

Groton Daily Independent

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Follow State Golf

Here is the code for the golf genius app to put in the paper to follow the boys and get all the results live as they happen.

23SDBOYSA

Monday, Oct. 2

State boys Golf Tournament at Hart Ranch, Rapid City

Volleyball hosts Mobridge-Pollock: C/7th at 4 p.m., JV/8th to follow and then the varsity.

JH FB hosts Webster Area, 5:30 p.m.

Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.

School Lunch: Garlic Cheese bread, green beans.

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

United Methodist: Gorton PPR Budget Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 3

4 p.m.: Girls Soccer State Quarterfinals: Groton Area hosts St. Thomas More

Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

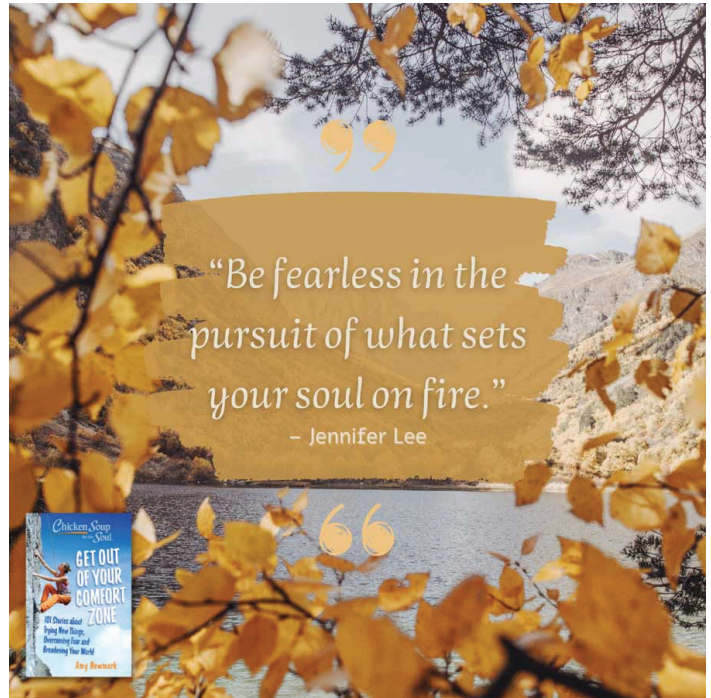
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Conde Ad Council, 6 p.m.; Conde Bible Study, 7 p.m.

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

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
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GDILIVE.COM Monday, Oct. 2, 2023
at Groton Area
Groton Area Tigers 5 pm: C: Kyle Gerlach Family
JV: Adam & Nicole Wright

GT

LADY TIGER VOLLEYBALL

Mobridge-Pollock Lady Tigers

Varsity Sponsors: 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

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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

the Senate.

The Kansas City Chiefs narrowly defeated the New York Jets 23-20 Sunday night at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium.

A church roof collapse in Mexico during Sunday Mass killed at least nine people and injured about 40 others. Rescuers worked into the night searching for another 30 people who were believed to be trapped at Santa Cruz Church in Ciudad Madero.

Former Red Sox pitcher and 2-time World Series Champion Tim Wakefield died of brain cancer at age 57.

The Nobel Prize in medicine has been awarded to Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman for their role in the development of mRNA vaccines designed to fight COVID-19. They were announced as winners during an event in Stockholm, Sweden.

New York State Police are searching for Charlotte Sena, a 9-year-old girl who they say was abducted Saturday night while camping with her family at New York's Moreau Lake State Park.

Simone Biles became the first woman to land the Yurchenko double pike vault at the 2023 World Artistic Gymnastics Championships on Sunday in Belgium.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, a factory that manufactures Kh-59 cruise missiles in western Russia was struck by multiple drones, causing significant damage and disrupting the production of the rockets, Ukraine's Main Directorate of Intelligence agency said.

TALKING POINTS

"This is personal with Matt. Matt has voted against the most conservative ability to protect our border, to secure our border. He's more interested in securing TV interviews than doing something. He wanted to push us into a shutdown, even threatening his own district, with all the military people there who would not be paid, only because he wants to take this motion. So be it. Bring it on. Let's get over with it, and let's start governing." House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's response to Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz after he vowed to vacate McCarthy from his speakership role after he passed a short-term spending bill opposed by House conservatives.

"Once he loses the license within which to operate the good standing of the certificates of incorporation that make up what's called the Trump Corporation, not only is the main company now going into the receivership, but there are hundreds of other subsidiary companies that additionally will ultimately go as part of the receivership. It is a financial catastrophe. It is the death blow to Donald." Former Trump attorney Micheal Cohen's prediction for the former president after a judge ruled he committed fraud.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

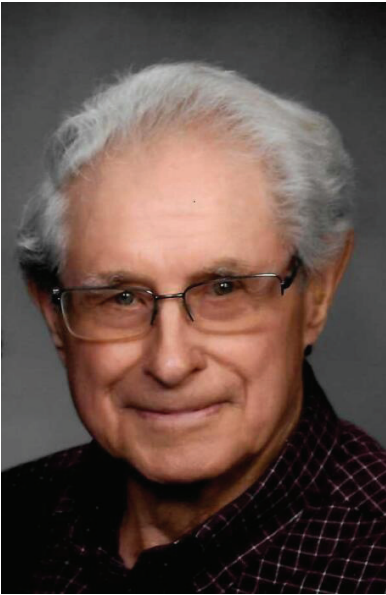
Microsoft Corp. Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella will take the stand Monday as part of the Justice Department's antitrust trial against Google.

The SAG-AFTRA actors union will resume talks with major studios and streaming services today. Their demands are similar to those of writers — curbs on the use of artificial intelligence, better pay, and other things.

Nobel Prize winners will be announced today and continue through October 9. Prizes in sciences, literature, economics, peace work, and others will be streamed live at nobelprize.org.

S&P and ISM manufacturing PMI figures for September and construction spending for August will be released at 9:45 a.m. ET.

The Life of Richard Sanderson



A Celebration of Life for Richard Owen Sanderson, 93, of Conde will be held at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 4th at the United Methodist Church, Conde. Rev. Rob Moorlach will officiate. Lunch will be served after the celebration so everyone is invited to stay for fellowship. Inurnment will follow in the Conde City Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Richard entered into eternal rest on September 27, 2023 at Wilmot Care Center.

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services at the church. Two special songs, which Richard always liked, will be sung by his granddaughters Jennifer Hyk and Andria Bender with Rosemary Sanderson playing piano. The organist will be Joan Fahrenwald.

Richard Owen Sanderson was born on February 5, 1930 on the farm near Verdon to William Earl and Martha Elmira (Webster) Sanderson. Richard had a brother Jim and two sisters, Jean and Hazel. He attended country school and later began farming with his dad near Crandall. Richard married Arda Mae Grimes in 1950 and they lived many years on the farm near Crandall. While married to Arda they had three children: Dana, Lynn and Michael.

Richard later married Dorothy (Kraft) Phillips in Conde in 1975. He continued to farm with the help of his son Lynn. They continued to make their home on the family farm until they moved to the Wilmot Care Center.

Richard was a member of the United Methodist Church in Conde. He enjoyed a good life on the family farm. He is remembered as a hard-working man and a true farmer at heart. He enjoyed spending time with family, his siblings, seeing the hills every day, fixing things in the shop, doing field work, checking the crops and cattle, visiting with his many friends and neighbors and enjoying country music. He is remembered telling his son Dana, "If I had not farmed, I don't know what I would have done with my life."

Celebrating Richard's life is his wife Dorothy, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Dana (Brenda) Sanderson of Wagner and their children: Nicole (Joe) Fette and Adam (Kristen) Sanderson of Sioux Falls and Carrie (Phillip) Nest of Pocasset, Oklahoma. The celebration also includes his daughter in-law Rosemary Sanderson of Sioux Falls and her children: Jennifer (Rob) Hyk and Andria (Chris) Bender, all of Sioux Falls, and Jacob Sanderson of Lisbon N.D.. His sister-in-law Joyce Sanderson and her children: Don Sanderson of Washington, Patty (Mark) Grossman from Wisconsin and Brian (Tina) Sanderson of Conde and her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Also celebrating his life is his step-children: John (Lana) Phillips of Aberdeen, Jerry (Kathy) Phillips of Sioux Falls, Jim (Lynn) Phillips of Watertown, Shelly Phillips, Rhoda Sandquist, Josh Phillips, Nick Miller, Brandon Miller, Landon Phillips, Logan Phillips, Lucas Phillips and many great-grandchildren.

Preceding him in death are his parents William Earl and Martha Sanderson, two sons, Michael Sanderson and Lynn Sanderson, his siblings, Hazel Reeve, Jean Tribble and Jim Sanderson and a step-daughter, Patricia Ringgenberg.

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Weekly Vikings Recap - Vikings vs. Panthers

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The Minnesota Vikings picked up their first win of the season Sunday as they defeated Adam Thielen and the winless Carolina Panthers despite having multiple turnovers yet again in a game, this time coming from two Kirk Cousins interceptions. In a season where the Vikings already have 11 turnovers through four games, the first interception on Sunday by Kirk Cousins might have been the worst of them all. After receiving the opening kickoff, the Vikings easily drove down the field to get in first and goal territory. However, all that success and momentum disappeared when Cousins' pass to KJ Osborn was cut off by Sam Franklin near the endzone and taken 99 yards for a pick-6. If this Vikings team could ever figure out a way to just not shoot themselves in the foot, there is no team in the NFL that they cannot compete with.

Sunday's game was the best performance for the Vikings' defense so far this season. Thanks to the addition of pass-rusher Marcus Davenport, the Vikings were able to get constant pressure on Panthers' rookie quarterback Bryce Young all game. In total, the Vikings' defense finished with five sacks, including three by Harrison Smith. The play of the game for the came on one of those Harrison Smith sacks late in the third quarter. With the Vikings trailing 13-7, and the Panthers driving down the field to take a two-score lead, Brian Flores called for a Harrison Smith blitz off the edge. Smith, who has made a career with his patented safety blitzes, came screaming off the edge and as Bryce Young went to avoid him, Smith was able to strip Young clean for a strip-sack. Luckily, the ball finally bounced the Vikings way, as DJ Wonnum picked up Young's fumble and ran 51 yards for a touchdown.

After forcing a three-and-out, the Vikings got the ball back again with a 14-13 lead. The Vikings' offense made quick work as they drove down the field for a Justin Jefferson touchdown in only five plays. Jefferson, who had only 85 yards receiving Sunday, a below-average game for his standards, still finished with two touchdowns. This was Jefferson's first multi-touchdown game since Week 1 of last season when he went off against the Green Bay Packers.

In all, the game was not a memorable one for either fanbase. Both teams came in without a win, both starting quarterbacks threw for less than 210 passing yards, and the game was completed in a short 2 hours and 45 minutes. We likely will never mention this game again.

Vikings 21 - Panthers 13

Looking ahead, the Vikings host Patrick Mahomes and the defending Super Bowl champions Kansas City Chiefs next week. This will be a great test for the Vikings. At 1-3, the team has nothing to lose to a team many expect will be back in the Super Bowl this year. If the Vikings can pull off the upset, this entire season will flip on its head. No longer will fans be wondering if the tank is on, but instead it will become a push for the Vikings to defend their NFC North title over the up-and-coming Detroit Lions. This game really might end up defining the Vikings' season.

“The secret to losing weight”

People often think they need to lose weight. The hard part, of course, is following through on that desire in a sustained and successful manner. Here are a few of the ways people do lose weight, and the secrets of their success. Some people should not lose weight, so please talk to your doctor.

First of all, consider the reasons to lose weight. Benefits can include having more energy, improved mobility, fewer aches and pains, sleeping better, improvement in mood, lower blood pressure, and lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Some may do it for a positive self image, but that reason alone may be hard to satisfy.

The secret to success is eating less and exercising more. Do that, and one can get all those benefits without actually losing weight. If the pounds fall with time, great, but if they do not, please do not get discouraged. You are healthier with efforts at eating less and exercising more, even if the weight does not drop.

Try keeping track of everything you eat. Counting calories can help you second guess those poor decisions. Meanwhile, logging your exercise can help motivate you to do more. Consider an app that tracks food and activity. Some apps have a social component or a health coach which may help with following through with your goals.

We have all seen diets that promise fast results. Indeed, many can be quite successful in the short term. You may know someone that lost over 50 lbs with a ketogenic, high protein diet. Unfortunately, they are hard to sustain, and people often find themselves right back where they started, but even more frustrated. Many fad diets involve buying something and eating more of something. While they could be helpful, long term success depends on some level of eating less and exercising more.

One extreme way people lose weight is with bypass surgery. Those can vary, but essentially the surgery helps by limiting the amount of food you consume, helping to decrease your appetite, decreasing your calorie intake, decreasing the absorption of food, and helping you lose weight. Certainly, there are risks of complications, and risks of vitamin deficiencies. Sometimes people gradually eat more over time and gain the weight back. This is why the most successful bariatric surgery programs stress the importance of a healthy diet and exercise even before surgery, to help retrain people’s behavior to improve long term success.

A newer way many people have been losing weight is with a diabetes medication. These medications, GLP-1 agonists, are often a once a week or daily injection, although even newer ones can be taken by mouth. For weight loss, they help by decreasing your appetite and helping you feel full faster. Thus, they help you eat less. Currently they are expensive.

Once again, the secret to weight loss is to eat less and exercise more. Now you have it. How do you do that successfully? Sure and steady progress. Set a behavior goal, and turn it into a habit. Remember, when you eat less and exercise more, you are healthier regardless of weight.

Andrew Ellsworth, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook and instagram featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its 22nd season of health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

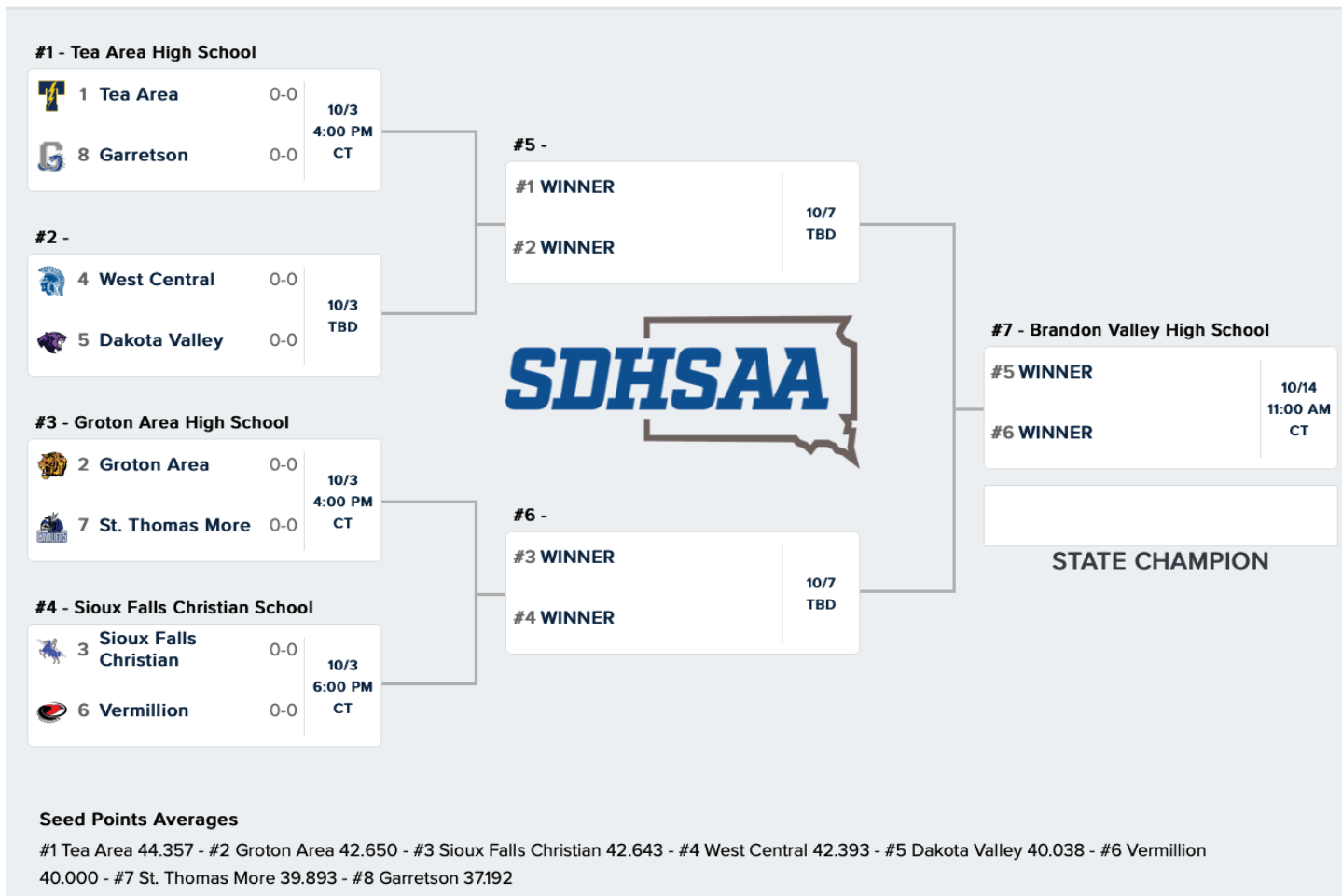


Andrew Ellsworth, MD

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Class A - State



EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What are some ways to grow more food on less land given that human population is growing as the amount of arable land shrinks?

-- Peter B., Washington, DC

It's no secret that Earth is facing a daunting challenge: With human numbers expected to swell to 10 billion by 2060 and the amount of arable land shrinking at a rate of about 23 hectares per minute (!), finding sustainable ways to produce more food on less land is a pressing concern. Fortunately, innovative solutions and practices are emerging to address this issue and ensure food security for future generations.

Perhaps the best developed kind of "future farming" is vertical farming, in which crops are grown in stacked layers instead of horizontally like at conventional farms. Controlled environments in vertical farms allow for year-round cultivation, precise control over factors like temperature and humidity, and significant water savings. They can be and often are indoors. In fact, multiple floors in tall buildings in big city centers could be devoted to this agricultural technique. Producing food closer to its consumers reduces transportation costs and emissions, reducing everyone's carbon footprint from farm to table.

One of the ways vertical farms make do with less water than conventional farms is through hydroponics, whereby plants are grown in small amounts of nutrient-rich water instead of soil, maximizing land use efficiency and offering faster growth and crop turnover cycles. Hydroponic farming has already shown to be ideal for small or residential growers looking to produce a steady flow of herbs and vegetables.

Besides vertical farming and hydroponics, there is much we can do to optimize conventional farming to make it more future-proof. Farmers can use advanced technologies like GPS, sensors and drones to optimize crop management, making their lives easier and their harvests more abundant. By precisely tailoring irrigation, fertilization and pest control to specific areas of a field, farmers can maximize yields and minimize resource usage. This approach ensures that every inch of arable land is used efficiently.

Another way to make the most of conventional agriculture land is to diversify the landscape and crop output. To wit, agroforestry and permaculture are holistic farming practices that integrate trees, crops and livestock on the same piece of land. These systems mimic natural ecosystems and can greatly increase food production while conserving soil, water and biodiversity. Likewise, forward-looking farmers are starting to incorporate techniques like cover cropping, crop rotation and no-tilling to enhance soil health and reduce the need for chemicals while enabling higher crop yields without expanding agricultural land.

Those of us who are not farmers can play a big role in solving the impending food shortage crisis the world faces. One way to be part of the solution is to reduce food waste and advocate the same to others. The United Nations estimates that over a third of all food produced globally is lost or wasted each year. By reducing waste, we can make better use of the food we already produce, alleviating some of the pressure on arable land. Another way to help is to eliminate animal products. Plant-based diets are generally less land-intensive than diets heavily reliant on animal agriculture—and require fewer resources to produce equivalent caloric and nutritional values.



Netherlands-based PlantLab is an innovator in building vertical farms around the world.



Feds say state overpaid \$36 million in unemployment benefits during pandemic

One-third of the fraudulently or mistakenly paid money has been recovered

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 1, 2023 1:00 PM

A federal report says at least \$36 million in unemployment benefits were wrongfully distributed to South Dakotans, fraudulently or mistakenly, from March 2020 to March 2023. The state has recovered a third of the money.

Much of the money flowed from federal legislation designed to mitigate the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal funds also helped protect the state unemployment insurance fund, which is supported by a tax on employers.

"The unprecedented demand for benefits and need to quickly implement the new programs increased the risk of fraud," according to the new report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The GAO designated the unemployment insurance system as high risk in June 2022. Seto Bagdoyan, an audit director with GAO's Forensic Audits and Investigative Service team, said the designation moved concerns about the system to the "absolute top of the pile."

South Dakota and other states paid historic amounts of unemployment benefits during the height of the pandemic. The state Department of Labor and Regulation issued weekly news releases about claims until June 2021; at that point, the state had paid a total of \$384.9 million in state and federal benefits since pandemic-related claims began in March 2020.

The U.S. Department of Labor awarded states money during the pandemic to help them vet applicants; South Dakota received about \$8.5 million for that purpose.

The GAO said South Dakota found about \$2.7 million in fraudulent payments to people who probably had unemployment insurance before the pandemic began. Since those people were already in the system, it was easier to get that money back, Bagdoyan said. So far, the state has recovered about \$1.1 million of that money.

The state found around \$4.6 million in fraudulent payments to individuals who signed up for pandemic-specific unemployment programs. Those people likely weren't in the system before, which made getting that money back harder, according to Bagdoyan.

"In fact, these fraudsters may have used stolen or fake identities to apply for and receive unemployment benefits," he said.

Only \$937,022 from that category has been recovered in South Dakota.

The report also mentions a separate class of non-fraudulent, "honest mistakes" (administrative errors on the part of state agencies or applicants).

The state has recovered \$3.8 million from \$7.5 million of non-fraudulent overpayments to people who were likely already in the unemployment insurance system before the pandemic.

Regarding pandemic-specific programs, the state overpaid \$21.4 million, recovered \$6 million and waived \$3.4 million.

The state Department of Labor and Regulation declined an interview but answered some South Dakota Searchlight questions by email. Department spokesperson Dawn Dovre said the Division of Reemployment Assistance waived the recovery of some overpayments "because the claimant was not at fault for the overpayment, and it would be against equity and good conscience or defeat the purpose of the program."

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Nationally, from March 2020 to March 2023, at least \$55.8 billion in unemployment insurance benefits was wrongly disbursed, and 12% has been recouped, according to the GAO. Recovery rates vary by state. South Dakota's rate is 33%, while neighboring North Dakota and Montana have recovered 12% and 21% of their overpayments, respectively.

The GAO report suggests that overpayments exceeded the amounts identified by states. The office estimated the true amount of overpayments nationally was \$100 billion to \$135 billion, constituting 11% to 15% of all unemployment benefits. That estimate emerged from a comprehensive analysis of expenditures, particularly spotlighting the pandemic-specific unemployment program's high fraud risk, according to the report.

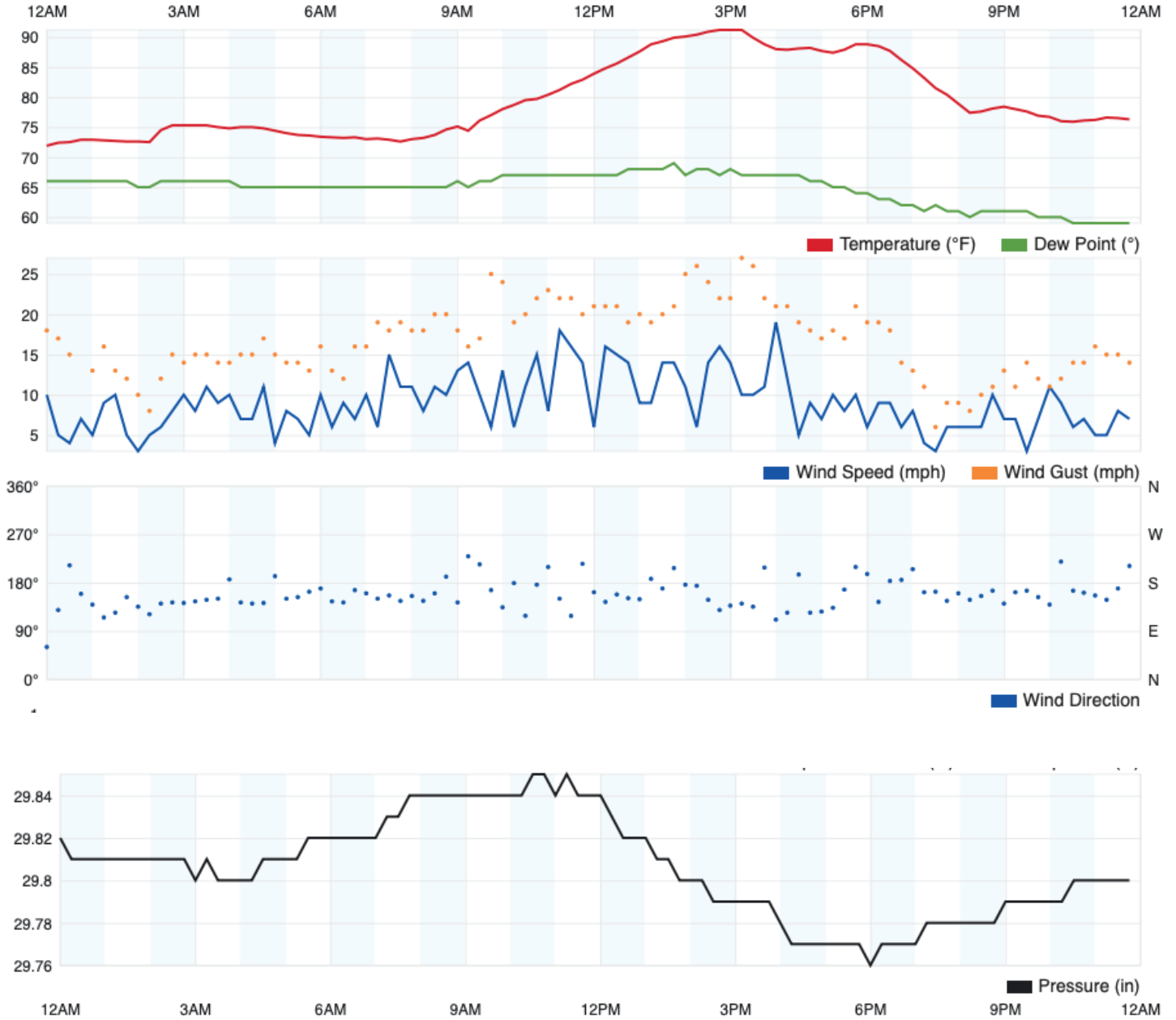
"Fraudulent activities frequently go undetected due to their deceptive nature and the limited resources available to investigate and adjudicate fraud," the GAO report said.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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| Mon Oct 2 | Tue Oct 3 | Wed Oct 4 | Thu Oct 5 | Fri Oct 6 | Sat Oct 7 | Sun Oct 8 |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | | | | |
| 85°F | 76°F | 64°F | 58°F | 53°F | 59°F | 59°F |
| 67°F | 52°F | 46°F | 38°F | 35°F | 40°F | 42°F |
| S | S | WNW | WNW | NW | WSW | SW |
| 18 MPH | 21 MPH 50% | 21 MPH | 19 MPH | 17 MPH | 12 MPH | 11 MPH |

Severe Weather Threat Overview October 2, 2023 4:13 AM

Monday Evening & Overnight

Timing/Location
Storms develop in western SD late this afternoon and move rapidly northeast towards the Missouri valley in the evening & early overnight hours.

Primary Threats for the **GREEN** areas

Tornado Potential

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----|--------|------|
| Very Low | Low | Medium | High |
|-----------------|-----|--------|------|

Max Hail Size

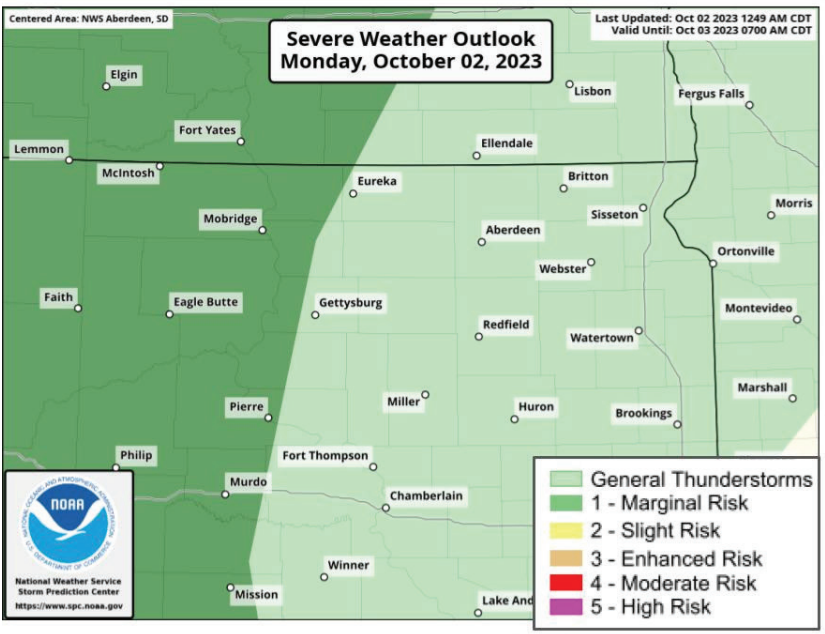
| | | | |
|-------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Dimes | Quarters | Golfball | Baseball |
|-------|----------|-----------------|----------|

Max Wind Speed

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| < 60 mph | 60-70 mph | 70-80 mph | > 80mph |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----|--------|------|
| Very Low | Low | Medium | High |
|-----------------|-----|--------|------|



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

**National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD**

The severe weather focus for this afternoon and evening is mainly west-river with storms moving rapidly north northeast. Main threat will be large hail and gusty winds.

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Moisture Probabilities For Tuesday

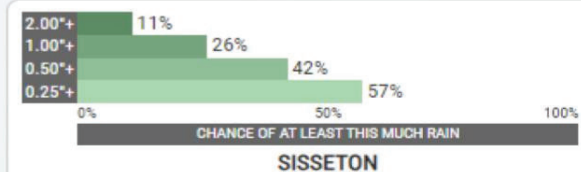
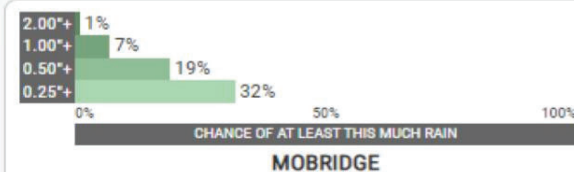
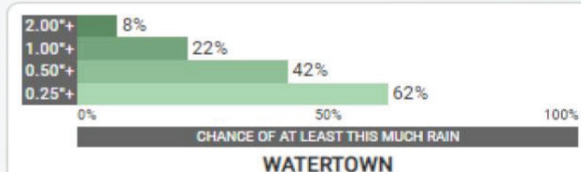
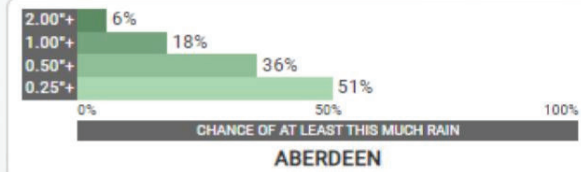
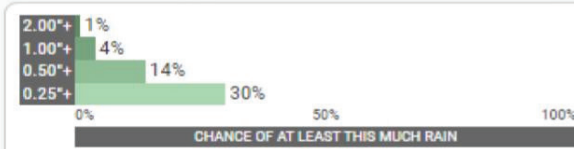
October 2, 2023
4:00 AM



Rainfall Probabilities

Tue, Oct 3, 2023, 1 AM to Wed, Oct 4, 2023, 1 AM

These graphs show the probability that rainfall will reach or exceed the given value for select locations. Values above 50% indicate that rainfall of this amount has a greater than 50/50 chance of occurring.



Issued: Mon, Oct 2, 2023, 3 AM

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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Ranges for greater than 0.25" 0.5" 1" and 2"



Overnight Temperature Records Shattered

October 2, 2023
3:39 AM

Sundays Low Temperatures

A LOW OF 71° AT ABERDEEN BREAKS THE OLD RECORD OF 59° SET IN 2021 (PERIOD OF RECORD BEGINS 01/01/1893)

A LOW OF 69° AT WATERTOWN BREAKS THE OLD RECORD OF 59° SET IN 2021 (PERIOD OF RECORD BEGINS 01/01/1893)

A LOW OF 64° AT PIERRE BREAKS THE OLD RECORD OF 62° SET IN 1953 (PERIOD OF RECORD BEGINS 07/01/1933)

A LOW OF 64° AT MOBRIDGE BREAKS THE OLD RECORD OF 60° SET IN 2016 (PERIOD OF RECORD BEGINS 01/02/1911)

A LOW OF 62° AT SISETON BREAKS THE OLD RECORD OF 58° SET IN 2021 (PERIOD OF RECORD BEGINS 10/01/1931)

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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 92 °F at 3:04 PM (tied the record high)

Low Temp: 72 °F at 12:00 AM

Wind: 29 mph at 2:46 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 42 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1897

Record Low: 17 in 1974

Average High: 67

Average Low: 40

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.16

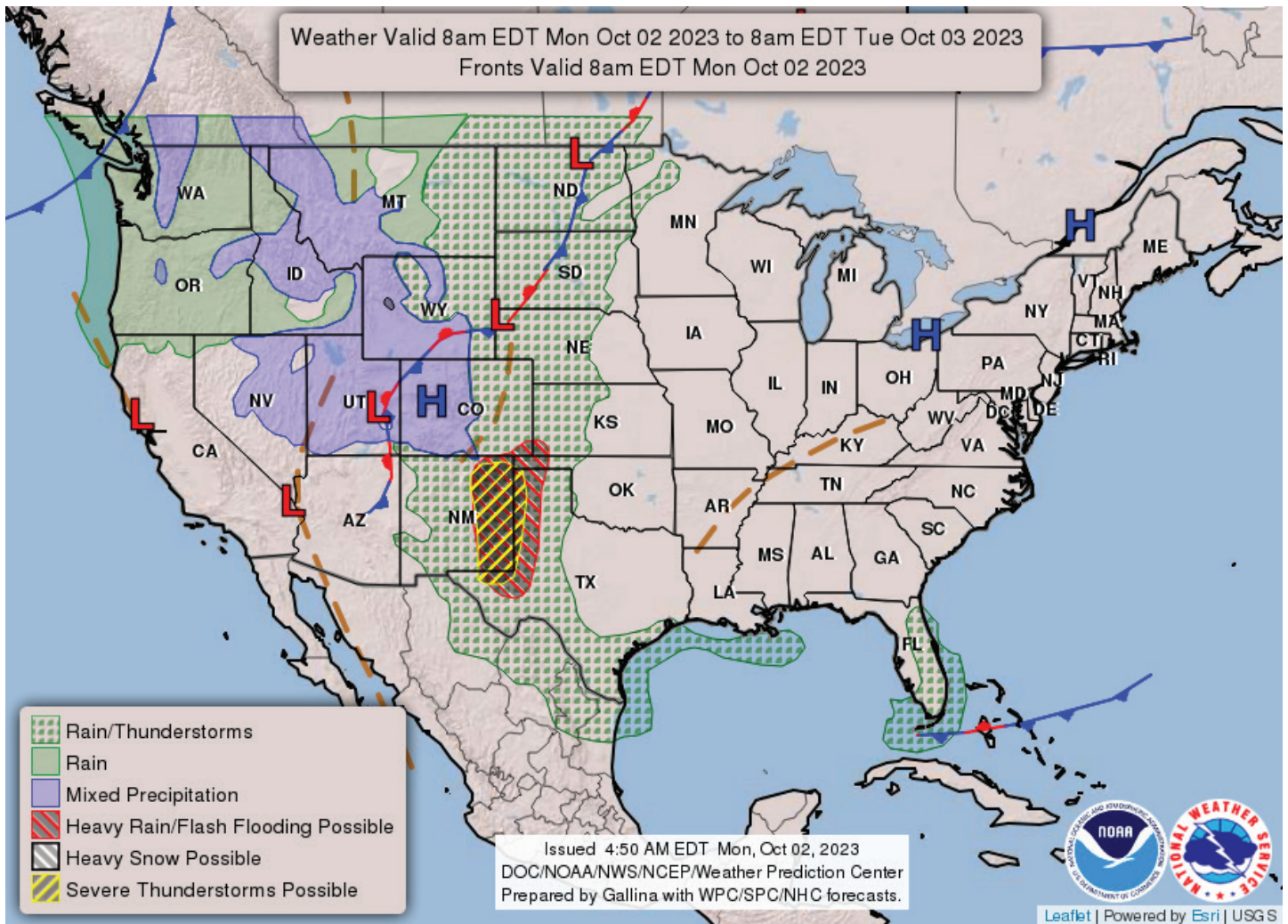
Precip to date in Oct.: 3.18

Average Precip to date: 18.49

Precip Year to Date: 21.77

Sunset Tonight: 7:12:59 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:31:43 AM



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Today in Weather History

October 2, 1971: Heavy wet snow of over a foot fell in the northern Black Hills. The heavy snow was accompanied by high winds which caused extensive damage to trees and utility lines. The power company said it was one of the worst storms they had experienced.

1858: The only hurricane to impact California struck San Diego on this day. Two researchers with NOAA Michael Chenoweth and Christopher Landsea reconstructed the path of the storm using accounts from newspapers of the high winds. They estimated that if a similar storm were to have hit in 2004, it would have caused around \$500 million in damage.

1882 - An early season windstorm over Oregon and northern California blew down thousands of trees and caused great crop damage in the Sacramento Valley. (David Ludlum)

1898: A Category 4 hurricane made landfall in Georgia on this day. This is the most recent major (Cat 3 or stronger) hurricane to make landfall in Georgia.

1894: A tornado passed over the Little Rock, Arkansas Weather Bureau office on this day.

1959 - A tornado struck the town of Ivy, VA (located near Charlottesville). Eleven persons were killed, including ten from one family. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - The temperature at Blue Canyon, CA, soared to 88 degrees, an October record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1981 - Severe thunderstorms raked Phoenix, AZ, with heavy rain, high winds, and hail up to an inch and a half in diameter, for the second day in a row. Thunderstorms on the 1st deluged Phoenix with .68 inch of rain in five minutes, equalling their all-time record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A fast moving cold front produced snow flurries from Minnesota to the Appalachian Mountains, and gale force winds behind the front ushered cold air into the Great Lakes Region. Valentine NE reported a record low of 25 degrees. Temperatures recovered rapidly in the Northern High Plains Region, reaching the lower 80s by afternoon. Jackson, WY, warmed from a morning low of 21 degrees to an afternoon high of 76 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Early morning thunderstorms in Georgia produced three inches of rain at Canton and Woodstock. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Flooding due to thunderstorm rains in the southeastern U.S. on the last day of September and the first day of October caused the Etowah River to rise seven feet above flood stage at Canton GA. Thunderstorms produced up to ten inches of rain in northeastern Georgia, with six inches reported at Athens GA in 24 hours. One man was killed, and another man was injured, when sucked by floodwaters into drainage lines. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

RIGHT WAY OR DEAD END?

"I wish I could buy him for what he's worth and sell him for what he thinks he's worth. We could both retire!" said a colleague to me after interviewing a potential employee.

Many people lead "presumptuous" lives and never get in touch with who they are and what their strengths or weaknesses might be. They refuse to see themselves as others see them, and will not admit the fact that they may have done something wrong or harmful. "It's not my fault. It's theirs. They just wouldn't admit what they did."

In the final analysis, we all have the freedom to choose what path we will take - even though, as Solomon warns, "... in the end that path leads to death." We may choose a path, even claim that it was a "path from God and was His will for my life," not admitting that our decision was ours alone, ill-conceived, and even ill advised. "I certainly prayed about it!"

"Seems right" is a frightening combination of words. It simply means that "I (or someone else) did not know what was right" and went off in the wrong direction and it ended in disaster - perhaps death. "Seems right" is full of presumptions, beginning with sincerity. Although we may be very sincere about most anything we choose to do, sincerity does not lead to fulfilling God's plan for our lives. "Seems right" can be "surely wrong!"

Those who truly want to live the "right way" will find it in God's Word. The "right way" is living a life that agrees with the Word of God, choosing to be obedient to His commands, waiting for His guidance, and putting His will before my wants.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may we avoid doing what "seems right" by surrendering our lives and will to You. Help us to do right and live right by following You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death. Proverbs 14:12



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:

09.29.23

18 40 47 55 64 11

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$300,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 55

DRAW: Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.30.23

4 5 26 27 35 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,450,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 10 Mins 54

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.01.23

11 13 24 29 47 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 25 Mins 55

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.30.23

5 20 26 33 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 25

DRAW: Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.30.23

2 22 46 56 67 25

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 54 Mins

DRAW: 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.30.23

19 30 37 44 46 22

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$1,040,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 54 Mins

DRAW: 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Nobel in medicine goes to 2 scientists whose work enabled creation of mRNA vaccines against COVID-19

By DAVID KEYTON and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Two scientists won the Nobel Prize in medicine on Monday for discoveries that enabled the development of effective mRNA vaccines against COVID-19.

The award was given to Katalin Karikó, a professor at Sagan's University in Hungary and an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Drew Weissman, who performed his prizewinning research together with Karikó at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Through their groundbreaking findings, which have fundamentally changed our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system, the laureates contributed to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times," the panel that awarded the prize said.

Thomas Perlmann, secretary of the Nobel Assembly, announced the prize and said both scientists were "overwhelmed" by news of the prize when he contacted them shortly before the announcement.

The Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine was won last year by Swedish scientist Svante Paabo for discoveries in human evolution that unlocked secrets of Neanderthal DNA which provided key insights into our immune system, including our vulnerability to severe COVID-19.

The award was the second in the family. Paabo's father, Sune Bergstrom, won the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1982.

Nobel announcements continue with the physics prize on Tuesday, chemistry on Wednesday and literature on Thursday. The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced Friday and the economics award on Oct. 9.

The prizes carry a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (\$1 million). The money comes from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, who died in 1896.

The prize money was raised by 1 million kronor this year because of the plunging value of the Swedish currency.

The laureates are invited to receive their awards at ceremonies on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death. The prestigious peace prize is handed out in Oslo, according to his wishes, while the other award ceremony is held in Stockholm.

A big fire at a police headquarters in northeastern Egypt injures at least 38 people

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A huge fire broke out early Monday at a police facility in northeastern Egypt, injuring at least 38 people before firefighters were able to extinguish the blaze several hours later, authorities said.

The cause of the fire, which ripped through the multistory police headquarters in the Suez Canal province of Ismailia, was not immediately clear.

Interior Minister Mahmoud Tawfiq, whose ministry oversees police forces, rushed to the site in the city of Ismailia, about 125 kilometers (77 miles) northeast of Cairo. He said a committee was set up to investigate the fire.

Hossam Abdel-Ghaffar, a spokesperson for the Health Ministry, said in a statement that 12 of the injured were treated at the site, while 26 others were taken to hospitals. All but two suffered from breathing difficulties; seven of the injured were treated and discharged, he said.

It was not immediately clear how many police were in the building at the time. Local media reported that the police building was severely damaged in the blaze.

Videos circulating on social media shows flames and black smoke pouring out of the building. The state-

run MENA news agency said firefighters managed to put out the fire after several hours.

Safety standards and fire regulations are poorly enforced in Egypt and have been linked to many deaths. In August 2022, a fire at a packed Coptic Orthodox church during morning services in Cairo killed 41 worshippers in what was one of Egypt's deadliest fires in recent years.

Last year, there were more than 49,300 fires in Egypt, resulting in 203 deaths and injuries to 855 people, according to the country's official statistics agency.

Top European diplomats meet in Kyiv to support Ukraine as signs of strain show among allies

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Some of Europe's top diplomats gathered Monday in Kyiv in a display of support for Ukraine's fight against Russia's invasion as signs emerge of political strain in Europe and the United States about the 19-month-old war.

European Union foreign ministers converged on the Ukrainian capital for an unannounced informal meeting that officials said would review the bloc's support for Ukraine and discuss Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's proposed peace formula.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the foreign ministers' first joint meeting outside EU borders signaled that the 27-nation bloc's support is "unwavering" and underscored the EU's commitment to Ukraine.

The United States, the EU and the United Kingdom have provided massive military and financial support to Ukraine, enabling it to stand up to the Kremlin's attack. The assistance is crucial for Ukraine's weakened economy and has so far been open-ended.

But uncertainty has set in over how long Kyiv's allies will keep sending it aid worth billions of dollars (euros).

U.S. President Joe Biden on Sunday reassured allies of continued U.S. financial support for the war effort, after Congress averted a government shutdown by adopting a short-term funding package that dropped assistance for Ukraine in its battle against Russia.

Many U.S. lawmakers acknowledge that winning approval for Ukraine assistance in Congress is growing more difficult as the war grinds on.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba told reporters that Ukraine held discussions with representatives of both parties in the U.S. Congress to ensure more help will arrive.

"The decision was taken as it was, but we are now working with both sides of the Congress to make sure that it does not repeat again under any circumstances," Kuleba said.

"The question is whether what happens in the U.S. Congress last weekend is an incident or a system. I think it was an incident," he added.

The EU meeting in Kyiv took place after the weekend election victory in EU member Slovakia of Robert Fico, whose pro-Russian agenda has increased the question marks about the EU's continued support for Kyiv.

The small eastern European country could bring more tension to the EU's discussions on Ukraine, as has happened with Hungary's at-times cool attitude toward Kyiv. Budapest has maintained close relations with Moscow and argued against supplying arms to Ukraine or providing it with economic assistance. Slovakia operates a key rail line used to transport western military hardware to Ukraine.

The foreign ministers of Hungary and Poland were not at the Kyiv gathering. However, it is not unusual for diplomats to skip such informal meetings.

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said Europe must be ready to provide further help "for many good reasons."

"First of all, in order to support Ukraine, but also to send a strong trans-Atlantic signal that what's going on on our own soil is something we have to take on a great responsibility for," Løkke Rasmussen said.

Ukraine is bent on becoming a member of the EU, and EU officials have encouraged that course even though it could take years amid a war of attrition with no end in sight.

"With every village, with every meter that Ukraine liberates, with every meter in which it rescues its

people, it is also paving its way to the European Union," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock told reporters in Kyiv.

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn said Western allies must keep up the military aid "because if we don't deliver any weapons from the EU, from NATO, from other countries, then this war is over but with the wrong consequences."

Late-night shows return after writers strike as actors resume talks that could end their standoff

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Late-night talk shows are returning after a five-month absence brought on by the Hollywood writers strike, while actors will begin talks that could end their own long work walk-off.

CBS's "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert," ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and NBC's "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" were the first shows to leave the air when the writers strike began on May 2, and now will be among the first to return on Monday night.

Comedian John Oliver got his first take on the strike out, exuberantly returning Sunday night to his "Last Week Tonight" show on HBO and delivering full-throated support for the strike.

Oliver cheerily delivered a recap of stories from the last five months before turnings serious, calling the strike "an immensely difficult time" for all those in the industry.

"To be clear, this strike happened for good reasons. Our industry has seen its workers severely squeezed in recent years," Oliver said. "So, the writers guild went to strike and thankfully won. But, it took a lot of sacrifices from a lot of people to achieve that."

"I am also furious that it took the studios 148 days to achieve a deal they could have offered on day (expletive) one," Oliver said. He added that he hope the writers contract would give leverage to other entertainment industry guilds – as well as striking auto workers and employees in other industries – to negotiate better deals.

Warner Bros. Discovery, which owns HBO, is among the studios on the other side of the table in the writers and actors strikes.

Network late-night hosts will have their returns later Monday.

Colbert will have Astrophysicist and author Neil deGrasse Tyson on his first show back. Kimmel will host Arnold Schwarzenegger. Matthew McConaughey will be on Fallon's couch.

All the hosts will surely address the strike in their monologues.

"I'll see you Monday, and every day after that!" an ebullient Colbert said in an Instagram video last week from the Ed Sullivan Theater, which was full of his writers and other staffers for their first meeting since spring.

The hosts haven't been entirely idle. They teamed up for a podcast, "Strike Force Five," during the strike.

The writers were allowed to return to work last week after the Writers Guild of America reached an agreement on a three-year contract with an alliance of the industry's biggest studios, streaming services and production companies.

Union leaders touted the deal as a clear win on issues including pay, size of staffs and the use of artificial intelligence that made the months off worth it. The writers themselves will vote on the contract in a week of balloting that begins Monday.

Meanwhile, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists will begin negotiations with the same group, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, for the first time since they joined writers in a historic dual strike on July 14.

Actors walked off the job over many of the same issues as writers, and SAG-AFTRA leaders said they would look closely at the gains and compromises of the WGA's deal, but emphasized that their demands would remain the same as they were when the strike began.

It was just five days after writers and studios resumed talks that a deal was reach and that strike ended, though an attempt to restart negotiations a month earlier broke off after a few meetings.

The late-night shows will have significant limits on their guest lists. Their bread and butter, actors appearing to promote projects, will not be allowed to appear if the movies and shows are for studios that are the subject of the strikes.

But exceptions abound. McConaughey, for example, is appearing with Fallon to promote his children's book, "Just Because."

And SAG-AFTRA has granted interim agreements allowing actors to work on many productions, and with that comes the right of actors to publicly promote them.

Rep. Matt Gaetz is threatening to oust Speaker Kevin McCarthy. It won't be easy

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — "How would you be different as speaker, compared to Mr. Boehner?" a reporter asked then-House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy in September 2015 as the California Republican pursued, and eventually gave up, his first attempt at the speakership.

McCarthy laughed while standing next to outgoing Speaker John Boehner — who had just stepped down after facing a threat of removal — and joked that he was from a different generation and wouldn't be as tan.

Eight years later, McCarthy is finding that there are fewer differences between them as he faces a conservative revolt against his speakership.

"If somebody wants to remove (me) because I want to be the adult in the room, go ahead and try," McCarthy told reporters Saturday.

And his critics, namely Rep. Matt Gaetz, plan to do just that. On Sunday, the far-right Republican from Florida threatened to use a procedural tool — called a motion to vacate — to try and strip McCarthy of his office as soon as this week after he relied on Democrats to provide the necessary votes to fund the government.

"I think we need to rip off the Band-Aid," Gaetz said on CNN. "I think we need to move on with new leadership that can be trustworthy."

Here's what you need to know about how the House can remove a speaker:

WHAT IS A MOTION TO VACATE?

The rules of the House allow for any single lawmaker — Democrat or Republican — to make a "motion to vacate the chair," essentially an attempt to oust the speaker from that leadership post through a privileged resolution.

It's a rare and strong procedural tool that has only been used twice in the past century. But in recent years, conservatives have wielded the motion as a weapon against their leaders.

In January, McCarthy, hoping to appease some on the hard right as he fought to gain their vote for speaker, agreed to give as few as five Republican members the ability to initiate a vote to remove him. But when that wasn't good enough for his critics, he agreed to reduce that threshold to one — the system that historically has been the norm.

Proponents of allowing a single lawmaker to file the motion said it promotes accountability, noting its long history in the House. The last use of the motion was in 2015, when then-Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, a Republican who later became Donald Trump's White House chief of staff, introduced a resolution to declare the speaker's office vacant. Two months later, Boehner said he would be stepping down.

No speaker has ever been removed from office through a motion to vacate.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

At any point in time, a member of the House can introduce a privileged resolution — a designation that gives it priority over other measures — to declare the office of the speaker of the House of Representatives vacant.

Once the motion is introduced, the lawmaker can walk onto the House floor and request a vote. Such a request would force House leaders to schedule a vote on the resolution within two legislative days.

But there are procedural motions that members of either party could introduce to slow down or stop the

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process altogether. If those tactics were to fail, and the resolution came to the floor for a vote, it would take a simple majority of the House — 218 votes, when no seats are vacant — to remove the speaker.

While it has never been successful, a motion to vacate has been used as a political threat against several speakers throughout history, dating back to Republican Speaker Joseph Cannon — who first invoked the resolution against himself in 1910. The effort failed as his fellow Republicans voted overwhelmingly to keep him as their leader. But by calling the bluff of his detractors, Cannon was able to put them on the record and end the threats against him.

In 1997, Republicans frustrated with then-Speaker Newt Gingrich considered trying to oust him but eventually decided against it. Most recently, the mere whispers of a motion to vacate forced Boehner out of office and set McCarthy on the path to the leadership post he has today.

WHO IS TRYING TO OUST MCCARTHY AND WHY?

Just like for Boehner, the call for McCarthy's removal began with just one man. Gaetz, a member of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus, has been threatening to file the resolution to remove him from the dais ever since McCarthy was nominated speaker by a majority of the conference earlier this year.

Gaetz is among 20 or so members who voted against McCarthy round after round as he fought to become speaker. While others eventually relented and voted in favor of McCarthy or present, Gaetz fought until the very end.

"This will all be torpedoed by one person who wants to put a motion to vacate for personal, political reasons, and undermine the will of the conference and the American people, who elected a Republican majority to govern," Rep. Mike Lawler, R-N.Y., a defender of McCarthy, said Sunday on ABC.

Gaetz and other critics of McCarthy say he has failed to be the conservative leader the party needs. They have railed against his deal with the White House over raising the debt limit earlier this year and have demanded the House slash spending levels to new lows. The group has also made sweeping demands to reimagine the U.S. government, which they criticize as "woke and weaponized."

DOES A MOTION TO VACATE HAVE THE VOTES TO PASS?

As of right now, it is unclear, but there's reason to be skeptical. No matter how loud or disruptive they may be, the anti-McCarthy faction is only a small minority in a Republican conference that is mostly supportive or amenable to him remaining speaker.

Another problem with the push to remove McCarthy is that there is no clear, consensus candidate to take his place. And lastly, and maybe more importantly, Gaetz would need the support of most Democrats to oust McCarthy if the motion ever came to a vote — and it's far from certain that they would join him.

"The one thing I agree with my Democrat colleagues on is that for the last eight months, this House has been poorly led and we own that and we have to do something about it," Gaetz said on the floor last week. "And you know what? My Democrat colleagues will have an opportunity to do something about that, too. And we will see if they bail out our failed speaker."

Gaetz has been speaking to House Democrats from across the ideological spectrum in recent weeks trying to assess what kind of support, if any, he would have from those across the aisle if he were to file his motion and it came to the floor.

"We haven't had a discussion about any hypothetical motion to vacate," Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said at a news conference Saturday. "We'll cross that bridge when we get to it."

IF THEY OUSTED MCCARTHY, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

The House would enter uncharted territory if a motion to vacate effort against McCarthy were to pass the full House.

The speaker of the House, under the rules of the chamber, is required to keep a list of individuals who can act as speaker pro tempore in the event a chair is vacated. The list, which is oddly written by the sitting speaker at any given time, remains with the House Clerk and would be made public if the speaker-ship were vacant.

The first person on that list would be named speaker pro tempore and their first order of business would be to hold an election for a new speaker. That event requires the House to vote as many times as it takes

for a candidate to receive the majority of those present and voting for speaker.

For McCarthy, that process took an unprecedented 15 rounds in January.

New candidates for speaker could emerge, but there's also nothing to stop Republicans from nominating McCarthy again.

Women's voices and votes loom large as pope is to open a Vatican meeting on church's future

By NICOLE WINFIELD and TRISHA THOMAS Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A few years ago, Pope Francis told the head of the main Vatican-backed Catholic women's organization to be "brave" in pushing for change for women in the Catholic Church.

Maria Lia Zervino took his advice and in 2021 wrote Francis a letter, then made it public, saying flat out that the Catholic Church owed a big debt to half of humanity and that women deserved to be at the table where church decisions are made, not as mere "ornaments" but as protagonists.

Francis appears to have taken note, and this week he will open a global gathering of Catholic bishops and laypeople discussing the future of the church, where women — their voices and their votes — are taking center stage for the first time.

For Zervino, who worked alongside the former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio when both held positions in the Argentine bishops' conference, the gathering is a watershed moment for the church and quite possibly the most consequential thing Francis will have undertaken as pope.

"Not only because of these events in October in Rome, but because the church has found a different way of being church," Zervino said in a recent interview in her Vatican offices. "And for women, this is an extraordinary step forward."

Women have long complained they are treated as second-class citizens in the church, barred from the priesthood and highest ranks of power yet responsible for the lion's share of church work — teaching in Catholic schools, running Catholic hospitals and passing the faith down to next generations.

They have long demanded a greater say in church governance, at the very least with voting rights at the synod but also the right to preach at Mass and be ordained as priests. While they have secured some high-profile positions in the Vatican and local churches around the globe, the male hierarchy still runs the show.

This 3-week synod, which begins Wednesday, is putting them more or less on an equal playing field to debate agenda items including such hot-button issues as women, LGBTQ+ Catholics and priestly celibacy. It's the culmination of an unprecedented two-year canvassing of rank-and-file Catholics about their hopes for the future of the institution.

The potential that this synod, and a second session next year, could lead to real change on previously taboo topics has given hope to many women and progressive Catholics. At the same time, it has sparked alarm from conservatives, some of whom have warned that the process risks opening a "Pandora's Box" that will split the church.

American Cardinal Raymond Burke, a frequent Francis critic, recently wrote that the synod and its new vision for the church "have become slogans behind which a revolution is at work to change radically the church's self-understanding in accord with a contemporary ideology which denies much of what the church has always taught and practiced."

The Vatican has hosted synods for decades to discuss particular issues such as the church in Africa or the Amazon, with bishops voting on proposals at the end for the pope to consider in a future document.

This edition is historic because its theme is so broad — it's essentially how to be a more inclusive and missionary church in the 21st century — and because Francis has allowed women and other laypeople to vote alongside bishops for the first time.

Of the 365 voting members, only 54 are women and organizers insist the aim is to reach consensus, not tally votes like a parliament, especially since the October session is only expected to produce a synthesis document.

But the voting reform is nevertheless significant, tangible evidence of Francis' vision of the Catholic

Church as being more about its flock than its shepherds.

"I think the church has just come to a point of realization that the church belongs to all of us, to all the baptized," said Sheila Pires, who works for the South African bishops' conference and is a member of the synod's communications team.

Women, she said, are leading the charge calling for change.

"I don't want to use the word revolution," Pires said in an interview in Johannesburg. But women "want their voices to be heard, not just towards decision-making, but also during decision-making. Women want to be part of that."

Francis took a first step in responding to those demands in 2021 when he appointed French Sister Nathalie Becquart as undersecretary of the synod's organizing secretariat, a job which by its office entitled her to a vote but which had previously only been held by a man.

Becquart has in many ways become the face of the synod, traveling the globe during its preparatory phases to try to explain Francis' idea of a church that welcomes everyone and accompanies them.

"It's about how could we be men and women together in this society, in this church, with this vision of equality, of dignity, reciprocity, collaboration, partnership," Becquart said in a June interview.

At previous synods, women were only allowed more marginal roles of observers or experts, literally seated in the last row of the audience hall while the bishops and cardinals took the front rows and voted. This time around, all participants will be seated together at hierarchically neutral round tables to facilitate discussion.

Outside the synod hall, groups advocating for even more women's representation in the church are hosting a series of events, prayer vigils and marches to have their voices heard.

Discerning Deacons, a group pressing for the pope to approve female deacons, as there were in the early church, sent a small delegation; other groups pressing for women's ordination to the priesthood are also in Rome, even though the pope has taken women's ordination off the table.

"I'm hopeful that there is room in that space for these bold conversations, courageous conversations, and particularly that the voices and experiences of women called to the priesthood are brought to the synod," said Kate McElwee, director of the Women's Ordination Conference.

Zervino's group, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, a Vatican-based umbrella organization of 100 Catholic associations, conducted a survey earlier this year of Catholics who participated in the synod consultations. While a few women in North America and Europe called for female priests, there was a broader demand for female deacons in those regions.

Francis listens to Zervino, an Argentine consecrated woman. He recently named her as one of three women to sit on the membership board of the Dicastery for Bishops, the first time in history that women have had a say in vetting the successors of Christ's Apostles.

Zervino says such small steps like her nomination are crucial and offer the correct way of envisioning the changes that are under way for women in the church, especially given all the expectations that have been placed on the synod.

"For those who think that there's going to be a 'before the synod and after,' I bet they'll be disillusioned," she says. "But if women are smart enough to realize that we're headed in the right direction, and that these steps are fundamental for the next ones, then I bet we won't be disillusioned."

Donald Trump says he will be in courtroom for New York trial scrutinizing his business practices

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — With control over some of his most prized real estate holdings in jeopardy, former President Donald Trump says he will make a rare, voluntary trip to court in New York on Monday for the start of a civil trial in a lawsuit that already has resulted in a judge ruling that he committed fraud in his business dealings.

"I'm going to Court tomorrow morning to fight for my name and reputation," Trump wrote Sunday night

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on his Truth Social platform.

Trump lashed out in his post at New York Attorney General Letitia James, who is suing him, and Judge Arthur Engoron, who is presiding over the non-jury trial and made the fraud ruling last week.

"THIS WHOLE CASE IS SHAM!!!" Trump wrote. "See you in Court — Monday morning."

The trial is the culmination of a yearslong investigation by James, who accused Trump and his company of habitually lying about his wealth in financial statements.

Last week, Engoron resolved the lawsuit's top claim before the trial even began, ruling that Trump routinely deceived banks, insurers and others by exaggerating the value of assets on paperwork used in making deals and securing loans.

The former president and a who's who of people in his orbit — his two eldest sons, Trump Organization executives and former lawyer-turned-foe Michael Cohen are all listed among dozens of potential witnesses.

Trump isn't expected to testify for several weeks. His trip to court Monday will mark a remarkable departure from his past practice.

Trump didn't come to court as either a witness or a spectator when his company and one of its top executives was convicted of tax fraud last year. He didn't show, either, for a trial earlier this year in which a jury found him liable for sexually assaulting the writer E. Jean Carroll in a department store dressing room.

In some ways, though, this new trial comes with higher stakes.

James, a Democrat, is seeking \$250 million in penalties and a ban on doing business in New York.

Engoron's ruling of last week, if upheld on appeal, would also shift control of some of his companies to a court-appointed receiver and could force him to give up prized New York properties such as Trump Tower, a Wall Street office building, golf courses and a suburban estate.

Trump called it a "a corporate death penalty."

"I have a Deranged, Trump Hating Judge, who RAILROADED this FAKE CASE through a NYS Court at a speed never before seen," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

In his post Sunday night, Trump wrote that Engoron is "unfair, unhinged, and vicious in his PURSUIT of me."

Engoron will decide on six remaining claims in James' lawsuit, including allegations of conspiracy, falsifying business records and insurance fraud.

James' lawsuit accused Trump and his company of a long list of fibs in the financial statements he gave to banks. In a recent court filing, James' office alleged Trump exaggerated his wealth by as much as \$3.6 billion.

Among the allegations were that Trump claimed his Trump Tower apartment in Manhattan — a three-story penthouse replete with gold-plated fixtures — was nearly three times its actual size and worth an astounding \$327 million. No apartment in New York City has ever sold for close to that amount, James said.

Trump valued Mar-a-Lago as high as \$739 million — more than 10 times a more reasonable estimate of its worth, James claimed. Trump's figure for the private club and residence was based on the idea that the property, now a private club, could be developed for residential use, but deed terms prohibit that, James said.

Trump has denied wrongdoing, arguing in sworn testimony for the case that it didn't matter what he put on his financial statements because they have a disclaimer that says they shouldn't be trusted.

He and his lawyers have also argued that no one was harmed by anything in the financial statements. Banks he borrowed money from were fully repaid. Business partners made money. And Trump's own company flourished.

James' lawsuit is one of several legal headaches for Trump as he campaigns for a return to the White House in next year's election. He has been indicted four times since March, accused of plotting to overturn his 2020 election loss, hoarding classified documents and falsifying business records related to hush money paid on his behalf.

The trial could last into December, Engoron said.

Indonesian president launches Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway, funded by China

By ACHMAD IBRAHIM and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian President Joko Widodo inaugurated Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway on Monday as it was set to begin commercial operations, a key project under China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative that will drastically reduce the travel time between two key cities.

The project has been beset with delays and increasing costs, and some observers doubt its commercial benefits. But Widodo has championed the 142-kilometer (88-mile) railway, which was issued its official operating license from the Transportation Ministry on Sunday.

The \$7.3 billion project, largely funded by China, was constructed by PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia-China, known as PT KCIC, a joint venture between an Indonesian consortium of four state-owned companies and China Railway International Co. Ltd.

The railway connects Jakarta with Bandung, the heavily populated capital of West Java province, and will cut travel time between the cities from the current three hours to about 40 minutes.

Its use of electrical energy is expected to reduce carbon emissions.

Widodo in his opening remarks officially named Indonesia's first high-speed railway — the fastest in Southeast Asia, with speeds of up to 350 kph (217 mph) — as "Whoosh," from "Waktu Hemat, Operasi Optimal, Sistem Handal," which means "timesaving, optimal operation, reliable system" in Indonesian language.

"The Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train marks the modernization of our mass transportation, which is efficient and environmentally friendly," Widodo said.

"Our courage to try new things gives us confidence and the opportunity to learn and will be very useful for the future, making our human resources more advanced and our nation more independent," he added.

Widodo, along with other high-ranking officials, rode Whoosh from its first station, Halim in eastern Jakarta, to Bandung's Padalarang station, one of the line's four stations, located about 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the central area of Bandung.

He took a 25-minute test ride on the train on Sept. 13 and told reporters that he felt comfortable sitting or walking inside the bullet train even at its top speeds.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang took a test ride early last month while visiting Jakarta for three days of talks with leaders of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and other countries.

Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, the coordinating minister for maritime and investment, said China Railway has agreed to transfer its technology to Indonesia so that in the future the country's high-speed trains can be made domestically.

For two weeks leading up to the inauguration, PT KCIC has been running a free-of-charge public trial.

Indonesia broke ground on the project in 2016. The line was originally expected to begin operations in 2019, but was delayed by disputes over land acquisition, environmental issues and the COVID-19 pandemic. It was planned to cost 66.7 trillion rupiah (\$4.3 billion), but the amount ballooned to 113 trillion rupiah (\$7.3 billion).

The trains have been modified for Indonesia's tropical climate and are equipped with a safety system that can respond to earthquakes, floods and other emergency conditions. The 209-meter (685-foot) train has a capacity of 601 passengers.

Ticket prices had not been finalized as of Monday, but PT KCIC estimated one-way prices per passenger would range from 250,000 rupiah (\$16) for second class to 350,000 rupiah (\$22.60) for VIP seats.

Passengers going to downtown Bandung need to take a feeder train from the Padalarang station that will add a further 20 minutes, with an estimated cost about 50,000 rupiah (\$3.20).

The rail deal was signed in October 2015 after Indonesia selected China over Japan in fierce bidding. It was financed with a loan from the China Development Bank for 75% of the cost. The remaining 25% came from the consortium's own funds.

The project is part of a planned 750-kilometer (466-mile) high-speed train line that would cut across four provinces on Indonesia's main island of Java and end in the country's second-largest city, Surabaya.

As a global economic giant, China is one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment in Southeast Asia, a region home to more than 675 million people. Amid crackdowns by the United States and its allies, China is expanding trade with ASEAN countries and infrastructure projects are playing key roles.

A semi-high-speed railway — with speeds up to 160 kph (99 mph) — linking China with Laos was inaugurated in December 2021. The \$6 billion infrastructure was financed mostly by China under the Belt and Road policy. The 1,035-kilometer (643-mile) route runs through Laos' mountain ranges to connect the southeastern Chinese city of Kunming with Vientiane, the capital of Laos. There are plans for a high-speed train down through Thailand and Malaysia to Singapore.

Church roof collapses in north Mexico, killing at least nine and injuring about 50, officials say

By ALFREDO PEÑA Associated Press

CIUDAD MADERO, Mexico (AP) — The roof of a church collapsed in northern Mexico during a Mass on Sunday, killing at least nine people and injuring around 50, authorities said as searchers probed in the wreckage late into the night looking for survivors and other victims.

Approximately 30 parishioners were believed to have been trapped in the rubble when the roof caved in, officials said. Searchers crawled under the roof slabs and officials brought in dogs to help search for possible survivors.

The Tamaulipas state police said about 100 people were in the church at the time of the collapse.

The state security spokesman's office said late Sunday that nine people had been confirmed dead from the collapse, which it described as likely being caused by "a structural failure."

Tamaulipas state police said units of the National Guard, the state police and state civil defense office and the Red Cross were involved in the operation.

The Mexican Council of Bishops issued a statement saying that "we join in prayer at the tragic loss of life and those injured."

Bishop José Armando Alvarez of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tampico said the roof caved in while parishioners were receiving communion at the Santa Cruz church in the Gulf coast city of Ciudad Madero, next to the port city of Tampico.

The diocese later posted a list of about 50 people who had been hospitalized as a result of the accident. They included a 4-month-old baby, three 5-year-olds and two 9-year-olds. There was no immediate information on their conditions.

The number of young victims — police officers said three of the dead were children — may have been due to the fact that baptisms were to take place at the church.

"We lament the painful loss of people who were there celebrating the baptism of their children," Alvarez wrote.

At the same time, there were signs of hope.

"From underneath the rubble, thanks to Divine Providence and the work of the rescue teams, people have been pulled out alive!" Alvarez's diocese wrote in a statement posted on its social media accounts. "Let's keep praying!"

He also called on anyone who had wood to donate to bring it to the church, apparently to shore up the roof while rescue teams crawled inside.

Photos published by local media showed what appeared to be a concrete and brick structure, with parts of the roof fallen almost to the ground. Security camera footage from about a block away showed the unusual, gabled roof simply collapsed downward.

Walls did not appear to have been blown outward, nor was there any indication of an explosion, or anything other than simple structural failure.

The roof appeared to be made of relatively thin poured concrete, and photos distributed by state au-

thorities showed the roof slab resting on the top of pews in some parts of the church. That left open the possibility there were air spaces for any survivors.

"At this time, the necessary work is being performed to extract the people who are still under the rubble," Alvarez said in a taped message. "Today we are living through a very difficult moment."

Video distributed by the state civil defense office showed the outer edges of the roof propped up by short wooden blocks.

It also showed initial efforts to lift off parts of the collapsed roof closer to the ground, in the center of the church, with a crane. But the office said the efforts to lift roof sections were abandoned because of the danger that a chunk of the now-crumbling slab might fall back and endanger any survivors.

The video described how officials had reverted to manual rescue efforts, apparently sending rescuers under the slab with wood props or hydraulic jacks to reach those trapped underneath. Specially trained dogs also were sent into the rubble to detect survivors.

The civil defense office said the dogs did not initially appear to detect signs of survivors, so an older method was implemented that had been used in past earthquakes: sending rescue teams into the rubble to shout and listen for signs of any response.

Building collapses are common in Mexico during earthquakes, but the National Seismological Service did not report any seismic activity strong enough to cause such damage at the time of the collapse. Nor was there any immediate indication of an explosion.

Ciudad Madero is about 310 miles (500 kilometers) south of Brownsville, Texas. Tamaulipas is known for drug cartel violence, but Ciudad Madero is in the southern part of the state near neighboring Veracruz state and has been less touched by the violence.

Few Americans say conservatives can speak freely on college campuses, AP-NORC/UChicago poll shows

By COLLIN BINKLEY, JOCELYN GECKER and EMILY SWANSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans view college campuses as far friendlier to liberals than to conservatives when it comes to free speech, with adults across the political spectrum seeing less tolerance for those on the right, according to a new poll.

Overall, 47% of adults say liberals have "a lot" of freedom to express their views on college campuses, while just 20% said the same of conservatives, according to polling from the University of Chicago and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Republicans perceive a stronger bias on campuses against conservatives, but Democrats see a difference too — about 4 in 10 Democrats say liberals can speak their minds freely on campuses, while about 3 in 10 Democrats say conservatives can do so.

"If you're a Republican or lean Republican, you're unabashedly wrong, they shut you down," said Rhonda Baker, 60, of Goldsboro, North Carolina, who voted for former President Donald Trump and has a son in college. "If they hold a rally, it's: 'The MAGA's coming through.' It's: 'The KKK is coming through.'"

Debates over First Amendment rights have occasionally flared on college campuses in recent years, with conflicts arising over guest speakers who express polarizing views, often from the political right.

Stanford University became a flashpoint this year when students shouted down a conservative judge who was invited to speak. More recently, a conservative Princeton University professor was drowned out while discussing free speech at Washington College, a small school in Maryland.

At the same time, Republican lawmakers in dozens of states have proposed bills aiming to limit public colleges from teaching topics considered divisive or liberal. Just 30% of Americans say states should be able to restrict what professors at state universities teach, the poll found, though support was higher among Republicans.

Overall, Republicans see a clear double standard on college campuses. Just 9% said conservatives can speak their minds, while 58% said liberals have that freedom, according to the polling. They were also slightly

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less likely than Americans overall to see campuses as respectful and inclusive places for conservatives.

Chris Gauvin, a Republican who has done construction work on campuses, believes conservative voices are stifled. While working at Yale University, he was once stopped by pro-LGBTQ+ activists who asked for his opinion, he said.

"They asked me how I felt, so I figured I'd tell them. I spoke in a normal tone, I didn't get excited or upset," said Gauvin, 58, of Manchester, Conn. "But it proceeded with 18 to 20 people who were suddenly very irritated and agitated. It just exploded."

He took a lesson from the experience: "I learned to be very quiet there."

Republicans in Congress have raised alarms, with a recent House report warning of "the long-standing and pervasive degradation of First Amendment rights" at U.S. colleges. Some in the GOP have called for federal legislation requiring colleges to protect free speech and punish those who infringe on others' rights.

Nicholas Fleisher, who chairs an academic freedom committee for the American Association of University Professors, said public perception is skewed by the infrequent cases when protesters go too far.

"The reality is that there's free speech for everyone on college campuses," said Fleisher, a linguistics professor at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. "In conversations within classrooms, people are free to speak their minds. And they do."

Officials at PEN America, a free speech group, say most students welcome diverse views. But as the nation has become more politically divided, so have college campuses, said Kristen Shahverdian, senior manager for education at PEN.

"There's this polarization that just continues to grow and build across our country, and colleges and universities are a part of that ecosystem," she said.

Morgan Ashford, a Democrat in an online graduate program at Troy University in Alabama, said she thinks people can express themselves freely on campus regardless of politics or skin color. Still, she sees a lack of tolerance for the LGBTQ+ community in her Republican state where the governor has passed anti-LGBTQ legislation.

"I think there have to be guidelines" around hate speech, said Ashford. "Because some people can go overboard."

When it comes to protesting speakers, most Americans say it should be peaceful. About 8 in 10 say it's acceptable to engage in peaceful, non-disruptive protest at a campus event, while just 15% say it's OK to prevent a speaker from communicating with the audience, the poll found.

"If they don't like it, they can get up and walk out," said Linda Woodward, 71, a Democrat in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas.

Mike Darlington, a real estate appraiser who votes Republican, said drowning out speakers violates the virtues of a free society.

"It seems to me a very, very selfish attitude that makes students think, 'If you don't think the way I do, then your thoughts are unacceptable,'" said Darlington, 58, of Chesterfield County, Virginia.

The protest at Stanford was one of six campus speeches across the U.S. that ended in significant disruption this year, with another 11 last year, according to a database by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, a free speech group.

Those cases, while troubling, are one symptom of a broader problem, said Ilya Shapiro, a conservative legal scholar who was shouted down during a speech last year at the University of California's law school. He says colleges have drifted away from the classic ideal of academia as a place for free inquiry.

An even bigger problem than speakers being disrupted by protesters is "students and faculty feeling that they can't be open in their views. They can't even discuss certain subjects," said Shapiro, director of constitutional studies at the Manhattan Institute think tank.

About three in five Americans (62%) say that a major purpose of higher education is to support the free exchange and debate of different ideas and values. Even more U.S. adults say college's main purpose is to teach students specific skills (82%), advance knowledge and ideas (78%) or teach students to be critical thinkers (76%). Also, 66% said a major purpose is to create a respectful and inclusive learning environment.

"I believe it should be solely to prepare you to enter the workforce," said Gene VanZandt, 40, a Repub-

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lican who works in shipbuilding in Hampton, Virginia. "I think our colleges have gone too far off the path of what their function was."

The poll finds that majorities of Americans think students and professors, respectively, should not be allowed to express racist, sexist or anti-LGBTQ views on campus, with slightly more Republicans than Democrats saying those types of views should be allowed. There was slightly more tolerance for students expressing those views than for professors.

About 4 in 10 said students should be permitted to invite academic speakers accused of using offensive speech, with 55% saying they should not. There was a similar split when asked whether professors should be allowed to invite those speakers.

Darlington believes students and professors should be able to discuss controversial topics, but there are limits.

"Over-the-top, overtly racist, hateful stuff — no. You shouldn't be allowed to do that freely," he said.

The poll of 1,095 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 4 percentage points.

The justices are taking the bench Monday at the Supreme Court for the first time since June

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The justices are taking the bench at the Supreme Court for the first time since late June. Their new term is beginning Monday with ethics concerns swirling around the court.

The only case being argued Monday concerns the meaning of the word "and" in a federal law dealing with prison terms for low-level drug dealers. The length of thousands of sentences a year are at stake.

The court also is expected to get rid of hundreds of appeals that accumulated over the summer.

The term is shaping up as an important one for social media as the court continues to grapple with applying older laws and rulings to the digital age.

Several cases also confront the court with the continuing push by conservatives to constrict federal regulatory agencies. On Tuesday, the court will hear a challenge that could disrupt the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The court also is dealing with the fallout from major rulings a year ago that overturned *Roe v. Wade* and expanded gun rights. A gun case will be argued in November. Limits on mifepristone, a drug used in the most common method of abortion, could be before the court by spring.

Among the bigger unknowns is whether any disputes will reach the court involving the prosecution of former President Donald Trump or efforts to keep him off the 2024 ballot because of the Constitution's insurrection clause.

Apart from cases, the justices are discussing a first-ever code of conduct, though disagreements remain, Justice Elena Kagan said recently.

The push to codify ethical standards for the justices stems from a series of stories questioning some of their practices. Many of those stories focused on Justice Clarence Thomas and his failure to disclose travel and other financial ties with wealthy conservative donors, including Harlan Crow and the Koch brothers. But Justices Samuel Alito and Sonia Sotomayor also have been under scrutiny.

Life at the court has more or less returned to its pre-COVID 19 normal over the past two years, though arguments last much longer than they used to. One other change that resulted from the pandemic remains. The court is livestreaming audio of all its arguments. Cameras remain forbidden.

Forced kiss claim leads to 'helplessness' for accuser who turned to Olympics abuse-fighting agency

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By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

DENVER (AP) — When Kirsten Hawkes, a one-time elite fencer, reached out to her childhood coach for advice about starting her own fencing club, their meeting turned awkward right away.

It began, she said, with an unwanted kiss on the lips when the two met at a bar during a fencing tournament in Minneapolis last October. A few hours later, as she and the coach were saying good-bye, Hawkes said he forcibly kissed her — “stuck his tongue in my mouth,” she told investigators.

Hawkes filed a complaint against the then-assistant coach with the U.S. Paralympic team to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, whose mandate is to combat sex abuse in Olympic sports. But it didn’t take long for her to realize she was pitted against not just the coach, but one of the most renowned sports attorneys in the United States.

“It just led to a sense of helplessness,” Hawkes, 36, told The Associated Press about the process that led to her allegations against the 52-year-old coach ultimately being rejected.

“The whole point is, it shouldn’t be an undue burden for a victim to come forward. But that’s how it ended up.”

To Hawkes, the 10-month-long ordeal illustrates why the Denver-based SafeSport Center has come under increasing scrutiny for what critics, from athletes to high-ranking Olympics officials, contend is an opaque, confusing process that often takes far too long to resolve cases.

A draft report in September by a congressionally appointed commission obtained by the AP concluded the center was “in potential crisis.” More than half of the 1,756 athletes, coaches and administrators in the Olympic movement surveyed said SafeSport wasn’t meeting its goals; nearly 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed when asked whether the center was successful in its mandate to sanction sex abuse in Olympic sports.

Formed in 2017 as the depths of former gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar’s crimes were being exposed by hundreds of his victims, SafeSport is responsible for resolving abuse cases involving not just Olympians but all athletes in Olympic-related sports down to the grassroots level — a scope that covers more than 11 million athletes, including those like Hawkes.

Since then, more than 1,900 offenders have been placed on SafeSport’s disciplinary database — showing, it says, that efforts to corral abusers who might otherwise go unchecked have been successful.

But Hawkes’ former coach never went on that list — not after SafeSport handed him a three-month probation in May, six months after its initial hearing in December, nor after he was immediately removed from his Paralympics coaching job by USA Fencing. Then, an eight-hour arbitration hearing in August overturned the probation and other sanctions.

In her ruling, the arbitrator noted her decision was partly influenced by the “different and contradictory messages” sent by the kiss that began the evening.

The AP is not identifying the coach because his name never landed on SafeSport’s disciplinary database. His probation only meant he had to disclose his status to anyone he worked for and faced harsher punishment if he committed another violation.

Hawkes’ complaint also included abuse accusations against the coach when she was a child in Huntington, New York. She told SafeSport investigators he touched her between her legs, squeezed her thigh, poked and touched her breasts using his fencing foil, and made comments about her breasts, starting when she was 12.

SafeSport told Hawkes those allegations were not pursued because New York state law and fencing rules at the time would not have resulted in charges or sanctions.

That policy undercuts what SafeSport touts as one of its biggest strengths — its authority to pursue cases without regard to statutes of limitation.

“It’s frustrating to the center, as it is rightly to claimants, when rules or laws did not exist that prohibited conduct in the past” that SafeSport rules would punish today, communications director Hilary Nemchik said in an email.

Nemchik said the center is constantly exploring ways to improve and next year will announce changes

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stemming from feedback and internal review “on how to make its processes more timely, understandable and trauma-informed.”

Hawkes said the center’s response fed into her belief that the process is flawed if it won’t even consider older allegations like hers.

“It has to be consistent,” she said. “If it doesn’t work for everybody, then it doesn’t work for anybody.”

Hawkes said as a kid, with her father not in the picture, her reaction to the coach’s alleged behavior was less horrified than it should have been.

“I think about it now and it’s really disturbing,” she said. “There are a lot of things that happened when I was a kid and young adult where it was just less awkward” to let it pass, “than to just say ‘No.’”

Hawkes also said she was thinking about good memories from her childhood fencing days when she decided to meet with the coach to pick his brain about a business venture she was considering to open her own fencing center in San Diego.

Both said the evening began with the kiss on the lips, but in arbitration testimony, they disagreed over who initiated it.

Hawkes testified the coach began talking to her about her sex life and interlocking legs with her under the bar. She said she was uncomfortable, but tried to make the best of a difficult situation because she knew they would cross paths again at the tournament.

She said she answered “No” when the coach asked if she would invite him to her hotel room. As they parted ways in front of her hotel, Hawkes said she reached out for a hug and the coach leaned down and forcibly stuck his tongue in her mouth.

“I was like, ‘No, no, no, no, no, no, no,’” she testified, adding that she pushed him away.

The arbitration decision says the coach “acknowledged kissing claimant that evening, stating he thought she wanted him to kiss her” — something Hawkes adamantly maintained was far from the vibe she was putting out.

In seeking evidence the kiss was unwanted, Hawkes said she asked the hotel for surveillance video and was told it was caught on camera. But the hotel refused to hand it over without a subpoena.

Hawkes said she filed a report with Minneapolis police but was told an unwanted kiss — the likes of which has dominated headlines in recent weeks following Spain’s Women’s World Cup soccer victory, prompting an international outcry and the resignation of the Spanish soccer federation chief — did not rise to the level of sexual misconduct needed to open an investigation.

SafeSport, though chartered by Congress and acting as a quasi-legal agency, does not have the authority to compel the hotel to turn over the surveillance video. Hawkes said she realized she would have to hire an attorney and initiate a civil proceeding to access it, which she couldn’t afford.

Nemchik said because the center isn’t designed to act like a criminal or civil court system, it limits respondents’ ability to call witnesses and subpoena evidence — powers she said wouldn’t “be appropriate and would potentially lead to more trauma for those involved.”

But to Hawkes, the arbitration hearing prompted by the coach’s appeal of SafeSport’s sanctions was, in fact, traumatic. It included cross-examination and what she described as “slut shaming” by the coach’s lawyer, Howard Jacobs, a top sports attorney involved in some 100 SafeSport cases over the agency’s six years.

In arbitration cases, a SafeSport attorney is tasked with defending the agency’s sanctions. Claimants such as Hawkes are not required to participate, but she said she thought it was important to be heard.

The coach “was still working with children, and working with other fencers and athletes, and justice hadn’t been served,” Hawkes said.

It put her in a position to field what Jacobs concedes were tough-but-necessary questions — about Hawkes’ sexual history and her actions the night she met the coach.

It also led Hawkes to wish she’d hired her own attorney — something she said she believed was unnecessary according to SafeSport rules and a center intake coordinator.

Also playing a key role was USA Fencing, which removed the coach from his Paralympic team job and limited his one-on-one contact with athletes after the complaint.

This was the latest in a line of cases in which a national agency overseeing an Olympic sport has been at odds with SafeSport, which has primary jurisdiction over abuse cases. In this instance, SafeSport imposed less-stringent sanctions than USA Fencing. The coach did not get his job back after the arbitration, but USA Fencing's other penalties were lifted, meaning the coach was able to return to training fencers who might make the Paralympic team.

USA Fencing CEO Phil Andrews expressed frustration about cases in which SafeSport rules sometimes hamstringing his agency and others that "wish to act in the interests of safety and abuse-prevention of its members and are prevented to do so because of jurisdictional control."

At a September hearing in Washington by a congressionally appointed committee looking into the Olympics, witnesses took special aim at SafeSport's arbitration process.

"It has routinely resulted in re-traumatization of victims and reversal of well-founded claims," said Marci Hamilton of the advocacy group Child USA.

SafeSport CEO Ju'Riese Colon called arbitration "one of the stickiest pieces we have to deal with."

Even Jacobs, who estimated that about two-thirds of the 40 cases he's taken to arbitration have resulted in sanctions being overturned or reduced, thinks the SafeSport system is broken.

"I certainly wouldn't say the arbitration process is perfect, but they have to give somebody who's accused some reasonable process to challenge it," he said.

Hawkes called arbitration the final step of a frustrating process that left her feeling overmatched and barely heard.

"I didn't feel like I could trust anyone," she said. "I felt like I was dealing with this useless, for-show organization that didn't solve anything."

At least 13 people were killed at a nightclub fire in Spain's southeastern city of Murcia

MADRID, Spain (AP) — A fire broke out in a nightclub in the southeastern Spanish city of Murcia on Sunday, killing 13 people and injuring several others, authorities said.

The fire started around 6 a.m. in the popular Teatre nightclub and quickly tore through the venue, according to Spain's state news agency EFE.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fire.

A video shared by Murcia's fire service showed firefighters trying to control flames inside the nightclub. Police and emergency services worked to secure the interior of the club to avoid a possible collapse and were trying to locate and identify the bodies.

Officials said the death toll could increase.

The city council declared three days of mourning with flags flown at half-staff on public buildings throughout the region of Murcia.

Biden says there's 'not much time' to keep aid flowing to Ukraine and Congress must 'stop the games'

By KEVIN FREKING and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Sunday that American aid to Ukraine will keep flowing for now as he sought to reassure allies of continued U.S. financial support for the war effort. But time is running out, the president said in a warning to Congress.

"We cannot under any circumstances allow America's support for Ukraine to be interrupted," Biden said in remarks from the Roosevelt Room after Congress averted a government shutdown by passing a short-term funding package late Saturday that dropped assistance for Ukraine in the battle against Russia.

"We have time, not much time, and there's an overwhelming sense of urgency," he said, noting that the funding bill lasts only until mid-November. Biden urged Congress to negotiate an aid package as soon as possible.

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"The vast majority of both parties — Democrats and Republicans, Senate and House — support helping Ukraine and the brutal aggression that is being thrust upon them by Russia," Biden said. "Stop playing games, get this done."

But many lawmakers acknowledge that winning approval for Ukraine assistance in Congress is growing more difficult as the war grinds on. Republican resistance to the aid has been gaining momentum and the next steps are ahead, given the resistance from the hard-right flank.

While Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has begun a process to potentially consider legislation providing additional Ukraine aid, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., faces a more difficult task in keeping the commitment he made over the objections of nearly half of his GOP majority.

He told CBS' "Face on the Nation" that he supported "being able to make sure Ukraine has the weapons that they need," but that his priority was security at the U.S.-Mexico border.

"I firmly support the border first," he said. "So we've got to find a way that we can do this together."

By omitting additional Ukraine aid from the measure to keep the government running, McCarthy closed the door on a Senate package that would have funneled \$6 billion to Ukraine, roughly one-third of what has been requested by the White House. Both the House and Senate overwhelmingly approved the stop-gap measure, with members of both parties abandoning the increased aid in favor of avoiding a costly government shutdown.

Now Biden is working to reassure U.S. allies that more money will be there for Ukraine.

"Look at me," he said turning his face to the cameras at the White House. "We're going to get it done. I can't believe those who voted for supporting Ukraine -- overwhelming majority in the House and Senate, Democrat and Republican -- will for pure political reasons let more people die needlessly in Ukraine."

Foreign allies, though, were concerned. European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Sunday from Kyiv that he believed it wouldn't be the last word, but he noted the EU's continued substantial financial support for Ukraine and a new proposal on the table.

"I have a hope that this will not be definitive decision and Ukraine will continue having the support of the U.S.," he said.

The latest actions in Congress signal a gradual shift in the unwavering support that the United States has so far pledged Ukraine in its fight against Russia, and it is one of the clearest examples yet of the Republican Party's movement toward a more isolationist stance. The exclusion of the money for Ukraine came little more than a week after lawmakers met in the Capitol with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He sought to assure them that his military was winning the war, but stressed that additional assistance would be crucial.

After that visit, Schumer said that one sentence summed up Zelenskyy's message in his meeting with the Senate: "If we don't get the aid, we will lose the war," Schumer said.

McCarthy, pressured by his right flank, has gone from saying "no blank checks" for Ukraine, with the focus being on accountability, to describing the Senate's approach as putting "Ukraine in front of America."

The next funding deadline, which comes during the U.S.-hosted meeting in San Francisco of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders, is likely to become a debate over border funding in exchange for additional Ukraine aid.

This was the scenario that Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican leader who has championed Ukraine aid, was trying to avoid back in summer when he urged the White House team not to tangle the issue in the government shutdown debate, according to people familiar with his previously undisclosed conversations with the administration who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private talks. Now, all sides are blaming the other for the failure, straining to devise a path forward.

Voting in the House this past week pointed to the potential trouble ahead. Nearly half of House Republicans voted to strip \$300 million from a defense spending bill to train Ukrainian soldiers and purchase weapons. The money later was approved separately, but opponents of Ukraine support celebrated their growing numbers.

The U.S. has approved four rounds of aid to Ukraine in response to Russia's invasion, totaling about \$113

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billion, with some of that money going toward replenishment of U.S. military equipment that was sent to the front lines. In August, Biden called on Congress to provide for an additional \$24 billion.

Jimmy Carter turns 99 at home with Rosalynn and other family as tributes come from around the world

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Jimmy Carter has always been a man of discipline and habit. But the former president broke routine Sunday, putting off his practice of quietly watching church services online to instead celebrate his 99th birthday with his wife, Rosalynn, and their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in Plains.

The gathering took place in the same one-story structure where the Carters lived before he was first elected to the Georgia Senate in 1962. As tributes poured in from around the world, it was an opportunity for Carter's family to honor his personal legacy.

"The remarkable piece to me and I think to my family is that while my grandparents have accomplished so much, they have really remained the same sort of South Georgia couple that lives in a 600-person village where they were born," said grandson Jason Carter, who chairs the board at The Carter Center, which his grandparents founded in 1982 after leaving the White House a year earlier.

Despite being global figures, the younger Carter said his grandparents have always "made it easy for us, as a family, to be as normal as we can be."

At The Carter Center in Atlanta, meanwhile, 99 new American citizens, who came from 45 countries, took the oath of allegiance as part of a naturalization ceremony timed for the former president's birthday.

"This is so impressive, and I'm so happy for it to be here," said Tania Martinez after the ceremony. A 53-year-old nurse in Roswell, Martinez was born in Cuba and came to the U.S. from Ghana 12 years ago.

"Now, I will be free forever," she said, tears welling.

Celebrating the longest-lived U.S. president this way was inconceivable not long ago. The Carters announced in February that their patriarch was forgoing further medical treatments and entering home hospice care after a series of hospitalizations. Yet Carter, who overcame cancer diagnosed at age 90 and learned to walk after having his hip replaced at age 94, defied all odds again.

"If Jimmy Carter were a tree, he'd be an towering, old Southern oak," said Donna Brazile, a former Democratic national chairperson and presidential campaign manager who got her start on Carter's campaigns. "He's as good as they come and tough as they come."

Jill Stuckey, a longtime Plains resident who visits the former first couple regularly, cautioned to "never underestimate Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter."

His latest resilience has allowed Carter a rare privilege even for presidents: He's been able to enjoy months of accolades typically reserved for when a former White House resident dies. The latest round includes a flood of messages from world leaders and pop culture figures donning "Jimmy Carter 99" hats, with many of them focusing on Carter's four decades of global humanitarian work after leaving the Oval Office.

Katie Couric, the first woman to anchor a U.S. television network's evening news broadcast, praised Carter in a social media video for his "relentless effort every day to make the world a better place."

She pointed to Carter's work to eradicate Guinea worm disease and river blindness, while advocating for peace and democracy in scores of countries. She noted he has written 32 books and worked for decades with Habitat for Humanity building houses for low-income people.

"Oh, yeah, and you were governor of Georgia. And did I mention president of the United States?" she joked. "When are you going to stop slacking off?"

Bill Clinton, the 42nd president and first Democratic president after Carter's landslide defeat, showed no signs of the chilly relationship the two fellow Southerners once had.

"Jimmy! Happy birthday," Clinton said in his video message. "You only get to be 99 once. It's been a long, good ride, and we thank you for your service and your friendship and the enduring embodiment of the American dream."

Musician Peter Gabriel led concertgoers at Madison Square Garden in a rendition of "Happy Birthday,"

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as did the Indigo Girls at a recent concert.

In Atlanta, the Carter Library & Museum and adjacent Carter Center held a weekend of events, including the citizenship ceremony. The museum offered 99-cent admission Saturday. The commemoration there was able to continue Sunday only because Congress came to an agreement to avoid a partial government shutdown at the start of the federal fiscal year, which coincides with Carter's birthday.

Jason Carter said his grandfather has found it "gratifying" to see reassessments of his presidency. Carter's term often has been broad-brushed as a failure because of inflation, global fuel shortages and the holding of American hostages in Iran, a confluence that led to Republican Ronald Reagan's 1980 romp.

Yet Carter's focus on diplomacy, his emphasis on the environment before the climate crisis was widely acknowledged and his focus on efficient government — his presidency added a relative pittance to the national debt — have garnered second looks from historians.

Indeed, Carter's longevity offers a frame to illuminate both how much the world has changed over his lifetime while still recognizing that certain political and societal challenges endure.

The Carter Center's disease-eradication work occurs mostly in developing countries. But Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter were first exposed to river blindness growing up surrounded by the crushing poverty of the rural Deep South during the Great Depression.

The Center's global democracy advocacy has reached countries that were still part of various European empires when Carter was born in 1924 or were under heavy American influence in the decades after World War II. Yet in recent years, Carter has declared his own country to be more of an "oligarchy" than a well-functioning democracy. And the Center has since become involved in monitoring and tracking U.S. elections.

Carter has lived long enough finally to have a genuine friend in the Oval Office again. President Joe Biden was a young Delaware politician in 1976 and became the first U.S. senator to endorse Carter's campaign against better-known Washington figures. Now, as Biden seeks reelection in 2024, he faces the headwinds of inflation that Republicans openly compare to Carter's economy. Biden had a wooden birthday cake display placed on the White House front lawn to honor Carter.

The year Carter was born, Congress passed sweeping immigration restrictions, sharply curtailing Ellis Island as a portal to the nation. Now, the naturalization ceremony to mark Carter's 99th birthday comes as Washington continues a decades-long fight over immigration policy. Republicans, especially, have moved well to the right of Reagan, who in 1986 signed a sweeping amnesty policy for millions of immigrants who were in the country illegally or had no sure legal path to citizenship.

Carter also was born into Jim Crow segregation, at a time when the Ku Klux Klan marched openly on state capitols and in Washington. As governor and president, Carter set new marks for appointing Black Americans to top government posts. At 99, Carter's Sunday online church circuit includes watching Georgia's first Black U.S. senator, the Rev. Raphael Warnock, preach at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Yet, at the same time, some white state lawmakers in Carter's native region are defying the U.S. Supreme Court in an effort to curtail Black voters' strength at the ballot box.

Jason Carter said understanding his grandfather's impact means resisting the urge to assess whether he solved every problem he confronted or won every election. Instead, he said, the takeaway is to recognize a sweeping impact rooted in respecting other people on an individual level and trying to help them.

"You don't get more out of a life than he got, right?" the younger Carter said. "It is a incredible, full rich life with a long marriage, a wonderful partnership with my grandmother, and the ability to see the world and interact with the world in ways that almost nobody else has ever been able to do."

Attorney General Garland says in interview he'd resign if Biden asked him to take action on Trump

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Merrick Garland said in an interview that aired Sunday that he would resign if asked by President Joe Biden to take action against Republican presidential frontrunner

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Donald Trump. But he doesn't think he'll be put in that position.

"I am sure that that will not happen, but I would not do anything in that regard," he said on CBS "60 Minutes." "And if necessary, I would resign. But there is no sense that anything like that will happen."

The Justice Department is at the center of not only indictments against Trump that include an effort to overturn the 2020 election and wrongly keeping classified documents, but also cases involving Biden's son Hunter, the aftermath of the riot at the U.S. Capitol and investigations into classified documents found in the president's home and office. Garland has appointed three separate special counsels.

Garland has spoken only sparingly about the cases and reiterated Sunday he would not get into specifics, but dismissed claims by Trump and his supporters that the cases were timed to ruin his chances to be president in 2024.

"Well, that's absolutely not true. Justice Department prosecutors are nonpartisan. They don't allow partisan considerations to play any role in their determinations," Garland said.

Garland said the president has never tried to meddle in the investigations, and he dismissed criticism from Republicans that he was going easy on the president's son, Hunter, who was recently indicted on a gun charge after a plea deal in his tax case fell apart. Hunter Biden is due in a Delaware court this week.

"We do not have one rule for Republicans and another rule for Democrats. We don't have one rule for foes and another for friends," he said. "We have only one rule; and that one rule is that we follow the facts and the law, and we reach the decisions required by the Constitution, and we protect civil liberties."

Garland choked up when talking about his concerns over violence, particularly as judges and prosecutors assigned to the Trump cases got death threats.

"People can argue with each other as much as they want and as vociferously as they want. But the one thing they may not do is use violence and threats of violence to alter the outcome," he said. "American people must protect each other. They must ensure that they treat each other with civility and kindness, listen to opposing views, argue as vociferously as they want, but refrain from violence and threats of violence. That's the only way this democracy will survive."

Trump campaigns before thousands in friendly blue-collar, eastern Iowa, touting trade, farm policy

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

OTTUMWA, Iowa (AP) — Former President Donald Trump campaigned in southeast Iowa Sunday in the middle of a fall campaign push aimed at locking in supporters with large organizing events.

As he has with his other recent travels to the leadoff caucus state, Trump stumped in an area that formerly supported Democrats but has embraced him, as the influence trade unions once held has shrunk and lost voters to Republicans.

Trump headlined an afternoon event in Ottumwa, where 2,500 packed the inside of an event hall at the Bridge View Center in Ottumwa. The small city is a hub in eastern Iowa and the seat of Wapello County, one of 31 counties Trump carried in 2016 that Democrat Barack Obama had won four years earlier.

It was Trump's second trip in two weeks to eastern Iowa, where he was drawing large crowds, as his campaign has sought to step up their press to urge voters to commit to support him in the Jan. 15 caucuses, where more than a half-dozen other Republicans are vying to rise as a threat to his popularity within the party.

"With your support on Monday, Jan. 15, we're going to win the caucuses in an historic landslide," Trump told the packed event hall in Ottumwa Sunday.

The crowd spent hours waiting outdoors to enter the Trump event, despite sweltering heat uncommon for early October. It was a stark contrast to the roughly 200 who attended a campaign stop in suburban Des Moines Saturday by former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley, who has gained renewed interest in Iowa since the first two Republican presidential debates.

Trump is expected back to the Waterloo and Cedar Rapids areas next week.

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Trump, the first Republican to capture the county since the Eisenhower administration, campaigned the week before in northeast Iowa. There, he drew about 1,400 to rural Jackson County along the Mississippi River and almost 2,000 to Dubuque County to the north. Like Wapello, Dubuque County had been a Democratic stronghold for decades before 2016.

Though aides said they were not specifically targeting counties that Trump flipped in 2016, they noted that he has had success in the eastern part of Iowa where manufacturing has declined sharply in the past two decades. His administration's renegotiation of the U.S. trade pact with Canada and Mexico remains popular.

Rick Anderson and his wife Nancy, who were filing into the hall, are the kind of voters whom Trump's campaign would like to persuade to caucus for the candidate on Jan. 15. They used to vote Democratic but switched in 2016 to support Trump. They have not attended Iowa's Republican precinct caucuses in the past.

Rick Anderson, a retired union millwright who co-owns a small business with his wife, is among the many longtime union members who kept Wapello County and others in Iowa's once-robust, eastern manufacturing corridor reliably Democratic-performing until Trump.

"We like what he says. He says 'Drill, baby, drill,' and that's got my heart. Because that's what's wrong with the country is energy. Solve that problem and you solve so many other problems," Anderson said. "Democrats have lost touch with people like us."

Trump later traveled with his motorcade 40 miles northeast to Leighton, Iowa, where he visited a soybean farm. There, he autographed a John Deere combine and touted his administration's trade policy as a boon for farmers, even as Mexico and Canada seek to renegotiate the 2020 United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

In front of the polished, green farm implement and a backdrop of amber soybeans, Trump also commented on the stop-gap government spending measure aimed at keeping the federal government from a partial shutdown. Trump said House Republicans, who hold a thin majority, "got very little."

"I think they could have done a much better deal," he said.

As Trump maintains a strong lead in Iowa, his Republican rivals are scrambling for backing, hoping a strong showing can help them consolidate the non-Trump support.

Trump volunteers at the site held clipboards stacked with pledge cards and asked attendees whether they would commit to support Trump at the caucuses.

Trump arrived in Iowa after a two-day trip to California, where he picked up 6 million of his 74 million votes in 2020 while losing the state by 30 percentage points to Democrat Joe Biden.

In a fiery speech that delighted Republicans dejected after decades of Democratic control, Trump escalated his long-standing tough-on-crime message with calls for violent retribution for against criminals. People caught robbing stores should be shot, Trump said to applause. He raised money during his trip to Orange County, once a bastion of conservatism in Southern California that has become increasingly competitive.

While Trump's would-be Republican challengers sparred in the second primary debate earlier in the week, Trump was in another key blue-collar county in the general election battleground of Michigan. Trump spoke during Wednesday night's debate in Macomb County, Michigan, north of Detroit at a nonunion manufacturing plant, where he blasted Biden's push for electric cars amid an autoworkers' strike. Trump carried Macomb County twice, after Obama did in 2008 and 2012.

David Beckham reflects on highs and lows in 'Beckham' doc, calls it an 'emotional rollercoaster'

By LOUISE DIXON Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — David Beckham delves back into the hateful treatment he received following his infamous 1998 World Cup red card — and its impact on him — in a new Netflix documentary series pegged to the 10th anniversary of his retirement.

"This whole process has been like an emotional rollercoaster," Beckham said of the "Beckham" series in

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an exclusive video interview with The Associated Press. "I've never talked about these certain moments in my career and in my life."

The intimate four-part series explores Beckham's upbringing, his courtship with his wife and his triumphs on the field, but perhaps the most difficult part was revisiting his painful sending off during England's World Cup match against Argentina.

"I hadn't actually watched it and I hadn't actually watched the interviews and what people said about me after," he said, adding that it left him "shocked and emotional."

Beckham was red carded for deliberately kicking the back of Diego Simeone's leg. He lashed out after the Argentina captain pushed him to the ground. England's World Cup hopes were crushed, and Beckham instantly went from hero to villain.

"Beckham" includes footage of the hatred the soccer star received — condemnation in British tabloids and constant fan abuse, including one who hung his effigy from a noose outside a London pub.

"I knew it was bad at the time, but going over that whole that whole thing was quite a tough one," he told the AP.

The backlash continued throughout the next season.

"It wasn't just stepping onto a football pitch, it was every time that I went out in my car and people stopped me and spat at my window and you know, all of those things, and then walking into a restaurant knowing that everybody in there hates you."

Best friend David Gardner recalls how Beckham even had to be accompanied by friends in the bathroom for his safety, yet never retaliated.

Despite the full support of Manchester United fans and club manager Sir Alex Ferguson, Beckham said there wasn't the same knowledge or concern about mental health that exists now.

"Back then there wasn't anyone turning round to me and saying, 'Are you OK? Are you sure you're OK? Let's talk about it.'"

Even his own family struggled to understand. "Twenty five years ago, if I'd have turned around to my dad and said that I don't feel great, he would have said, 'Boy, just get on with it'. So that's how I grew up and that's how I knew how to kind of handle a situation like that," he said.

"I became, I wouldn't say a cold person, but I was able to block things out that were challenging and difficult for me at the time" he added, saying it helped him grow as a player and as a person.

"I'm not a person that sits and reflects on past achievements and things like that" Beckham said, explaining that he learned from an early age that you can win a trophy and celebrate that evening, "but then the next day you're on to the next season and you're on to something else."

The first episode, which debuts Oct. 4, explores young David's upbringing in Chingford, Essex, and his relationship with his father.

"He was a very disciplined dad from a very early age. And when I didn't play well, he told me and when I did play well, he kind of told me that I did play well, but not too much," Beckham said with a smile.

It had always been his father's dream that his son play in the premiership for Manchester United and it soon became their shared dream, turned reality. After being spotted by a scout playing on London's Hackney Marshes, Beckham moved to Manchester at 15. The tough love continued under Ferguson. Their partnership helped Beckham win six Premier League titles, two FA Cups and one Champions League.

"Without a doubt, me getting out of London at that time and becoming a Manchester United player, in the north, surrounded by unbelievable people -- that for me without doubt helped me have the success and have the career that I had had and have," he said. "Having the discipline of Sir Alex Ferguson possibly was one of the biggest reasons why I was able to succeed."

But the discipline didn't rub off when it comes to his own four children Brooklyn, Romeo, Cruz and Harper Seven, who all appear in the documentary. Beckham admits his wife is "pretty strict" and he finds it hard to lay down the law.

"I always thought growing up, if I was to become a young dad, I would be like my dad. I would support my kids with going into football and be hard with them. But I was nowhere near like my dad was. I'm a

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bit of a softie.”

Meeting Spice Girl Victoria Adams was a pivotal moment in Beckham’s life. She was already a global superstar as “Posh Spice” and he was a rising talent with Manchester United.

“It wasn’t something that normally happens, you know, a footballer and a pop star coming together and the pressures of that but also her being on the world tour, me really wanting to see her. But obviously I couldn’t travel. So, we used to sneak around.”

He said they managed to keep their relationship secret for the first few months and then “the explosion happened.”

Beckham’s teammate and close friend Gary Neville jokes on “Beckham” about the pair’s long phone calls into the early hours before a game and says Beckham would drive for four hours just to spend 20 minutes with her.

Part three and four of the series were not available for review prior to Beckham’s interview, but those episodes explore his explosive fallout with Ferguson, his sale to Real Madrid and tabloid allegations of Beckham’s extra-marital affairs.

“There are pressures, but you work hard,” Beckham said of his marriage. And despite press speculation, the couple recently celebrated their 24th wedding anniversary and remain a united force.

“I suppose that’s one of the reasons why we’re so, so strong as a couple, because, yes, we have amazing kids, we have amazing careers, but we ... make time for each other as well.”

Beckham’s career spread far beyond his success as a player to cultural icon and entrepreneur. He was a trailblazer for collaborations with brands like Adidas, Armani, Breitling and more. While players weren’t really doing similar deals at the time, he said it felt like a natural progression enabled by his success on the football pitch.

He knew early on that “Brand Beckham” would broaden and lengthen his career if he could achieve a good balance.

“I always made sure that whatever I was doing off the field never affected what I was doing on the field because that was what I loved and what was important to me.”

His business savvy culminated in ownership of his own soccer team, Inter Miami.

“I had the opportunity to play in different countries, move to America, obviously have my own franchise and my own team, become an owner,” he said. “So then once I finished playing, I knew that the moment I finished playing, I could then jump into the business. But, we were working on that a long time before that.”

Looking back on his career’s highs and lows, it’s natural to wonder: Does Beckham have regrets?

“Do I wish things hadn’t happened? Absolutely. Do I wish ‘98 hadn’t happened? Absolutely.”

But he said he realized it all happened for a reason.

“It made me stronger as a person, as a player, as a human being, and as a father, as a husband,” he said. “And if that hadn’t have happened, I maybe I wouldn’t have had the career that I had.”

A fight over precious groundwater in a rural California town is rooted in carrots

By AMY TAXIN Associated Press

NEW CUYAMA, Calif. (AP) — In the hills of a dry, remote patch of California farm country, Lee Harrington carefully monitors the drips moistening his pistachio trees to ensure they’re not wasting any of the groundwater at the heart of a vicious fight.

He is one of scores of farmers, ranchers and others living near the tiny town of New Cuyama who have been hauled into court by a lawsuit filed by two of the nation’s biggest carrot growers, Grimmway Farms and Bolthouse Farms, over the right to pump groundwater.

The move has saddled residents in the community 100 miles (160 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles with mounting legal bills and prompted them to post large signs along the roadway calling on others to boycott carrots and “Stand with Cuyama.”

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"It's just literally mind-boggling where they're farming," Harrington said, adding that his legal fees exceed \$50,000. "They want our water. They didn't want the state telling them how much water they can pump."

The battle playing out in this stretch of rural California represents a new wave of legal challenges over water, long one of the most precious and contested resources in a state that grows much of the country's produce.

For years, California didn't regulate groundwater, allowing farmers and residents alike to drill wells and take what they needed. That changed in 2014 amid a historic drought, and as ever-deeper wells caused land in some places to sink.

A new state law required communities to form local groundwater sustainability agencies tasked with developing plans, which must be approved by the state, on how to manage their basins into the future. The most critically overdrafted basins, including Cuyama's, were among the first to do so with a goal of achieving sustainability by 2040. Other high and medium priority basins followed.

But disputes arose in Cuyama and elsewhere, prompting a series of lawsuits that have hauled entire communities into court so property owners can defend their right to the resource beneath their feet. In the Oxnard and Pleasant Valley basins, growers sued due to a lack of consensus over pumping allocations. In San Diego County, a water district filed a lawsuit that settled about a year later.

It's a preview of what could come as more regions begin setting stricter rules around groundwater.

The lawsuit in Cuyama, which relies on groundwater for water supplies, has touched every part of a community where cellphone service is spotty and people pride themselves on knowing their neighbors.

The school secretary doubles as a bus driver and a vegetable grower also offers horseshoeing services. There is a small market, hardware store, a Western-themed boutique hotel and miles of land sown with olives, pistachios, grapes and carrots.

From the start, Grimmway and Bolthouse participated in the formation of the local groundwater sustainability agency and plan.

Their farms sit on the most overdrafted part of the basin, and both companies said they follow assigned cutbacks. But they think other farmers are getting a pass and want the courts to create a fairer solution to reduce pumping throughout the basin, not just on their lots.

"I don't want the aquifer to get dewatered because then all I have is a piece of gravel, no water, which means it's desert ground, which is of no value to anybody," said Dan Clifford, vice president and general counsel of Bolthouse Land Co. "What we're trying to get is the basin sustainability, with the understanding that you're going to have a judge calling balls and strikes."

Grimmway, which has grown carrots in Cuyama for more than three decades, currently farms less than a third of its 20 square miles (52 square kilometers) there and has installed more efficient sprinklers to save water. Seeing groundwater levels decline and pumping costs rise, the company began growing carrots in other states, but doesn't plan to uproot from Cuyama, said Jeff Huckaby, the company's president and chief executive.

"It's one of the best carrot-growing regions that we've come across," Huckaby said, adding that arid regions are best so carrot roots extend below ground for moisture, growing longer. "The soil up here is ideal, temperatures are ideal, the climate is ideal."

California has been a "Wild West" for water but that's changing. The company has cut back its water use in Cuyama and hopes to remain there for decades, he said.

Until the lawsuit, 42-year-old cattle rancher Jake Furstenfeld said he thought the companies were working with people in town, but not anymore.

Furstenfeld, who sits on an advisory committee to the groundwater agency, doesn't own land and doesn't have an attorney. But he's helping organize the boycott and has passed out yard signs.

"It's been called David versus Goliath," he said.

Many residents are worried about the water they need to brush their teeth, wash clothes and grow a garden. The water district serving homes in town said rates are rising to cover legal fees. The school district, which is trying to stay afloat so its 185 students can attend school locally, is burdened with un-

expected legal bills.

"Without water, we have no school," said Alfonso Gamino, the superintendent and principal. "If the water basin goes dry, I can kind of see Bolthouse and Grimmway going somewhere else, but what about the rest of us?"

Before the state's groundwater law, most groundwater lawsuits were filed in Southern California, where development put added pressure on water resources. Legal experts now expect more cases in areas where farmers are being pushed to slash pumping.

"For an average person or a small user it is disruptive because most people haven't been involved in lawsuits," said Eric Garner, a water rights attorney who worked on California's law. "For large pumpers, lawyers are an inexpensive option compared with having to replace their water supply."

Most of the country's carrots are grown in California, with consumers demanding a year-round supply of popular baby carrots. The state's climate is a prime place for growing and carrots are one of California's top 10 agricultural commodities, valued at \$1.1 billion last year, state statistics show.

Along the highway, Grimmway's fields are doused with sprinklers for eight hours and left to dry for two weeks so carrot roots stretch in search of moisture. Critics question the companies' use of daytime sprinklers, but Huckaby said Grimmway uses far less water than the alfalfa grower who farmed there before.

The suit in Cuyama, filed two years ago, has an initial hearing in January. In a recent twist, Bolthouse Farms has asked to withdraw as a plaintiff, saying the company has no water rights as a tenant grower and plans to slash its water use 65% by 2040. The company that owns the land, Bolthouse Land Co., is still litigating.

Jean Gaillard, another Cuyama advisory committee member, sells produce from his garden to locals. He tries to conserve water by alternating rows of squash between corn stalks and capturing rainwater on the roof of an old barn.

Paying a lawyer to represent him rather than re-investing in his produce business is problematic, he said. Meanwhile, his well water has dropped 30 feet (9 meters) in the past two decades.

"We feel we are being totally overrun by those people," Gaillard said. "They are taking all the water."

More than 100 search for 9-year-old girl who was camping with family in upstate New York

MOREAU, N.Y. (AP) — Drones, bloodhounds and an airboat were used in the search for a missing 9-year-old girl who had been camping with her family in upstate New York, officials said Sunday.

Charlotte Sena was last seen bicycling on Saturday evening in Moreau Lake State Park, about 35 miles (60 kilometers) north of Albany, and police said it was possible she was abducted.

She had been riding her bike around a loop in the bucolic park with other children when she decided to ride around one more time by herself. Her parents became alarmed when the fourth-grader failed to come back after 15 minutes, Gov. Kathy Hochul said at a briefing Sunday.

The girl's mother called 911 after her bicycle was found about 6:45 p.m. Saturday.

Officials issued an Amber Alert on Sunday morning after an exhaustive search because "it was quite possible that an abduction had taken place," state police Lt. Colonel Richard Mazzone said. The alert describes her as a white girl with blonde hair and green eyes, about 4 feet 6 inches tall (1.37 meters).

The more than 100 searchers on Sunday included police, forest rangers and civilians.

"We are leaving no stone, no branch, no table, no cabin unturned, untouched, unexamined in our search to find Charlotte," said Hochul, who described her as a "joyful" girl who was recently elected a class officer for student council.

The girl, a resident of nearby Greenfield, was last seen wearing an orange tie-dye Pokemon shirt, dark blue pants, black Crocs and a grey bike helmet.

Turkey strikes suspected Kurdish militant targets in northern Iraq

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after suicide attack in Ankara

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish warplanes carried out airstrikes on suspected Kurdish militant targets in northern Iraq on Sunday following a suicide attack on a government building in the Turkish capital, Turkey's defense ministry announced.

Some 20 targets of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, were "destroyed" in the latest aerial operation, including caves, shelters and depots, the ministry said, adding that a large number of PKK operatives were "neutralized" in the strikes.

Earlier on Sunday, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device near an entrance of the Interior Ministry, wounding two police officers. A second assailant was killed in a shootout with police.

The PKK, which maintains bases in northern Iraq, claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing, according to a news agency close to the rebel group. Turkey's Interior Ministry also identified one of the assailants as a member of the outlawed group. It said efforts were still underway to identify the second attacker.

The attack happened hours before Turkey's Parliament reopened after its three-month summer recess with an address by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The two assailants arrived at the scene inside a light commercial vehicle, which they seized from a veterinarian in the central province of Kayseri, according to the Interior Ministry. The pro-government daily Sabah reported that they shot the man in the head and threw his body into a ditch by the side of the road. They then drove the vehicle to Ankara, roughly 300 kilometers (200 miles) away.

"Our heroic police officers, through their intuition, resisted the terrorists as soon as they got out of the vehicle," Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya told reporters. "One of them blew himself up, while the other one was shot in the head before he had a chance to blow himself up."

"Our fight against terrorism, their collaborators, the (drug) dealers, gangs and organized crime organizations will continue with determination," he said.

Police found plastic explosives, hand grenades and a rocket launcher at the scene, a ministry statement said.

Erdogan gave his speech in Parliament as planned and called the attack "the last stand of terrorism."

"The scoundrels who targeted the peace and security of the citizens could not achieve their goals and they never will," he said.

The president reiterated his government's aim to create a 30-kilometer (20 mile) safe zone along Turkey's border with Syria to secure its southern border from attacks.

Turkey has conducted numerous cross-border offensives against the PKK in northern Iraq. It has also launched incursions into northern Syria since 2016 to drive away the Islamic State group and a Kurdish militia group, known by the initials YPG, and controls swaths of territory in the area.

Turkey views the YPG as an extension of the PKK, which is listed as a terror group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. The PKK has waged an insurgency against Turkey since 1984. Tens of thousands of people have died in the conflict.

Last year, a bomb blast in a bustling pedestrian street in Istanbul left six people dead, including two children. More than 80 others were wounded. Turkey blamed the attack on the PKK and the YPG.

Security camera footage on Sunday showed the vehicle stopping in front of the Interior Ministry, with a man exiting it and rushing toward the entrance of the building before blowing himself up. A second man is seen following him.

Earlier, television footage showed bomb squads working near a vehicle in the area, which is located near the Turkish Grand National Assembly and other government buildings. A rocket launcher could be seen lying near the vehicle.

Turkish authorities later imposed a temporary blackout on images from the scene.

Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said an investigation has been launched into the "terror attack."

"These attacks will in no way hinder Turkey's fight against terrorism," he wrote on X. "Our fight against terrorism will continue with more determination."

Police cordoned off access to the city center and increased security measures, warning citizens that they would be conducting controlled explosions of suspicious packages.

The two police officers were being treated in a hospital and were not in serious condition, Yerlikaya said. Egypt, which has normalized ties with Turkey after a decade of tensions, condemned the attack. A terse statement from the Foreign Ministry offered Egypt's solidarity with Turkey.

The U.S. Embassy in Ankara and other foreign missions also issued messages condemning the attack. Erdogan in his speech did not provide any indication as to when Turkey's parliament may ratify Sweden's membership in NATO.

Stockholm applied for NATO membership alongside Finland following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. While Finland has since joined, Turkey blocked Sweden's membership in the military alliance, accusing it of not doing enough to tackle groups like PKK from operating on its soil. In a posting on X, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said Stockholm "strongly condemns today's terrorist attack in Ankara."

"We reaffirm our commitment to long-term cooperation with Türkiye in combating terrorism and wish for quick and full recovery of the ones injured," he wrote, using the Turkish government's preferred spelling for the country.

U2 concert uses stunning visuals to open massive Sphere venue in Las Vegas

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — It looked like a typical U2 outdoor concert: Two helicopters zoomed through the starlit sky before producing spotlights over a Las Vegas desert and frontman Bono, who kneeled to the ground while singing the band's 2004 hit "Vertigo."

This scene may seem customary, but the visuals were created by floor-to-ceiling graphics inside the immersive Sphere. It was one of the several impressive moments during U2's "UV Achtung Baby" residency launch show at the high-tech, globe-shaped venue, which opened for the first time Friday night.

The legendary rock band, which has won 22 Grammys, performed for two hours inside the massive, state-of-the-art spherical venue with crystal-clear audio. Throughout the night, there were a plethora of attractive visuals — including kaleidoscope images, a burning flag and Las Vegas' skyline, taking the more than 18,000 attendees on U2's epic musical journey.

"What a fancy pad," said Bono, who was accompanied onstage with guitarists The Edge and Adam Clayton along with drummer Bram van den Berg. He then stared at the high-resolution LED screen that projected a larger version of himself along with a few praying hands and bells.

Bono then paid homage to the late Elvis Presley, who was a Las Vegas entertainment staple. The band has rocked in the city as far back as 1987 when they filmed the music video for "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" on the Strip during a tour in 1987.

"Look at all this stuff. ... Elvis has definitely not left this building," he continued. "It's an Elvis chapel. It's an Elvis cathedral. Tonight, the entry into this cathedral is a password: flirtation."

U2 made their presence felt at the \$2.3 billion Sphere, which stands 366-feet (111 meters) high and 516-feet (157 meters) wide. With superb visual effects, the band's 25-show residency opened with a splash performing a slew of hits including "Mysterious Ways," "Zoo Station," "All I Want is You," "Desire" and new single "Atomic City."

On many occasions, the U2 band members were so large on screen that it felt like Bono intimately sang to the audience on one side while The Edge strummed his guitar to others on a different side.

The crowd included many entertainers and athletes: Oprah, LeBron James, Matt Damon, Andre Agassi, Ava DuVernay, Josh Duhamel, Jason Bateman, Jon Hamm, Bryan Cranston, Aaron Paul, Oscar de la Hoya, Henrik Lundqvist, Flava Flav, Diplo, Dakota Fanning, Orlando Bloom and Mario Lopez.

After wrapping up The Beatles' jam "Love Me Do," Bono recognized Paul McCartney, who was in attendance, saying "Macca is in the house tonight." He acknowledged Sphere owner James Dolan's efforts for spearheading a venue that's pushing forward the live concert audio landscape with 160,000 high-quality

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speakers and 260 million video pixels.

The Sphere is the brainchild of Dolan, the executive chair of Madison Square Garden and owner of the New York Knicks and Rangers. He sketched the first drawing of the venue on notebook paper.

"I'm thinking the that the Sphere may have come into existence because of Jim Dolan trying to solve the problem that The Beatles started when they played Shea Stadium," Bono said. "Nobody could hear you. You couldn't hear yourselves. Well, the Sphere's here. ... Can you hear us?"

The U2 frontman pointed into the crowd and shouted out Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg and Jimmy Iovine. At one point he became emotional when he dedicated a song to the late Jimmy Buffett's family, who were also in attendance.

Afterward Bono spoke about performing onstage for the first time without drummer Larry Mullen Jr., who is recovering from back surgery. He acknowledged Dutch drummer Bram van den Berg's birthday and him filling in for Mullen.

"I would like to introduce you to the only man who could stand, well, sit in his shoes," said Bono, who walked toward Berg as some in the crowd began to sing "Happy Birthday." He handed the microphone to Berg, who offered a few words.

"Let there be no mistake, there is only one Larry Mullen Jr.," Berg said.

As U2 wrapped up the show, a bright light shined from the ceiling and the massive screen began to fill with images of birds, insects and reptiles above a lake. The band closed its first Sphere concert with "Beautiful Day," which won three Grammys in 2001.

Gaetz says he will seek to oust McCarthy as speaker this week.

'Bring it on,' McCarthy says

BY KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Matt Gaetz said Sunday he will try to remove House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, a fellow Republican, from his leadership position this week after McCarthy relied on Democratic support to pass legislation that avoided a government shutdown. "Bring it on," McCarthy responded.

Gaetz, a longtime McCarthy nemesis, said in broadcast interviews that McCarthy was in "brazen, material breach" of agreements he made with House Republicans in January when he ran for speaker. As a result, Gaetz said he would be filing a "motion to vacate the chair," as House rules permit.

McCarthy's response: "So be it. Bring it on. Let's get over with it and let's start governing."

No speaker has ever been removed from office through such a move. Procedural votes could be offered to halt the motion or it could trigger a House floor vote on whether McCarthy, R-Calif., should remain speaker.

"I think we need to rip off the Band-Aid," said Gaetz, R-Fla. "I think we need to move on with new leadership that can be trustworthy."

Republicans just ended a tumultuous week in which Congress flirted with a government closure and the majority party in the House could not even pass its own bill in an effort to avoid a shutdown. Many GOP lawmakers complained the House waited too long to take up annual spending bills, squandering an opportunity to force the Senate to negotiate on spending and policy priorities.

McCarthy has consistently worked to placate the conservative wing of his conference during his nearly nine months on the job. Last month, he launched an impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden without a House vote, though the speaker had in the past said the failure to have such a vote created a process devoid of legitimacy. McCarthy also has pushed spending levels for next year that are far below the caps he agreed to with Biden on a deal to extend the nation's debt ceiling so that the government could pay its bills.

On Friday, he brought a short-term plan to fund the government that would enact steep spending cuts of nearly 30% for many agencies and strict border security provisions. But that was deemed insufficient by some Republicans, and 21 joined with every Democrat in voting against the package.

McCarthy pivoted on Saturday to a bill that would draw Democratic support. It keeps agencies funded at current levels into mid-November and provides \$16 billion in disaster relief for states and communities

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dealing with hurricanes and other natural disasters. Democrats jumped at the chance to keep the government open and both chambers passed the bill by overwhelming margins.

Gaetz had threatened to file his ouster motion if McCarthy worked with Democrats and he said the spending package blew past spending guardrails that McCarthy had agreed to previously.

McCarthy has the support of a large majority of House Republicans, but because the GOP holds such a slim 221-212 majority, he may need votes from some Democrats to keep his job. When asked how many Republicans he had on board, Gaetz said he had enough to ensure that if McCarthy retains the speakership he would "be serving at the pleasure of the Democrats."

"The only way Kevin McCarthy is speaker of the House at the end of this coming week is if Democrats bail him out," Gaetz said.

Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York said she would vote to oust McCarthy as speaker if such a vote occurs, calling him a "weak speaker" who had "lost control of his caucus." But she also left open the opportunity for negotiations, saying that if there is Democratic support for McCarthy, it would come at a price.

"You don't just vote for a Republican speaker for nothing. That's not what we were elected here to do," Ocasio-Cortez said.

Biden declined to weigh in when asked if Democrats should help McCarthy keep his job.

"I don't have a vote on that matter," Biden said at the White House on Sunday. "I'll leave that to the leadership in the House and the Senate."

Gaetz's tactics have generated considerable scorn from many House Republicans. Rep. Mike Lawler, R-N.Y., spoke of Gaetz's "diatribe of delusional thinking" and said Gaetz was acting for "personal, political reasons." McCarthy made a similar accusation, saying that Gaetz was "more interested in securing TV interviews than doing something."

Still, McCarthy is unpopular with some within his party. That was on display in January when it took 15 rounds of voting to gain the support he needed within his conference to become speaker.

The rules of the House allow for any single lawmaker — Democrat or Republican — to make a "motion to vacate the chair," essentially an attempt to oust the speaker from that leadership post through a privileged resolution.

In January, as he ran for speaker, McCarthy agreed to give as few as five Republican members the ability to initiate a vote to remove him. But when that was not good enough for his critics, he reduced that threshold to one — the system that historically has been the norm.

Proponents of allowing a lone lawmaker to file the motion said it promotes accountability, noting its long history in the House. The last use of the motion was in 2015, when then-Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, a Republican who later became President Donald Trump's White House chief of staff, introduced a resolution to declare the speaker's office vacant. Two months later, Boehner, R-Ohio, said he would be stepping down.

McCarthy expressed optimism Sunday that Gaetz would fail and said that Gaetz has been after him since he ran for speaker.

"Yes, I'll survive," McCarthy said.

Gaetz appeared on CNN's "State of the Union" and ABC's "This Week," while McCarthy was on CBS' "Face the Nation." Ocasio-Cortez was on CNN and Lawler was on ABC.

Ryder Cup in Rome stays right at home for the Europeans. The US loses its seventh straight in Europe

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

GUIDONIA MONTECELIO, Italy (AP) — The best collection of players at Marco Simone had flags from their eight countries draped around their shoulders as they took turns clutching and thrusting the gold Ryder Cup, the very trophy that turns them into one nation, one team, with one purpose.

The celebration was familiar on European soil, and so was the winner of the Ryder Cup.

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Team Europe, embarrassed two years at Whistling Straits when it suffered its worst loss to the Americans, got their payback Sunday, along with that 17-inch trophy.

"Not many people gave us a chance, I don't think, especially two years ago," European captain Luke Donald said. "Well, we proved them wrong."

Europe now has seven straight wins at home dating to 1993.

This one wasn't even particularly close, from the opening session Friday, which Europe swept for the first time in history, to the Sunday singles that led to a 16 1/2-11 1/2 victory.

Rory McIlroy, in tears two years ago after his shabby performance, was among Europe's top players who quickly doused any American dreams of a rally. He beat Sam Burns to go 4-1 for the week, the first time he was Europe's top scorer in his seventh appearance.

"I was so disappointed after Whistling Straits — we all were," McIlroy said. "And we wanted to come here to Rome and redeem ourselves."

Jon Rahm, Viktor Hovland and Tyrrell Hatton also picked up key points early in the singles lineup, leaving Europe needing only a half-point to reaching the winning total. Tommy Fleetwood delivered the clincher, hitting a signature shot on the signature hole at Marco Simone — a drive to 25 feet on the reachable 16th against Rickie Fowler.

Fowler, now with a 1-8-5 road record in the Ryder Cup, hit into the water and wound up conceding the birdie to Fleetwood, who raised both arms to the loudest cheer of the week.

"I really didn't want to come down to one of us at the back," said Fleetwood, in the 11th spot in the lineup. "Just so happened to play a part — it was a bit bigger than I thought I was going to have when we saw the draw. But just so proud of being part of this team."

The Americans were confident, mainly based on their 19-9 victory in Wisconsin two years ago, that they finally would win on European soil for the first time in 30 years.

Now make it 34 years. Their next chance is 2027 at Adare Manor in Ireland.

"I think the European team played some phenomenal golf. I think it really is quite that simple," U.S. captain Zach Johnson said, his voice choking to the point that it was hard for him to complete a sentence. "Team USA will be better for it. We'll figure it out."

Johnson is sure to face scrutiny for his six picks, leading to perceptions they were as much about friendships as good form. The six picks combined to go 4-12-4 for the week. Whether it would have mattered is hard to tell.

Europe has the magic touch in these matches.

"This is our time to shine, not because this is our stage. We are just taking care of it because of the amazing role models that we've had before us that have shown us how to do it," said Justin Rose, at 43 the oldest player in the Ryder Cup.

"A good pairing on the European team doesn't mean playing with your best mate," he said. "It means representing something bigger than yourself. And I feel like that's for me what being a European Ryder Cup player is all about."

Whatever hopes the Americans had Sunday didn't last long.

They needed to win the last five matches still on the course. Matt Fitzpatrick of England was in position to win the 18th hole for the clinching half-point with Max Homa buried in gnarly rough above the bunker. Homa, on the advice of caddie Joe Greiner, boldly took a penalty drop, chipped to 7 feet and made the par for the full point.

Homa was a rare bright spot for the U.S. team, going 3-1-1 in his Ryder Cup debut. The mettle came from Patrick Cantlay, whose hat led to the only real drama at Marco Simone, and led to more anger than McIlroy has experienced in these tense matches.

Cantlay was the only player not wearing a USA cap (he says it didn't fit right) but an unsubstantiated Sky Sports report Saturday morning said it was to protest not getting paid. Cantlay referred to the report as "outright lies."

But the Europeans fans picked up on it and heckled him endlessly, waving their caps at him at every turn. Cantlay never flinched, making three straight birdies to win a fourballs match.

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McIlroy still had a putt to tie, and he was furious when he felt Cantlay's caddie, Joe LaCava, celebrated for too long and too close to the action, even when asked to move. McIlroy was seen that night being held back as he described the behavior as "(expletive) disgraceful."

"I was probably the angriest I have ever been in my career," McIlroy said. "I said to the U.S. guys I thought it was disgraceful what went on. I made that clear. I needed to calm myself down because I could have let it bring me down the wrong path."

McIlroy said he has texted LaCava, who previously worked for Tiger Woods, and they would move on from that.

Europe went into the singles session knowing no team had ever come back from a five-point deficit on Sunday. The Americans made them sweat, but only briefly.

Rahm won the 18th hole to earn a half-point against Scottie Scheffler. Hatton completed an unbeaten week by beating British Open champion Brian Harman. Hovland put the first blue point on the board in a win over Collin Morikawa.

All Europe needed was one more halve, and Fleetwood assured that with a 2-up lead with two holes to play against Fowler.

The only mood that mattered was pure joy, with Europeans leaping into the water to celebrate a win they badly needed.

The Americans still lead the overall series in the Ryder Cup dating to 1927. But since Europe joined the party in 1979 — the modern era — Europe now has a 12-9-1 advantage.

Next up is Bethpage Black on Long Island in New York, renowned for its harsh fans even before the flags of two continents are involved. McIlroy led a chorus of European players already hopeful Donald will return as captain.

"I think one of the biggest accomplishments in golf right now is winning an away Ryder Cup," McIlroy said. "And that's what we're going to do at Bethpage."

AP Top 25: Georgia's hold on No. 1 loosens, but top seven unchanged. Kentucky, Louisville enter poll

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Georgia's hold on No. 1 in The Associated Press college football poll loosened Sunday as the Bulldogs received a season-low 35 first-place votes out of possible 62 while extending their streak atop the rankings to 16 straight weeks.

The Bulldogs needed a late touchdown to escape with a win at Auburn on Saturday and that sent many in the media panel looking for a new No. 1 team. Georgia had 55 first-place votes and 1,562 points last week but was down to 1,501 points in this week's AP Top 25.

No. 2 Michigan got 12 first-place votes and 1,436 points but nearly was passed by No. 3 Texas, which received 10 first-place votes and 1,426 points. Both the Wolverines and Longhorns won big on Saturday.

Ohio State kept its spot at No. 4 and received one first-place vote. No. 5 Florida State received four first-place votes. Neither the Buckeyes nor Seminoles played this weekend.

No. 6 Penn State and No. 7 Washington also held their spots. Oregon moved up a place to No. 8 and Southern California dropped one to No. 9.

No. 10 Notre Dame moved back into the top 10 after a dramatic victory at Duke. The Blue Devils dropped two places to No. 19.

POLL POINTS

Before declaring Georgia vulnerable, it should be noted that it was right around this time last year when the Bulldogs needs a second-half comeback to escape Missouri with a victory.

After that result, the Georgia slipped from No. 1 to No. 2 in the rankings behind Alabama.

A week later on Oct. 9, the Bulldogs regained the top spot — and haven't relinquished it since — but it took a while to convince a lot of voters.

Georgia didn't receive more than 32 first-place votes until it pounded Tennessee in a 1-vs.-2 matchup. On Nov. 6, Georgia received 62 of 63 first-place votes and there was never really a serious question again

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about who was No. 1.

IN-AND-OUT

Florida and Kansas dropped out of the rankings after being routed this weekend, the Gators by Kentucky. That pushed the Wildcats into the poll along with rival Louisville, both setting up ranked vs. ranked matchups Saturday:

No. 20 Kentucky goes to Georgia. The Wildcats reached as high as No. 7 early last season before a second-half swoon that left them unranked at the end of the season.

No. 25 Louisville hosts Notre Dame on Saturday. The Cardinals are ranked for the first time since being in the AP Top 25 for two weeks at the start of the 2020 pandemic season, when some conferences were not playing and their teams were ineligible for the poll.

The last time both the Bluegrass State rivals were ranked when all of Division I college football was up and running was Sept. 16, 2007.

CONFERENCE CALL

SEC — 7 (Nos. 1, 11, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23).

Pac-12 — 6 (Nos. 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, 18).

ACC — 5 (Nos. 5, 14, 17, 19, 25).

Big Ten — 3 (Nos. 2, 4, 6).

Big 12 — 2 (Nos. 3, 12).

Mountain West — 1 (No. 24).

Independent — 1 (No. 10).

RANKED vs. RANKED

No. 12 Oklahoma vs. No. 3 Texas in Dallas. The 43rd Red River Rivalry with both teams ranked.

No. 23 LSU at No. 21 Missouri. Only the fourth meeting between the two Tigers, and the first with both ranked.

No. 20 Kentucky at No. 1 Georgia. Third time in the last six years the SEC East rivals have met as ranked teams, and only the fifth time in 77 total games.

No. 10 Notre Dame at No. 25 Louisville. Another first-time ranked-on-ranked matchup. The Irish and Cardinals have played just three times previously.

In New York City, scuba divers' passion for the sport becomes a mission to collect undersea litter

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and TED SHAFFREY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — On a recent Sunday afternoon, the divers arrived on a thin strip of sand at the furthest, watery edge of New York City. Air tanks strapped to their backs, they waded into the sea and descended into an environment far different from their usual terrestrial surroundings of concrete, traffic and trash-strewn sidewalks.

Horseshoe crabs and other crustaceans crawl on a seabed encrusted with barnacles and colonies of coral. Spiny-finned sea robin, blackfish and wayward angelfish swim in the murky ocean tinted green by sheets of algae.

Not all is pretty. Plastic bottles, candy wrappers and miles and miles of fishing line drift with the tides, endangering sea life.

The undersea litter isn't always visible from the shore. But it has long been a concern of Nicole Zelek, founder of the dive school SuperDive who four years ago launched monthly cleanups at this small cove in the community of Far Rockaway, where New York City meets the Atlantic Ocean, about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) south of John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens.

A throwaway culture of single-use plastics and other hard-to-degrade material has sullied the world's waters over the decades, posing a danger to marine life such as seals and seabirds.

Dive by dive, small groups like Zelek's have been trying to undo some of the damage as part of the

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DIVERS-ity Initiative, which promotes inclusion in the sport.

"Every month we have a prize for the weirdest find," she said. They have included the occasional goat skull, perhaps used as part of some ritual, Zelek surmises.

"The best find of all time was an actual ATM machine. Unfortunately, it was empty," she said.

The divers' haul one late-summer Sunday wasn't much, but there were clumps and clumps of fishing line untangled from underwater objects. What the divers can't pull away by hand is cut with scissors.

"Unfortunately, tons of crabs and horseshoe crabs — which are under threat — get tangled in the fishing line and then they die," Zelek said.

While more ambitious projects are underway to scoop up huge accumulations of floating debris in deeper waters, small-scale coastal cleanups like Zelek's are an important part of the battle against ocean pollution, said Nick Mallos, vice president of conservation for Ocean Conservancy.

"The science is very clear and that's to tackle our global plastic pollution crisis," he said. "We have to do it all."

Every September, the conservancy holds monthlong international coastal cleanups. Since its inception nearly four decades ago, the cleanups have retrieved about 400 million pounds (181.4 million kilograms) of trash from coastal areas around the world.

The best way to combat plastics going into the oceans, Mallos said, is to reduce the globe's dependence on them, particularly in packaging consumer products. But human-powered cleanup is the least costly of all cleanup options.

By 2025, some 250 million tons (226.7 million metric tons) of plastic will have found its way into the oceans, according to the PADI AWARE Foundation, a conservation group sponsoring a global project called Dive Against Debris.

The project invites what organizers call "citizen scientists" to survey their diving sites to help catalog the myriad items that don't belong in oceans, lakes and other bodies of water. By the group's count, more than 90,000 participants have conducted more than 21,000 such surveys and removed 2.2 million pieces of junk, big and small.

Zelek and her fellow divers have contributed their finds to the project.

Surface trash might be easy enough to clear with a rake, but the task is more challenging beneath the water. Over the years, the layers of monofilament fishing line have accumulated. And until a few years ago, no one was scooping out the line, hooks and lead weights.

Untangled, a pound of medium-weight fishing filament would stretch to a bit more than 4 miles (6.4 kilometers). It's anybody's guess how many miles of fishing line remain on the channel's bottom.

"Those small things are really what start to accumulate and become a much larger and bigger problem," said Tanasia Swift, who has been with the group for a year and works for an environmental nonprofit focused on restoring the health of New York City's waters.

"If there's anything that we see that doesn't belong in the water, we take it out," she said.

While the divers work, fishermen cast their lines from a ledge where the city's concrete stops. The beach is frequented mostly by residents who live nearby.

Raquel Gonzalez is one such resident, and she's been coming to the beach for years. She and a neighbor brought a rake with them on the same Sunday the divers were there.

"Needs a lot of cleanup here. There's nobody that does any cleanup around here. We have to clean it up ourselves," she said.

"I love this spot, I love the scuba divers," Gonzalez said. "Look at all the good people here."

A populist ex-premier who opposes support for Ukraine leads his leftist party to victory in Slovakia

By KAREL JANICEK Associated Press

PRAGUE (AP) — A populist former prime minister and his leftist party have won early parliamentary elections in Slovakia, staging a political comeback after campaigning on a pro-Russian and anti-American message, according to complete results announced Sunday.

Former Prime Minister Robert Fico and the leftist Smer, or Direction, party had 22.9% of the votes, or 42 seats in the 150-seat Parliament, the Slovak Statistics Office said.

Public and exit polls predicted a tight race but in the end, Fico won relatively big after his campaign — considered aggressive and the most radical of his career — attracted voters who favored the far-right.

With no party winning a majority of seats, a coalition government will need to be formed. The president traditionally asks an election's winner to try to form a government, so Fico is likely to become prime minister again. He served as prime minister in 2006-2010 and again in 2012-2018.

Fico said he was ready to open talks with other parties on forming a coalition government as soon as President Zuzana Caputova asks him. Caputova said she will do it on Monday.

"We're here, we're ready, we've learned something, we're more experienced," he said.

Saturday's election was a test for the small eastern European country's support for neighboring Ukraine in its war with Russia, and the win by Fico could strain a fragile unity in the European Union and NATO.

Fico, 59, has vowed to withdraw Slovakia's military support for Ukraine in Russia's war if his attempt to return to power succeeds. "People in Slovakia have bigger problems than Ukraine," he said.

The country of 5.5 million people created in 1993 following the breakup of Czechoslovakia has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine since Russia invaded last February, donating arms and opening the borders for refugees fleeing the war.

Slovakia has delivered to Ukraine its fleet of Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets, the S-300 air defense system, helicopters, armored vehicles and much-needed demining equipment.

The current caretaker government is planning to send Ukraine artillery ammunition and to train Ukrainian service members in demining.

Winning approval for sending more arms to Ukraine is getting more difficult in many countries. In the U.S. Congress, a bill to avert a government shutdown in Washington, D.C., excluded President Joe Biden's request to provide more security assistance to the war-torn nation.

In other countries, including Germany, France, and Spain, populist parties skeptical of intervention in Ukraine also command significant support. Many of these countries have national or regional elections coming up that could tip the balance of popular opinion away from Kyiv and toward Moscow.

A liberal, pro-West newcomer, the Progressive Slovakia party, took second place, with 18% of the votes, or 32 seats.

Its leader Michal Simecka, who is deputy president of the European Parliament, said his party respected the result. "But it's bad news for Slovakia," he said. "And it would be even worse if Robert Fico manages to create a government."

He said he'd like try to form a governing coalition if Fico fails.

The left-wing Hlas (Voice) party, led by Fico's former deputy in Smer, Peter Pellegrini, came in third with 14.7% (27 seats). Pellegrini parted ways with Fico after the scandal-tainted Smer lost the previous election in 2020, but their possible reunion would boost Fico's chances to form a government.

Pellegrini replaced Fico as prime minister after he was forced to resign following major anti-government street protests resulting from the 2018 killing of journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée.

Pellegrini congratulated Fico on his victory but said that two former prime ministers in one government might not work well. "It's not ideal but that doesn't mean such a coalition can't be created," he said.

Another potential coalition partner, the ultranationalist Slovak National Party, a clear pro-Russian group, received 5.6% (10 seats).

Those three parties would have a parliamentary majority of 79 seats if they joined forces in a coalition

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government.

Fico opposes EU sanctions on Russia, questions whether Ukraine can force out the invading Russian troops and wants to block Ukraine from joining NATO. He proposes that instead of sending arms to Kyiv, the EU and the U.S. should use their influence to force Russia and Ukraine to strike a compromise peace deal.

Fico's critics worry that his return to power could lead Slovakia to abandon its course in other ways, following the path of Hungary under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and to a lesser extent of Poland under the Law and Justice party.

"It can't be ruled out that he will be looking for a partner who uses similar rhetoric, and the partner will be Viktor Orbán," said Radoslav Stefancik, an analyst from the University of Economics in Bratislava.

Orbán welcomed Fico's victory.

"Always good to work together with a patriot," he posted on X, the former Twitter.

Hungary has — uniquely among EU countries — maintained close relations with Moscow and argued against supplying arms to Ukraine or providing it with economic assistance.

Fico repeats Russian President Vladimir Putin's unsupported claim that the Ukrainian government runs a Nazi state from which ethnic Russians in the country's east needed protection. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is Jewish and lost relatives in the Holocaust.

Today in History: October 2, Nazis crush Warsaw Uprising during World War II

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Oct. 2, the 275th day of 2023. There are 90 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 2, 1944, German troops crushed the two-month-old Warsaw Uprising, during which a quarter of a million people had been killed.

On this date:

In 1869, political and spiritual leader Mohandas K. Gandhi was born in Porbandar, India.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson had a serious stroke at the White House that left him paralyzed on his left side.

In 1941, during World War II, German armies launched an all-out drive against Moscow; Soviet forces succeeded in holding on to their capital.

In 1959, Rod Serling's "The Twilight Zone" made its debut on CBS with the episode "Where Is Everybody?" starring Earl Holliman.

In 1967, Thurgood Marshall was sworn as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court as the court opened its new term.

In 1970, one of two chartered twin-engine planes flying the Wichita State University football team to Utah crashed into a mountain near Silver Plume, Colorado, killing 31 of the 40 people on board.

In 1984, Richard W. Miller became the first FBI agent to be arrested and charged with espionage. (Miller was tried three times; he was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but was released after nine years.)

In 1986, the Senate joined the House in voting to override President Reagan's veto of stiff economic sanctions against South Africa.

In 2006, an armed milk truck driver took a group of girls hostage in an Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, killing five of them and wounding five others before taking his own life.

In 2013, a jury in Los Angeles cleared a concert promoter of negligence, rejecting a lawsuit brought by Michael Jackson's mother claiming AEG Live had been negligent in hiring the doctor who killed the pop star with an overdose of a hospital anesthetic in 2009.

In 2016, Hall of Fame baseball broadcaster Vin Scully signed off for the last time, ending 67 years behind the mic for the Los Angeles Dodgers, as he called the team's 7-1 loss to the Giants in San Francisco.

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In 2019, House Democrats threatened to make White House defiance of a congressional request for testimony and documents potential grounds for an article of impeachment against President Donald Trump.

In 2017, rock superstar Tom Petty died at a Los Angeles hospital at age 66, a day after going into cardiac arrest at his home.

In 2020, stricken by COVID-19, President Donald Trump was injected with an experimental drug combination at the White House before being flown to a military hospital, where he was given Remdesivir, an antiviral drug.

In 2022, police firing tear gas after an Indonesian soccer match in an attempt to stop violence triggered a disastrous crush of fans that left at least 125 people dead.

Today's Birthdays: Movie critic Rex Reed is 85. Singer-songwriter Don McLean is 78. Cajun/country singer Jo-el Sonnier (sahn-YAY') is 77. Actor Avery Brooks is 75. Fashion designer Donna Karan (KA'-ruhn) is 75. Photographer Annie Leibovitz is 74. Rock musician Mike Rutherford (Genesis, Mike & the Mechanics) is 73. Singer-actor Sting is 72. Actor Robin Riker is 71. Actor Lorraine Bracco is 69. Rock singer Phil Oakey (The Human League) is 68. R&B singer Freddie Jackson is 67. Singer-producer Robbie Nevil is 65. Retro-soul singer James Hunter is 61. Rock musician Bud Gaugh (Sublime, Eyes Adrift) is 56. Folk-country singer Gillian Welch is 56. Country singer Kelly Willis is 55. Actor Joey Slotnick is 55. R&B singer Dion Allen (Az Yet) is 53. Actor-talk show host Kelly Ripa (TV: "Live with Kelly and Ryan") is 53. Rock musician Jim Root (AKA #4 Slipknot) is 52. Singer Tiffany is 52. Rock singer Lene Nystrom is 50. Actor Efren Ramirez is 50. R&B singer LaTocha Scott (Xscape) is 51. Gospel singer Mandisa (TV: "American Idol") is 47. Actor Brianna Brown is 44e. Former tennis player Marion Bartoli is 39. Actor Christopher Larkin is 36. Rock singer Brittany Howard (Alabama Shakes) is 35. Actor Samantha Barks is 33. Actor Elizabeth McLaughlin is 30.