrance license is required on Thursday and Saturday, but there is no cost to attend the Buffalo Roundup or Arts Festival on Friday. Share the experience by using #SDintheField, #HifromSD, and #BuffaloRoundup when posting images to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

Next year's Buffalo Roundup will be held Friday, Sept. 27, 2024.

To learn more about the event, visit custerstatepark.com, call 605.255.4515 or email CusterStatePark@state.sd.us



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Johnson says members who 'love chaos' could hurt Republicans in shutdown fight

Congressman laments rising 'knucklehead quotient' in D.C.

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 3:37 PM

South Dakota's lone U.S. representative said Monday that a handful of his fellow Republicans with extreme positions could hurt the party's position in negotiations on a potential government shutdown.

Congress does not have a deal yet on a short-term spending bill to avert a partial government shutdown before the new fiscal year begins Sunday.

Rep. Dusty Johnson said if a small group of his own party's representatives do not help pass a House Republican proposal to fund the government, he and other Republicans will work across the aisle. That, Johnson said, "will ultimately mean that a far less conservative solution will be the one implemented."

Johnson made the comments in an interview with South Dakota Searchlight during a public event Monday morning in Colton.

House members left Washington, D.C., on Thursday amid deep disagreements about how much the federal government should spend and what policy restrictions should be included in full-year spending bills as well as a stopgap measure.

"There are seven or eight Republican members of Congress who say they won't vote for a bill to fund the government, under any circumstances," Johnson said Monday. And with 221 Republicans in the House and 218 votes needed to pass legislation, he added, "those eight holdouts can doom any Republican effort to keep the government open."

Johnson did not call out any members by name. On Thursday, the latest effort to avert the shutdown by starting debate on a defense spending bill failed on a 212-216 vote. Six Republicans voted no: Eli Crane of Arizona, Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, Andy Biggs of Arizona, Dan Bishop of North Carolina, Matt Rosendale of Montana and Tom Cole of Oklahoma. Colorado Rep. Ken Buck and South Carolina Rep. Ralph Norman both voted yes after their earlier opposition.

Johnson said he has grown especially frustrated with "seven or eight" members after he helped negotiate a proposal with the Freedom Caucus that he said "would have secured the border and kept the government open."

"I don't understand Republicans who opposed that measure," Johnson said.



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, speaks with students on May 19, 2023, in Sioux Falls. (Joshua Haiar/SD Searchlight)

Haiar/SD Searchlight)

When asked about their motive, Johnson said some of those Republican members “love chaos.”
“There are some who want to burn everything down, and who somehow, in their misguided thinking, believe that will make America better. They’re wrong.”

He said others may see opportunity in the chaos.

“Some politicians may believe they can impact the 2024 presidential election by trying to force more failure on the current government,” Johnson said.

He added that some politicians apparently do not understand the costs that a shutdown “imposes on the American people.”

“Government shutdowns are stupid, and they hurt real people,” Johnson said. “The politicians don’t get hurt during a shutdown.”

More than 3.5 million federal employees and military personnel — many in the Washington, D.C., area but also scattered across the states and around the globe — would be affected by a shutdown.

Most of the workers would be furloughed and go without paychecks during the shutdown. Some would have to work without pay because of the nature of their jobs, like members of the military, law enforcement officers, air traffic controllers and TSA officers. Those federal employees would get back pay once the shutdown ended.

Johnson noted potential impacts for people served by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Internal Revenue Service, the Farm Service Agency and the Indian Health Service.

“Anyone who thinks it should be OK for sailors, soldiers, airmen and Marines to not be paid for their work is foolish,” Johnson said. “Anybody who thinks disrupting the lives of regular Americans by telling them they aren’t able to get a knee surgery at the VA, they’re not able to visit their national parks, they’re not able to access services from the IRS, FSA or IHS, is being foolish.”

Johnson said part of the problem is a decline in the number of good people running for public office because they do not view it as “the highest and best use of their efforts anymore.”

“That does mean the knucklehead quotient in D.C. has gone up a bit in recent years,” he said. “That makes it harder to run a country.”

— *States Newsroom’s D.C. Bureau contributed to this report.*

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

Proposed nursing home staffing standards are ‘disaster waiting to happen,’ industry reps say

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 5:22 PM

PIERRE — Proposed federal staffing standards for nursing homes that accept Medicaid would be catastrophic for South Dakota facilities, industry representatives warn.

The South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations and South Dakota Health Care Association both presented information to legislators at Thursday’s committee meeting at the Capitol on the sustainability of long-term care in the state.

The rules would require a registered nurse be on duty 24/7 – up from the current requirement of eight hours a day, seven days a week – and would require facilities have enough nursing staff to provide each resident with at least 0.55 hours of registered nurse care and 2.45 hours of nurse aid care every day.

Just over 5% of South Dakota nursing homes currently meet the proposed minimum staffing standards, explained SDHCA Executive Director Mark Deak. That would mean around 95% of South Dakota facilities would have to hire additional nursing staff.

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The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimate around 75% of nursing homes in the United States would need to increase hiring to achieve the minimum staffing requirements.

The standards would add to burdens nursing homes have faced in recent years, including high costs due to pandemic-related regulations and hiring travel nurses to fill open positions, plus low state reimbursement rates for Medicaid, said SDAHO Chief Operating Officer Tammy Hatting and Deak.

"This really is a disaster waiting to happen," Deak said. "The folks we need to be in long-term care are not there to hire. This rule has no money attached to hire them."

The standards are intended to strengthen staffing requirements to provide safer, more quality patient care, balancing the changes against the "practicalities of implementation and costs," according to CMS. While well

intentioned, Hatting said, the rules would add more red tape to an industry that's already wrapped in it.

"The staffing mandate will lead to nursing home closures," Hatting told South Dakota Searchlight. "We're already having a hard time staffing positions and now they're coming in and forcing an unfunded mandate. Rates will go up, which means people won't be able to afford nursing home care through private pay, and more people will end up on Medicaid. It'll end up costing everybody more money: the nursing homes, the patient and the state."

Eighteen nursing homes have closed in South Dakota since 2015, often citing workforce and reimbursement issues. Three South Dakota nursing homes have closed or have announced they plan to close so far in 2023.

Hatting said her organization will push back on several aspects of the proposed standards, including:

- Removing the 24/7 registered nurse requirement – or at least providing funding and allowing nursing facilities to use telehealth alternatives.
- Including licensed practical nurses, in addition to registered nurses, in the staffing requirements. The proposed rule doesn't include requirements for licensed practical nurses, though South Dakota nursing homes rely on them regularly.
- Redefining which communities are "rural."

Urban facilities would have to comply with the new standards along a faster schedule than rural facilities. "Urban" nursing homes under the CMS proposed language would not only include South Dakota's largest cities like Sioux Falls and Rapid City, but also nursing homes in Alcester, Lead, Marion and New Underwood.

Deak added that the standards would "obliterate" recent accomplishments made by the state. The Legislature last winter approved an increase to a 100% Medicaid cost reimbursement rate for community-support providers that rely on government funding, such as nursing homes. The Legislature revisits and sets reimbursement rates each session.

The increase infused \$49 million into nursing homes, according to the Department of Human Services. In the first month after the new reimbursement rate was implemented, nursing home reimbursements increased by 28.2%.

Deak said the National Health Care Association plans to send 10,000 comments opposing the proposed standards to the federal government by the beginning of November, when the public comment period ends.



South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations Chief Operating Officer Tammy Hatting presents to legislators on Sept. 25, 2023, in Pierre.

(Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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U.S. Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds spoke out against the proposed standards earlier this year. Hatting said she plans to meet with South Dakota's congressional delegation this week to further discuss the impact the rule changes would have on long term care in the state.

"CMS issued a tornado warning," Hatting said. "Tornadoes can wipe out small towns easily. It could veer another way or the weather service could cancel it altogether, but it is impending."

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.

Booze tax should help pay county legal bills, state senator says

Public defense task force adds option of using all state alcohol money for legal aid

BY: JOHN HULT - SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 4:27 PM

Liquor, beer and wine might offer relief to counties stuck paying for alcohol's impact on public safety, if a recommendation from a public defense task force becomes law.

Sen. Jim Mehlhaff, R-Pierre, would like to see the state dedicate its half of the \$18 million collected in alcohol taxes to finance the creation and operation of a state-level public defender's office.

The recommendation was added to a list of funding mechanisms in a final report that the group voted to formalize during its Monday meeting, which took place over Zoom. The creation of a state defense office is the group's primary suggestion. Such an office would handle all abuse and neglect appeals and criminal appeals and cost a little over \$1.4 million to fund with a seven-person staff.

Mehlhaff's idea would see the \$9 million in alcohol tax cash the state

now pumps into its general fund earmarked for that office. Funds beyond the proposed office's \$1.4 million operational needs could be distributed to counties to help cover the cost of indigent legal services.

The proposal lives at the intersection of two summer studies. A separate study group discussed adjusting the alcohol tax math less than two weeks ago. Currently, cities and counties each get a quarter of the money after the state gets its 50% cut. The county funding group suggested giving 50% to the counties and leaving a quarter apiece for the state and cities.

The goal of the indigent legal services task force was to look for ways to make sure defendants who can't afford a lawyer get competent legal services. Mehlhaff told members of that task force that moving booze dollars to a public defense office for distribution to counties would make a notable dent in the \$22 million annual burden they bear for legal services.

"I know that's not the primary focus here, but it is certainly something that both groups are looking at: To try to find a way to help the counties out, and this is something that's eating their lunch on an annual basis," Mehlhaff said.



The Brown County Courthouse is located in Aberdeen and is connected to other county offices, such as the Auditor's Office and the Brown County Jail. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Mehlhoff sat on both summer study groups. He told the county funding group's chair, Huron Sen. Roger Chase, prior to Monday's meeting that he planned to suggest using the state's share of the alcohol tax for public defense. He also told Sen. Jim Bolin of Canton, who proposed sending half the money back to counties.

Neither are directly opposed to his alternative, Mehlhoff said. The other members of the public defense group voted to add it to the list of possible funding sources that will appear in its final report.

The task force signed off on that final report Monday, a draft of which is available online. Aside from Mehlhoff's suggestion and one suggesting a search for federal funding sources, little changed from the group's most recent discussions. Other funding ideas include a one-time payment to counties for public defense, upping the cost charged to defendants for their court-appointed lawyer, and the creation of a reinvestment pool to help counties cover the cost of major cases.

The group also recommended signing a contract with the nonprofit Sixth Amendment Center to gather data on public defense to better inform the lawmakers who may vote on public defense proposals.

That piece will begin immediately and be funded by the state Unified Judicial System, said task force co-chair and State Court Administrator Greg Sattizahn.

"Regardless of what this looks like during session, it's going to be important to have more information," Sattizahn said.

South Dakota is one of just two states that requires counties to cover the entire cost of its constitutional duty to provide a lawyer to those who can't afford one at both the trial and appeals court levels, according to the final task force report. It's also one of six to lack state-level public defense oversight through a state office, commission or board. The final report also notes that South Dakota ranks 49th in the nation for state-level contributions to indigent defense costs.

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

Food benefits for low income families at risk in a government shutdown, White House says

Nearly 14,000 South Dakotans would be affected

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 5:09 PM

WASHINGTON — As Congress barrels toward a partial government shutdown, the White House Monday warned that a program that helps millions of low income families afford healthy food could see substantial cuts.

The White House released a state-by-state breakdown, estimating that nearly 7 million people who rely on the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC, could be at risk of losing funds to purchase select food and receive vouchers for vegetables and fruit. That includes nearly 14,000 South Dakotans.

The program provides financial support for those who are low income and pregnant or nursing, as well as for children up to 5 years old.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said during a Monday White House briefing that WIC recipients could feel the impact of the shutdown within days.

"Millions of those moms, (babies) and young children would see a lack of nutrition assistance," he said.

Vilsack, Iowa's former governor, said some states have leftover WIC benefits and "could extend (WIC) for a week or so."

"The vast majority of WIC participants would see an immediate reduction and elimination of those benefits, which means the nutrition assistance that's provided would not be available," he said.

For example, in Alabama, about 112,000 WIC recipients could lose their benefits, and in Florida, more than 421,000 as well. In Michigan, more than 207,000 recipients could lose their WIC benefits and in North Carolina, it's more than 268,000 WIC recipients.

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Additionally, new eligible participants could face a backlog.

"Without the urgent investment of additional funds, state WIC offices could soon be forced to consider waiting lists for prospective participants — a drastic step not seen in nearly 30 years," Kate Franken, board chair of the National WIC Association, which is the non-profit advocacy arm of WIC, said in a statement.

The impending shutdown comes after President Joe Biden made a deal with Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy earlier this year to raise the debt ceiling. That deal set maximum spending levels for the next fiscal year.

However, only one of the 12 appropriations bills has been passed by the House, and a handful of far-right Republicans are pushing for steeper cuts, even if it means a partial government shutdown.

"House Republicans have turned their backs on the bipartisan budget deal that a large majority of them voted for just a few months ago and proposed a continuing resolution (CR) that makes devastating cuts to programs that millions of hard-working Americans count on," the White House said in a press release.

A continuing resolution, or CR, is regularly used to keep the government funded for weeks or a couple of months while the House and Senate finish work on the 12 annual spending bills.

Without a CR by Saturday, the end of the fiscal year, a partial shutdown will occur and programs that have discretionary funding, like WIC, will lapse.

Funding for WIC is not mandatory spending, meaning the program won't be automatically funded regardless of a government shutdown. It's funded through the Agriculture appropriations bill, which has not been passed by Congress.

The White House criticized the Agriculture appropriations bill the House passed out of its committee that did not include the supplemental funding the Biden administration requested.

"Without the Administration's funding request, states could soon be forced to institute waiting lists for WIC, causing mothers and children to lose access to the vital nutrition assistance," the White House said.

WIC funding is distributed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service to states through a formula. The share of eligible people who participate in WIC can vary between states — for example California, Massachusetts, and Minnesota, have a coverage rate for WIC by over 60%.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.



Fall peppers and chili at Bloomingdale Farmers Market on Nov. 9, 2014, in Washington, D.C. The market accepted Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program benefits coupons. (USDA Photo by Lance Cheung)

Jury awards \$400,000 in Black Hills National Forest gender discrimination case

BY: SETH TUPPER - SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 2:01 PM

A jury awarded \$400,000 in damages Saturday to a former Black Hills National Forest district ranger in her discrimination case against the federal government.

The verdict came after a week-long trial in federal court at Rapid City.

The jury found in favor of Ruth Esperance's claim that she suffered gender discrimination. The jury also found that the Forest Service had not proven Esperance would've been reassigned to a different job regardless of her gender.

Esperance was the ranger of the Black Hills National Forest's Mystic District from 2012 until 2018, when she was reassigned to other duties.

She made a statement in a news release through her Washington, D.C.-based attorney, Daniel K. Gebhardt, of the Solomon Law Firm. The statement referenced the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which includes the Forest Service.

"The Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service now bear the responsibility of taking greater steps to address this part of their culture," Esperance said. She added that "those women suffering in silence at the Forest Service can now be heard and those responsible held accountable."

Many previous allegations of gender discrimination have been lodged against the Ag Department and the Forest Service, including at a 2016 U.S. House committee hearing on the topic. Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Maryland, said during that hearing, "For more than 40 years, the Forest Service has repeatedly faced litigation alleging discrimination against female employees."

Esperance alleged in her lawsuit that she had been subjected to a hostile work environment, excluded from working on special assignments given to male colleagues, excluded from management's communications with male colleagues, subjected to a verbal threat, and had her ideas routinely dismissed in meetings by male managers. She was ultimately reassigned from her district ranger job to another position with decreased authority and duties, and she currently works remotely from Rapid City as a public affairs officer for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest in California.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for South Dakota represents the government in the lawsuit. After South Dakota Searchlight asked whether the government will appeal the verdict, a spokesperson for the office said it does not comment about ongoing litigation.

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



Ruth Esperance, left, and her attorney, Daniel Gebhardt, in front of the federal courthouse in Rapid City. (Courtesy of Daniel Gebhardt/Solomon Law Firm)

Family of famed poet plans to breach century-old monument to unlock mystery inside

Concrete marker near Lemmon honors frontier mountain man Hugh Glass

BY: PAUL HAMMEL - SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 9:36 AM

LINCOLN, Nebraska — After gaining federal permission, the family of a famed poet/author plans to trek to a remote corner of northwest South Dakota in October to retrieve a century-old monument dedicated to a heroic mountain man.

The goal is to finally unlock a mystery hidden inside the monument, erected at the direction of writer John Neihardt as an “altar to courage” of the subject of one of his poems: Hugh Glass, who crawled, limped and paddled 200 miles after being mauled by a bear and left for dead in 1823.

The mauling was depicted in the 2015 movie “The Revenant,” which starred Leonardo DiCaprio as Hugh Glass.

Neihardt wrote that he placed a time capsule in the “bosom” of the concrete monument. The capsule, he wrote, includes an “original manuscript” from him, the author of “Black Elk Speaks,” a million-selling book about the remembrances of a Lakota medicine man.

The monument sits on U.S. Bureau of Reclamation land. The agency recently determined that the Neihardt family rightly owns the monument and gave the OK for the family to remove it from its current site, along Shadehill Reservoir near Lemmon.

Coralie Hughes, a granddaughter of Neihardt, said her family plans to haul it to the Neihardt State Historic Site, a museum dedicated to the poet/author, in Bancroft, Nebraska.

‘No idea’ what will be found

Family members, she said, plan to proceed carefully in breaching the monument after picking it up on Oct. 23-24.

“We have no idea what we’re going to find,” said Hughes from her home in Indiana. “We want to be very careful. We don’t know where the objects are.”

She said it has not been determined exactly when the family will reveal what was inside the time capsule, if it is successfully found. Tentative plans are to do that at the spring conference of the Neihardt Foundation, which is scheduled April 27 at Wayne State College.

Displayed in Bancroft

The monument and its contents will be displayed at the Neihardt center in Bancroft, where the writer



The monument to Hugh Glass, as seen today, at its new location.

(Courtesy of Joseph Weixelman)

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began his work on "The Cycle of the West," a collection of five epic poems about the frontier which included the "Song of Hugh Glass."

"It will be another attraction for our center. There's a great story to go with it," said Marianne Reynolds, the executive director of the Neihardt State Historic Site.

Unlocking the mystery of what's inside the monument will be the culmination of a saga begun in June when a contingent from Wayne State College trekked to Lemmon in response to a challenge issued by Neihardt — to return to the monument site after 100 years, read some poetry, and "celebrate" as mountain men might have.

The original monument was erected by Neihardt and members of a now-defunct "Neihardt Club" at the college, which the author/poet attended and was known in 1923 as Nebraska Normal College. A local rancher and local judge also helped, as did the head of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

Wayne State contingent led by professor

Wayne State history professor Joseph Weixelman, who specialized in Western history, led a contingent of Wayne students.

But the contingent was denied permission to breach the monument, due to uncertainty about who exactly owned it, and who exactly could give permission to break into it.

The concrete monument was originally poured and created on private ranch land, but later, the property was obtained for federal reservoir, on which a park, managed by the State of South Dakota, now sits.

Just recently, the Bureau of Reclamation accepted the ownership claim of Hughes and other Neihardt descendants, and OK'd its removal to the historic site dedicated to Neihardt, the poet laureate in perpetuity of Nebraska.

Bureau spokeswoman Elizabeth Smith said that agency, in consultation with historians and to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, determined that the monument "was not of significance as a federal historic resource."

She said that since the monument was moved sometime after the reservoir was built, "it no longer retains historic integrity" as outlined in the federal act.

'We still own the legend'

Allowing it to be displayed at the Neihardt Center, Smith added, will provide "a long-term public benefit."

Astrid Blumer, the proprietor of the Summerville Store and Cafe, a local gathering spot near the reservoir and monument, said it will be a little sad to see Neihardt's monument removed. But, she said, a larger, state historical marker, erected by the State of South Dakota in the 1970s, will remain.

"So the story will not be forgotten," Blumer said. "And that's what important."

"It's a great story. We still own the legend," she added.

Lemmon recently held its annual Hugh Glass Rendezvous to commemorate the bicentennial of the mauling.

Hughes said that the family's wish is to crack into the monument as a family, and not have a large group looking over their shoulders.

"If you're resorting to hand chisels and brushes, you don't want a herd of people around," she said. "It could easily take two days to chip our way in."

There's some uncertainty about whether anything is left inside the time capsule. The monument was reportedly inundated by floodwaters at least three times as it sat alongside the federal reservoir.

Hughes said it was in total keeping with her grandfather's personality to erect such a monument, then bury a time capsule inside for others to unearth in 100 years.

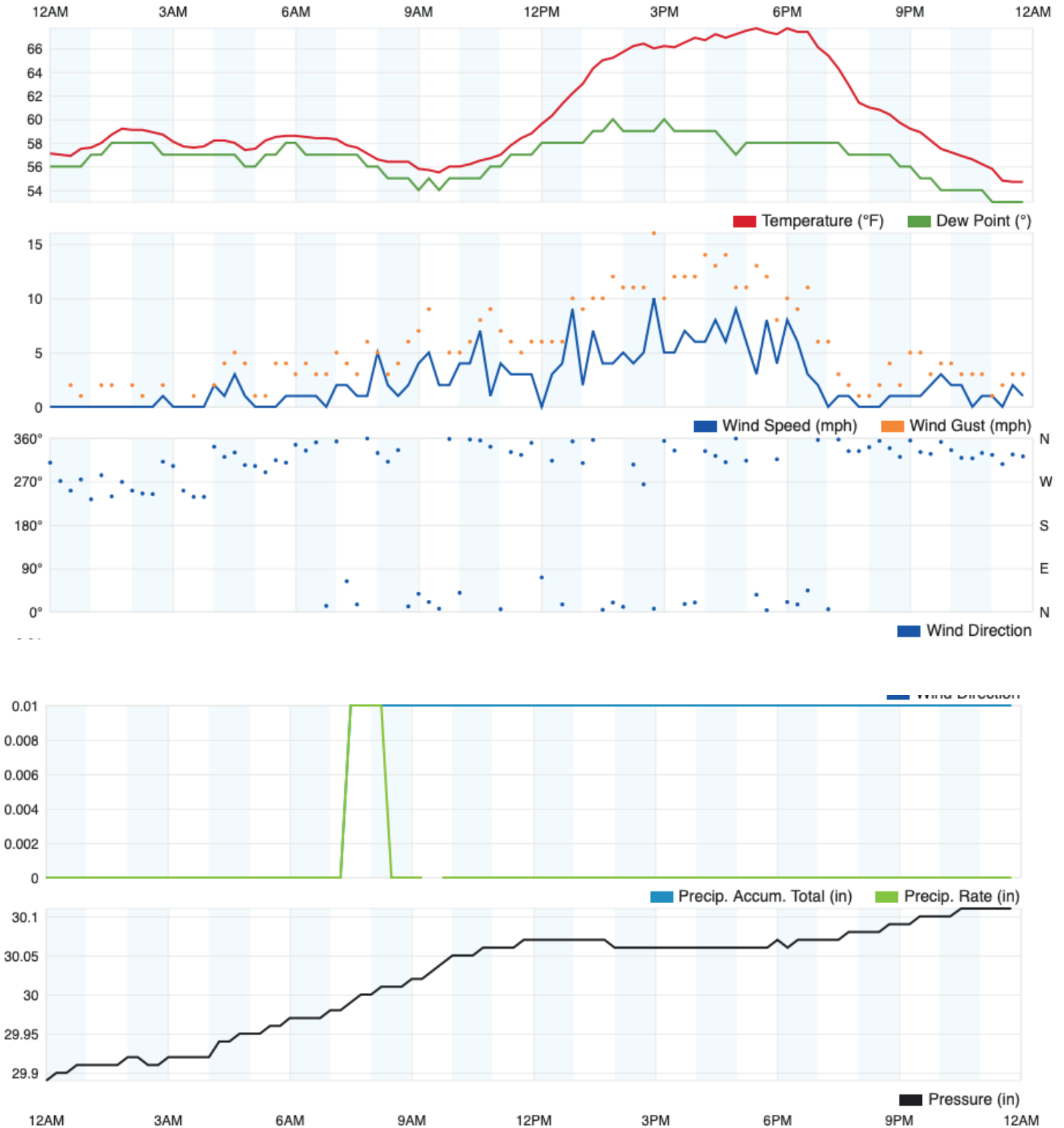
"He had a great sense of humor, and he could make anything into an adventure," she said. "He was so much fun."

This story was originally published by the Nebraska Examiner, which like South Dakota Searchlight is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Nebraska Examiner maintains editorial independence.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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| Tue Sep 26 | Wed Sep 27 | Thu Sep 28 | Fri Sep 29 | Sat Sep 30 | Sun Oct 1 | Mon Oct 2 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 68°F 52°F | 70°F 55°F | 76°F 55°F | 77°F 59°F | 81°F 64°F | 81°F 60°F | 75°F 62°F |
| NNE 10 MPH | ESE 12 MPH | SSE 23 MPH | E 13 MPH | SSE 18 MPH | S 18 MPH | SE 13 MPH |
| | | | | 20% | 30% | 30% |



Morning Fog, Partly to Mostly Cloudy Today

 65-70°

A warming trend is on the way for the end of the work week with highs in 70s and 80s.

 weather.gov/aberdeem
September 26, 2023 4:52 AM

Patchy fog can be expected this morning, especially in northeastern South Dakota. The rest of the day will feature partly to mostly cloudy skies. Highs today will reach the mid 60s, to the lower 70s.

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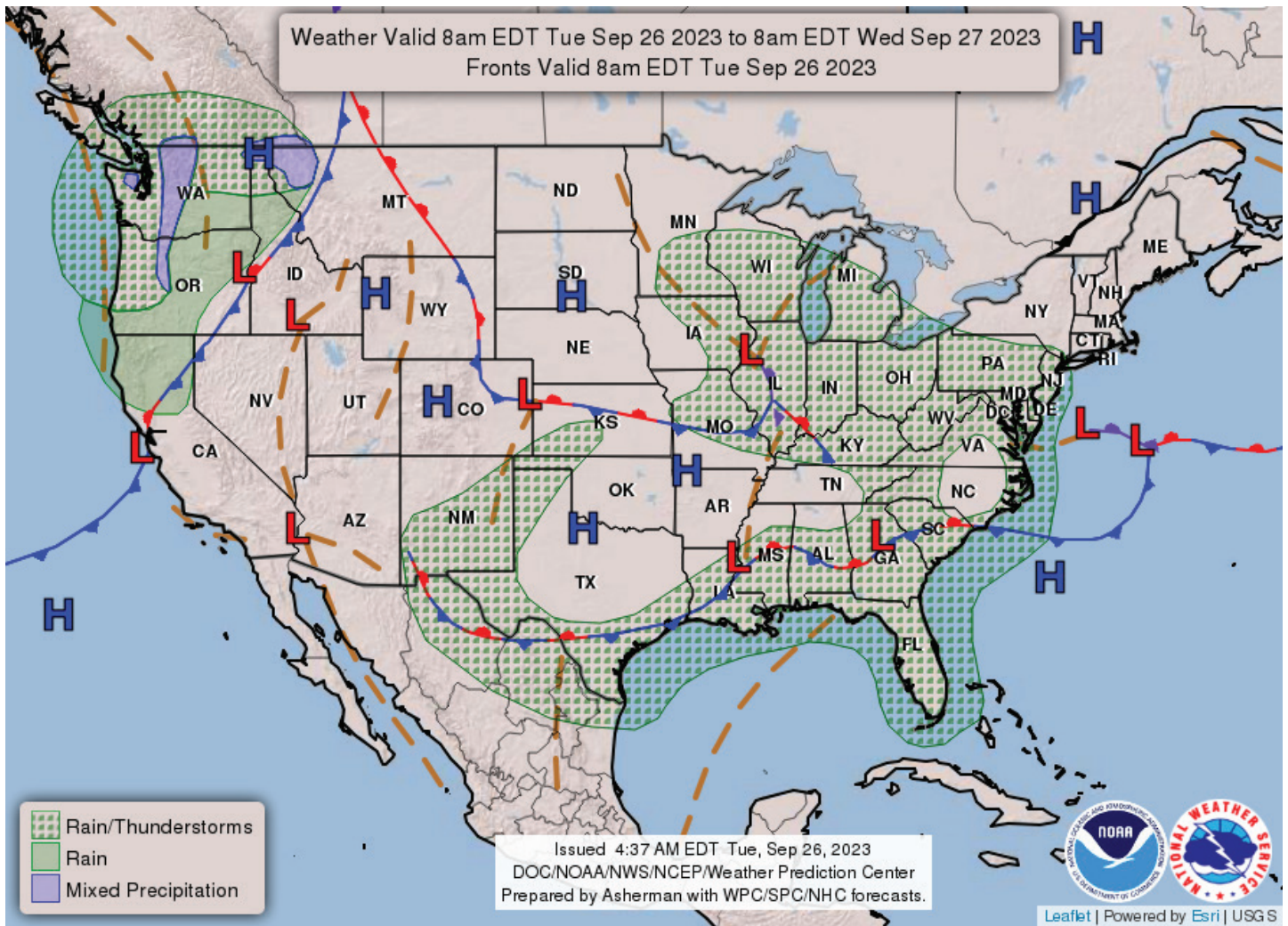
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 68 °F at 5:17 PM
Low Temp: 55 °F at 11:18 PM
Wind: 16 mph at 2:45 PM
Precip: : 0.01

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1974
Record Low: 17 in 1939
Average High: 71
Average Low: 43
Average Precip in Sept.: 1.72
Precip to date in Sept.: 2.79
Average Precip to date: 18.06
Precip Year to Date: 21.38
Sunset Tonight: 7:24:27 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:24:12 AM

Day length: 12 hours, 01 minutes



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Today in Weather History

September 26, 1965: A hard freeze hit most of Minnesota in the early morning causing the loss of millions of bushels of corn and soybeans. Temperatures fell below 20 degrees in the northern part of the state.

September 26, 1981: A tornado touched down in the early morning hours several times east of Vermilion. Two barns received extensive damage.

1898: A school teacher saved 32 children from death in Merritton, Ontario, when she spotted an approaching tornado and led her students to a safe corner. Unfortunately, falling debris killed one of the children and injured several others.

1936: A forest fire burned several miles east of the town of Brandon, Oregon. The fire was far enough away that residents were not particularly worried. A sudden shift in the winds drove the flames westward and through town. The fire, caused by summer drought and fueled by the abundant Gorse Weed found in many of the empty spaces between buildings in Brandon, caused so much destruction that only a handful of structures were left standing when the fire finally died down.

1936: The heaviest snowfall ever recorded in September and the heaviest snowfall ever recorded so early in the season dumped a total of 16.5 inches of snow on downtown Denver and 21.3 inches at Denver Municipal Airport. The 15.0 inches of snow measured from 6:00 PM on the 27th to 6:00 PM on the 28th is the greatest 24-hour snowfall ever recorded in September. This was the first snow of the season. The snow was intermittent on the 26th, but continuous from early afternoon on the 27th to around midnight on the 28th, except for a period of rain during the afternoon of the 28th.

1950 - Residents of the northeastern U.S. observed a blue sun and a blue moon, caused by forest fires in British Columbia. (David Ludlum)

1955: On this date, the Atlantic reconnaissance aircraft, "Snowcloud Five" went down while investigating Hurricane Janet and was never heard from again. Lt. Comdr. Windham with a crew of 8 and two newspapermen reported that they were about to begin penetrating the central core of the hurricane. Hurricane Janet made landfall at peak intensity near Chetumal, Mexico on September 29th. Janet's landfall as a Category 5 hurricane on the Yucatán Peninsula was the first recorded instance that a storm of such intensity in the Atlantic made landfall on a continental mainland; prior to Janet, landfalls of Category 5 intensity were only known to have taken place on islands.

1963 - San Diego, CA, reached an all-time record high of 111 degrees. Los Angeles hit 109 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Freezing temperatures were reported in the Northern and Central Appalachians, and the Upper Ohio Valley. The morning low of 27 degrees at Concord NH tied their record for the date. Temperatures soared into the 90s in South Dakota. Pierre SD reported an afternoon high of 98 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across Florida. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees at Apalachicola and 95 degrees at Fort Myers were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Rain spread from the southeastern states across New England overnight. Cape Hatteras NC reported measurable rainfall for the fourteenth straight day, with 15.51 inches of rain recorded during that two week period. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 108 degrees, and a record 134 days of 100 degree weather for the year. Afternoon temperatures were only in the 40s over parts of northwest Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. (The National Weather Summary)

1998: There were four hurricanes were spinning simultaneously in the Atlantic basin: Georges, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl. That was the first time this had happened since 1893.

2004 - After making its infamous loop east of the Bahamas, Hurricane Jeanne made landfall the night of September 26th, 2004. Jeanne came ashore as a major category 3 hurricane just a few miles away from where Hurricane Frances made landfall a few weeks before. Jeanne produced extensive damage along the east central Florida coast from Volusia County south to Martin County. The highest wind gusts occurred over extreme Southern Brevard County as well as Indian River County with 110 - 120 mph estimates at the peak of the storm. (NWS, Melbourne, FL)

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

GIVING IN OR GROWING IN HIM?

We all have had days filled with discouragement and disappointments. Perhaps more than we care to recall. Often they are used by the devil to defeat and destroy us.

Think of discouragement. It comes from being dissatisfied with things in the past, a distaste of our present situation or quite possibly a distrust of the future. When we allow ourselves to become discouraged, we are surrendering our courage to what we have allowed to overcome us. Discouragement is a signal from God that the devil is trying to take away the hope He has given us in Christ. When we feel discouraged we need to take away the "d" and replace it with an "H" and call for "His-courage" to enable us to be victorious.

We also need to realize that our disappointments are, in fact, His-appointments! Nothing enters our life by chance - only by and through Christ. Often when things do not go as we intended them to go, we consider them to be one of life's disappointments. However, what we need to realize is that God Himself is intervening in our life. He is attempting to get our attention. He wants us to make an adjustment to what we are doing with our lives or our thoughts or our intentions that are not in line with the plans He has for us.

Not everything that happens to us can be considered "good" at the time it happens or is happening - but, one day, everything will eventually be "good" for us.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to believe that You love us too much to abandon us, care for us too much to harm us, and too gracious to keep what we need from us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Romans 8:28



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:
09.22.23

10 13 14 57 66 3

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$230,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 44 Mins
DRAW: 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.25.23

19 23 31 38 52 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,350,000

NEXT 1 Days 14 Hrs 59
DRAW: Mins 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.25.23

2 7 9 11 18 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 14 Mins 46
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.23.23

2 5 9 14 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 14
DRAW: Mins 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.25.23

5 16 18 38 40 19

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 43
DRAW: Mins 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.25.23

10 12 22 36 50 4

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$835,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 43
DRAW: Mins 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-13, 25-17, 25-19

Bon Homme def. Viborg-Hurley

Canton def. Freeman, 25-17, 25-2, 25-22

Flandreau def. Deuel, 25-7, 25-19, 25-18

Groton Area def. Florence/Henry, 25-19, 25-21, 25-12

McLaughlin def. Solen, N.D., 25-27, 25-15, 25-13, 25-17

Sisseton def. Wheaton/Herman-Norcross, Minn., 26-24, 25-22, 23-25, 25-13

Stanley County def. Crow Creek Tribal School, 25-23, 25-13, 23-25, 25-14

Wolsey-Wessington def. Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op, 11-25, 25-11, 25-13, 21-25, 15-5

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

Biden will join the UAW strike picket line. Experts can't recall the last time a president did that

By SEUNG MIN KIM, TOM KRISHER and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's decision to stand alongside United Auto Workers pickets on Tuesday on the 12th day of their strike against major carmakers underscores an allegiance to labor unions that appears to be unparalleled in presidential history.

Experts in presidential and U.S. labor history say they cannot recall an instance when a sitting president has joined an ongoing strike, even during the tenures of the more ardent pro-union presidents such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman. Theodore Roosevelt invited labor leaders alongside mine operators to the White House amid a historic coal strike in 1902, a decision that was seen at the time as a rare embrace of unions as Roosevelt tried to resolve the dispute.

Lawmakers often appear at strikes to show solidarity with unions, and during his 2020 Democratic primary campaign, Biden and other presidential hopefuls joined a picket line of hundreds of casino workers in Las Vegas who were pushing for a contract with The Palms Casino Resort.

But sitting presidents, who have to balance the rights of workers with disruptions to the economy, supply chains and other facets of everyday life, have long wanted to stay out of the strike fray — until Biden.

"This is absolutely unprecedented. No president has ever walked a picket line before," said Erik Loomis, a professor at the University of Rhode Island and an expert on U.S. labor history. Presidents historically "avoided direct participation in strikes. They saw themselves more as mediators. They did not see it as their place to directly intervene in a strike or in labor action."

Biden's trip to join a picket line in the suburbs of Detroit is the most significant demonstration of his pro-union bona fides, a record that includes vocal support for unionization efforts at Amazon.com facilities and executive actions that promoted worker organizing. He also earned a joint endorsement of the major unions earlier this year and has avoided southern California for high-dollar fundraisers amid the writers' and actors' strikes in Hollywood.

During the ongoing UAW strike, Biden has argued that the auto companies have not yet gone far enough to satisfy the union, although White House officials have repeatedly declined to say whether the president endorses specific UAW demands such as a 40% hike in wages and full-time pay for a 32-hour work week.

"I think the UAW gave up an incredible amount back when the automobile industry was going under. They gave everything from their pensions on, and they saved the automobile industry," Biden said Monday

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from the White House. He stressed that the workers should benefit from the carmakers' riches "now that the industry is roaring back."

Biden and other Democrats are more aggressively touting the president's pro-labor credentials at a time when former President Donald Trump is trying to chip away at union support in critical swing states where the constituency remains influential, including Michigan and Pennsylvania. Biden is also leaning in on his union support at a time when labor enjoys broad support from the public, with 67% of Americans approving of labor unions in an August Gallup poll.

Instead of participating in the second Republican primary debate on Wednesday, Trump will head to Michigan to meet with striking autoworkers, seeking to capitalize on discontent over the state of the economy and anger over the Biden administration's push for more electric vehicles — a key component of its clean-energy agenda.

"If it wasn't for President Trump, Joe Biden would be giving autoworkers the East Palestine treatment and saying that his schedule was too busy," said Trump campaign adviser Jason Miller, referring to the small Ohio town that is still grappling with the aftermath of a February train derailment. Biden said he would visit the community but so far has not.

White House officials dismissed the notion that Trump forced their hand and noted that Biden was headed to Michigan at the request of UAW President Shawn Fain, who last week invited the sitting president to join the strikers.

"He is pro-UAW, he is pro-workers, that is this president," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday. "He stands by union workers, and he is going to stand with the men and women of the UAW."

Yet the UAW strike, which expanded into 20 states last week, remains a dilemma for the Biden administration since a part of the workers' grievances include concerns about a broader transition to electric vehicles. The shift away from gas-powered vehicles has worried some autoworkers because electric versions require fewer people to manufacture and there is no guarantee that factories that produce them will be unionized.

Carolyn Nippa, who was walking the picket line Monday at the GM parts warehouse in Van Buren Township, Michigan, was ambivalent about the president's advocacy for electric vehicles, even as she said Biden was a better president than Trump for workers. She said it was "great that we have a president who wants to support local unions and the working class."

"I know it's the future. It's the future of the car industry," Nippa said. "I'm hoping it doesn't affect our jobs."

Still, other pickets remained more skeptical about Biden's visit Tuesday.

Dave Ellis, who stocks parts at the distribution center, said he's happy Biden wants to show people he's behind the middle class. But he said the visit is just about getting more votes.

"I don't necessarily believe that it's really about us," said Ellis, who argued that Trump would be a better president for the middle class than Biden because Trump is a businessman.

The Biden administration has no formal role in the negotiations, and the White House pulled back a decision from the president earlier this month to send two key deputies to Michigan after determining it would be more productive for the advisers, Gene Sperling and acting Labor Secretary Julie Su, to monitor talks from Washington.

Krisher reported from Van Buren Township, Michigan. Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Summerville, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

South Korea parades troops and powerful weapons in its biggest Armed Forces Day ceremony in years

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea paraded thousands of troops and an array of weapons capable of striking North Korea through its capital as part of its biggest Armed Forces Day ceremony in 10 years on Tuesday, as its president vowed to build a stronger military to thwart any provocation by the North.

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Concerns are growing that North Korea is seeking Russian help in expanding its nuclear arsenal in return for supplying Moscow with conventional arms exhausted by its war with Ukraine.

"After looking at your imposing march today, I believe our people would trust you and have faith in our national security," President Yoon Suk Yeol told cheering soldiers at the end of the ceremony in a central Seoul plaza. "I'll always support you together with our people."

Earlier, South Korea rolled tanks, artillery systems, drones and powerful ballistic missiles capable of hitting all of North Korea through the streets of Seoul, amid steady autumn rains. About 4,000 South Korean troops carrying rifles or flags followed them, accompanied by about 300 U.S. soldiers, in the first such military parade since 2013.

As the soldiers and their weapons went past, Yoon waved, clapped and flashed a thumbs-up.

Since taking office last year, he has been pushing hard to beef up South Korea's defense capability while expanding military drills with the United States in response to North Korea's advancing nuclear arsenal.

But a complication in Seoul and Washington's efforts to curb the North's nuclear ambitions is the latest North Korean push to deepen military cooperation with Russia. Earlier this month, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia's far eastern region to meet with President Vladimir Putin and visit key military sites.

North Korea reportedly wants to receive Russian technologies to help its development of spy satellites, nuclear-propelled submarines and powerful long-range missiles. Such weapons would pose a major security threat to South Korea and the U.S.

In a formal Armed Forces Day ceremony at a military airport near Seoul earlier Tuesday, Yoon said he'll strive to build "a strong military that instills fear in the enemy."

"Based on battle-ready combat capabilities and a solid readiness posture, our military will immediately retaliate against any North Korean provocation," he said. "If North Korea uses nuclear weapons, its regime will be brought to an end by an overwhelming response" from the South Korean-U.S. alliance.

That ceremony drew about 6,700 soldiers and 200 weapons assets, the largest of its kind since 2013, according to South Korean officials.

Yoon didn't mention North Korean-Russian ties in either of his two speeches Tuesday. But in an address to the U.N. General Assembly last week, he said South Korea "will not sit idly by" if North Korea and Russia agree to such weapons deals in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions that ban all weapons trading with North Korea.

U.S. officials have also said that North Korea and Russia would face consequences if they go ahead with such deals.

Also Tuesday, senior diplomats from South Korea, Japan and China met in Seoul and agreed to hold the first summit of their leaders in four years "at the earliest convenient time," according to a statement from South Korea's Foreign Ministry. No date has been fixed, however, and the South Korean statement said the three countries agreed to hold a related foreign ministers' meeting in a couple of months.

Yoon said last week that Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida had expressed their support for a trilateral summit in South Korea.

Yoon's moves to strengthen South Korea's military alliance with the U.S. and boost Seoul-Washington-Tokyo security cooperation have caused concerns that Seoul's relations with China, its biggest trading partner, will be undermined. But Yoon says Seoul-Washington-Tokyo cooperation won't marginalize any particular nation.

Researchers have verified 1,329 hunger deaths in Ethiopia's Tigray region since the cease-fire there

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Researchers say they have verified 1,329 deaths from hunger in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region since a cease-fire ended a two-year conflict there in November.

A study by local health authorities and Mekele University in the regional capital found that hunger is now the main cause of death in Tigray, accounting for more than 68% of deaths investigated by the researchers.

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The study is based on a household census conducted by health workers from August 15-29 in nine subdistricts of Tigray and 53 camps for internally displaced people.

Tigray in total has 88 subdistricts and 643 displacement camps, so the number of hunger deaths across the region is almost certainly far higher.

One factor is the suspension of food aid by the United States and United Nations after the discovery in March of a huge scheme to steal humanitarian grain in Tigray. The pause was extended to the rest of Ethiopia in June after the theft was found to be nationwide.

Ethiopia's government wants the suspension ended. The U.S. government and the U.N. want the government to give up its control of the food aid delivery system.

The number of deaths from all causes recorded by the researchers in the Tigray areas studied rose sharply after the aid suspension, almost doubling from 159 in March to 305 in July.

Around 5.4 million of Tigray's 6 million population relied on humanitarian aid. Over 20 million people in Ethiopia as a whole need food aid.

The study's findings are described in a document seen by The Associated Press and prepared by the Tigray Emergency Coordination Center, a group of U.N. agencies, aid groups and regional government offices.

Hunger plagued Tigray throughout the conflict between Ethiopian and allied forces and Tigray fighters. For much of it, the federal government cut the region's services and restricted aid access, prompting U.N. experts to accuse it of using hunger as a weapon.

The government rejected claims of weaponizing aid, blaming the Tigray fighters for the lack of access.

November's cease-fire kindled hopes that aid would reach the region, but they were dashed by the discovery of the massive theft, with some U.S.-marked bags of grain being sold in local markets.

Tigray authorities found that 7,000 metric tons of grain had been stolen. Earlier this month, the region's leader announced that 480 officials had been arrested in connection with the corruption.

Other parts of Ethiopia are yet to disclose the results of their own probes. The U.S. and the U.N. World Food Program are also investigating.

China goes on charm offensive at Asian Games, but doesn't back down from regional confrontations

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

HANGZHOU, China (AP) — A month before the Asian Games, China released a new national map, doubling down on its claims to almost the entire South China Sea and disputed border territories with India.

A few days before the event, it flew more than 100 warplanes toward Taiwan, stepping up its regular military harassment of the self-governing democratic island that Beijing claims for its own.

At the games themselves, however, outward aggression has taken a backseat to unctuous charm as China sought to win the hearts of more than 40 Asian nations and regions by dazzling them with technology and slathering them with praise.

In a personal appearance in the eastern city of Hangzhou, into which the government poured billions of dollars for the two-week games, Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomed leaders and officials at an opening banquet on Saturday.

"The Asian Games embodies the Asian people's shared desire for peace, unity and inclusiveness," Xi told them, according to his prepared remarks.

No mention was made of the status of Taiwan, the tense standoffs in the South China Sea over competing claims with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines - all competitors at the Hangzhou games - or the border disputes with India that resulted in a clash three years ago in which 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed.

Nor was anything said about a diplomatic spat China ignited with India the day before Saturday's opening ceremony as it refused to back down on its stance on visas for Indian athletes coming from a region that leaders maintain belongs to China, resulting in three women wushu athletes being unable to compete.

Taiwan's athletes even received one of the loudest rounds of applause at the opening ceremony, though

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have to compete under the name "Chinese Taipei" and without their flag due to China's claim on the island off of its east coast, which it has not ruled out taking by force.

Signs around Hangzhou billed the city as a "paradise on earth" while China adopted the motto "heart to heart" for the Asian Games, which feature some 12,000 competitors - more than the summer Olympics - from across Asia and the Middle East.

"This will undoubtedly open new prospects for cultural exchanges, cultural integration and people-to-people bonds in Asia," the Chinese Communist Party's official People's Daily wrote Monday in an effusive editorial about the Hangzhou games. "It will inject profound and lasting cultural strength into the building of a community with a shared future for mankind."

The headlines the state-run China Daily's supplement edition for the games carried after the opening ceremony included "Xi extends hand of friendship," and "Wave of Glory" alongside a photo of the Chinese leader waving to the crowds.

Xi told the officials at Saturday's banquet that the region's recent economic growth had been an "Asian miracle" and that "we should make Asia an anchor of world peace."

But while offering a verbal carrot in Hangzhou, Beijing continued brandishing a physical stick elsewhere. Taiwan's military said Sunday it had detected the Chinese military initiating an exercise featuring warplanes, ships and ground troops in coastal Fujian Province, which faces Taiwan.

The Philippine coast guard reported over the weekend that it had detected a floating barrier placed by China's coast guard to prevent Filipino fishing boats from entering a lagoon in a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

The Philippines removed the barrier on Monday. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters Tuesday that China's "resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and maritime rights" was unwavering, and he warned "the Philippines not to make provocations or seek trouble."

Xi's banquet speech did not refer to any territorial claims or confrontations, nor to the mounting tensions with the U.S. and its allies as Beijing and Washington jockey for influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Still, geopolitics were clearly not far from his Xi's mind as he outlined China's goals, thinly veiling his remarks with the language of sport.

"As a community with a shared future connected by mountains and rivers as well as cultural affinity, we should use sports to promote peace, pursue good neighborliness and mutual benefit, and reject Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation," he said, using language China commonly does when referring to the U.S.'s Asia-Pacific strategy.

"As humanity faces unprecedented global challenges, we should use sports to promote unity, seize the historic opportunity, and jointly stand up to the challenges," Xi said.

What to know about Elijah McClain's death and the criminal trial of two officers

By COLLEEN SLEVIN and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — The trial of two Denver-area police officers charged in Elijah McClain's death resumes Tuesday as prosecutors press their case that excessive force transformed the late-night stop of the Black man in the summer of 2019 into a fatal encounter.

Criminal charges were brought in 2021 after a national racial reckoning in the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police galvanized criticism over law enforcement abuses against Black people and revived interest in McClain's case.

The officers put McClain in a neck hold during the stop, and McClain can be heard on body camera footage saying he's having trouble breathing. Defense attorneys argue the officers were correctly performing their duties before paramedics gave McClain an overdose of a powerful sedative that led to complications causing his death.

Here's what you need to know about McClain's death and the trial in state court:

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HOW DID ELIJAH McCLAIN DIE?

Police stopped McClain on the night of Aug. 24, 2019 while he was walking home from a convenience store and listening to music on earbuds in the city of Aurora. The 23-year-old massage therapist, who was often cold, was wearing a runner's mask and jacket despite the warm weather. A 911 caller reported he seemed "sketchy."

Three officers approached McClain and within 10 seconds, Officer Nathan Woodyard put his hands on McClain, turning him around. As McClain tried to escape his grip, Woodyard said, "Relax, or I'm going to have to change this situation."

The encounter quickly escalated, with officers taking McClain to the ground and putting him in a neck hold, pressing against his carotid artery. Paramedics arrived and injected McClain with the sedative ketamine. He went into cardiac arrest on the way to the hospital and was taken off life support three days later.

WHY WERE THE OFFICERS CHARGED?

A Colorado prosecutor initially decided against prosecuting McClain's death largely because the coroner's office could not determine exactly how he died.

Following the protests over Floyd's death in 2020, Democratic Gov. Jared Polis directed Colorado's attorney general to open a new investigation. Two paramedics and three officers were indicted by a state grand jury in 2021.

A revised coroner's report that relied in part on grand jury information said McClain died of complications from the ketamine after being forcibly restrained.

The officers now on trial — Randy Roedema and Jason Rosenblatt — are charged with manslaughter, criminally negligent reckless homicide and assault, all felonies. They pleaded not guilty.

Roedema, a former Marine who is currently suspended without pay, had been with the department for five years before McClain's death. Rosenblatt worked for the agency for two years and was fired in 2020 for making light of other officers' reenactment of the neck hold.

The two officers have not talked publicly about McClain's death and it's unknown if they'll take the stand to testify. Their lawyers told jurors that the officers' actions followed police policies and weren't responsible for McClain's death. They've sought to shift any blame to the paramedics who injected the ketamine.

Body cameras worn by the officers captured the confrontation and that footage is being used by both sides to bolster their arguments.

DID THE KETAMINE ALONE KILL HIM?

That's what jurors will have to decide.

Rosenblatt initially tried to put McClain in a neck hold but couldn't because of his position, so Woodyard did, authorities said. The maneuver, called a carotid control hold, restricts the flow of blood to a person's brain, rendering them temporarily unconscious. Neck restraints have been banned in many states following the nationwide Black Lives Matter protests.

McClain had been kept on the ground for 15 minutes when paramedics gave him 500 milligrams of ketamine. He weighed 140 pounds (64 kilograms) but received a higher dose of ketamine than recommended for someone of his size and overdosed, pathologist Stephen Cina found.

"It's really important that after Mr. McClain was handcuffed and on his side, he was breathing. He was talking with the officers," said Roedema's attorney, Reid Elkus. "When paramedics arrived on scene, the paramedics have full medical control. So what does that mean? That means they are in charge of the diagnosis of the suspect who's now their patient. They're also in charge of treating that suspect."

But Cina also noted that the ketamine was injected after McClain was restrained.

McClain threw up repeatedly and inhaled vomit into his lungs that made it hard to breathe, according to Dr. David Beuther, a pulmonologist who testified for the prosecution. Even before the ketamine was injected, McClain's health had deteriorated to the extent that he belonged in a hospital intensive care unit, Beuther said.

WHAT ROLE DID EXCITED DELIRIUM PLAY?

Excited delirium is a controversial condition involving erratic behavior that is associated with chronic drug abuse, mental illness or both. Some doctors question whether it's real. Paramedics Jeremy Cooper and

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Peter Cichuniec concluded about two minutes after arriving on the scene that McClain was suffering from excited delirium, according to the indictment. They did not talk to McClain or check his vital signs, it said.

Colorado's health department announced in 2021 that emergency workers should not use excited delirium as a reason to inject people with ketamine. A report done by a medical panel for the department found that excited delirium is open to interpretation and has been "associated with racial bias against African American men."

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER OFFICER AND PARAMEDICS?

Woodyard is set to go on trial next month and paramedics Cooper and Cichuniec are scheduled to be tried in November. They each face similar felony charges.

Cooper and Cichuniec asked that their trials be separated from those for the officers.

Woodyard left the immediate scene before the paramedics arrived while Rosenblatt and Roedema remained.

Judge Mark Warner ruled in January that there would be separate trials to avoid "spillover prejudice" and guarantee that the proceedings are fair.

Brown reported from Billings, Mont.

New cars are supposed to be getting safer. So why are fatalities on the rise?

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Alyssa Milligan was someone who intuitively knew when another person needed help, encouragement or a kind word. Although she was new to Tennessee, the 23-year old physical therapy student, whose mother called her "Sweet Alyssa," had already made many close connections, especially within the tight-knit cycling community around Nashville — before she was killed this month, struck by a pickup truck while cycling with a friend.

Roadway deaths in the U.S. are mounting despite government test data showing vehicles have been getting safer. While the number of all car-related fatalities has trended upward over the last decade, pedestrians and cyclists have seen the sharpest rise: over 60% between 2011 and 2022.

It coincides with a steep increase in sales of SUVs, pickup trucks and vans, which accounted for 78% of new U.S. vehicle sales in 2022, according to Motorintelligence.com.

Current U.S. ratings only consider the safety of the people inside the vehicle. The National Association of City Transportation Officials is leading an effort asking U.S. transportation officials to begin factoring the safety of those outside of vehicles into their 5-star safety ratings.

"We don't know exactly what's going on with the increase in pedestrian fatalities. It certainly seems like the increase in bigger vehicles is contributing to it," said Jessica Cicchino, vice president of research at the nonprofit Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

"Many studies have shown that larger vehicles like SUVs and pickups are more likely to kill or seriously injure pedestrians and cyclists when they're involved in a crash," she said, noting that large vehicles are more likely to strike people in the head and vital organs, rather than the legs.

The design of these vehicles can also pose visibility problems. An Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study of crashes with pedestrians at intersections found that the vehicles most likely to be involved in left-turn crashes were SUVs and pickups, suggesting "they might be having a harder time seeing some of those pedestrians," Cicchino said.

Subaru, which has performed well in IIHS pedestrian crash avoidance tests, considers visibility its first line of safety, according to spokesperson Todd Hill. But that has become more challenging as safety standards for rollovers have required vehicles to improve the strength of the pillars that support the roof.

"The smaller the glass you make, the more design flexibility you have ... but it really comes at the sacrifice of outward visibility," he said.

While there has been less research on blind spots directly in front of passenger vehicles, Consumer

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Reports found in 2021 that high hoods obstructed driver views of pedestrians. Meanwhile, a January 2023 report from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Volpe Center determined "the increasingly large blind zones in SUVs and pickups have been associated with fatal 'frontover' crashes," where people are run over by slow-moving vehicles.

The Volpe Center, which works to address the nation's most pressing transportation challenges, recently collaborated to produce a web application called VIEW, which uses crowd-sourcing to create a database of vehicle blind zones. For example, the app shows that as many as eight elementary school children could stand shoulder-to-shoulder in front of a 2016 Chevrolet Silverado without being visible to the driver.

The U.S. first began crash testing cars in the 1970s, and it implemented the 5-star rating system in 1993. In 2006, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began requiring window labels on new vehicles to include those ratings.

Thanks to vehicle improvements, seatbelt laws and other changes, fatal crashes in the U.S. trended downward for decades, hitting a low of 29,867 in 2011. But that trend has reversed. Government estimates of fatal crashes in 2022 show a 43% increase to 42,795 — partially thanks to increases in speeding and drunk driving and decreases in seatbelt use. Fatal crashes also increased as a percent of total miles driven. Pedestrian and cyclist deaths increased by 64% since 2011, to an estimated 8,413 in 2022.

NHTSA has proposed new pedestrian crash avoidance tests, but they would be voluntary and not part of the agency's 5-star rating system, said Billy Richling, a spokesperson at the National Association of City Transportation Officials, which is pushing to make pedestrian safety testing mandatory.

"A vehicle could fail the pedestrian crash-worthiness test and still receive five stars," he said.

A voluntary evaluation isn't enough for Jessica Hart, whose 5-year-old daughter Allie was struck and killed in their Washington, D.C., neighborhood in 2021. Her petition on Change.org, which demands the NHTSA include a vehicle's risk of killing a pedestrian in its 5-star rating system, has collected more than 28,000 signatures.

"She had just started kindergarten," Hart said of her daughter. "She was riding her bike in the crosswalk, a block from our house in the school zone. She was with her dad. And a Ford Transit van came up to the 4-way intersection, and didn't see her, and just proceeded through the stop sign, and hit and killed her."

John Capp, the director of vehicle safety technology, strategy and regulation at General Motors, stressed that there is not enough data about pedestrian traffic deaths to understand the causes. He also acknowledged there are tradeoffs in design and said safety emphasis in the past has been on the people inside of vehicles.

"Ultimately, there's less we can do when someone is hit outside a vehicle," he said. "That's why we're focused on pedestrian crash avoidance."

Nearly all new GM vehicles come equipped with automatic emergency braking, and cameras are getting better at seeing pedestrians at night, when the majority of those fatal crashes occur.

That is in line with an NHTSA proposal that would require new cars and light trucks to have automatic emergency braking able to detect pedestrians, including at night, within three years.

Advances in that technology promise to help compensate for blind spots, but safety experts say it is only part of a solution that requires infrastructure changes, speed limit enforcement and even changes to vehicle design.

"You want to be getting it from all angles," Cicchino said. "You want to prevent the crashes from occurring, but when the crashes occur, you want them to be less dangerous."

Hart is now an advocate with the Washington chapter of Families for Safe Streets, a nonprofit working to end fatal crashes.

"I've been speaking out and advocating for safe streets, safer vehicles, alternatives to driving," Hart said, "simply because I just can't fathom that my daughter was killed — it's violent and it's traumatic — and that nothing would change."

With a government shutdown just days away, Congress is moving into crisis mode

By LISA MASCARO and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a government shutdown five days away, Congress is moving into crisis mode as Speaker Kevin McCarthy faces an insurgency from hard-right Republicans eager to slash spending even if it means curtailing federal services for millions of Americans.

There's no clear path ahead as lawmakers return with tensions high and options limited. The House is expected to vote Tuesday evening on a package of bills to fund parts of the government, but it's not at all clear that McCarthy has the support needed to move ahead.

Meanwhile, the Senate, trying to stave off a federal closure, is preparing its own bipartisan plan for a stopgap measure to buy some time and keep offices funded past Saturday's deadline as work in Congress continues. But plans to tack on additional Ukraine aid have run into trouble as a number of Republicans in both the House and Senate oppose spending more money on the war effort.

Against the mounting chaos, President Joe Biden warned the Republican conservatives off their hardline tactics, saying funding the federal government is "one of the most basic fundamental responsibilities of Congress."

Biden implored the House Republicans not to renege on the debt deal he struck earlier this year with McCarthy, which set the federal government funding levels and was signed into law after approval by both the House and Senate.

"We made a deal, we shook hands, and said this is what we're going to do. Now, they're renegeing on the deal," Biden said late Monday.

"If Republicans in the House don't start doing their jobs, we should stop electing them."

A government shutdown would disrupt the U.S. economy and the lives of millions of Americans who work for the government or rely on federal services — from air traffic controllers who would be asked to work without pay to some 7 million people in the Women, Infants and Children program, including half the babies born in the U.S., who could lose access to nutritional benefits, according to the White House.

It comes against the backdrop of the 2024 elections as Donald Trump, the leading Republican to challenge Biden, is egging on the Republicans in Congress to "shut it down" and undo the deal McCarthy made with Biden.

Republicans are also being encouraged by former Trump officials, including those who are preparing to slash government and the federal workforce if the former president retakes the White House in the 2024 election. With five days to go before Saturday's deadline, the turmoil is unfolding as House Republicans hold their first Biden impeachment inquiry hearing this week probing the business dealings of his son, Hunter Biden.

"Unless you get everything, shut it down!" Trump wrote in all capital letters on social media. "It's time Republicans learned how to fight!"

McCarthy arrived at the Capitol early Monday after a tumultuous week in which a handful of hard-right Republicans torpedoed his latest plans to advance a usually popular defense funding bill. They brought the chamber to a standstill and leaders sent lawmakers home for the weekend with no endgame in sight.

After the House Rules Committee met Saturday to prepare for this week's voting, McCarthy was hopeful the latest plan on a package of four bills, to fund Defense, Homeland Security, Agriculture, and State and Foreign Operations, would kickstart the process.

"Let's get this going," McCarthy said. "Let's make sure the government stays open while we finish our job passing all the individual bills."

But at least one top Trump ally, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., who is also close to McCarthy, said she would be a "hard no" on the vote to open debate, known as the Rule, because the package of bills continues to provide at least \$300 million for the war in Ukraine.

Other hard-right conservatives and allies of Trump may follow her lead.

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"Now you have a couple of new people thinking about voting against the Rule," said Rep. Ken Buck, R-Colo., referring to the upcoming procedural vote.

Once a holdout himself, Buck told reporters at the Capitol he would be voting for the package, but he's not sure McCarthy will have enough for passage. "I don't know if he gets them back on board or not," Buck said.

While their numbers are just a handful, the hard-right Republican faction holds oversized sway because the House majority is narrow and McCarthy needs almost every vote from his side for partisan bills without Democratic support.

The speaker has given the holdouts many of their demands, but it still has not been enough as they press for more — including gutting funding for Ukraine, which President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told Washington last week is vital to winning the war against Russia.

The hardline Republicans want McCarthy to drop the deal he made with Biden and stick to earlier promises for spending cuts he made to them in January to win their votes for the speaker's gavel, citing the nation's rising debt load.

Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, a key Trump ally leading the right flank, said on Fox that a shutdown is not optimal but "it's better than continuing on the current path that we are to America's financial ruin."

Gaetz, who has also threatened to call a vote to oust McCarthy from his job, wants Congress to do what it rarely does anymore: debate and approve each of the 12 annual bills needed to fund the various departments of government — typically a process that takes weeks, if not months.

"I'm not pro-shutdown," he said. But he said he wants to hold McCarthy "to his word."

Even if the House is able to complete its work this week on some of those bills, which is highly uncertain, they would still need to be merged with similar legislation from the Senate, another lengthy process.

Meantime, senators have been drafting a temporary measure, called a continuing resolution or CR, to keep government funded past Saturday, but have run into trouble trying to tack on Biden's request for supplemental funding for Ukraine. They face resistance from a handful of Republicans to the war effort.

A Senate aide said talks would continue through the night. And a spokesperson for the White House Office of Management and Budget said the administration would continue to work with members of both parties in Congress to secure supplemental funds and ensure efforts to support Ukraine continue alongside other key priorities like disaster relief.

With just days remaining before a shutdown, several of the holdouts say they will never vote for any stopgap measure to fund the government as they push for Congress to engage in the full-scale debate.

___ Associated Press writers Seung Min Kim, Kevin Freking and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

First of thousands of Lahaina residents return to homes destroyed by deadly wildfire

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — The first of thousands of residents who lost their homes in the wildfire that destroyed the Hawaii town of Lahaina returned to their devastated properties Monday, with some stopping for a moment of reflection and others searching for mementos among the ruins.

"They're very appreciative to get in here, something they've all been waiting anxiously for," Darryl Oliveira, interim administrator of the Maui Emergency Management Agency, told reporters gathered outside the burn zone. "People who haven't been here since the fire are taken aback by the amount of and extent of the destruction."

In the days following the Aug. 8 wildfire, some people were able to return to their properties to evaluate the damage. But since then, the burned area has been off-limits to all but authorized workers. Authorities opened one small part of it on Monday, allowing residents in for supervised visits from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. By midday, about two dozen vehicles carrying residents had entered the area.

The prospect of returning has stirred strong emotions in residents who fled in vehicles or on foot as wind-

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whipped flames raced across Lahaina, the historic capital of the former Hawaiian kingdom, and overcame people stuck in traffic trying to escape.

The wildfire killed at least 97 people and destroyed more than 2,000 buildings, most of them homes. Some survivors jumped over a sea wall and sheltered in the waves as hot black smoke blotted out the sun.

Officials urged returning residents not to sift through the ashes for fear of raising toxic dust. The first area to be cleared for reentry was a zone of about two dozen parcels in the northern part of Lahaina.

From a National Guard blockade near the burn zone, Jes Claydon has been able to see the ruins of the rental home where she lived for 13 years and raised three children. Little remains recognizable beyond the jars of sea glass that stood outside the front door.

Claydon hoped to collect those jars and any other mementos she might find.

"I want the freedom to just be there and absorb what happened," Claydon said. "Whatever I might find, even if it's just those jars of sea glass, I'm looking forward to taking it. ... It's a piece of home."

Claydon's home was a single-story cinderblock house painted a reddish-tan, similar to the red dirt in Lahaina. A few of the walls are still standing, and some green lawn remains, she said.

Claydon said Monday evening that she was able to take some sea glass. She said the jars, weakened by the heat, cracked at her touch. She said it was difficult to be the first residents to return "knowing that so many are waiting for this opportunity."

Those returning were given water, shade, washing stations, portable toilets, medical and mental health care, and transportation assistance if needed. Nonprofit groups also offered personal protective equipment, including masks and coveralls. Officials say ash could contain asbestos, lead, arsenic or other toxins.

Most journalists were confined to an area where they could not see people visiting their properties. Oliveira said officials wanted to ensure residents had space and privacy to reflect or grieve.

A team of more than two dozen people from Samaritan's Purse, a nondenominational Christian ministry, was on hand to help residents sort through what was left of their homes, said Todd Taylor, who works with the organization.

"It's like losing a loved one. That's exactly what these folks are going through," Taylor said. "Those homeowners can talk to us about their house — 'This is where my bedroom was, and I had a nightstand here with my wedding ring,' or, 'My grandfather's urn was on the sink' — those type of indicators that can help our volunteers sift through the ash and look for very specific items."

Writers strike is not over yet with key votes remaining on deal

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The deal is made, the pickets have been suspended, and Hollywood's writers are on the verge of getting back to work after months on strike. Actors, meanwhile, wait in the wings for their own resolution.

Crucial steps remain for the writers, who technically remain on strike, and for other workers awaiting a return to production of new shows. The next phase comes Tuesday, when the governing boards of the two branches of the Writers Guild of America are expected to vote on the tentative agreement reached by union negotiators with Hollywood studios.

Following the approval from the boards — which is likely — comes a vote from the writers themselves, whose timing is uncertain. The guild and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents studios, streaming services and production companies in the negotiations, were still finalizing language Monday on their agreement.

That could prompt a delay of Tuesday's voting and has kept union leaders from sharing with writers the details of what nearly five months of striking and hardship has earned them. The leaders have promised a series of meetings later this week where writers can learn about the terms of the deal regarding pay, show staffing, and control of artificial intelligence in storytelling.

The guild's leaders told them only that the agreement is "exceptional," with gains for every member. A successful yes vote from the membership will finally, officially, bring the strike to an end.

Meanwhile, though their own pickets have been suspended, writers were encouraged to join actors in solidarity on their lines starting Tuesday, just as many actors did with writers in the two months before their own strike started in July.

The studio alliance has chosen to negotiate only with the writers so far, and has made no overtures yet toward restarting talks with the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Radio and Television Artists. That will presumably change soon.

SAG-AFTRA leaders have said they will look closely at the agreement struck by the writers, who have many of the same issues they do, but it will not effect the demands they have.

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

America's poor math skills raise alarms over global competitiveness

By JON MARCUS of The Hechinger Report undefined

BOSTON (AP) — Like a lot of high school students, Kevin Tran loves superheroes, though perhaps for different reasons than his classmates.

"They're all insanely smart. In their regular jobs they're engineers, they're scientists," said Tran, 17. "And you can't do any of those things without math."

Tran also loves math. This summer, he studied calculus five hours a day with other high schoolers in a program at Northeastern University.

But Tran and his friends are not the norm. Many Americans joke about how bad they are at math, and already abysmal scores on standardized math tests are falling even further.

The nation needs people who are good at math, employers say, in the same way motion picture mortals need superheroes. They say America's poor math performance isn't funny. It's a threat to the nation's global economic competitiveness and national security.

The Education Reporting Collaborative, a coalition of eight newsrooms, is documenting the math crisis facing schools and highlighting progress. Members of the Collaborative are AL.com, The Associated Press, The Christian Science Monitor, The Dallas Morning News, The Hechinger Report, Idaho Education News, The Post and Courier in South Carolina, and The Seattle Times.

"The advances in technology that are going to drive where the world goes in the next 50 years are going to come from other countries, because they have the intellectual capital and we don't," said Jim Stigler, a psychology professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, who studies the process of teaching and learning subjects including math.

The Defense Department has called for a major initiative to support education in science, technology, education and math, or STEM. It says there are eight times as many college graduates in these disciplines in China and four times as many engineers in Russia as in the United States.

"This is not an educational question alone," said Josh Wyner, vice president of The Aspen Institute think tank. In July, the think tank warned that other nations, particularly China, are challenging America's technological dominance. "Resolving the fundamental challenges facing our time requires math."

Meanwhile, the number of jobs in math occupations — positions that "use arithmetic and apply advanced techniques to make calculations, analyze data and solve problems" — will increase by more than 30,000 per year through the end of this decade, Bureau of Labor Statistics figures show. That's much faster than most other kinds of jobs.

"Mathematics is becoming more and more a part of almost every career," said Michael Allen, who chairs the math department at Tennessee Technological University.

Tennessee Tech runs a summer camp teaching cybersecurity, which requires math, to high school students. "That lightbulb goes off and they say, 'That's why I need to know that,'" Allen said. Computer-related

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jobs — ranging from software development to semiconductor production — require math, too. Analysts say those fields have or will develop labor shortages.

But most American students aren't prepared for those jobs. In the most recent Program for International Student Assessment tests in math, or PISA, U.S. students scored lower than their counterparts in 36 other education systems worldwide. Students in China scored the highest. Only one in five college-bound American high school students is prepared for college-level courses in STEM, according to the National Science and Technology Council.

One result: Students from other countries are preparing to lead these fields. Only one in five graduate students in math-intensive subjects including computer science and electrical engineering at U.S. universities are American, the National Foundation for American Policy reports. The rest come from abroad. Most will leave the U.S. when they finish their programs.

In the U.S., poor math skills could mean lower salaries for today's kids. A Stanford economist has estimated that, if U.S. pandemic math declines are not reversed, students now in kindergarten through grade 12 will earn from 2% to 9% less over their careers, depending on what state they live in, than their predecessors educated just before the start of the pandemic.

But it also means the country's productivity and competitiveness could slide.

"Math just underpins everything," said Megan Schrauben, executive director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's MiSTEM initiative, which tries to get more students into STEM. "It's extremely important for the future prosperity of our students and communities, but also our entire state."

In Massachusetts, employers are anticipating a shortage over the next five years of 11,000 workers in the life sciences alone.

"It's not a small problem," said Edward Lambert Jr., executive director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education. "We're just not starting students, particularly students of color and from lower-resourced families, on career paths related to math and computer science and those things in which we need to stay competitive, or starting them early enough."

The Bridge to Calculus program at Northeastern, where Kevin Tran spent his summer, is one response to that. The 113 participating students were paid \$15 an hour, most of it from Boston and its public schools, said the program's coordinator, Bindu Veetel. The university provided the classroom space and some of the teachers.

The students' days began at 7:30 a.m., when teacher Jeremy Howland had them run exercises in their heads. "Bada-bing," Howland said whenever they were right.

Students learned to apply that knowledge in coding, data analysis, robotics and elementary electrical engineering classes.

It's not just a good deed that Northeastern is doing. Some of the graduates of Bridge to Calculus end up enrolling there and proceeding to its highly ranked computer science and engineering programs, which — like those at other U.S. universities — struggle to attract homegrown talent.

These American high school students said they get why their classmates don't like math.

"It's a struggle. It's constant thinking," said Steven Ramos, 16, who said he plans to become a computer or electrical engineer instead of following his brother and other relatives into construction work.

But with time, the answers come into focus, said Wintana Tewolde, also 16, who wants to be a doctor. "It's not easy to understand, but once you do, you see it."

Peter St. Louis-Severe, 17, said math, to him, is fun. "It's the only subject I can truly understand, because most of the time it has only one answer," said St. Louis-Severe, who hopes to be a mechanical or chemical engineer.

Not everyone is convinced that a lack of math skills is holding America back.

What employers really want "is trainability, the aptitude of people being able to learn the systems and solve problems," said Todd Thibodeaux, president and CEO of CompTIA, an information technology trade association. Other countries, he said, "are dying for the way our kids learn creativity."

Back in class, the students fielded Howland's questions about polynomial functions. And after an oc-

casional stumble, they got all the exercises right.

"Bada-bing," their teacher happily responded.

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Donald Trump, skipping GOP debate, eyes California delegate sweep in the state he loves to hate

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Few corners of the U.S. may be less hospitable to Donald Trump than California, where he lost by more than 5 million votes in the 2020 election. But as the former president seeks to return to the White House, the liberal bastion may give him an unlikely boost.

A state GOP rule change has opened the possibility that Trump could sweep each of the state's 169 delegates on March 5, when California is among more than a dozen states participating in the so-called Super Tuesday contests. With Trump already leading his rivals in many state and national polls, a dominant performance in California could move him much closer to the GOP nomination.

"This race is quickly consolidating," said GOP fundraiser Charles Moran, a Trump delegate in 2016 and 2020. With a win in California, he added, "I truly think Trump could take the nomination on Super Tuesday — then this is over."

With less than four months before the Iowa caucuses officially kick off the GOP nomination process, the dynamics of the race could still change. But Trump is keeping a close eye on the state, where his most prominent Republican rivals will gather without him on Wednesday for the second presidential debate. While Trump is skipping the event, he has made sure to be in California on Friday to appear at the state's GOP convention, where many of the people who will ultimately serve as delegates will be in attendance.

In what would be an ironic twist, the state where the former president is widely loathed outside his conservative base could help him tighten his grip on the Republican White House nomination.

Trump, who is facing criminal charges in four separate cases, has long had a conflicted relationship with California, the nation's most populous state, where Democrats haven't lost a statewide election since 2006 and outnumber registered Republicans by about 2-to-1.

California was home to the so-called Trump resistance during his time in office, and Trump often depicts California as representing all he sees wrong in America. As president, he called the homeless crises in Los Angeles, San Francisco and other big cities disgraceful, and threatened to intercede — faulting the "liberal establishment" for what he described as a "terrible situation."

He berated state Democrats who supported funding health care for some adults who entered the U.S. illegally, and challenged California's authority to reduce car emissions. Then-state Attorney General Xavier Becerra filed more than 50 lawsuits against the Trump administration, targeting initiatives on immigration, health care and the environment.

Still, the Trump National Golf Club Los Angeles sits on the Pacific coast south of the city. And even in losing California in a landslide in 2020, Trump received over 6 million votes — more than any Republican presidential candidate before him — with his margins topping 70% in some rural counties that typically favor conservative candidates.

California probably will be an afterthought in November 2024 — the state's lopsided electorate makes it a virtual lock for Democrats on Election Day. You'd have to go back to 2000 to find a Republican nominee pushing hard to win California, when George W. Bush invested millions in the state then lost to Democrat Al Gore by 12 points.

Under the rule change, a Republican presidential candidate who pulls in more than 50% of the primary vote would be awarded all 169 delegates. If no candidate hits that threshold, delegates will be awarded proportionally.

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Such a winner-take-all rule didn't exist in recent presidential elections in the state. Previously, the California GOP primary amounted to dozens of separate races on a single day — one in each congressional district across the sprawling state, and then one statewide. The winner in each district collected three delegates; the candidate who received the largest number of votes statewide claimed a bonus of about a dozen more.

That created a competitive environment where Democratic Rep. Nancy Pelosi's district in San Francisco awarded the same number of GOP delegates as a rural, conservative heartland district.

When the change was adopted in late July, state party Chairwoman Jessica Millan Patterson predicted it would lure GOP presidential candidates to California to campaign, drive turnout and make the state relevant in picking the party's 2024 nominee.

But others believe it has had the opposite effect, stifling competition in a state where buying media advertising across half a dozen markets comes at a huge, prohibitive cost. The vastness of the state, home to nearly 1-in-8 Americans, makes it hard to get to all the regions. The previous guidelines encouraged candidates to target specific districts — now, one candidate can collect them all.

"The effect of the change has been to effectively terminate the Republican primary in California," said conservative activist Jon Fleishman, a former executive director of the state GOP.

The state party — strongly influenced by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy of Bakersfield, a Trump loyalist — "shifted everything to help Donald Trump," Fleishman said.

In a sign of the fallout, a super PAC supporting Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Never Back Down, recently curtailed operations in California. The committee says it had knocked on over 100,000 doors over several months but has shifted its focus elsewhere.

"The Trump team came in to rig the rules in their favor," Ken Cuccinelli, who was deputy secretary of Homeland Security during the Trump administration and founded the PAC, said in a statement.

Similar rule changes seen as benefiting the Trump campaign are playing out elsewhere, including in Michigan and Nevada, where some GOP leaders fear changing guidelines could confuse voters. The California rules are expected to be challenged at a state party convention next week, though reversing course is seen as unlikely.

"Nobody is seriously trying to repeal it," said longtime conservative activist Steve Frank.

The home turf of Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, California was once reliably Republican in presidential elections. Pronounced demographic shifts, particularly a boom in the Hispanic population, and a shifting economy that included the collapse of the defense industry, changed everything.

The number of Hispanics, Blacks and Asian-Americans combined has outnumbered whites in California since 1998, and Latinos alone have outnumbered the white population for about a decade. Most new voters are Democrats or left-leaning independents. Democrats hold every statewide office and dominate the Legislature and the congressional delegation.

California's Republican Party has been in decline for years, and GOP voters account for just 23.8% of the statewide total, slightly ahead of independents. Infighting between conservatives and moderates persists, and dueling factions are expected to brawl at the state party convention over a proposed rewrite of the party platform, moving it toward the political center.

The last Republican to win a presidential contest in California was George H.W. Bush, in 1988. Since then, it's been a long string of Election Day misery: John McCain, the 2008 GOP nominee against Barack Obama, boasted about competing in California but lost by 24 points. Mitt Romney suffered a 23-point loss to Obama in 2012. Trump lost there to Hillary Clinton in 2016 by 30 points.

However, pockets of Republican strength remain, including in the vast Central Valley farm belt and the so-called Inland Empire running east and north of Los Angeles. Despite his penchant for California-bashing, Trump won 23 of the state's 58 counties in the state in 2020, mostly in the state's farm belt and rural interior.

Once the primary is over, California's relevance may lie in a string of competitive House seats, including several in Orange County southeast of Los Angeles, which are expected to play into control of the closely divided chamber next year.

What is saltwater intrusion and how is it affecting Louisiana's drinking water?

By SARA CLINE Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — For months, residents in the southeast corner of Louisiana have relied on bottled water for drinking and cooking, with the water from the faucet coming out salty.

Plaquemines Parish Councilman Mark "Hobbo" Cognevich, who represents the affected area, said grocery stores are constantly having to restock plastic water bottles, neighbors have reported getting rashes after showering, and, overall, the community is "fed up" with the situation.

"We are praying for rain," Cognevich said. That is a sentiment echoed by officials across the state, as the drought-stricken Mississippi River's flow is low and slow, allowing for salt water from the Gulf of Mexico to intrude upstream and threaten communities' drinking supplies.

But with little precipitation in the forecast, officials are now hastily preparing for if and when the salt water will reach the state's most populous city — New Orleans.

WHAT IS SALTWATER INTRUSION AND HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

Typically, the mighty flow of the Mississippi River — which stretches from northern Minnesota, through the center of the continental United States and out to the Gulf of Mexico — is enough to keep mass amounts of salt water from intruding too far upstream. But hot and dry conditions across the country this summer, triggering extreme drought, have affected the Mississippi. Officials expect the river volume to reach historic lows in the coming weeks.

Matt Roe, a spokesperson for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in New Orleans, said on Monday that when the flow of the river gets this weak, "it doesn't have the mass and velocity needed to push the salt water back down around the mouth of the river."

HOW IS THE SALT WATER AFFECTING LOUISIANA'S DRINKING WATER?

Many communities in south Louisiana rely on the Mississippi's fresh water, with their water intake treatment facilities located along the river.

Unimpeded salt water continues to creep upriver and threatens municipal drinking water. That makes it unsafe to drink — especially for people with kidney disease, high blood pressure, people on a low-sodium diet, infants and pregnant women.

While most of the state still has fresh water flowing out of faucets, water advisories have been issued in parts of Plaquemines Parish since June. Edwards warns that other parishes may soon be affected by the salt water, including Orleans, St. Bernard and Jefferson. Although that likely won't happen until mid-to-late October.

During a news conference on Friday, Edwards urged Louisianans not to panic or rush to buy bottled water. Instead, residents will be notified in advance if salt water will affect their area.

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

Officials are addressing the issue in multiple ways, including heightening an existing sill, an underwater levee used to block or slow the flow of salt water. Officials say the sill augmentation — which had been used during similar situations, in 1988, 2012 and last year — will delay salt water's progression by about 10 to 15 days.

"We're being proactive. We're applying best practices and lessons learned from the past," Edwards said.

In addition, millions of gallons of fresh water are being taken by barges to treatment facilities in impacted areas.

Edwards also plans to request an emergency declaration from the federal government to get more agencies to address the issue and authorize the state "to take emergency protective measures with some level of reimbursement available."

But what is needed most right now is rain. And not just in Louisiana, but further north to strengthen the river's flow,

WILL THE SALT WATER AFFECT OTHER THINGS?

The Mississippi is one of the world's most important commercial waterways, and the Port of South Loui-

siana is critical for grain shipments, handling about 60% of U.S. grain exports.

Officials say they are doing what they can during the sill augmentation to keep the channel open to ships and barges.

However, traffic along the Mississippi is already slower than usual due to the drought, which has left the river so low that barge companies are reducing their loads.

Additionally, state departments are monitoring the effects this could have on agriculture — specifically citrus nurseries, which rely heavily on irrigation and are more sensitive to salt water than a mature tree in the ground.

But with this likely being a long-duration event, the full effects of the saltwater intrusion have yet to be felt.

Democratic Sen. Menendez rejects calls to resign and says cash found in home was not bribe proceeds

By DEEPTI HAJELA and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

UNION CITY, N.J. (AP) — Democratic U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey defiantly pushed back against federal corruption charges on Monday, saying nearly half a million dollars in cash authorities found in his home was from his personal savings, not from bribes, and was on hand for emergencies.

Rejecting rising calls for him to resign, the influential chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said he believed he'd be cleared of charges that he took cash and gold in illegal exchange for helping Egypt and New Jersey business associates.

"I recognize this will be the biggest fight yet, but as I have stated throughout this whole process, I firmly believe that when all the facts are presented, not only will I be exonerated, but I still will be New Jersey's senior senator," Menendez said at Hudson County Community College's campus in Union City, where he grew up.

He did not respond to questions and did not say whether he would seek reelection next year.

Addressing allegations in the indictment unsealed Friday that authorities found cash stuffed in envelopes and clothing at his home, Menendez said that stemmed from his parents' fear of confiscation of funds from their time in Cuba.

"This may seem old fashioned, but these were monies drawn from my personal savings account based on the income that I have lawfully derived over those 30 years," he said.

Authorities recovered about 10 envelopes with tens of thousands of dollars in cash that had the fingerprints of one of the other defendants in the case on them, according to the indictment.

Menendez also addressed his relationship with Egypt, which plays a central role in the indictment against him, suggesting he's been tough on the country over its detention of Americans and other "human rights abuses."

"If you look at my actions related to Egypt during the period described in this indictment and throughout my whole career, my record is clear and consistent in holding Egypt accountable," he said.

Prosecutors say he met with Egyptian military and intelligence officials, passed along non-public information about employees at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and ghostwrote a letter on behalf of Egypt asking his Senate colleagues to release a hold on \$300 million worth of aid. He did not directly address those allegations Monday.

The state's Democratic leadership, including Gov. Phil Murphy, the state party chairmen and leaders of the Legislature, along with some of Menendez's congressional colleagues, are calling on him to resign.

In Washington, however, where his party holds a bare Senate majority, some of Menendez's Democratic colleagues have stopped short of urging him to give up his seat, notably Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, and Majority Whip Dick Durbin of Illinois.

Even though Schumer has not called for Menendez to step down, other members of his caucus have. Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown and Vermont Sen. Peter Welch called for his resignation on Monday, following Pennsylvania Sen. John Fetterman on Saturday.

Menendez did, however, step down as required as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Schumer

said on Friday, when the indictment was unsealed.

If he seeks reelection, Menendez will face at least one challenger in a primary next year after Democratic Rep. Andy Kim announced over the weekend that he will run for the Senate because of the charges against the state's senior senator.

Menendez's reelection campaign could face significant hurdles besides the criminal indictment, the second one he has faced in eight years, in light of opposition from state party leaders.

If the Democratic Party abandons Menendez, he could lose a potent benefit of party support: the so-called party line, or preferred ballot placement in the primary, widely regarded as a significant boost to incumbents and those with establishment backing.

Menendez has denied any wrongdoing in the federal case against him, his wife and three of their business associates. In an emailed statement last week, he accused prosecutors of misrepresenting "the normal work of a congressional office" and said he will not allow his work in the Senate to be distracted by "baseless allegations." A lawyer for his wife said she "denies any criminal conduct and will vigorously contest these charges in court."

He and Nadine Menendez are accused of accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, gold and a luxury car from a trio of New Jersey businessmen for a variety of corrupt acts.

The indictment said Menendez used his clout to interfere in three criminal cases, pressured U.S. agriculture regulators to protect an associate's business interests, and used his position as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to influence U.S. policy on Egypt.

Federal agents who searched his home in 2022 found more than \$480,000 in cash stuffed into envelopes and hidden in clothing, closets and a safe, and gold bars worth more than \$100,000, prosecutors said. Another \$70,000 was discovered inside his wife's safety deposit box, they said.

Some Menendez supporters attended the news conference. Among them was Manny Contreras, a resident of nearby Passaic County, who said he came to show his support for Menendez and had been voting for him for years.

"It's a big problem for the Latino community, we don't want to see him go, we have to give him the benefit of the doubt," Contreras said.

He said if Menendez were found guilty, he would have to reconsider his support, but because of the good things in the Menendez's long career, he was willing to let the process play out.

Catalini reported from Trenton. Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick in Washington contributed to this report.

Screenwriters wait to learn terms of deal with Hollywood studios to end historic strike

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Screenwriters waited Monday to learn what their five-month strike won and prepared for a possible return to work after their union reached an agreement with studio executives that could help end the walkouts that brought Hollywood to a standstill.

The historic shutdown will go on for now, with actors remaining on strike and no talks planned, though the tentative deal announced Sunday night may provide momentum that could lead to a resolution for them too. That would allow full production to resume for the first time since May.

The governing boards of the two branches of the Writers Guild of America are likely to vote on the contract Tuesday. With their approval, writers will then vote on the deal, and the strike can officially end. Network shows including NBC's "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" and ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" could return to the air within days.

Details of the agreement have not yet been made public or even shared with the writers themselves because the contract language is being finalized. But the WGA said in an email to members that the deal was "exceptional — with meaningful gains and protections for writers in every sector of the membership."

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The 11,500 screenwriters walked off the job May 2 over issues of pay, the size of writing staffs and control of the use of artificial intelligence in scripts.

"It's been a long, hard-fought victory," John August, a writer on films including "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" who is also a member of the negotiating committee, said on his podcast, choking up as he spoke. "But it's nice to be near the end."

Writer and guild member Zayd Dohrn said many lives were upended during the strike and will now be changing again, but they're used to it.

"It's not that unusual for writers and actors to suddenly have to drop everything and go to work," Dohrn told The Associated Press. "Routines will have to be broken or changed. But I think people are pretty used to being ready to go on short notice."

Union leaders told writers not to return to work yet, but picketing will be suspended. They encouraged writers to join the actors on their picket lines in solidarity.

The three-year contract agreement emerged after five marathon days of renewed talks by the WGA and negotiators from the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents studios, streaming services and production companies in the negotiations. Chief executives including Disney's Bob Iger and Netflix's Ted Sarandos took part in the talks directly.

Media and entertainment companies got a small boost from the news. Shares in Warner Bros. Discovery, Paramount, Disney and Netflix all rose about 2% or less on Monday.

The agreement came just five days before the strike would have become the longest in the guild's history and the longest Hollywood strike more than 70 years. When an agreement was reached in the last writers strike, in 2008, more than 90 percent of members voted to approve it.

The Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists said its leaders will look closely at the deal struck by writers, who walked out over many of the same issues as actors.

The actors union said the guild continues to urge executives "to return to the table and make the fair deal that our members deserve and demand."

The writers' deal was reached without the intervention of federal mediators or other government officials, which was necessary in previous strikes.

President Joe Biden said the agreement was "testament to the power of collective bargaining."

"There simply is no substitute for employers and employees coming together to negotiate in good faith toward an agreement that makes a business stronger and secures the pay, benefits and dignity that workers deserve," Biden said Monday in a statement.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and California Gov. Gavin Newsom congratulated the two sides on the deal and expressed hopes that the industry could return to normal soon.

The writers strike immediately sent late-night talk shows and "Saturday Night Live" on hiatus. Dozens of scripted shows and other productions have been in limbo, including forthcoming seasons of Netflix's "Stranger Things," HBO's "The Last of Us," and ABC's "Abbot Elementary." Films including "Deadpool 3" and "Superman: Legacy" were also held up. The Emmy Awards were pushed from September to January.

More recently, writers had been targeting talk shows that were working around strike rules to return to air, including "The Drew Barrymore Show," "Real Time With Bill Maher" and "The Talk." All reversed course in the face of picketing and pressure, and are likely to quickly return now.

The combined strikes made for a pivotal moment in Hollywood as creative labor faced off against executives in a business transformed by technology, from the seismic shift to streaming in recent years to the potentially paradigm-shifting emergence of AI in the years to come.

Screenwriters have traditionally gone on strike more than any other segment of the industry, but they enjoyed a relatively long stretch of labor peace until last spring, when negotiations for a new contract fell apart. The walkout was their first since 2007 and their longest since 1988.

On July 14, they got a dose of solidarity and star power — along with a lot of new picketing partners — when they were joined by 65,000 film and television actors.

It was the first time the two groups had been on strike together since 1960.

Texas Walmart shooter agrees to pay more than \$5M to families over 2019 racist attack

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A white Texas gunman who killed 23 people at a Walmart in 2019 after ranting about Hispanics taking over the government and economy has agreed to pay more than \$5 million to victims of the racist attack, according to an order signed by a judge Monday.

Patrick Crusius was sentenced to 90 consecutive life sentences in July after pleading guilty to federal hate crime charges following one of the nation's worst mass killings. Court records show his attorneys and the Justice Department reached an agreement over the restitution amount, which was then approved by U.S. District Judge David Guaderrama.

There is no indication Crusius, 25, has significant assets. He was 21 years old and had dropped out of community college when police say he drove more than 700 miles from his home near Dallas to target Hispanics with an AK-style rifle inside and outside the store. Moments before the attack began, Crusius posted a racist screed online that warned of a Hispanic "invasion" of Texas.

He once worked at a movie theater, a job that his attorneys have said Crusius was forced to leave because he was having violent thoughts.

Crusius pleaded guilty in February after federal prosecutors took the death penalty off the table. But Texas prosecutors have said they will try to put Crusius on death row when he stands trial in state court. That trial date has not yet been set.

Under the agreement between the gunman and the government, Crusius will pay \$5,557,005.55, according to court filings.

Dean Reckard, whose mother Margie Reckard was killed in the shooting, said he chose not to be included in the restitution and expressed doubt that someone sentenced to prison for life could actually pay millions of dollars.

"Nobody can ever bring back the people who were lost, including my mother," Reckard said. "You can't put a price on somebody's life. We're going to be without the people in our lives forever and he is just sitting behind bars right now, and he still gets to live so there is no winning anything here."

Joe Spencer, an attorney for Crusius, and a spokesperson for the Justice Department did not return messages Monday.

In January, the Justice Department proposed changes to how it runs federal prisoners' deposit accounts in an effort to ensure victims are paid restitution, including from some high-profile inmates with large balances. The move came as the Justice Department faced increased scrutiny after revelations that several high-profile inmates kept large sums of money in their prison accounts but only made minimal payments to their victims.

The 2019 attack was the deadliest of a dozen mass shootings in the U.S. linked to hate crimes since 2006, according to a database compiled by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

Before the shooting, Crusius had appeared consumed by the nation's immigration debate, tweeting #BuildtheWall and other social media posts that praised then-President Donald Trump's hardline border policies. Crusius went further in his rant posted before the attack, sounding warnings that Hispanics were going to take over the government and economy.

More schools are adopting 4-day weeks. For parents, the challenge is day 5

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

INDEPENDENCE, Mo. (AP) — It's a Monday in September, but with schools closed, the three children in the Prunte household have nowhere to be. Callahan, 13, contorts herself into a backbend as 7-year-old Hudson fiddles with a balloon and 10-year-old Keegan plays the piano.

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Like a growing number of students around the U.S., the Prunte children are on a four-day school schedule, a change instituted this fall by their district in Independence, Missouri.

To the kids, it's terrific. "I have a three-day break of school!" exclaimed Hudson.

But their mom, Brandi Prunte, who teaches French in a neighboring district in suburban Kansas City, is frustrated to find herself hunting for activities to keep her kids entertained and off electronics while she works five days a week.

"I feel like I'm back in the COVID shutdown," she said.

Hundreds of school systems around the country have adopted four-day weeks in recent years, mostly in rural and western parts of the U.S. Districts cite cost savings and advantages for teacher recruitment, although some have questioned the effects on students who already missed out on significant learning during the pandemic.

For parents, there also is the added complication, and cost, of arranging child care for that extra weekday. While surveys show parents approve overall, support wanes among those with younger children.

On this Monday, Brandi Prunte was home because Hudson had a mysterious rash on his arm. Most weeks, her oldest would be in charge, with occasional help from grandparents. She has no interest in paying for the child care option the district is offering for \$30 per day. Multiplied by several kids, it adds up.

"I want my kids in an educational environment," she said, "and I don't want to pay for somebody to babysit them."

Even then, the district-provided child care isn't as convenient because it's not in every school. And in other four-day districts, so many parents adjust their work schedule or enlist family to help that the day care has been discontinued because of low enrollment.

That is especially concerning for parents of younger kids and those whose disabilities can make finding child care an extra challenge.

In more than 13,000 school districts nationwide, nearly 900 operate on a truncated schedule, up from 662 in 2019 and a little more than 100 in 1999, said Paul Thompson, an associate professor of economics at Oregon State University.

The practice has taken off mostly in rural communities, where families often have a stay-at-home parent or nearby grandparent. But Independence, known best for its ties to President Harry Truman, is anything but rural, with 14,000 students, including around 70% who are eligible for government-subsidized meals.

The district offers meals on Mondays, but not at every school. Starting in October, struggling students will be able to attend school on Mondays for extra help. Superintendent Dale Herl said discussions with officials at other districts convinced him parents will figure out child care for the other students.

"You have to go back and look, you know, what do parents do during the summertime? What do they do over, you know, spring break or Christmas break?" he said, adding that schools already had weekdays off for occasions such as teacher conferences.

In Missouri, the number of districts routinely getting three-day weekends has more than doubled since the pandemic hit, from 12% to 30%. Some Missouri lawmakers have pushed back, arguing students need more time with teachers. One failed legislative proposal would have let students in four-day districts transfer or attend private schools, with their home districts picking up the tab.

Some turn to a shortened schedule to save money. An analysis by the Economic Commission of the States found such savings were modest, totaling 0.4% to 2.5% of their annual budgets.

For many school systems including Independence, which lengthened the other four school days, the hope is to boost teacher recruitment and retention. Some school systems making the switch are competing against districts that are able to pay up to \$15,000 more, with just 15 minutes added to the commute, said Jon Turner, a Missouri State University associate professor of education.

But when one district switches to a shortened school week, it gains a recruiting advantage over the others.

Other districts soon follow, making shortened schedules a "Band-Aid" solution with diminishing returns, Missouri Commissioner of Education Margie Vandeven said.

"If everybody becomes a four-day school week," she said, "that is no longer a recruitment strategy."

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In some communities, a four-day week is better for families. In the Turner district in north-central Montana, taking Fridays off avoids situations such as basketball games played at districts three or more hours away that leave only a small number of students at school, Superintendent Tony Warren said.

The change also provides another day to work on family farms in the district with a little more than 50 students, Warren said, although he now also sees some larger districts adopting the schedule.

"They're making the shift to the four-day week because all the districts around them have adopted a four-day week," he said.

The effect on academics is murky, although some studies show the schedule doesn't hurt test scores if the other four school days are lengthened to make up the time, Thompson said.

However, the Rand Corporation found achievement differences in four-day districts, while initially hard to spot, became apparent over multiple years.

That worries Karyn Lewis of the research organization NWEA, whose recent study found students are not making up all the academic ground they lost during the pandemic.

"Now is not the time to do anything that threatens the amount of instruction kids are receiving," she said.

In Independence, the hope is that the soon-to-start off-day program for struggling students will help them catch up with their classmates. Older students, meanwhile, can take classes at a community college.

Only a few large districts have adopted a four-day week. The 27J district north of Denver made the switch in 2018 after several failed efforts to increase taxes to boost teacher wages. With surrounding districts able to pay more, teacher turnover had become a problem.

Superintendent Will Pierce said the district's own surveys now show nearly 80% of parents and 85% of teachers support the schedule. "Quality of life is what they're reporting," he said.

Demand for day care hasn't been huge, with fewer than 300 kids using the off-day program in the district of 20,000 students, he said.

Still, a study published this year found test scores dipped slightly in the 27J district, and that home values also took a hit compared to those in neighboring districts.

"Voters need to think about trade offs," said Frank James Perrone, one of the study's authors and an Indiana University assistant professor of educational leadership.

Teacher retirements have dropped in Independence and job applications have increased since switching the schedule. And that's all good, Brandi Prunte acknowledged.

"But," she added, "it can't be at the expense of the community or families of the district."

Here's when your favorite show may return as writers strike is on the verge of ending

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A tentative agreement between striking screenwriters and Hollywood studios offers some hope that the industry's dual walkouts may soon be over. But when will your favorite shows return?

Well, it's complicated. First, the agreement needs to pass two key votes — one involving the boards of the screenwriters union, followed by a vote by the 11,500 members themselves.

Then there's the fact that 65,000 film and television actors remain on strike. That work stoppage will prevent many projects from returning to normal. Certain paused productions such as "Deadpool 3," "Yellowjackets" and the next film from Quentin Tarantino will still have to wait on actors to reach a deal with studios.

WHEN IS 'JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE' COMING BACK?

Once the contract is approved, work will resume more quickly for some writers than others. Late-night talk shows were the first to be affected when the strike began, and they may be among the first to return to air now. NBC's "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon," ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert" on CBS could come back within days.

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They will return with a guest shortage, however. The actors strike limits promotional appearances that are the lifeblood of late-night shows.

"Saturday Night Live" might be able to return for its 49th season. Its writers could be at work soon on sketches, and its actors could perform because they work under a different contract not covered by the actors strike, though as union members they may be reluctant to do so.

Shows that return while actors are still picketing could prove controversial, as happened with the planned resumptions of daytime shows including "The Drew Barrymore Show" and "The Talk." Those plans were later abandoned.

One show that's likely to make a speedy return is "Real Time with Bill Maher." The host plotted a return without writers but ended up postponing once last week's negotiations were set.

WHAT ABOUT 'STRANGER THINGS' AND 'SUPERMAN?'

Writers rooms for scripted shows that shut down at the strike's onset, including Netflix's "Stranger Things," "Severance" on Apple TV+ and "Abbott Elementary" on ABC are also likely to reactivate quickly. But with no performers to act out the scripts, long delays between page and screen will be inevitable.

Film writers will also get back to work on their slower timeline, though those working on scripts or late revisions for already scheduled movies — including "Deadpool 3" and "Superman: Legacy" — will certainly be hustling to avoid further release-date delays.

Director Quentin Tarantino's 10th film, "The Movie Critic," is among the scripts that are written whose makers are awaiting actors' return to sets.

WHEN ARE DREW BARRYMORE AND OTHER DAYTIME SHOWS COMING BACK?

Barrymore's planned return to her daytime television show became a rallying point for picketers earlier this month, prompting her to cancel her plans. "The Talk" and "The Jennifer Hudson Show," which also employ some screenwriters, also called off plans to return.

Barrymore and the other shows have not announced their plans for returning. However, the Writers Guild of America has made it clear: Guild members cannot start working again on projects until the tentative contract is ratified.

That vote has not yet been scheduled.

IS THERE ANYTHING NEW COMING OUT THIS FALL?

Absolutely. Networks had to get creative with fall programming by tapping into international shows, game shows and more sports. But there are still several new series and movies coming out this year.

Some standout newcomers include a "Walking Dead" show focused on fan favorite Daryl Dixon and a "John Wick" prequel series that are airing now. Still to premiere are a new Jesse L. Martin NBC series, "Irrational," and a "Frasier" sequel.

The PBS lineup is largely unaffected. It includes a Ken Burns documentary series, "The American Buffalo," and a drama show about the lives of people fighting World War II airing. The network also has nonfiction shows that examine Elon Musk's Twitter takeover, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Houston Astros cheating scandal, as well as how animals are adapting to human-caused habitat changes.

Movie theaters will have a mix of Oscar contenders and action films. Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon," starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert DeNiro and Lily Gladstone, will be out in October. November brings the newest Marvel film, "The Marvels," as well as the prequel "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes."

Trump argues First Amendment protects him from 'insurrection' cases aimed at keeping him off ballot

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Attorneys for former President Donald Trump argue that an attempt to bar him from the 2024 ballot under a rarely used "insurrection" clause of the Constitution should be dismissed as a violation of his freedom of speech.

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The lawyers made the argument in a filing posted Monday by a Colorado court in one of the most significant of a series of challenges to Trump's candidacy under the Civil War-era clause in the 14th Amendment. The challenges rest on Trump's attempts to overturn his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden and his role leading up to the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

"At no time do Petitioners argue that President Trump did anything other than engage in either speaking or refusing to speak for their argument that he engaged in the purported insurrection," wrote attorney Geoffrey Blue.

Trump also will argue that the clause doesn't apply to him because "the Fourteenth Amendment applies to one who 'engaged in insurrection or rebellion,' not one who only 'instigated' any action," Blue wrote.

The former president's lawyers also said the challenge should be dismissed because he is not yet a candidate under the meaning of Colorado election law, which they contend isn't intended to settle constitutional disputes.

The motion under Colorado's anti-SLAPP law, which shields people from lawsuits that harass them for behavior protected by the First Amendment, will be the first of the 14th Amendment challenges filed in multiple states to be considered in open court. It was filed late Friday and posted by the court Monday.

Denver District Judge Sarah B. Wallace has scheduled a hearing on the motion for Oct. 13. A hearing on the constitutional issues will come on Oct. 30.

Whatever Wallace rules, the issue is likely to reach the U.S. Supreme Court, which has never heard a case on the provision of the 14th Amendment, which was ratified in 1868, three years after the Civil War ended. The clause has only been used a handful of times.

The Colorado challenge stands out because it was the first filed by an organization with significant legal resources, in this case a liberal group called Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. A second liberal group, Free Speech For The People, has also filed a challenge to Trump's candidacy in Minnesota that is scheduled to be heard by that state's high court on Nov. 2.

Section Three of the amendment bars from office anyone who once took an oath to uphold the Constitution but then "engaged" in "insurrection or rebellion" against it. Its initial intent was to prevent former Confederate officials from becoming members of Congress and taking over the government.

Trump's contention that he is protected by freedom of speech mirrors his defense in criminal cases charging him for his role in the Jan. 6 attack. There, too, he argues he was simply trying to bring attention to what he believed was an improper election — even though dozens of lawsuits challenging the results had already been rejected.

Prosecutors in those cases and some legal experts have noted that Trump's offenses go beyond speech, to acts such as trying to organize slates of fake electors that Congress could have recognized to make him president again.

The criminal cases have already bled into the 14th Amendment challenge in Colorado. On Friday, Wallace issued an order barring threats and intimidation in the case after the plaintiffs noted that Trump has targeted lawyers and witnesses in the criminal proceedings against him.

With cameras capturing every word, the pressure is on for the Georgia judge over Trump's indictment

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Judge Peter Cahill hardly slept during the six weeks he presided over the murder trial of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin for killing George Floyd.

Cameras in the courtroom broadcast the veteran Minnesota judge's every word to a global audience. Outside, the nation waited nervously for the outcome of a slaying that galvanized the movement for racial justice.

"When you're in a high-profile trial, you feel the stress, you feel the pressure even if you're not reading the papers," he told an audience of judges last year at The National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada.

Cahill's experience provides a glimpse of the additional scrutiny and strain that await the four judges

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overseeing the criminal cases against former President Donald Trump.

But the challenge facing Fulton County Judge Scott McAfee in Georgia is unlike any of the others. For one, he is the only judge so far to allow television cameras in the courtroom to broadcast hearings and any trials. He is presiding over a sprawling indictment with 19 defendants, among them other prominent figures including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Trump White House chief of staff Mark Meadows. And the trials will play out in a battleground state that Trump narrowly lost in 2020.

Attorneys who have worked alongside McAfee, who took the bench just this year, say his demeanor and years of work as a prosecutor have prepared him for heightened pressure. The judge's varied interests — he is an accomplished cellist and was a scuba diver at the Georgia Aquarium — should also provide relief from the stress of a long legal case.

But the experience of some judges who have been thrust into the public eye point to potential pitfalls and dangers ahead for the 34-year-old Georgia native. U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon in Florida, who was nominated by Trump, has already faced sharp criticism for an early decision that favored the Republican former president in his fight against charges he illegally hoarded classified documents.

High-profile cases lead to a "greater intrusion on your life," said U.S. Senior Judge Reggie Walton, who presided over the 2007 trial of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, a former top aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, and the 2012 trial of pitcher Roger Clemens.

"Sometimes there'll be articles that may be written that may be off base," he said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "They can create a little heartburn sometimes."

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Lance Ito was accused of self-promotion for giving an interview during the O.J. Simpson trial in 1994. Critics also said he appeared too sensitive to criticism in the press and failed to control the proceedings, allowing the case to drag on for months and turn into a spectacle. "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" mocked the trial with a skit featuring dancers in beards and black robes: the Dancing Itos.

In Florida, a judicial commission found Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer violated several rules governing judicial conduct during the penalty trial last year of Parkland school shooter Nikolas Cruz. Among them, she "unduly" chastised the lead public defender and improperly embraced members of the prosecution in the courtroom after sentencing Cruz to life without parole, the commission said. Scherer, who has since retired, told the commission she also offered to hug the defense team.

Delaware Superior Court Judge Eric Davis, who presided over Dominion Voting Systems' defamation lawsuit against Fox News, said he found even a laugh can be misconstrued.

"Sarcasm doesn't come across well. I learned that," he said at an American Bar Association meeting in August.

The cases may also prompt safety concerns. Already some of the judges overseeing Trump's criminal cases have received threats. U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who is presiding over the federal election subversion case in Washington, has increased security after a woman was arrested for threatening to kill her.

McAfee did not respond to interview requests from The Associated Press. But in a sign that he understands the potential hazards ahead, he told The New Yorker he has no aspiration to become the next Ito or Judge Judy.

"The idea with my job, in general, is to keep your head down," he told the magazine. "Stay even-keeled and manage expectations."

Attorneys who know McAfee say he's ready for the challenge.

Although he's presided over few trials, McAfee's previous courtroom experience shows he has great confidence and poise, said Han Chung, an attorney who worked alongside McAfee at the Fulton County district attorney's office.

As a senior assistant district attorney, McAfee prosecuted hundreds of felony cases, including murder and armed robbery. He was unflappable under tough questioning from a judge or the gaze of a jury, Chung said.

Chung, who is now a prosecutor in nearby Gwinnett County, recalled coming runner-up to McAfee in

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2016 for the best trial lawyer in their unit.

"In order to do our job, you can't be afraid of the courtroom," he said. "He was somebody who was especially not afraid."

In a hearing earlier this month for two of Trump's co-defendants, McAfee was polite, presaged a key potential stumbling block in the prosecution and ruled directly from the bench that the two would be tried together. When a prosecutor asked for two weeks to submit a brief, the judge gave him six days.

At a second hearing days later, a defense attorney accused a prosecutor of defaming the attorney's colleague. McAfee said the prosecutor's comment wasn't an issue for the court, but the attorney talked over him and pressed on. McAfee let him continue briefly before cutting him off.

"I said it's over," he told the attorney, who continued to protest as he left the lectern.

McAfee later listened patiently to the same attorney's suggestion for how to schedule the trial.

Retired Massachusetts Superior Court Judge E. Susan Garsh, who presided over the 2015 murder trial of New England Patriots star Aaron Hernandez, told the AP that "you want to be this very firm presence but not become part of the story."

Garsh recalled getting a weekly massage and listening to audio books during her commute to help ease the stress of the trial.

She also said she tried to anticipate as many issues as possible. That included making sure people did not wear Patriots jerseys in the courtroom, she said.

For McAfee, it may mean accounting for his prior work at the Fulton County district attorney's office. His supervisor for part of his tenure there was Fani Willis, who brought the indictment against Trump and the 18 other defendants.

Trump has attacked Willis, a Democrat, as a "rabid partisan," and his attorneys may make McAfee's work under her an issue. His legal team has already filed motions asking two of the judges overseeing indictments against him — Chutkan, who was nominated by President Barack Obama, and New York Judge Juan Manuel Merchan, who also oversaw the Trump Organization's tax fraud trial — to recuse themselves, citing bias. Merchan rejected the request. Chutkan has yet to rule.

But McAfee, who got his law degree in 2013 from the University of Georgia, also has conservative credentials.

He worked for the administration of Georgia's Republican governor, Brian Kemp, and in law school was a member of the Federalist Society, a group closely aligned with Republican priorities.

Kemp in 2021 appointed McAfee to lead Georgia's Office of Inspector General, which is tasked with exposing fraud and waste in state government. Before then, McAfee worked for the U.S. attorney's office, where he prosecuted drug trafficking groups.

In a press release announcing his appointment to the bench last year, Kemp's office noted McAfee, who is married with two children, was captain of a tennis team, received a scholarship to play the cello as an undergraduate at Emory University and volunteered as a scuba diver at the Georgia Aquarium.

Those activities may prove helpful for McAfee while he presides over the Georgia case.

"Hopefully, you have a life outside the law," Cahill said during his talk in Reno about handling high-profile cases. "Something where you can get away from the law itself and enjoy yourself."

Experimental treatment pushed by ALS patients gets day before FDA, but agency unconvinced it works

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration meets this week to consider approval of an experimental treatment for Lou Gehrig's disease, the culmination of a yearslong lobbying effort by patients with the fatal neurodegenerative disease.

Those advocates still face one giant hurdle: FDA regulators say the treatment hasn't been shown to work.

In documents posted Monday, the FDA reiterated its longstanding position that a lone study by drugmaker Brainstorm doesn't provide convincing evidence that its stem cell-based therapy helps patients with ALS,

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or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

It's the same message the FDA delivered to company executives in early 2021 when they first shared data on the treatment, dubbed NurOwn. And again last November, when the FDA refused to accept the company's application for review.

But with the backing of thousands of ALS patients, Brainstorm took the rare step of "filing over protest," essentially forcing the agency to render a decision.

"FDA is the 800-pound gorilla here and if they're convinced that the drug doesn't work it's very hard to change their minds," said Marc Scheineson, a former associate FDA commissioner who now consults for drugmakers.

In the documents posted Monday, FDA reviewers outlined their "major concerns" about the company's evidence.

Still, ALS patients see reasons for optimism.

Under pressure from the ALS community and Congress, FDA officials have recently emphasized the "urgent need" for new ALS treatments and pledged to use maximum "regulatory flexibility" when reviewing them. FDA has approved two new ALS drugs in the last year, neither of which met the agency's traditional approval standards.

NurOwn is the clearest test yet of how far the agency may be willing to bend to approve a new medicine for a rare and deadly condition with few treatment options.

ALS gradually destroys nerve connections needed for basic movements and functions, including breathing. Most people die within five years of diagnosis.

At Wednesday's meeting, federal advisers will hear from FDA scientists, company researchers and patients before taking a non-binding vote on NurOwn's effectiveness. FDA will make the final decision on the therapy later this year.

The meeting was scheduled after ALS advocates delivered a 30,000-signature petition seeking a public vetting of the treatment.

Brian Wallach, co-founder of the advocacy group I AM ALS, says even if NurOwn only provides a small benefit for some patients, it should be made available. A former Obama White House staffer, Wallach was diagnosed with ALS in 2017.

"We do not want the perfect to be the enemy of the good," said Wallach, speaking through an interpreter. "The key is to have treatments that make it possible to turn ALS into more of a chronic disease and to allow all patients to live longer and hopefully see a cure."

Still, there's little consensus on NurOwn among the normally tight-knit ALS community.

The ALS Association, the largest organization in the field, has not endorsed Brainstorm's bid for approval despite giving the company \$400,000 in research funding. Brainstorm declined to make its complete dataset available for external review, a spokesperson noted.

"The amazing testimonials we have seen online do not align with the data that Brainstorm has shared," the group said in a statement.

At Wednesday's meeting, people with such reservations are certain to be outnumbered by appeals from ALS patients and their families. The FDA has received more than 1,900 written comments, many expressing outrage that NurOwn was not approved years ago.

"If we would've had NurOwn approved back when I was still walking, I believe I might still be walking today," wrote Patricia Manhardt, who was diagnosed in 2020.

NurOwn is made from stem cells collected from patients' bone marrow. The cells are processed in a lab with biological proteins designed to promote nerve growth, and then injected into the spinal column.

In a study of 200 patients, NurOwn failed to show a statistically significant difference between patients who received the drug and those who got sham injections. Brainstorm and the academic researchers who conducted the study say the results were skewed by an unexpectedly high number of patients with advanced disease who enrolled in the trial.

ALS is measured using a 48-point questionnaire that tracks functions like walking, swallowing and hand-

writing.

On Wednesday, researchers will tell FDA that because many patients declined so quickly on the scale, the study failed to show Nurown's effect on progression. When data from a small subset of healthier patients is isolated, they argue, NurOwn significantly slowed the disease.

"The leaders in this field have said there's more to this story than just, 'No it doesn't work,'" said Dr. Anthony Windebank, a Mayo Clinic neurologist who will present on Brainstorm's behalf.

But FDA reviewers said Monday the company's theory does not explain the study's failed results.

Physicians who weren't involved in the research suggest regulators might be willing to make a compromise: approving NurOwn for some patients while awaiting more definitive results.

"I don't want to lose a potential treatment for ALS, but I also don't want to foist on the public an expensive treatment that doesn't work," said Dr. Terry Heiman-Patterson of Temple University.

That compromise would be similar to FDA's approach to Relyvrio last year, another ALS drug with questionable data. But in that case, the drugmaker had started its follow-up study long before approval.

Brainstorm has not begun a second study, saying it's been unable to raise enough money.

Meanwhile, FDA observers worry about the long-term consequences if regulators keep accepting weaker evidence from drugmakers.

"If the standards fall too low, that sends a message to industry that you don't have to prove your drug works," said Holly Fernandez Lynch, a bioethicist at University of Pennsylvania. "It's understandable why some patients would accept that. But if that becomes the regulatory standard, it can set back a field in the long term."

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter: @AP_FDAAwriter

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We carry DNA from extinct cousins like Neanderthals. Science is now revealing their genetic legacy

By LAURA UNGAR and MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writers

Neanderthals live on within us.

These ancient human cousins, and others called Denisovans, once lived alongside our early Homo sapiens ancestors. They mingled and had children. So some of who they were never went away — it's in our genes. And science is starting to reveal just how much that shapes us.

Using the new and rapidly improving ability to piece together fragments of ancient DNA, scientists are finding that traits inherited from our ancient cousins are still with us now, affecting our fertility, our immune systems, even how our bodies handled the COVID-19 virus.

"We're now carrying the genetic legacies and learning about what that means for our bodies and our health," said Mary Prendergast, a Rice University archeologist.

In the past few months alone, researchers have linked Neanderthal DNA to a serious hand disease, the shape of people's noses and various other human traits. They even inserted a gene carried by Neanderthals and Denisovans into mice to investigate its effects on biology, and found it gave them larger heads and an extra rib.

Much of the human journey remains a mystery. But Dr. Hugo Zeberg of the Karolinska Institute in Sweden said new technologies, research and collaborations are helping scientists begin to answer the basic but cosmic questions: "Who are we? Where did we come from?"

And the answers point to a profound reality: We have far more in common with our extinct cousins than we ever thought.

NEANDERTHALS WITHIN US

Until recently, the genetic legacy from ancient humans was invisible because scientists were limited to

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what they could glean from the shape and size of bones. But there has been a steady stream of discoveries from ancient DNA, an area of study pioneered by Nobel Prize winner Svante Paabo who first pieced together a Neanderthal genome.

Advances in finding and interpreting ancient DNA have allowed them to see things like genetic changes over time to better adapt to environments or through random chance.

It's even possible to figure out how much genetic material people from different regions carry from the ancient relatives our predecessors encountered.

Research shows some African populations have almost no Neanderthal DNA, while those from European or Asian backgrounds have 1% to 2%. Denisovan DNA is barely detectable in most parts of the world but makes up 4% to 6% of the DNA of people in Melanesia, which extends from New Guinea to the Fiji Islands.

That may not sound like much, but it adds up: Even though only 100,000 Neanderthals ever lived, "half of the Neanderthal genome is still around, in small pieces scattered around modern humans," said Zeberg, who collaborates closely with Paabo.

It's also enough to affect us in very real ways. Scientists don't yet know the full extent, but they're learning it can be both helpful and harmful.

For example, Neanderthal DNA has been linked to auto-immune diseases like Graves' disease and rheumatoid arthritis. When *Homo sapiens* came out of Africa, they had no immunity to diseases in Europe and Asia, but Neanderthals and Denisovans already living there did.

"By interbreeding with them, we got a quick fix to our immune systems, which was good news 50,000 years ago," said Chris Stringer, a human evolution researcher at the Natural History Museum in London. "The result today is, for some people, that our immune systems are oversensitive, and sometimes they turn on themselves."

Similarly, a gene associated with blood clotting believed to be passed down from Neanderthals in Eurasia may have been helpful in the "rough and tumble world of the Pleistocene," said Rick Potts, director of the human origins program at the Smithsonian Institution. But today it can raise the risk of stroke for older adults. "For every benefit," he said, "there are costs in evolution."

In 2020, research by Zeberg and Paabo found that a major genetic risk factor for severe COVID-19 is inherited from Neanderthals. "We compared it to the Neanderthal genome and it was a perfect match," Zeberg said. "I kind of fell off my chair."

The next year, they found a set of DNA variants along a single chromosome inherited from Neanderthals had the opposite effect: protecting people from severe COVID.

The list goes on: Research has linked Neanderthal genetic variants to skin and hair color, behavioral traits, skull shape and Type 2 diabetes. One study found that people who report feeling more pain than others are likely to carry a Neanderthal pain receptor. Another found that a third of women in Europe inherited a Neanderthal receptor for the hormone progesterone, which is associated with increased fertility and fewer miscarriages.

Much less is known about our genetic legacy from Denisovans – although some research has linked genes from them to fat metabolism and better adaptation to high altitudes. Maanasa Raghavan, a human genetics expert at the University of Chicago, said a stretch of Denisovan DNA has been found in Tibetans, who continue to live and thrive in low-oxygen environments today.

Scientists have even found evidence of "ghost populations" — groups whose fossils have yet to be discovered — within modern humans' genetic code.

SO WHY DID WE SURVIVE?

In the past, the tale of modern humans' survival "was always told as some success story, almost like a hero's story," in which *Homo sapiens* rose above the rest of the natural world and overcame the "insufficiencies" of their cousins, Potts said.

"Well, that simply is just not the correct story."

Neanderthals and Denisovans had already existed for thousands of years by the time *Homo sapiens* left Africa. Scientists used to think we won out because we had more complex behavior and superior

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technology. But recent research shows that Neanderthals talked, cooked with fire, made art objects, had sophisticated tools and hunting behavior, and even wore makeup and jewelry.

Several theories now tie our survival to our ability to travel far and wide.

"We spread all over the world, much more than these other forms did," Zeberg said.

While Neanderthals were specially adapted to cold climates, Potts said, Homo sapiens were able to disperse to all different kinds of climates after emerging in tropical Africa. "We are so adaptable, culturally adaptable, to so many places in the world," he said.

Meanwhile, Neanderthals and Denisovans faced harsh conditions in the north, like repeated ice ages and ice sheets that likely trapped them in small areas, said Eleanor Scerri, an archeologist at Germany's Max Planck Institute for Geoanthropology. They lived in smaller populations with a greater risk of genetic collapse.

Plus, we had nimble, efficient bodies, Prendergast said. It takes a lot more calories to feed stocky Neanderthals than comparatively skinny Homo sapiens, so Neanderthals had more trouble getting by, and moving around, especially when food got scarce.

Janet Young, curator of physical anthropology at the Canadian Museum of History, pointed to another intriguing hypothesis – which anthropologist Pat Shipman shared in one of her books – that dogs played a big part in our survival. Researchers found the skulls of domesticated dogs in Homo sapiens sites much further back in time than anyone had found before. Scientists believe dogs made hunting easier.

By around 30,000 years ago, all the other kinds of hominins on Earth had died off, leaving Homo sapiens as the last humans standing.

'INTERACTION AND MIXTURE'

Still, every new scientific revelation points to how much we owe our ancient cousins.

Human evolution was not about "survival of the fittest and extinction," said John Hawks, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It's about "interaction and mixture."

Researchers expect to learn more as science continues to advance, allowing them to extract information from ever-tinier traces of ancient lives. Even when fossils aren't available, scientists today can capture DNA from soil and sediment where archaic humans once lived.

And there are less-explored places in the world where they hope to learn more. Zeberg said "biobanks" that collect biological samples will likely be established in more countries.

As they delve deeper into humanity's genetic legacy, scientists expect to find even more evidence of how much we mixed with our ancient cousins and all they left us.

"Perhaps," Zeberg said, "we should not see them as so different."

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

AI is on the world's mind. Is the UN the place to figure out what to do about it?

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Just a few years ago, artificial intelligence got barely a mention at the U.N. General Assembly's convocation of world leaders.

But after the release of ChatGPT last fall turbocharged both excitement and anxieties about AI, it's been a sizzling topic this year at diplomacy's biggest yearly gathering.

Presidents, premiers, monarchs and cabinet ministers convened as governments at various levels are mulling or have already passed AI regulation. Industry heavy-hitters acknowledge guardrails are needed but want to protect the technology's envisioned benefits. Outsiders and even some insiders warn that there also are potentially catastrophic risks, and everyone says there's no time to lose.

And many eyes are on the United Nations as perhaps the only place to tackle the issue at scale.

The world body has some unique attributes to offer, including unmatched breadth and a track record of

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brokering pacts on global issues, and it's set to launch an AI advisory board this fall.

"Having a convergence, a common understanding of the risks, that would be a very important outcome," U.N. tech policy chief Amandeep Gill said in an interview. He added that it would be very valuable to reach a common understanding on what kind of governance works, or might, to minimize risks and maximize opportunities for good.

A CONVERSATION THAT IS GAINING MOMENTUM

As recently as 2017, only three speakers brought up AI at the assembly meeting's equivalent of a main stage, the "General Debate." This year, more than 20 speakers did so, representing countries from Namibia to North Macedonia, Argentina to East Timor.

Secretary-General António Guterres teased plans to appoint members this month to the advisory board, with preliminary recommendations due by year's end — warp speed, by U.N. standards.

Lesotho's premier, Sam Matekane, worried about threats to privacy and safety, Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal about potential misuse of AI, and Icelandic Foreign Minister Thórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir about the technology "becoming a tool of destruction." Britain hyped its upcoming "AI Safety Summit," while Spain pitched itself as an eager host for a potential international agency for AI and Israel touted its technological chops as a prospective developer of helpful AI.

Days after U.S. senators discussed AI behind closed doors with tech bigwigs and skeptics, President Joe Biden said Washington is working "to make sure we govern this technology — not the other way around, having it govern us."

And with the General Assembly as a center of gravity, there were so many AI-policy panel discussions and get-togethers around New York last week that attendees sometimes raced from one to another.

"The most important meetings that we are having are the meetings at the U.N. — because it is the only body that is inclusive, that brings all of us here," Omar Al-Olama, the United Arab Emirates' minister for artificial intelligence, said at a U.N.-sponsored event featuring four high-ranking officials from various countries. It drew such interest that a half-dozen of their counterparts offered comments from the audience.

Tech industry players have made sure they're in the mix during the U.N.'s big week, too.

"What's really encouraging is that there's so much global interest in how to get this right — and the U.N. is in a position to help harmonize all the conversations" and work to ensure all voices get heard, says James Manyika, a senior vice president at Google. The tech giant helped develop a new, artificial intelligence-enabled U.N. site for searching data and tracking progress on the world body's key goals.

LOTS OF PEOPLE TALKING, BUT PERHAPS A SLOW PROCESS

But if the United Nations has advantages, it also has the challenges of a big-tent, consensus-seeking ethos that often moves slowly. Plus its members are governments, while AI is being driven by an array of private companies.

Still, a global issue needs a global forum, and "the U.N. is absolutely a place to have these conversations," says Ian Bremmer, president of the Eurasia Group, a political risk advisory firm.

Even if governments aren't developers, Gill notes that they can "influence the direction that AI takes."

"It's not only about regulating against misuse and harm, making sure that democracy is not undermined, the rule of law is not undermined, but it's also about promoting a diverse and inclusive innovation ecosystem" and fostering public investments in research and workforce training where there aren't a lot of deep-pocketed tech companies doing so, he said.

The United Nations will have to navigate territory that some national governments and blocs, including the European Union and the Group of 20 industrialized nations, already are staking out with summits, declarations and in some cases regulations of their own.

Ideas differ about what a potential global AI body should be: perhaps an expert assessment and fact-establishing panel, akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or a watchdog like the International Atomic Energy Agency? A standard-setting entity similar to the U.N.'s maritime and civil aviation agencies? Or something else?

There's also the question of how to engender innovation and hoped-for breakthroughs — in medicine, disaster prediction, energy efficiency and more — without exacerbating inequities and misinformation or,

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worse, enabling runaway-robot calamity. That sci-fi scenario started sounding a lot less far-fetched when hundreds of tech leaders and scientists, including the CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, issued a warning in May about "the risk of extinction from AI."

An OpenAI exec-turned-competitor then told the U.N. Security Council in July that artificial intelligence poses "potential threats to international peace, security and global stability" because of its unpredictability and possible misuse.

Yet there are distinctly divergent vantage points on where the risks and opportunities lie.

"For countries like Nigeria and the Global South, the biggest issue is: What are we going to do with this amazing technology? Are we going to get the opportunity to use it to uplift our people and our economies equally and on the same pace as the West?" Nigeria's communications minister, Olatunbosun Tijani, asked at an AI discussion hosted by the New York Public Library. He suggested that "even the conversation on governance has been led from the West."

Chilean Science Minister Aisén Etcheverry believes AI could allow for a digital do-over, a chance to narrow gaps that earlier tech opened in access, inclusion and wealth.

AN INTRICATE PATH FORWARD, BUT WITH CLEAR UPSIDES

But it will take more than improving telecommunications infrastructure. Countries that got left behind before need to have "the language, culture, the different histories that we come from, represented in the development of artificial intelligence," Etcheverry said at the U.N.-sponsored side event.

Gill, who's from India, shares those concerns. Dialogue about AI needs to expand beyond a "promise and peril" dichotomy to "a more nuanced understanding where access to opportunity, the empowerment dimension of it ... is also front and center," he said.

Even before the U.N. advisory board sets a detailed agenda, plenty of suggestions were volunteered amid the curated conversations around the General Assembly. Work on global minimum standards for AI. Align the various regulatory and enforcement endeavors around the globe. Look at setting up AI registries, validation and certification. Focus on regulating uses rather than the technology itself. Craft a "rapid-response mechanism" in case dreaded possibilities come to pass.

From Dr. Rose Nakasi's vantage point, though, there was a clear view of the upsides of AI.

The Ugandan computer scientist and her colleagues at Makerere University's AI Lab are using the technology to streamline microscopic analysis of blood samples, the gold-standard method for diagnosing malaria.

Their work is aimed at countries without enough pathologists, especially in rural areas. A magnifying eyepiece, produced by 3D printing, fits cellphone cameras and takes photos of microscope slides; AI image analysis then picks out and identifies pathogens. Google's charitable arm recently gave the lab \$1.5 million.

AI is "an enabler" of human activity, Nakasi said between attending General Assembly-related events.

"We can't be able to just leave it to do each and every thing on its own," she said. "But once it is well regulated, where we have it as a support tool, I believe it can do a lot."

After summer's extreme weather, more Americans see climate change as a culprit, AP-NORC poll shows

By TAMMY WEBBER and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

Kathleen Maxwell has lived in Phoenix for more than 20 years, but this summer was the first time she felt fear, as daily high temperatures soared to 110 degrees or hotter and kept it up for a record-shattering 31 consecutive days.

"It's always been really hot here, but nothing like this past summer," said Maxwell, 50, who last week opened her windows for the first time since March and walked her dog outdoors for the first time since May. "I was seriously scared. Like, what if this doesn't end and this is how it's going to be?"

Maxwell blames climate change, and she's not alone.

New polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research indicates that extreme weather, including a summer that brought dangerous heat for much of the United States, is bolstering

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Americans' belief that they've personally felt the impact of climate change.

About 9 in 10 Americans (87%) say they have experienced at least one extreme weather event in the past five years — including drought, extreme heat, severe storms, wildfires or flooding — up from 79% who said that just a few months ago in April. And about three-quarters of those believe climate change is at least partly to blame.

In total, 64% of U.S. adults say both that they've recently experienced extreme weather and that they believe it was caused at least partially by climate change, up from 54% in April. And about 65% say climate change will have or already has had a major impact in their lifetime.

This summer's heat might be a big factor: About three-quarters of Americans (74%) say they've been affected by extremely hot weather or extreme heat waves in the last five years, up from 55% in April — and of those, 92% said they've had that experience just in the past few months.

This summer was the hottest ever measured in the Northern Hemisphere, according to the World Meteorological Organization and the European climate service Copernicus.

Millions of Americans also were affected by the worst wildfire season in Canada's history, which sent choking smoke into parts of the U.S. About six in 10 U.S. adults say haze or smoke from the wildfires affected them "a lot" (15%) or "a little" (48%) in recent months.

And around the world, extreme heat, storms, flooding and wildfires have affected tens of millions of people this year, with scientists saying climate change has made such events more likely and intense.

Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, said researchers there have conducted twice-yearly surveys of Americans for 15 years, but it wasn't until 2016 that they saw an indication that people's experience with extreme weather was affecting their views about climate change. "And the signal has been getting stronger and stronger year by year as these conditions continue to get worse and worse," he said.

But he also believes that media coverage of climate change has changed dramatically, and that the public is interpreting information in a more scientific way than they did even a decade ago.

Seventy-six-year-old Bruce Alvord, of Hagerstown, Maryland, said it wasn't unusual to experience days with a 112-degree heat index this summer, and health conditions mean that "heat really bothers me because it's restricted what I can do."

Even so, the retired government worker doesn't believe in human-caused climate change; he recalls stories from his grandparents about bad weather, and thinks the climate is fluctuating on its own.

"The way the way I look at it is I think it's a bunch of powerful politicians and lobbying groups that ... have their agenda," said Alvord, a Republican who sees no need to change his own habits or for the government to do more. "I drive a Chrysler 300 (with a V8 engine). I use premium gas. I get 15 miles a gallon. I don't give a damn."

The AP-NORC poll found significant differences between Democrats and Republicans. Among those who have experienced extreme weather, Democrats (93%) are more certain that climate change was a cause, compared to just half of Republicans (48%).

About 9 in 10 Democrats say climate change is happening, with nearly all of the remaining Democrats being unsure about whether climate change is happening (5%), rather than outright rejecting it. Republicans are split: 49% say climate change is happening, but 26% say it's not and an additional 25% are unsure. Overall, 74% of Americans say climate change is happening, largely unchanged from April.

Republican Ronald Livingston, 70, of Clute, Texas, said he's not sure if human activity is causing climate change, "but I know something is going on because we have been sweating our butts off."

The retired history teacher said it didn't rain for several months this year, killing his grass and drying up a slough on his property where he sometimes fishes. It was so hot — with 45 days of 100 degrees or more — that he could barely go outside, and he struggled to grow a garden. He also believes that hurricanes are getting stronger.

And after this summer, he's keeping an open mind about climate change.

"It worries me to the extent that I don't think we can go two or three more years of this," Livingston said.

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Jeremiah Bohr, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh who studies climate change communication, said scientific evidence "is not going to change the minds that haven't already been changed." But people might be swayed if people or institutions they already trust become convinced and spread the word, Bohr said.

After a brutal summer, Maxwell, the Phoenix resident, said she hopes more Americans will accept that climate change is happening and that people are making it worse, and support measures to slow it.

"It seems very, very obvious to me, with all of the extreme weather and the hurricanes and flooding," said Maxwell. "I just can't imagine that people wouldn't."

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

The poll of 1,146 adults was conducted Sept. 7-11, 2023, using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

Today in History: September 26

Kennedy and Nixon in first-ever presidential nominees' debate

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 26, the 269th day of 2022. There are 96 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 26, 1960, the first-ever debate between presidential nominees took place as Democrat John F. Kennedy and Republican Richard M. Nixon faced off before a national TV audience from Chicago.

On this date:

In 1777, British troops occupied Philadelphia during the American Revolution.

In 1888, poet T.S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri.

In 1954, the Japanese commercial ferry Toya Maru sank during a typhoon in the Tsugaru Strait, claiming more than 1,150 lives.

In 1986, William H. Rehnquist was sworn in as the 16th chief justice of the United States, while Antonin Scalia joined the Supreme Court as its 103rd member.

In 1990, the Motion Picture Association of America announced it had created a new rating, NC-17, to replace the X rating.

In 1991, four men and four women began a two-year stay inside a sealed-off structure in Oracle, Arizona, called Biosphere 2. They emerged from Biosphere on this date in 1993.

In 1996, President Clinton signed a bill ensuring two-day hospital stays for new mothers and their babies.

In 2003, President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin opened a two-day summit at Camp David.

In 2005, Army Pfc. Lynndie England was convicted by a military jury in Fort Hood, Texas, on six of seven counts stemming from the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal.

In 2008, Hollywood screen legend and philanthropist Paul Newman died in Westport, Connecticut, at age 83.

In 2016, Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton participated in their first debate of the presidential campaign at Hofstra University in New York.

In 2019, as Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh prepared for a public Senate hearing on an allegation from a California professor that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her when they were teens, a third accusation of sexual misconduct came from a woman who said she saw Kavanaugh "consistently engage in excessive drinking and inappropriate contact of a sexual nature."

In 2020, President Donald Trump nominated judge Amy Coney Barrett, a former clerk to the late Justice

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Antonin Scalia, to the Supreme Court, to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. (Barrett would be confirmed the following month.)

In 2021, the Rolling Stones launched their pandemic-delayed "No Filter" tour in St. Louis without their drummer of nearly six decades, Charlie Watts, who had died in August at age 80.

In 2022, NASA spacecraft Dart rammed an asteroid at blistering speed in an unprecedented dress rehearsal for the day a killer rock menaces Earth.

Today's Birthdays: Former baseball All-Star Bobby Shantz is 98. Country singer David Frizzell is 82. Actor Kent McCord is 81. Television host Anne Robinson is 79. Singer Bryan Ferry is 78. Actor Mary Beth Hurt is 77. Actor James Keane is 71. Rock singer-musician Cesar Rosas (Los Lobos) is 69. Country singer Carlene Carter is 68. Actor Linda Hamilton is 67. R&B singer Cindy Herron (En Vogue) is 62. Actor Melissa Sue Anderson is 61. Actor Patrick Bristow is 61. Rock musician Al Pitrelli is 61. Singer Tracey Thorn (Everything But The Girl) is 61. TV personality Jillian Barberie is 57. Actor Jim Caviezel (kuh-VEE'-zuhl) is 55. Actor Tricia O'Kelley is 55. Actor Ben Shenkman is 55. Actor Melanie Paxson is 51. Singer Shawn Stockman (Boyz II Men) is 51. Music producer Dr. Luke is 50. Jazz musician Nicholas Payton is 50. Actor Mark Famiglietti (fah-mihl-YEH'-tee) is 44. Singer-actor Christina Milian (MIHL'-ee-ahn) is 42. Tennis player Serena Williams is 42. Actor Zoe Perry is 40. Singer/songwriter Ant Clemons is 32.