

Groton Daily Independent

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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.

State Golf

The first round of the State Boys Golf Tournament was held Monday at Hart Ranch in Rapid City. Brevin Flihs is tied for 22nd with an 83 while Logan Pearson is tied at 52nd with a 90, Carter Simon is tied at 58 with a 91, Jace Johnson is tied at 71 with a 95 and Jayden Schwan is at 95th place with a 108. Groton Area is currently in ninth place.

FREE TO WATCH ON GDILIVE.COM

Groton Area
Tigers



**State Quarterfinals
Girls Soccer
hosts
St. Thomas More
Tues., Oct. 3, 4 p.m.**



**St. Thomas
More**

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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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

pant gang violence, marking the first time in almost 20 years that such a force would be deployed in the Caribbean nation.

Taiwan has issued a severe weather warning as Typhoon Koinu approaches the island from the Pacific Ocean. The storm is expected to make landfall on Thursday, with heavy rains and strong winds forecast.

Pierre Agostini, Ferenc Krausz and Anne L'Huillier have won the Nobel Prize in Physics for their work in measuring the minuscule movements of electrons in matter.

A new report revealed that the United Auto Workers strike has triggered nearly \$4 billion in losses across the automotive industry in the first two weeks of the union's stoppage in protest of America's "Big Three" automakers.

Early voting in Australia has begun on a landmark referendum that, if approved, will enshrine recognition of indigenous people in the constitution and establish a "Voice of Parliament" to give them an avenue to advise the government.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Kyiv is finding it challenging to source drones and drone parts from Chinese suppliers due to new export control restrictions imposed by Beijing, new analysis suggests. China is using its dominance in the drone industry for political gain and perhaps to support the Kremlin, too..

TALKING POINTS

"It most certainly can be charged as a misdemeanor, a criminal misdemeanor. Now, does that mean that it's grounds for expulsion? I don't think so. You know, if you start to do this, you're going to find a lot of folks are pushing for the expulsion of others. The fact that over hundreds of years, we've only expelled five members should tell you something. They always had that power, but I think both sides recognize that down this road lies madness. If we start to expel members, it's going to become an insatiable appetite," Fox News legal analyst Jonathan Turley dismissing GOP calls to expel Representative Jonathan Bowman from the House over his recent fire alarm incident.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

President Joe Biden's son, Hunter, is scheduled to appear in a Delaware court for arraignment on gun charges. He will enter a "not guilty" plea. Also, New York Times bestselling author Alex Marlow's book — Breaking Biden: Exposing the Hidden Forces and Secret Money Machine Behind Joe Biden, His Family, and His Administration — releases today. The book will unveil the findings of an investigation into the corruption within the Biden family.

Oklahoma lawmakers will hold a special session as Gov. Kevin Stitt demands a tax cut for all Oklahomans to put the state "on a path to zero income tax" and increase "fairness and transparency in our tax system and our budget process."

Michael Duane Zack, the 54-year-old man convicted of killing two women in 1996, is scheduled to be executed at 6 p.m. at the Florida state prison.

Atlanta Federal Reserve President Raphael Bostic is scheduled to participate in a conversation on the "Economic Outlook for 2024: Inflation, Rising Interest Rates, Labor Market, and Uncertainties" before the Leadership Atlanta alumni roundtable at 8 a.m. ET. Job opening data for August will be released at 10 a.m.

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Good Luck Groton Area Girls Soccer Team!

Back: Taryn Traphagen, Carly Gilbert, Gretchen Dinger, Emerlee Jones, Sydney Locke, Jaedyn Penning, Faith Traphagen, Elizabeth Fliehs, Brooklynn Hansen, Brenna Imrie, Kennedy Hansen

Front: Kayla Lehr, Ryelle Gilbert, Laila Roberts, Addison Hoffman, Jerica Locke, Makenna Tietz, Avery Crank, Mia Crank (Courtesy Photo)

State Quarterfinals: Groton Area vs. St. Thomas More

Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023, 4 p.m., at the Groton Soccer Complex

Free viewing on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by these businesses who also wish the Lady Tigers Good Luck!

Avantara Groton
Bahr Spray Foam
Bary Keith at Harr Motors
BK Custom T's & More
Blocker Construction
Farmers Union Co-op Assoc.
Groton Daily Independent
Groton Dairy Queen

Groton Ford
Locke Electric
Lori's Pharmacy
Love to Travel by Becah Fliehs
Milbrandt Enterprises Inc.
Northern State University
Rix Farms / F&M Farms
Weismantel Agency

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State Volleyball Polls

Below is the latest South Dakota Prep Media volleyball poll, issued for the week of Oct. 2, 2023. Teams are listed with first-place votes in parentheses, record and points.

Class AA

1. Harrisburg (13), 15-0, 65; 2. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 10-1, 52; 3. Sioux Falls Washington, 7-2, 39; 4. Watertown, 10-3, 26; 5. Aberdeen Central, 10-3, 12.

Others receiving votes: Pierre 1.

Class A

1. Sioux Falls Christian (13), 21-3, 65; 2. Dakota Valley, 10-4, 51; 3. Wagner, 15-3, 35; 4. Dell Rapids, 13-4, 30; 5. Madison, 14-2, 11.

Others receiving votes: Rapid City Christian 2, Miller 1.

Class B

1. Warner (13), 28-0, 65; 2. Chester Area, 20-2, 52; 3. Northwestern, 19-5, 36; 4. Colman-Egan, 17-3, 18; 5. Faith, 17-0, 13.

Others receiving votes: Burke 7, Wolsey-Wessington 4.

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

October 3, 2023 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Finalize 2-year Lease Agreement for Groton Municipal Airport Land
4. Open Sealed Bids for Surplus Items
5. Department Reports
6. Airport Discussion – Darrell Hillestad
7. Park Saferoom Update
8. 2023 Baseball Report
9. Skating Rink Discussion
10. Stop Signs at Intersection of East 7th Avenue and North 2nd Street
11. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 770 Certifying 2024 City of Groton Property Tax Levy to Brown County
12. First Reading of Ordinance No. 771 – Water Rates
13. Minutes
14. Bills
15. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
16. Adjournment

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Groton Area has clean sweep over Mobridge-Pollock

Groton Area's volleyball team handed Mobridge-Pollock its third loss of the season with a three-set win, 25-21, 25-19 and 25-22.

Groton Area was firing on all cylinders and no matter what the visiting Tigers threw at the Gold Tigers, Groton Area would answer back. It showed in the digs as Groton Area had 103 digs on the night compared to just 66 for Mobridge-Pollock. Groton Area had 38 kills compared to 22 for Mobridge-Pollock. It was an evening of fun volleyball to watch as these two teams battled it out in a number of long volleys.

Anna Fjeldheim was 36 of 44 in attacks with 13 kills and was 1 of 14 in serves with two ace serves. Sydney Leicht was 36 of 40 in attacks with 11 kills, had two ace serves and 21 digs. Rylee Dunker was 18 of 19 in attacks with seven kills and had one solo and one assisted block. Chesney Weber had five kills, was 13 of 14 in serving with two ace serves and had one assisted block. Carly Guthmiller had 28 digs and two ace serves. Elizabeth Flihs had 34 assists, 13 digs and one kill. Emma Kutter had one kill. Jerica Locke was eight of eight in serving with one ace serve. Laila Roberts had 13 digs.

Mobridge-Pollock's Charley Henderson had eight blocks and two ace serves while Raelyn Aberle had six kills, Jayda Thompson had four kills, Sophia Overland had two kills and one ace serve, Aubrey Ziegler and Tegan Kobold each had two kills and one block, Ryli Thompson had two kills, Grace Overland had a kill and a block, Katy Kemnitz had two ace serves and Regan Weisbeck had one ace.

Mobridge-Pollock, now 18-3, is fourth in the state with power points while Groton Area is now in ninth place with an 11-4 record.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bary Keith at Harr Motors, BK Custom Ts & More, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency and Locke Electric. Justin Hanson provided the commentary for the match.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-9 and 25-23. Jaedyn Penning led Groton Area with 12 kills and two ace serves, Faith Traphagen had five kills, Liby Althoff had three kills and one ace serve, Emerlee Jones and Kella Tracy each had two kills, Jerica Locke had two ace serves and one kill and Talli Wright had one block. The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by Adam and Nicole Wright. Justin Hanson provided the commentary for the match.











Groton Area made it a clean sweep with a 2-1 win in the C match. Game scores were 28-30, 25-22 and 15-8. The match was tied 27 times with the lead changing hands nine times. Emerlee Jones had seven kills and one ace serve, Taryn Traphagen had six kills and one ace serve, McKenna Tietz had four kills and three ace serves, Leah Jones and Teagan Hanten each had two kills, Liby Althoff had three kills and two ace serves, Avery Crank had two ace serves and Hannah Sandness had one ace serve. The match was broadcast on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by the Kyle Gerlach Family. Justin Hanson provided the commentary.

It was a full clean sweep as earlier in the season the Groton Area junior high teams won both of their matches over Mobridge-Pollock.

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State A Volleyball Standings

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	<u>PTS</u>
1	 Sioux Falls Christian	22	3	.880	44.960
2	 Rapid City Christian	25	5	.833	44.933
3	 Madison	14	2	.875	44.312
4	 Mobridge-Pollock	18	3	.857	44.000
5	 Estelline/Hendricks	18	2	.900	43.950
6	 Platte-Geddes	18	4	.818	43.909
7	 Miller	17	4	.810	43.905
8	 Aberdeen Roncalli	10	3	.769	43.769
9	 Groton Area	11	4	.733	43.667
10	 Wagner	16	3	.842	43.526

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Jerica Locke
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Anna Fjeldheim, Emma Kutter
and Elizabeth Flihs**
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Anna Fjeldheim
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Anna Bisbee sang the National Anthem
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Rylee Dunker
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Justin Hanson and Paul Kosel
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Running event showcases impact of state's special courts

Program participants and professionals team up as 'Recovery Runners' for road race

BY: CURT NETTINGA - OCTOBER 2, 2023 8:42 PM

BROOKINGS — Brookings resident Gordon Opatz says he was always athletic, but wasn't a "school athlete." When life decisions landed him in the Brookings County Drug and DUI Court, he was looking for something he could do to both occupy some time and improve his life.

"I started running for some exercise," Opatz said Sept. 23 after completing the 15.2-mile Jack 15 road race. "That year in May there was a challenge that came out — to run 90 miles in May for veterans' suicide awareness. I thought that was a good goal; 3 miles a day is one I thought I could manage."

Opatz said although he didn't hit 3 miles each day, he did complete the 90-mile challenge.

That was the first step in what became an outpouring of support that eventually led 11 people to don blue T-shirts with white "Recovery Runners" lettering on the front and participate in the Jack 15 race. It was a fitting gesture, as September was National Recovery Month.

The Brookings County Drug and DUI Court is one of 17 Problem Solving Courts within the framework of the Unified Judicial System of South Dakota. There are also Mental Health Courts and Veterans Courts.

Participants, if approved, are sentenced to a Problem Solving Court by a circuit court judge, and begin a treatment program that can include intensive supervision, treatment for substance use disorder and mental health, court appearances, getting a job, and maintaining a place to live. In lieu of being incarcerated, participants remain in their hometown and earn a living, often with family nearby as support, as they address the problems that led them into the justice system.

The Jack 15 is a road race from the small town of White to the South Dakota State University campus in Brookings. Participants can run alone or as part of a relay team. The race has been held for more than 60 years, making it one of the oldest road races in the state. Runners of all skill levels and a handful of walkers test themselves over the 15.2-mile course, cheered on by family and friends who drive ahead and wait for them to pass.

Shouts of "Way to go!" "You got this!" and "You're almost there!" ring out as exhausted runners struggle along the route. For many, those calls of support keep them plodding toward the finish, similar to the way support can help people in the state's special court programs.

For Opatz, the support during the race came not only from those along the side of the road, but from the 10 people who made the commitment to run with him.

Judge Abigail Howard, who oversees the Drug and DUI Courts in both Brookings and Huron, remembers how the challenge began.

"Early on in his program, Gordon had mentioned that the last time he felt good about himself was when he was able to exercise," Howard recalled. "He had previously been active in CrossFit when he was sober and was looking to try to get active again."

Howard noted that Opatz had shared how he was trying to meet the challenge for veterans' suicide awareness.

"I was so impressed with his conviction that I told him if he stuck with running, I would run a 5K with him," Howard said.

The goal was for the pair to run in the Hobo Day 5K, but when discussion began on the Jack 15, Opatz found there were others willing to lend their support.

Teams formed within the Drug and DUI Court family — one team of program participants, and another

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made up of professionals, including Howard. While Opatz completed the race on his own, the teams broke the course into five segments, with each team member running at least a 3-mile leg. Several also jumped back in for the final leg, to finish the race with other team members.

The support for each other was tangible. Sometimes, that's what it takes.

"Gordon struggled with many losses during the program, and with the many ups and downs that come with so much loss," Howard said.

She said when that occurs, it's hard for a participant to build consistency and even harder to remain physically active. Participants must work within the program or face the prospect of being terminated. Howard said Opatz was up for termination twice, but she decided both times to keep him in the program.

"He has been sober the entire time he's been in our program," she added. "He simply struggled with creating basic routines and consistency in life to follow through with some of his goals."

Howard and the team noticed a change in Opatz as he entered the final two phases of the program. He was beginning to feel better and build routines.

"Once I saw him get a good handle on a few pieces, I told him we could commit to running the Jack 15," Howard said.

Opatz encouraged other participants to join in. He trained by himself and with others to prepare for the race.

"I also told him that I would start training as well — and I did — to show that we practice what we preach in these programs," Howard said.

Opatz said the mutual support was important.

"Many wouldn't have done this if there wasn't someone egging them on and supporting them," he said. "Heck, there are some of the team members who don't run at all. It is great to see them come out and try, to be supportive."

"To say I am proud of the participants and the team is an understatement," Howard said, after sprinting the final 50 yards of her leg, the finish of the race. "To have so many participants show up in support of Gordon, and so many team members rally and agree to run the race with us, felt like a real movement for recovery in our community."

Watching each other run in the race helped the program participants and professionals see each other not just as parts of the justice system, but as people.

"It is an honor to work with these programs and get to walk — or in this case run — beside folks on this journey," Howard said. "And I think if you would ask each of them, although they may have signed up for this race because of Gordon, like I did, they likely each got something much more profound out of the experience as well. It is certainly a memory that I will carry with me forever."

Curt Nettinga is the managing editor of the Huron Plainsman and previously served as editor of the Hot Springs Star.

COMMENTARY

Despite challenges, newspapers still the best source for local news

Oct. 1-7, 2023, is National Newspaper Week

DANA HESS

National Newspaper Week, Oct. 1-7, is a good time to consider the state of newspaper journalism in South Dakota. As a former newspaper editor, I come at this task with a certain nostalgia for the way things were "back in the day."

Like other businesses, newspapers have gone through some changes as a result of the economy and the pandemic. A few weekly newspapers in the state have closed and many of the state's daily newspapers have cut back on the number of days that they publish, pushing readers to check for news on their websites.

The Gannett-owned newspapers in Sioux Falls, Watertown and Aberdeen continue to vex their readers who clamor for more local news. However, their poor performance has inspired competitors in those communities. The enthusiastic welcome for those startups by local readers has shown that there is a hunger

for good journalism and professionals ready to provide it online and in print.

Many changes in the industry have been for the better. Those changes are noted in the theme for the week, "In Print. Online. For You. #NewspapersYourWay." Of course there are those of us who aren't quite sure what the hashtag means, but it's a certainty that newspapers are working to get their news out to readers as many ways as they can.

In addition to their printed editions, newspapers offer websites, email newsletters and e-editions in recognition of the fact that more readers are comfortable getting their news online if they can be assured that it comes from a reliable source.

The fact that you're reading this column (thanks for that) shows that you're not averse to getting news online as you could be reading it on the South Dakota Searchlight website or in the Searchlight Daily email newsletter. There's also a chance it's being reprinted in your local newspaper, as all stories and columns offered by South Dakota Searchlight are offered for reprint at no charge.

In an age when almost everyone on the internet has an opinion or "news" about a subject, many lack the tradition of careful, insightful reporting that's a hallmark of newspaper journalism. Few online sources can keep up with the volume of news generated by local newspapers. Those newspapers keep tabs on city councils, school boards and county commissions. Their pages are filled with community calendars, obituaries and sports news. They may even find the time to write a feature story about people in their community.

Newspapers are still a good source for advertisements from local businesses. Another, often overlooked form of advertising is a stalwart of the newspaper business — public notices. Those notices ensure that citizens have regular access to information about how their tax dollars are being spent by local governments.

In the upcoming legislative session there will be a movement — spearheaded by the state's newspaper association — to allow internet-first news startups that have a free printed product to be eligible to print public notices. That's yet another change for South Dakota's newspapers, but one that ensures an expanding base of publications that can offer public notice advertising.

It doesn't matter if the operation is centered in print or mostly online, newspapering is a tough business. Each day you start with blank pages, hustling to fill them with news and advertising. It's not easy, but I can tell you from personal experience that it's rewarding. As much as I may long for the way things used to be in the newspaper business, it's easy to see that their future is bright and that the bright future is based on the fact that newspapers are still the best source for local news.

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

Next battle in Congress over Ukraine aid, as Biden presses House speaker for vote

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - OCTOBER 2, 2023 2:20 PM

WASHINGTON — Republican and Democratic lawmakers are searching for a way to clear more aid for Ukraine, after Congress approved a short-term spending bill that didn't include any additional money for the country.

President Joe Biden on Sunday said that U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy agreed to find the votes needed to pass a supplemental spending bill to provide additional military and humanitarian relief for Ukraine as it resists invasion by Russia — though the California Republican hasn't made such a commitment publicly.

"I fully expect the speaker to keep his commitment for the secure passage and support needed to help Ukraine as they defend themselves against aggression and brutality," Biden said Sunday. "And folks, you know, there's (an) overwhelming number of Republicans and Democrats in both the House and the Senate who support Ukraine. Let's vote on it."

McCarthy didn't commit to putting aid for Ukraine on the floor in the next 45 days during a press con-

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ference Saturday.

"Listen, what the Senate wanted to do was focus on Ukraine in front of America. I understand our responsibilities, but I'm going to put America first," McCarthy said.

"If there is a moment in time we need to have a discussion about that, we will have a discussion completely about that. But, I think, the administration has to make the case for what is victory," McCarthy said. "And I've asked the administration to come down and talk to our members about that."

McCarthy indicated that any legislation to provide additional relief for Ukraine would likely need to be tied to border security funding as well as policy changes.

"If we're worried about Ukraine's border, we should worry about America's border too," McCarthy said.

The California Republican, however, did say he still supports Ukraine.

"What Russia has done is wrong, but I believe in whatever we do, we have to have defined what victory is and what the plan is," McCarthy said. "And I think what the White House needs to do is come down and talk with us and lay out a part of it where we have a say as well."

Florida Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz on Monday made Ukraine aid a central reason he may offer a motion to remove McCarthy as speaker, arguing during a floor speech that McCarthy must explain whether there's a "secret side deal" with Biden to vote on Ukraine aid.

"Members of the Republican Party might vote differently on a motion to vacate if they heard what the speaker had to share with us about his secret side deal with Joe Biden on Ukraine," Gaetz said. "I'll be listening. Stay tuned."

Emergency request for \$24 billion

The White House asked Congress to provide \$24 billion in additional relief to Ukraine in an emergency funding request it released in early August. That same request asked lawmakers to approve \$4 billion to address immigration and border security.

U.S. senators planned to appropriate \$6.1 billion for Ukraine in a short-term government funding bill they released last week, though that bill was put on a shelf this weekend in order to avoid a partial government shutdown. The Senate, instead, approved a stopgap spending bill from the House that didn't include the Ukraine relief money.

Lawmakers from both parties have pledged to find a path forward, including Colorado Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet, who temporarily held up the short-term spending bill Saturday night to secure a commitment for debate on more aid to Ukraine.

"I objected tonight to proceeding to the continuing resolution because it failed to provide additional money for Ukraine. Senate Leadership needed to reaffirm our bipartisan commitment to sustain funding for Ukraine," Bennet said in a written statement. "The Senate leadership has released such a statement, and, as a result, I voted to keep the government open."

Thune, other senators discuss relief

Bennet will not be alone in his efforts to get more funding to Ukraine. Several of his colleagues from both parties have expressed support for more relief to the country.

Senate Minority Whip John Thune, a South Dakota Republican, told reporters Saturday that Congress would take up the issue of Ukraine aid at some point.

"We'll deal with it," Thune said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, has been adamant the United States needs to provide additional military and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine, saying last month during a floor speech that American support is "helping degrade Russian military strength and encouraging our allies to 'Buy American' and invest in their own defense."

"If we fail to help Ukraine stop Russia in its tracks, there is every reason to believe Russia and China will both be emboldened," McConnell said.

Ongoing support for Ukraine, McConnell said, shows "American leadership."

"And Republicans should be pressing President Biden to show more of it instead of dreaming about American retreat," he said.

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Minnesota Democrat Sen. Amy Klobuchar told reporters following a closed-door meeting on Saturday that Democrats' No. 1 goal will be "uninterrupted aid to Ukraine."

"That's what we concluded in that room," Klobuchar said, before calling out GOP lawmakers who have traveled to Ukraine or met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, but not pressed for more relief to the country.

"All these people go and have their picture with Zelenskyy and stand there and believe they're with Ukraine. I believe that with Ukraine, I believe there's a bunch of Republicans who are with Ukraine," Klobuchar said. "And so the big test and the big thing that matters is going to be what happens with the supplemental and what happens in the next few weeks."

Connecticut Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy told reporters Saturday the lack of relief dollars for Ukraine in the short-term government funding bill "raises the stakes for Ukraine aid later in the year."

"Every day that goes by that we don't get them additional money is a day that Russia gets closer to being capable of winning this war," Murphy said. "So I think there's a lot of work to do."

Murphy said senators were learning "how much wiggle room" there is for Ukraine to continue receiving weapons and support from previous aid packages in the meantime. He also noted that House lawmakers have shown there's broad bipartisan support for additional relief to the country.

House opponents

The House voted 311-117 last week to approve \$300 million in additional aid to Ukraine as part of a stand-alone bill, after House leaders used a procedural maneuver to remove that funding from the full-year spending bill for the U.S. Defense Department.

Hard-line Republicans were threatening to vote against the full year Pentagon spending measure had the aid remained in the legislation. All 117 no votes were from GOP lawmakers, while another 101 Republicans voted to support the funding.

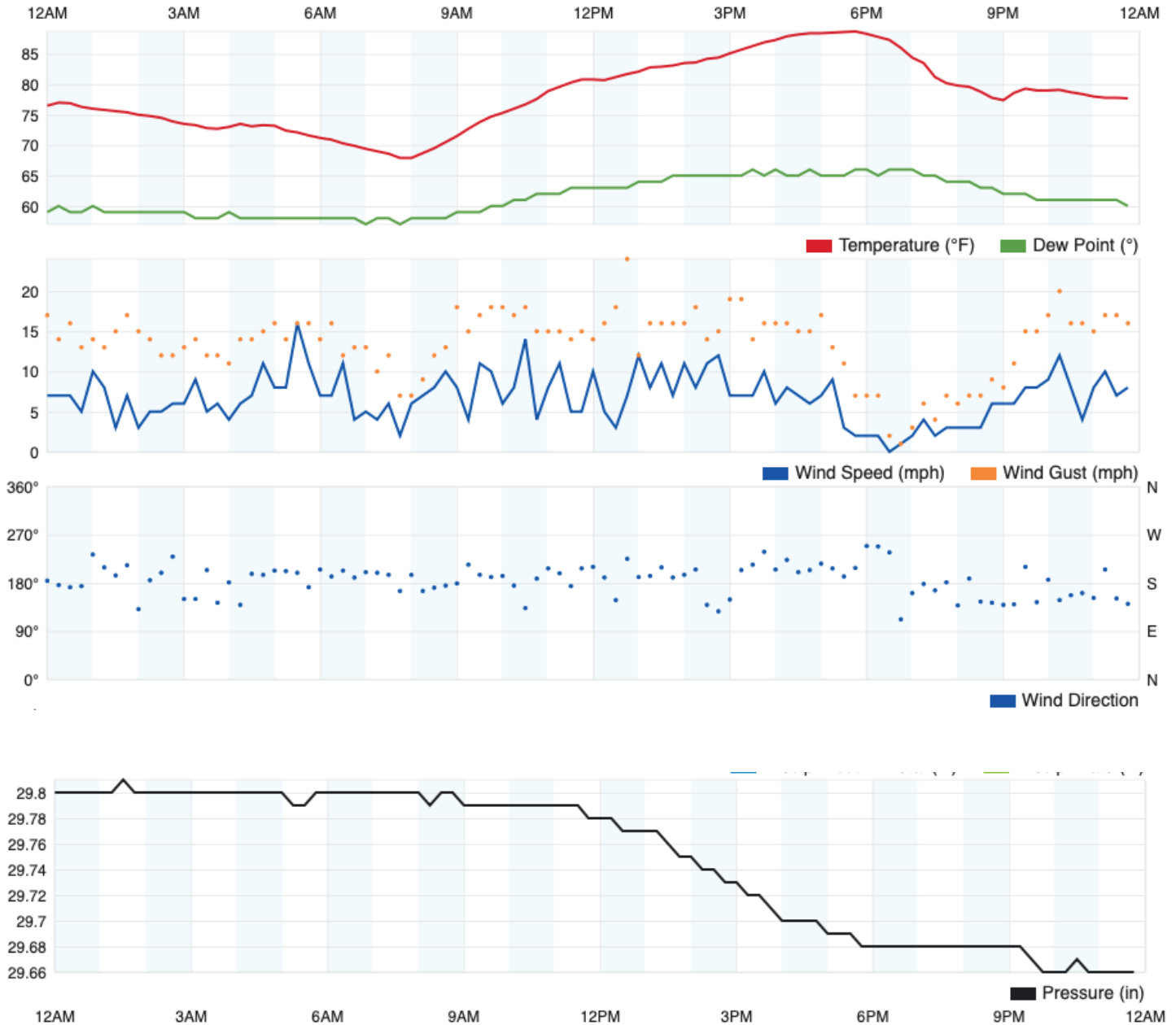
Virginia Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine told reporters Saturday there are enough votes to pass aid to Ukraine in that chamber, but he declined to speculate about whether McCarthy would actually put such a bill on the House floor.

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Tue Oct 3	Wed Oct 4	Thu Oct 5	Fri Oct 6	Sat Oct 7	Sun Oct 8	Mon Oct 9
79° F	65° F	57° F	50° F	55° F	64° F	61° F
53° F	48° F	38° F	31° F	36° F	39° F	44° F
S	WNW	W	NW	W	SSW	S
23 MPH	16 MPH	30 MPH	22 MPH	11 MPH	11 MPH	10 MPH



Severe Weather Threat Overview

October 3, 2023
3:05 AM

This Evening

Timing/Location

Storms develop in southern SD/northern NE and move northeast into eastern SD and west central MN early this evening.

Primary Threats for the **YELLOW** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low Low Medium High

Max Hail Size

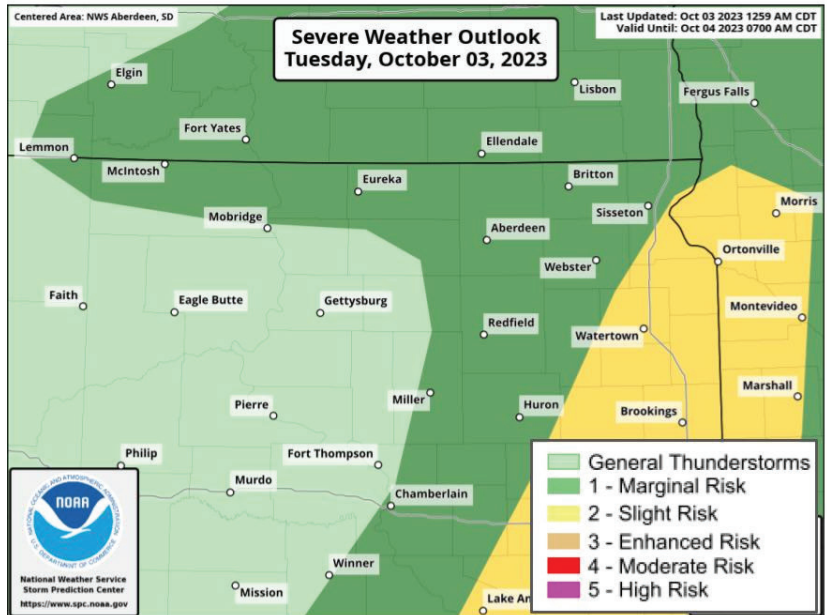
Dimes Quarters **Golfball** Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph **60-70 mph** 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low Low Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Some strong to severe storms are expected to move into eastern SD and west central MN this evening. The main threat will be large hail, but strong winds could also cause damage. Make sure you have multiple ways to receive warnings.

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Moisture Probabilities For Tuesday

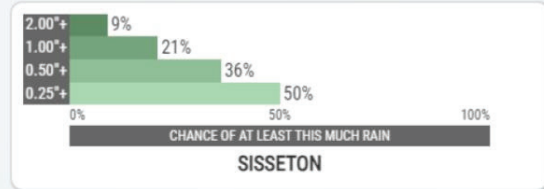
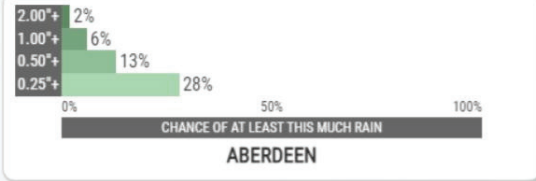
October 3, 2023
3:05 AM



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: Tue, Oct 3, 2023, 2 AM



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Eastern SD has a greater chance of higher rainfall totals today with the expected storms this evening.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 89 °F at 5:39 PM

Low Temp: 68 °F at 7:51 AM

Wind: 24 mph at 12:45 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 39 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1922

Record Low: 20 in 1894

Average High: 67

Average Low: 39

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.24

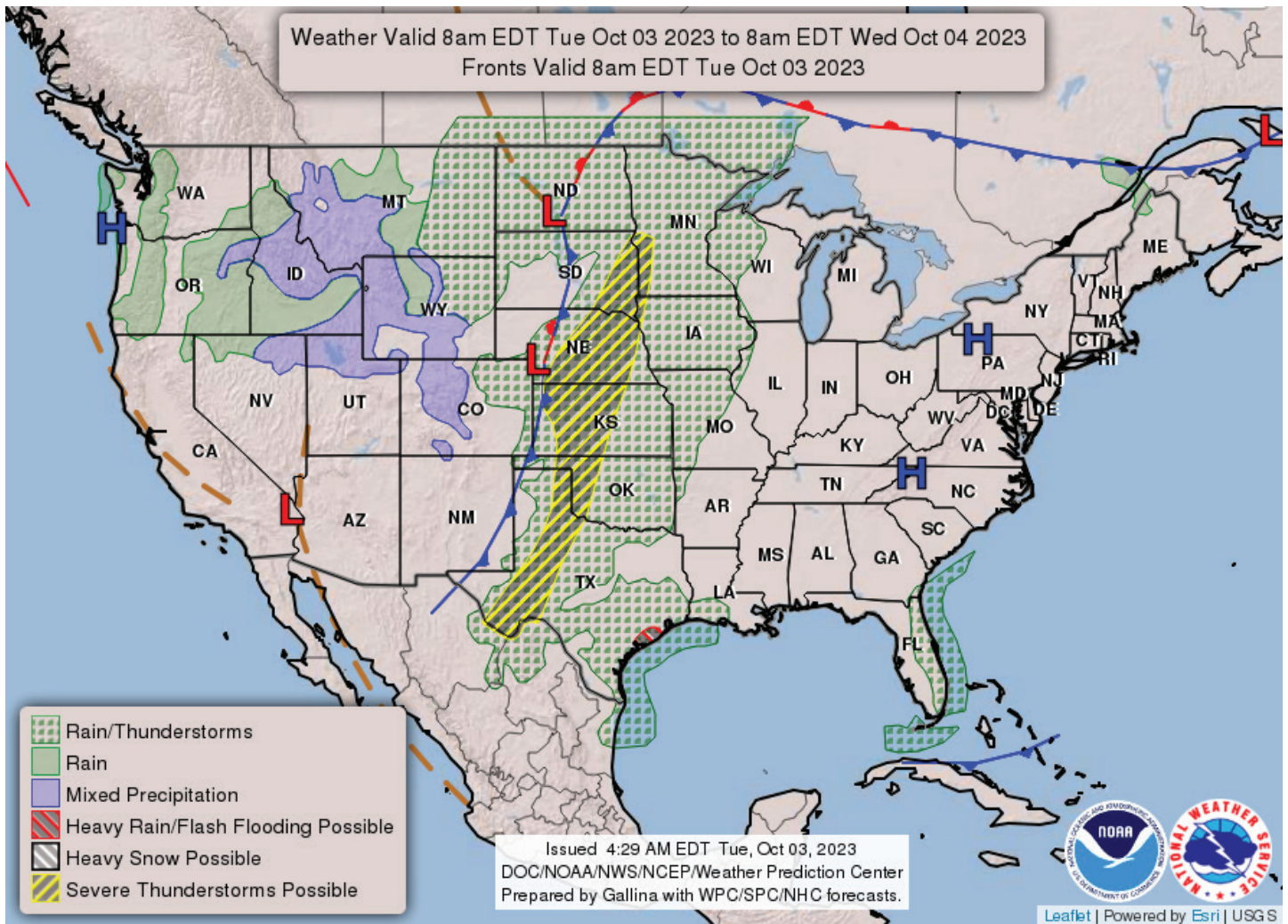
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 18.57

Precip Year to Date: 21.77

Sunset Tonight: 7:11:05 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:32:59 AM



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Today in Weather History

October 3, 1985: High winds of 60 to 75 mph occurred across much of western South Dakota from the late afternoon of the 3rd into the early morning hours of the 4th. The winds blew down power lines and caused power outages for many locations in the Black Hills. The strong winds uprooted trees in Rapid City and blew the roof off of a barn near Newell in Butte County.

1780: A hurricane, which formed on October 1st, destroyed the port city of Savanna-la-Mar on the island of Jamaica on this day. By some estimates, this storm caused 3,000 deaths. This storm is documented in the Jamaica Archives and Record Department.

1841 - An October gale, the worst of record for Nantucket, MA, caught the Cap Cod fishing fleet at sea. Forty ships were driven ashore on Cape Cod, and 57 men perished from the town of Truro alone. Heavy snow fell inland, with 18 inches near Middletown, CT. (David Ludlum)

1903: An unusual late-season tornado moved northeast from west of Chatfield, Minnesota, passing through and devastating St. Charles, Minnesota. Seven people were killed, and 30 injured as 50 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.

1912 - The longest dry spell of record in the U.S. commenced as Bagdad, CA, went 767 days without rain. (David Ludlum)

1964 - Hurricane Hilda struck Louisiana spawning many tornadoes, and claimed twenty-two lives. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1979: An F4 tornado struck the towns of Windsor, Windsor Locks, and Suffield in Connecticut, causing an estimated \$400 million in property damage, on this day. The New England Air Museum, which housed more than 20 vintage aircraft, was destroyed. This tornado also caused a United Airlines flight to abort a landing at the Bradley International Airport because the pilot saw the tornado.

1986 - Remnants of Hurricane Paine deluged Oklahoma and southeastern Kansas with 6 to 10 inch overnight rains. Hardy, OK, was drenched with 21.79 inches. Heavy rain between September 26th and October 4th caused 350 million dollars damage in Oklahoma. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Twenty-five cities in the Upper Midwest, including ten in Iowa, reported record low temperatures for the date. Duluth MN, Eau Claire, WI, and Spencer, IA, dipped to 24 degrees. Temperatures warmed into the 80s in the Northern and Central High Plains Region. At Chadron, NE, the mercury soared from a morning low of 29 degrees to an afternoon high of 88 degrees. Temperatures soared above 100 degrees in southern California. The high of 108 degrees at Downtown Los Angeles was a record for October. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cold Canadian air invaded the north central U.S. bringing an end to the growing season across those states. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Phoenix, AZ, reported a record high of 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably cold weather prevailed from the Pacific Northwest to the Upper Mississippi Valley. A dozen cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Bismarck, ND, and Williston, ND, with readings of 16 degrees above zero. An upper level weather disturbance brought snow to parts of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana, with five inches reported at West Yellowstone, MT. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2002: Hurricane Lili made landfall between White Lake and Vermilion Bay, Louisiana as a Category 1 storm.

2015: Unprecedented rainfall fell throughout South Carolina from October 1st — 5th, 2015. Storm total amounts greater than 20" were observed in Columbia and Sumter.

2017: The City of Houston had the wettest year on record with 73.51 inches. The previous wettest year was in 1900 when 72.86 inches were measured.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE

An ocean liner was in the midst of a terrible storm while making its way from England to the United States. The ship was swaying violently from side to side and heaving up and down as the waves washed over the bow.

The captain was trying his best to calm the people and encourage them not to be frightened. Suddenly a lady shouted, "Do something!"

"We're doing our best," said the captain calmly, "and we are trusting in the providence of God."

"Oh my word," she cried. "Is it that bad?"

The word "providence" comes from two Latin words. One means "before" and the other means "to see." When the Christian speaks of "providence," it conveys the message that God knows the outcome of the events in our lives before they happen. Not only that, He knows and understands how those events which we sometimes resent are working to shape us into the person He wants us to be!

Paul said that whatever happens in the life of the Christian happens for the Christian's best interests. For this reason, he said that "everything works together for their good who are called according to His purpose." Not that everything that happens to the Christian is pleasant in and of itself. It means that everything that happens is to shape us into the likeness of Christ. As we become more and more like Him, He can use us more and more to do the work He has called us to do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may we accept the fact that You are at work in our lives and choose to accept the fact that You love us and want us to be like Christ. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/10/2023 Family Fun Fest, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/08/2023 Family Fun Fest 3:30-5:30pm
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/09-10/2023 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 09/10/2023 Emmanuel Lutheran Church Sunday School Rally 9:00am
- 09/10/2023 7th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 4-6pm
- 09/15/2023 Homecoming Parade
- 10/13/2023 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes, Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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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 DRAW: 16 Hrs 59 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.02.23

4 5 21 36 51 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,500,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 14 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.02.23

9 10 21 38 46 12

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 29 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.30.23

5 20 26 33 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 29 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.02.23

11 26 35 40 43 24

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 58 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.02.23

12 26 27 43 47 5

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$1,200,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 58 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-21, 26-24, 26-24

Baltic def. McCook Central/Montrose, 25-18, 25-13, 25-18

Bon Homme def. Hanson, 25-16, 25-14, 25-22

Chester def. Colman-Egan, 25-23, 25-15, 25-13

Dell Rapids def. Dakota Valley, 25-2, 25-16, 25-21

Edgemont def. Hot Springs, 25-22, 25-14, 25-12

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Garretson, 26-24, 18-25, 25-22, 27-25

Groton Area def. Moberg-Pollock, 25-21, 25-19, 25-22

Langford def. Wilmot, 23-25, 25-15, 25-20, 25-22

Milbank def. Wheaton/Herman-Norcross, Minn., 25-19, 25-18, 25-14

Parker def. West Central, 25-18, 25-21, 26-24

Sioux Falls Christian def. Yankton, 25-19, 25-13, 25-13

Timber Lake def. Sully Buttes, 25-13, 23-25, 25-23, 25-21

Wagner def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-19, 25-12, 25-20

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

3 scientists win Nobel Prize in physics for looking at electrons in atoms during split seconds

By DAVID KEYTON and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The Nobel Prize in physics has been awarded to three scientists who look at electrons in atoms during the tiniest of split seconds.

Pierre Agostini of The Ohio State University in the U.S.; Ferenc Krausz of the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics and Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany; and Anne L'Huillier of Lund University in Sweden won the award.

Hans Ellegren, the secretary-general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, announced the prize Tuesday in Stockholm.

The Nobel 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.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Nobels season is resuming on Tuesday with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm awarding the prize in physics.

The physics prize comes a day after Hungarian-American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman won the Nobel Prize in medicine for discoveries that enabled the creation of mRNA vaccines against COVID-19.

Last year, three scientists jointly won the physics prize for proving that tiny particles could retain a connection with each other even when separated. The phenomenon was once doubted but is now being explored for potential real-world applications such as encrypting information.

Nobel announcements will continue with the chemistry prize on Wednesday and the literature prize on Thursday.

The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced on Friday and the economics award on Oct. 9.

The prizes carry a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (\$1 million) drawn 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.

Panda Diplomacy: The departure of DC's beloved pandas may signal a wider Chinese pullback

By ASHRAF KHALIL and DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wearing a "I Love Pandas" t-shirt and clutching a panda-covered diary, Kelsey Lambert bubbled with excitement as she glimpsed the real thing. She and her mother, Alison, had made a special trip from San Antonio, Texas, just to watch the National Zoo's furry rock stars casually munching bamboo and rolling around on the grass.

"It felt completely amazing," Kelsey, age 10, said Friday. "My mom has always promised she would take me one day. So we had to do it now that they're going away."

The National Zoo's three giant pandas — Mei Xiang, Tian Tian and their cub Xiao Qi Ji — are set to return to China in early December with no public signs that the 50-year old exchange agreement struck by former President Richard Nixon will continue.

National Zoo officials have remained tight-lipped about the prospects of renewing or extending the agreement, and repeated attempts to gain comment on the state of the negotiations did not receive a response. However, the public stance of the zoo has been decidedly pessimistic — treating these remaining months as the end of an era. The zoo just finished a weeklong celebration called Panda Palooza: A Giant Farewell.

The potential end of the National Zoo's panda era comes amid what veteran China-watchers say is a larger trend. With diplomatic tensions running high between Beijing and a number of Western governments, China appears to be gradually pulling back its pandas from multiple Western zoos as their agreements expire.

Dennis Wilder, a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Initiative for U.S.-China Dialogue on Global Issues, called the trend "punitive panda diplomacy," noting that two other American zoos have lost their pandas in recent years, while zoos in Scotland and Australia are facing similar departures with no signs of their loan agreements being renewed.

Beijing currently lends out 65 pandas to 19 countries through "cooperative research programs" with a stated mission to better protect the vulnerable species. The pandas return to China when they reach old age and any cubs born are sent to China around age 3 or 4.

The San Diego zoo returned its pandas in 2019 and the last bear at the Memphis, Tennessee zoo went home earlier this year. The departure of the National Zoo's bears would mean that the only giant pandas left in America are at the Atlanta Zoo — and that loan agreement expires late next year.

Wilder said the Chinese possibly could be "trying to send a signal."

He cited a litany of Chinese-American flashpoints: sanctions imposed by the U.S. government on prominent Chinese citizens and officials; restrictions on the import of Chinese semiconductors; accusations that Chinese-made fentanyl is flooding American cities; suspicion over Chinese ownership of the social media platform TikTok; and the uproar early this year over the Chinese balloons floating over America.

Beijing, Wilder said, is convinced that "NATO and the United States are lining up against China."

The panda-related tension has even spilled into the hallways of the U.S. Senate. Last week, Pennsylvania Democrat John Fetterman complained about China buying up American farmland and added, "I mean, they're taking back our pandas. You know, we should take back all their farmland."

That animosity has been at least partially shared by the public in China, where anti-American sentiments are on the rise. Those sentiments developed into a perfect panda storm earlier this year when Le Le, a male panda on loan to the zoo in Memphis, died suddenly in February at the age of 24. Pandas generally live 15 to 20 years in the wild, while those in human care often live to be around 30.

Le Le's unexpected death prompted an explosion on Chinese social media platforms like Weibo, with

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widespread allegations that the Memphis zoo had mistreated the bear and its female companion, Ya Ya. The campaign gained intensity when photos circulated on the Internet of Ya Ya looking dirty and gaunt (by panda standards) with patchy fur.

An online petition on Change.org demanded Ya Ya be returned immediately, alleging malnourishment and deprivation of proper medical care. Slogans such as "the panda's life matters" surfaced in China's social media along with emotional memes pleading with authorities to rescue the bear. One particular meme depicts a miserable-looking Ya Ya gazing at a plane flying overhead with the caption: "Mama, I have worked away from home for 20 years. Have I earned enough for a plane ticket to return home?"

The heat grew so intense that the Memphis Zoo released a statement responding to what it called "misinformation" about its pandas and stating that Ya Ya has "a chronic skin and fur condition" that "makes her hair look thin and patchy," and Le Le died of natural causes.

Even an official Chinese scientific delegation that visited Memphis and announced that Le Le was not mistreated and died of a heart condition failed to quell the outrage. Ya Ya was returned to China on schedule in April when the loan agreement expired and received a celebrity's welcome at Shanghai's airport.

The Chinese government, which gifted the first pair of pandas — Hsing Hsing and Ling Ling — to the U.S., now leases the pandas out for a typical 10-year renewable term. The annual fee ranges from \$1 million to \$2 million per pair, plus mandatory costs to build and maintain facilities to house the animals. Any cub born to the pandas belongs to the Chinese government, but can be leased for an additional fee until it reaches mating age.

Over the 50 years of American panda loan agreements, the arrangement has hit more than one rough patch. In 2010, Daniel Ashe, then head of the federal Fish and Wildlife Service, traveled to China to help resolve a technical bureaucratic issue that was threatening the renewal of the National Zoo's agreement. The problem was quickly resolved and the agreement extended.

"But the situation now is completely different," said Ashe, now CEO of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. "What we're seeing now is tensions between our governments at a much higher level, and they need to be addressed and resolved at that level."

Observers are holding out hope that exactly this sort of 11th-hour high-level intervention will come through. Wilder pointed to the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco in November as a potential forum for President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping to make headlines by breaking the deadlock. And Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Xie Feng has sounded semi-optimistic in his public statements.

"I will do my utmost to do that, and here, in Aspen, there also will be (pandas)," Xie said during the Aspen Security Forum in July in Aspen, Colorado.

But for now, panda-philes of all ages are making pilgrimages to Washington for a last glimpse at the bears. At the zoo last Friday, amid the chatter of children, was an adult couple with a baby on the way — each wearing matching panda-ears headbands. Colleen Blue and John Nungesser came from outside Philadelphia to see the pandas; this was Blue's third time.

"I've been obsessed with them since I was little. I used to just bury people in panda facts," she said.

Nungesser nodded, adding, "On our first date, she went on and on about pandas."

Blue said she broke into tears and "had a temper tantrum" when she found out that Washington's pandas would be leaving. The couple is already making plans, after their baby is born, to take the infant to see the pandas in Atlanta next summer before they leave.

And Alison Lambert, Kelsey's mom, said she remains optimistic that both sides will work out an agreement simply because it's mutually beneficial. And if they don't, Kelsey is already developing Plan B.

"We could always fly to China," she said. "That works, too."

How are ancient Roman and Mayan buildings still standing? Scientists are unlocking their secrets

By MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In the quest to build better for the future, some are looking for answers in the long-ago past.

Ancient builders across the world created structures that are still standing today, thousands of years later — from Roman engineers who poured thick concrete sea barriers, to Maya masons who crafted plaster sculptures to their gods, to Chinese builders who raised walls against invaders.

Yet scores of more recent structures are already staring down their expiration dates: The concrete that makes up much of our modern world has a lifespan of around 50 to 100 years.

A growing number of scientists have been studying materials from long-ago eras — chipping off chunks of buildings, poring over historical texts, mixing up copycat recipes — hoping to uncover how they've held up for millennia.

This reverse engineering has turned up a surprising list of ingredients that were mixed into old buildings — materials such as tree bark, volcanic ash, rice, beer and even urine. These unexpected add-ins could be key some pretty impressive properties, like the ability to get stronger over time and "heal" cracks when they form.

Figuring out how to copy those features could have real impacts today: While our modern concrete has the strength to hold up massive skyscrapers and heavy infrastructure, it can't compete with the endurance of these ancient materials.

And with the rising threats of climate change, there's a growing call to make construction more sustainable. A recent UN report estimates that the built environment is responsible for more than a third of global CO2 emissions — and cement production alone makes up more than 7% of those emissions.

"If you improve the properties of the material by using ... traditional recipes from Maya people or the ancient Chinese, you can produce material that can be used in modern construction in a much more sustainable way," said Carlos Rodriguez-Navarro, a cultural heritage researcher at Spain's University of Granada.

Is ancient Roman concrete better than today's?

Many researchers have turned to the Romans for inspiration. Starting around 200 BCE, the architects of the Roman Empire were building impressive concrete structures that have stood the test of time — from the soaring dome of the Pantheon to the sturdy aqueducts that still carry water today.

Even in harbors, where seawater has been battering structures for ages, you'll find concrete "basically the way it was when it was poured 2,000 years ago," said John Oleson, an archaeologist at the University of Victoria in Canada.

Most modern concrete starts with Portland cement, a powder made by heating limestone and clay to super-high temperatures and grinding them up. That cement is mixed with water to create a chemically reactive paste. Then, chunks of material like rock and gravel are added, and the cement paste binds them into a concrete mass.

According to records from ancient architects like Vitruvius, the Roman process was similar. The ancient builders mixed materials like burnt limestone and volcanic sand with water and gravel, creating chemical reactions to bind everything together.

Now, scientists think they've found a key reason why some Roman concrete has held up structures for thousands of years: The ancient material has an unusual power to repair itself. Exactly how is not yet clear, but scientists are starting to find clues.

In a study published earlier this year, Admir Masic, a civil and environmental engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, proposed that this power comes from chunks of lime that are studded throughout the Roman material instead of being mixed in evenly. Researchers used to think these chunks were a sign that the Romans weren't mixing up their materials well enough.

Instead, after analyzing concrete samples from Privernum — an ancient city outside of Rome — the scientists found that the chunks could fuel the material's "self-healing" abilities. When cracks form, water is

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able to seep into the concrete, Masic explained. That water activates the leftover pockets of lime, sparking up new chemical reactions that can fill in the damaged sections.

Marie Jackson, a geologist at the University of Utah, has a different take. Her research has found that the key could be in the specific volcanic materials used by the Romans.

The builders would gather volcanic rocks left behind after eruptions to mix into their concrete. This naturally reactive material changes over time as it interacts with the elements, Jackson said, allowing it to seal cracks that develop.

The ability to keep adapting over time "is truly the genius of the material," Jackson said. "The concrete was so well designed that it sustains itself."

Using tree juice to make sculptures as strong as seashells

At Copan, a Maya site in Honduras, intricate lime sculptures and temples remain intact even after more than 1,000 years exposed to a hot, humid environment. And according to a study published earlier this year, the secret to these structures' longevity might lie in the trees that sprout among them.

Researchers here had a living link to the structures' creators: They met with local masons in Honduras who traced their lineage all the way back to the Mayan builders, explained Rodriguez-Navarro, who worked on the study.

The masons suggested using extracts from local chukum and jote trees in the lime mix. When researchers tested out the recipe — collecting bark, putting the chunks in water and adding the resulting tree "juice" into the material — they found the resulting plaster was especially durable against physical and chemical damage.

When scientists zoomed in, they saw that bits of organic material from the tree juice got incorporated into the plaster's molecular structure. In this way, the Mayan plaster was able to mimic sturdy natural structures like seashells and sea urchin spines — and borrow some of their toughness, Rodriguez-Navarro said.

Studies have found all kinds of natural materials mixed into structures from long ago: fruit extracts, milk, cheese curd, beer, even dung and urine. The mortar that holds together some of China's most famous structures — including the Great Wall and the Forbidden City — includes traces of starch from sticky rice.

Luck or skill?

Some of these ancient builders might have just gotten lucky, said Cecilia Pesce, a materials scientist at the University of Sheffield in England. They'd toss just about anything into their mixes, as long as it was cheap and available — and the ones that didn't work out have long since collapsed.

"They would put all sorts of things in construction," Pesce said. "And now, we only have the buildings that survived. So it's like a natural selection process."

But some materials seem to show more intention — like in India, where builders crafted blends of local materials to produce different properties, said Thirumalini Selvaraj, a civil engineer and professor at India's Vellore Institute of Technology.

According to Selvaraj's research, in humid areas of India, builders used local herbs that help structures deal with moisture. Along the coast, they added jaggery, an unrefined sugar, which can help protect from salt damage. And in areas with higher earthquake risks, they used super-light "floating bricks" made with rice husks.

"They know the region, they know the soil condition, they know the climate," Selvaraj said. "So they engineer a material according to this."

Ancient Roman ... skyscrapers?

Today's builders can't just copy the ancient recipes. Even though Roman concrete lasted a long time, it couldn't hold up heavy loads: "You couldn't build a modern skyscraper with Roman concrete," Oleson said. "It would collapse when you got to the third story."

Instead, researchers are trying to take some of the ancient material's specialties and add them into modern mixes. Masic is part of a startup that is trying to build new projects using Roman-inspired, "self-healing" concrete. And Jackson is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to design concrete structures that can hold up well in seawater — like the ones in Roman ports — to help protect coastlines from sea level rise.

We don't need to make things last quite as long as the Romans did to have an impact, Masic said. If we add 50 or 100 years to concrete's lifespan, "we will require less demolition, less maintenance and less material in the long run."

Things to know about the Vatican's big meeting on the future of the Catholic Church

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis on Wednesday is opening a global gathering of bishops and laypeople to discuss the future of the Catholic Church, including some hot-button issues that have previously been considered off-limits for discussion.

For the first time, women and laypeople can vote on specific proposals alongside bishops, a radical change that is evidence of Francis' belief that the church is more about its flock than its shepherds.

Here is some background on the Oct. 4-29 Synod of Bishops, which will be followed by a second session this time next year. That session is expected to put forward specific proposals for Francis to consider in a future document.

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

The working document for the meeting was compiled by a committee after an unprecedented two-year canvassing of rank-and-file Catholics around the globe.

The final product is meant to stimulate debate and poses agenda items in the form of questions. But some of the questions also make clear a certain consensus that was reached during the consultation phase.

For example, the document calls for concrete steps to promote women to decision-making roles in the church, including as deacons, and for ordinary faithful to have more of a say in church governance.

It calls for a "radical inclusion" of LGBTQ+ Catholics and others who have been marginalized by the church, and for new accountability measures to check how bishops exercise their authority to prevent abuses.

"From all corners of the world, greater inclusion and support for LGBTQ+ people have emerged as a top pastoral issue for the Catholic Church," said New Ways Ministry, which advocates for LGBTQ+ Catholics.

WHAT'S THE CONTROVERSY?

Some conservatives have expressed doubts about the synod ever since Francis announced it three years ago. They have warned that bringing up for debate issues that have already been settled by the church risks schism.

They have penned articles, written books and hosted conferences. Just this week, five conservative cardinals from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas made their challenge to Pope Francis public.

In a letter posed as five questions, or "dubia," they asked him to affirm church teaching on matters of doctrine, homosexuality, female ordination and church authority because they said the synod was sowing confusion.

Francis responded to the cardinals in a letter released by the Vatican on Monday. He explained that changes in the world stimulate the church to better understand and explain its teachings, and that the synod is a way to discern the path forward.

"With much sincerity, I tell you it's not good to be afraid of these questions," Francis told them.

WHO'S COMING?

There are 365 voting members including the pope, 54 of whom are women. Their numbers are divided among delegates chosen by national bishops' conferences, members nominated by the pope himself and 10 priests and nuns chosen by religious orders.

In addition, there are around 100 experts and "facilitators" who have been brought in to help move the dialogue along as the meeting works through the agenda. But they will not vote on any final document.

Two late additions to the list are bishops from China, in an important signal of cooperation as the Vatican and Beijing try to improve ties particularly over the life of the Catholic Church in China.

Bishops Antonio Yao Shun from Jining in Inner Mongolia and Yang Yongquiang of Zhoucun in Shandong

province were nominated by Francis after the church in China put their names forward.

The archbishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal Stephen Chow, said their participation was particularly significant. "It's a sign of goodwill and possibly that they realize the church in China and the government wants to say there should be closer, more episcopal contacts between China and the universal church," Chow told The Associated Press. "Their presence is really speaking to that."

A SECRET SYNOD?

The two-year preparatory phase of the synod was marked by a radical transparency in keeping with the goals of the process for participants to listen to each other and learn from one another. So it has come as something of a surprise that Francis has essentially imposed a media blackout on the synod itself.

While originally livestreams were planned, and several extra communications officers were hired, organizers have made clear this is a closed-door meeting and participants have been told to not speak to journalists.

Paolo Ruffini, in charge of communications for the meeting, denied the debate had been put under the pontifical secret, one of the highest forms of confidentiality in the church.

He insisted that it was a liturgical moment of prayer and discernment, pointing to a 1990 essay by a late cardinal extolling the benefits of "silence" in communication.

No daily briefings are planned as in previous synods, though five are scheduled over the course of the meeting. Francis has defended the new regime as favoring real dialogue.

Challenged on the lack of transparency, Francis has said he didn't want "political gossip" leaking out with news of participants duking it out over tough issues.

"This isn't a television show," he told reporters during an airborne news conference in August.

Rep. Matt Gaetz files motion to oust Speaker Kevin McCarthy, throwing House into new turmoil

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaker Kevin McCarthy is facing an extraordinary referendum on his leadership of the House after a conservative member of his own Republican majority, a longtime critic, moved to launch a vote to oust him from the helm.

Late Monday, Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., rose in the chamber as the House was almost done for the day to file the motion — a resolution that would set a snap vote in coming days that even Gaetz acknowledged may not have enough support to remove the speaker from the job.

"I have enough Republicans where at this point next week, one of two things will happen: Kevin McCarthy won't be the speaker of the House or he'll be the speaker of the House working at the pleasure of the Democrats," Gaetz told reporters afterward outside the Capitol.

McCarthy responded minutes later on social media, "Bring it on."

Gaetz soon retorted in a post, "Just did."

It's a historic moment: the first time in more than 100 years that a lawmaker may actually force a vote using the legislative tool that has been threatened against other House speakers, including in 2015, but never fully employed to try to remove them.

The bold strike to confront McCarthy carries potentially dire ramifications if enough lawmakers decide to remove his hold on the gavel, but also for Gaetz if it fizzles out. It also puts on stark display the warring factions that have roiled the Republican majority this year in the House and beyond.

So far, despite the deep divides over McCarthy's leadership, only a handful of hard-right Republicans have signaled they are willing to vote to remove him. Others who have aligned with Gaetz on spending cuts or other priorities are parting ways with him on this one.

"It's a really bad idea," said Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., one of the more conservative lawmakers in the House.

Gaetz has for months threatened to use the procedural tool — called a motion to vacate — to try to strip McCarthy of his office. Those threats escalated over the weekend after McCarthy relied on Democrats to

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provide the necessary votes to fund the government.

That decision has set McCarthy up for what will likely be the ultimate test of his leadership and may force him to again look across the aisle to Democrats for support. But how the vote will ultimately unfold remains unclear as Democrats weigh whether to help McCarthy, join the effort to oust him, or simply withhold their votes or rely on parliamentary maneuvering that could sway the outcome.

"Do we side with a sociopath or an incompetent?" said Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., a progressive leader. "I don't know?"

And allies of McCarthy have said for weeks they were ready for a motion to come.

Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, said he has spoken privately to some Democrats who have told him they would vote to help McCarthy remain in office. "I'm sure Mr. Gaetz will have some allies who will go with him. But I don't see enough."

The vote ahead could result in humiliation — the first speaker ever ousted from the job through such a motion — or newfound strength as he overcomes yet another obstacle while trying to lead a narrow, unwieldy majority.

Conservative critics have been hounding McCarthy from the start, denying him votes and thwarting his plans. But McCarthy has leaned into the fight and suggested it's an opportunity to set aside his critics once and for all.

Gaetz acknowledged the effort is likely to fail. He responded to questions about what he hoped to accomplish by saying Americans need to know who's in charge.

In a speech on the House floor earlier in the day, Gaetz accused McCarthy of making a deal with the White House during funding negotiations to bring forward legislation to help fund Ukraine in its war against Russia.

Brushing off the threat, McCarthy told reporters earlier at the Capitol, "I'm focused on doing the work that has to be done." He added that there was "no side deal" on Ukraine, noting he has not spoken to Biden.

A motion to vacate is a rare and strong procedural tool that has only been used twice in the past century against Republican speakers. 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 like Gaetz 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.

The motion Gaetz introduced is a privileged resolution, a designation that gives it priority over other measures. The next step is for House leaders to schedule a vote on the resolution within two legislative days.

It would take a simple majority of the House — 218 votes, when no seats are vacant — to remove McCarthy from his post.

However, there are several procedural motions that members of either party could introduce to slow down or stop the process altogether.

But among McCarthy's detractors, passions run deep.

Rep. Bob Good, R-Va., who has long wanted McCarthy gone, said the speaker's weekend deal with Democrats to keep the government running without any of the conservative priorities is just another reason he will be voting for the ouster.

"We got nothing," he said Monday.

Still, other far-right members and allies of Gaetz as they fought the spending deal and other issues were less sure. Rep. Andy Ogles, R-Tenn., said his position on the motion was "to be determined."

Showing the tough road ahead to win over conservative support for ousting the speaker, Massie said the real history-making moment has been the House working through its regular job of trying to pass spending bills, and he worries this effort will quash all that.

"If you're asking how I feel, I am sad that this might be the end of that experiment," he said.

Democrats were largely treating the moment as another episode in a Republican-led House that has been full of chaotic twists since the start of the year, and declining to say whether they would work to

help McCarthy keep his job or vote to oust him.

"Another day at the show," said Rep. Gregory Meeks, D-N.Y.

China Evergrande soars after property developer's stocks resume trading

By ZEN SOO AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Shares of debt-laden property developer China Evergrande Group soared Tuesday after they resumed trading in Hong Kong following a suspension last week.

By midday, Evergrande's shares were up nearly 16% after jumping more than 60% early in the session.

Evergrande is the world's most heavily indebted real estate developer and is at the center of a property market crisis that is dragging on China's economic growth.

The company's stock was suspended from trading last week as it confirmed Chinese police were investigating its chairman, Hui Ka Yan, on "suspicion of illegal crimes."

An affiliate, Evergrande Property Services, also resumed trading Tuesday, according to a notice on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

However, trading of shares in China Evergrande New Energy Vehicle Group remained suspended "pending the release of an announcement in relation to inside information" of the firm, a notice to the Hong Kong exchange said. Both units halted trading last week.

China Evergrande said in a notice on last week that authorities had informed the firm that its chairman, Hui Ka Yan, had been subjected to "mandatory measures in accordance with the law due to suspicion of illegal crimes."

Evergrande is the world's most heavily indebted real estate developer and is at the center of a property market crisis that is dragging on China's economic growth.

Last month, Evergrande said in a filing that it had to delay a proposed debt restructuring meeting with creditors as "sales of the group have not been as expected by the company."

Evergrande had also said last week that it could not issue new debt as its subsidiary, Hengda Real Estate, was under investigation.

China's property sector is an important pillar of China's economy. It has swooned since regulators tightened rules on borrowing in the property sector in 2020. That led to Evergrande defaulting on its debt.

Last month, a former Chinese official estimated that even China's 1.4 billion population would not be able to fill all the vacant homes across the country.

More than 100 dolphins found dead in Brazilian Amazon as water temperatures soar

By MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — More than 100 dolphins have died in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest in the past week as the region grapples with a severe drought, and many more could die soon if water temperatures remain high, experts say.

The Mamiraua Institute, a research group of Brazil's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, said two more dead dolphins were found Monday in the region around Tefe Lake, which is key for mammals and fish in the area. Video provided by the institute showed vultures picking at the dolphin carcasses beached on the lakeside. Thousands of fish have also died, local media reported.

Experts believe high water temperatures are the most likely cause of the deaths in the lakes in the region. Temperatures since last week have exceeded 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit) in the Tefe Lake region.

The Brazilian government's Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation, which manages conservation areas, said last week it had sent teams of veterinarians and aquatic mammal experts to investigate

the deaths.

There had been some 1,400 river dolphins in Tefe Lake, said Miriam Marmontel, a researcher from the Mamiraua Institute.

"In one week we have already lost around 120 animals between the two of them, which could represent 5% to 10% of the population," said Marmontel.

Workers have recovered carcasses of dolphins since last week in a region where dry rivers have impacted impoverished riverside communities and stuck their boats in the sand. Amazonas Gov. Wilson Lima on Friday declared a state of emergency due to the drought.

Nicson Marreira, mayor of Tefe, a city of 60,000 residents, said his government was unable to deliver food directly to some isolated communities because the rivers are dry.

Ayan Fleischmann, the Geospatial coordinator at the Mamirauá Institute, said the drought has had a major impact on the riverside communities in the Amazon region.

"Many communities are becoming isolated, without access to good quality water, without access to the river, which is their main means of transportation," he said.

Fleischmann said water temperatures rose from 32 C (89 F) on Friday to almost 38 C (100 F) on Sunday.

He said they are still determining the cause of the dolphin deaths but that the high temperature remains the main candidate.

Hunter Biden returns to court in Delaware and is expected to plead not guilty to gun charges

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Hunter Biden is due back in a Delaware courtroom Tuesday, where he's expected to plead not guilty to federal firearms charges that emerged after his earlier deal collapsed.

The president's son is facing charges that he lied about his drug use in October 2018 on a form to buy a gun that he kept for about 11 days.

He's acknowledged struggling with an addiction to crack cocaine during that period, but his lawyers have said he didn't break the law. Gun charges like these are rare, and an appeals court has found the ban on drug users having guns violates the Second Amendment under new Supreme Court standards.

Hunter Biden's attorneys are suggesting that prosecutors bowed to pressure by Republicans who have insisted the president's son got a sweetheart deal, and the charges were the result of political pressure.

He was indicted after the implosion this summer of his plea agreement with federal prosecutors on tax and gun charges. The deal devolved after the judge who was supposed to sign off on the agreement instead raised a series of questions about the deal. Federal prosecutors had been looking into his business dealings for five years and the agreement would have dispensed with criminal proceedings before his father was actively campaigning for president in 2024.

Now, a special counsel has been appointed to handle the case and there appears no easy end in sight. No new tax charges have yet been filed, but the special counsel has indicated they could come in California or Washington.

In Congress, House Republicans are seeking to link Hunter Biden's dealings to his father's through an impeachment inquiry. Republicans have been investigating Hunter Biden for years, since his father was vice president. While questions have arisen about the ethics surrounding the Biden family's international business, no evidence has emerged so far to prove that Joe Biden, in his current or previous office, abused his role or accepted bribes.

The legal wrangling could spill into 2024, with Republicans eager to divert attention from the multiple criminal indictments faced by GOP primary frontrunner Donald Trump, whose trials could be unfolding at the same time.

After remaining silent for years, Hunter Biden has taken a more aggressive legal stance in recent weeks, filing a series of lawsuits over the dissemination of personal information purportedly from his laptop and his tax data by whistleblower IRS agents who testified before Congress as part of the GOP probe.

The president's son, who has not held public office, is charged with two counts of making false statements and one count of illegal gun possession, punishable by up to 25 years in prison. Under the failed deal, he would have pleaded guilty and served probation rather than jail time on misdemeanor tax charges and avoided prosecution on a single gun count if he stayed out of trouble for two years.

Defense attorneys have argued that he remains protected by an immunity provision that was part of the scuttled plea agreement, but prosecutors overseen by special counsel David Weiss disagree. Weiss also serves as U.S. Attorney for Delaware and was originally appointed by Trump.

Hunter Biden, who lives in California, had asked for Tuesday's hearing to be conducted remotely over video feed but U.S. Magistrate Judge Christopher Burke sided with prosecutors, saying there would be no "special treatment."

Fuller picture emerges of the 13 federal executions at the end of Trump's presidency

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — A day before the federal government executed a Texas man for the killing of an Iowa couple when he was 18, celebrity lawyer Alan Dershowitz pleaded with then-President Donald Trump — a former client — to call the execution off.

During a Dec. 9, 2020, call to the White House, Dershowitz told Trump that Brandon Bernard, at 40, wasn't the man he was when Todd and Stacie Bagley were killed in 1999 and that he deserved to have his sentence commuted to life in prison.

Trump sounded sincere when he said he wished he could spare Bernard's life, but he added apologetically that he'd already promised the victims' relatives that Bernard would be put to death, Dershowitz said about the 20-minute call.

"They're on their way. They're on their way," Trump kept saying, Dershowitz recalled. The relatives, Trump explained, were on the road to the prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, where federal executions are carried out and it was "too late to pull them back."

Bernard was executed the next day.

Secrecy was a hallmark of the 13 federal executions during the last six months of Trump's presidency. Although reporters were allowed to witness them, it was impossible to know at the time what was happening behind the scenes.

Fresh details have emerged since the executions, including from Dershowitz, who spoke recently to The Associated Press. The fuller picture reveals that officials cut corners and relied on a pliant Supreme Court to get the executions done, even when some — including Trump himself, in Bernard's case — agreed that there might be valid reasons not to proceed with them all.

Other newly available information includes an autopsy report obtained by the AP for Corey Johnson, convicted of seven drug-related killings. It concluded that during his execution, he suffered pulmonary edema, a painful condition akin to drowning. So much fluid rushed up his trachea that some exited his mouth.

More federal executions carried out under much the same conditions may not be far off.

President Joe Biden hasn't kept a promise he'd abolish the federal death penalty. Although his Justice Department announced a moratorium on federal executions in 2021, that can be lifted easily.

So, unless Biden clears death row, "history will repeat itself" if a pro-death penalty candidate, like Trump, wins in 2024, said Robert Dunham, a Temple Law School adjunct professor on capital punishment.

Trump's 2016 win didn't particularly worry federal death row inmates, prisoner Billie Allen, who was and remains in the unit, said by email. After all, there hadn't been a public clamor for federal executions to resume following a 17-year hiatus.

But guards began practicing executions in 2019, including by wheeling other guards role-playing as inmates out of cells in restraint chairs.

"It was a sign ... executions were about to take place," Allen said. "Many of us knew Trump was going

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to keep killing ... until he ran out of time."

Observers assumed it was Trump's initiative. But in his 2022 book, "One Damn Thing After Another," Trump's attorney general at the time of the executions, Bill Barr, suggested it was actually his.

Barr said he spoke to Trump just once about the plans. Regarding capital punishment, Trump asked, "Why do you support it?" Barr wrote that Trump seemed satisfied when he answered that for brutal killings, it was "the only punishment that fit the crime."

In 2019, Barr approved the use of pentobarbital in executions despite evidence it might cause pulmonary edema, making it possible for them to resume.

Starting in 2019, inmates froze when guards entered death row to tell one among them "the warden wants to speak with you," dreaded words signifying an inmate had been selected for execution, Allen and other inmates explained.

Guards wearing surgical masks stopped at cell No. 315 on Oct. 16, 2020. It was Bernard's cell.

"Their eyes were all I needed to see," Bernard explained in a statement posted for him on social media. "(Their) eyes held ... only pity and sadness."

To be selected, an inmate's guilt had to be certain and their victims had to have been uniquely vulnerable, Barr wrote.

It wasn't obvious Bernard met that criteria.

The kidnapping and robbery of the young couple who were on a Texas religious retreat was brutal. They were locked in their car's trunk for hours, begging for their lives, before accomplice Christopher Vialva shot them in the head.

Bernard's role was murkier. He allegedly set the car ablaze with the bodies inside. During the trial, prosecutors said smoke in Stacie's lungs indicated the fire had killed her. That evidence was disputed.

Lawyers for Bernard and Vialva, who were tried together, say prosecutors also mischaracterized the Black defendants to a nearly all-white jury as gang thugs.

By all accounts, Bernard transformed himself in prison and encouraged fellow inmates to follow his example. Introspective and polite, he didn't commit a single rules infraction during two decades in prison.

Each execution required up to 300 staff and contractors. Government lawyers cited those logistics in arguing against any delays.

Unfailingly, the conservative-tilted Supreme Court cleared all legal obstacles

The pace of executions alarmed Lisa Montgomery, who was held in Texas prior to her Terre Haute execution. She had killed an expectant Missouri mother and cut the baby from her womb.

"If they do two a month, then I'm screwed," Montgomery said during an Aug. 27, 2020, phone conversation, call transcripts revealed.

Her lawyers momentarily considered taking her off her medications so she'd "go absolutely psychotic," proving mental fragility exacerbated by sexual abuse in childhood, said her lawyer, Kelley Henry.

"Ultimately, we weren't going to do that to her," Henry said.

When courts greenlit executions of her clients convicted on state charges, Henry at least followed the logic.

"With the Trump executions, I can't give you a view of the law that would explain why any of them happened," she said.

Mental health and other issues should have precluded many of the executions, said Robin Maher, director of the Death Penalty Information Center, which tracks state and federal executions.

"For anyone who believed that the death penalty only punishes the worst of the worst, these executions were a rude awakening," she said.

Without explaining why, the Supreme Court rejected Bernard's final request for a stay on his execution day.

In dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that whether prosecutors exaggerated his gang status knowing he held the lowest rank deserved more scrutiny.

He never had the chance to prove those claims, she wrote. "Now he never will."

Within hours, executioners poked an IV line into each of Bernard's arms, including a backup in case the first one failed, in accordance with protocols.

Speaking with striking calm, Bernard turned toward the Bagley relatives in an adjacent witness room and said, "I'm sorry."

He watched a marshal pick up a death chamber phone, perhaps hoping Trump had commuted his sentence after all.

Bernard was pronounced dead at 9:27 p.m.

When word reached Dershowitz, he was devastated.

"I can tell you, I shed tears," he said. "This was a wasted life."

What haunts him is that he believes Trump might have intervened if he hadn't already made his promise to the Bagley relatives.

"This is a terrible thing to say," Dershowitz said, "but I believe if I had spoken to the president a month earlier, I might have been able to persuade him."

Trump turns his fraud trial into a campaign stop as he seeks to capitalize on his legal woes

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's court appearances are no longer distractions from his campaign to return to the White House. They are central to it.

The dynamic was on full display Monday as the former president and GOP front-runner returned to New York for the opening day of a civil fraud trial accusing him of grossly inflating the value of his businesses.

Trump was under no obligation to appear Monday and did not address the court. But he nonetheless seized the opportunity to create a media spectacle that ensured he was back in the spotlight. And he once again portrayed himself as a victim of a politicized justice system — a posture that has helped him emerge as the undisputed leader of the 2024 GOP primary.

The scene was much like the one that has played out over and over since the spring as Trump has reported to courthouses and a local jail to be processed in four criminal indictments. Once again, reporters waited in line overnight to snag seats in the courtroom; news helicopters tracked his motorcade journey from Trump Tower to the courthouse in lower Manhattan; and cable networks carried the spectacle live on TV.

The appearance demonstrated how deftly Trump has used his legal woes to benefit his campaign. The former president's Monday appearance drew far more attention than a standard campaign rally would have offered. And it gave Trump a fresh opportunity to rile up his base and gin his fundraising with claims that the cases he faces are nothing more than a coordinated attempt to damage his campaign.

"It's a scam, it's a sham," he said in the morning. "It's a witch hunt and a disgrace."

While some rivals had once thought Trump's long list of legal woes might dissuade Republican voters from choosing him as their nominee, his standing in the GOP primary has only improved since before the indictments and helped him raise millions of dollars.

While other politicians might shy away from drawing additional attention to accusations of wrongdoing, Trump took full advantage of the cameras.

He addressed the media assembled outside the courtroom multiple times throughout the day, railing against the case and offering commentary.

"Every lawyer would say, 'Don't talk.' Every candidate would obey the lawyer. Trump just throws out the playbook," said former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer.

Fleischer said that, for Trump, the lines between campaigning and the courtroom have now been erased.

"Every day is a day on the stump, whether it's in Iowa, New Hampshire or in the courtroom," he said, adding, "Every appearance is an opportunity to ring a bell, strike a message, say he's the victim of a weaponized Justice Department and he's the only one who can change Washington."

The civil fraud case, brought by New York Attorney General Letitia James, accuses Trump and his company of deceiving banks, insurers and others by chronically overstating his wealth by as much as \$3.6 billion.

Judge Arthur Engoron has already ruled that Trump committed fraud. If upheld on appeal, the case

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could cost the former president control of some of his most prized properties, including Trump Tower, a Wall Street office building and golf courses. James is also seeking \$250 million in penalties and a ban on Trump doing business in New York.

Trump spent the day seated at the defense table observing the proceedings, at times leaning to confer with his lawyers.

The former president grew visibly angry during the morning's opening statements, railing against the suggestion that he was worth less than he claimed and blasting both the judge and James. Trump sneered at the state attorney general as he walked past her on his way out of the courtroom during a lunch break, cocking his head toward her and glaring.

But by the end of the day, Trump's mood had changed. He exited the courtroom claiming he'd scored a victory, pointing to comments that he said showed the judge coming around to the defense view that most of the suit's allegations happened too long ago to be considered. Kevin Wallace, a lawyer in James' office, promised to link the cited incidents to a more recent loan agreement.

Still, Trump complained that he'd "love to be campaigning instead of doing this."

"This was for politics," he said. "Now, it has been very successful for them because they took me off the campaign trail 'cause I've been sitting in a courthouse all day long instead of being in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina or a lot of other places I could be at."

This will be the reality of his campaign going forward as he alternates between visits to early voting states and courtrooms, including to testify later in the New York civil trial. On Feb. 15, he will have to make an in-person court appearance in New York ahead of a criminal trial in which he is accused of misclassifying hush money payments made to women during his 2016 campaign. His federal trial in Washington on charges related to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election is tentatively set to begin March 4, his New York trial is set to begin March 25 and his federal trial in the Mar-a-Lago documents case is set to begin on May 20.

His trial in Georgia over his efforts to subvert the results of the state's 2020 election hasn't yet been scheduled.

Plans for Trump to attend the New York trial's first days were first revealed in legal filings last week. Lawyers representing Trump in a separate lawsuit against his former lawyer Michael Cohen used his appearance to put off a deposition.

Trump had also said in May that he wanted to attend an earlier civil trial brought by writer E. Jean Carroll accusing him of rape, but did not end up doing so. A jury found him liable for sexually assaulting her in a department store dressing room.

In a post on his social media site, Trump said he wanted to appear in court Monday "to fight for my name and reputation."

"I want to watch this witch hunt myself," he told reporters. "I've been going through a witch hunt for years, but this is really now getting dirty."

Trump is expected to return to testify in the case in several weeks.

9-year-old who vanished from New York state park found safe and man linked to ransom note arrested

By MICHAEL HILL and LISA BAUMANN Associated Press

MOREAU, N.Y. (AP) — A 9-year-old girl who vanished during a family camping trip in upstate New York was "safe and in good health" Monday after a massive two-day search ended with her rescue and the arrest of a person suspected in her abduction, police said.

Charlotte Sena disappeared while riding her bike early Saturday evening at Moreau Lake State Park, a heavily wooded area some 35 miles (60 kilometers) north of Albany.

Gov. Kathy Hochul said Monday night during a news conference that investigators were able to identify a fingerprint from a ransom note allegedly left by the suspect she identified as Craig Nelson Ross Jr., 47.

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"What happened was extraordinary," she said.

She said while the rest of Charlotte's family remained at the campground where she had gone missing, police watching their home saw someone drop a note in their mailbox at 4:20 a.m. Monday. State police pulled fingerprints off the note and the second one matched Ross, who was in a database from a 1999 DWI case, Hochul said.

Law enforcement agents linked Ross to a property owned by his mother, made entry and found him in a camper at about 6:30 p.m., she said.

"After some resistance, the suspect was taken into custody and immediately the little girl was found in a cabinet," Hochul said. "She knew she was being rescued. She knew that she was in safe hands."

Charlotte was taken to a local hospital, as is customary, Hochul said, adding that she appeared physically unharmed and that she and her family have been reunited.

No charges have been brought against Ross, but they are expected, Hochul said. Ross was still being questioned on Monday night, Hochul said.

The governor named Ross as the suspect late Monday night and it wasn't immediately known if he had a lawyer to comment on his behalf.

Authorities said it was still an active investigation.

The rescue marked the end of an intense search. About 400 people took part in the hunt for the girl Monday, including forest rangers, police officers and firefighters. The search had expanded over 46 linear miles (74 linear kilometers).

Charlotte, a fourth grader from nearby Greenfield, had been riding her bike around a campsite loop in the park with other children when she decided to ride around one more time by herself. Her parents became alarmed when she failed to return after 15 minutes, Hochul said at a briefing Sunday.

The girl's mother called 911 after her bicycle was found at around 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 described her as a white girl with blonde hair and green eyes who is about 4 feet 6 inches tall (1.37 meters).

The girl's family pleaded with the public for help in finding Charlotte, including providing any tips to the state police.

"We just want her returned safely like any parent would," the family said in a statement earlier Monday. "No tip is too small, please call if you know anything at all."

Troopers had set up several checkpoints on the winding, rural roads around the park. They stopped drivers and asked if they knew the family, had seen the girl's photo or had any other information that could help the search. They also had some drivers open their trunks.

The park remained closed because of the search, and officials asked members of the public who showed up hoping to help to stay away and leave the search to professionals. Federal authorities also issued a temporary flight restriction over the park for the safety of law enforcement air operations.

The Corinth Central School District said it had extra counselors at Charlotte's elementary school for any students or staff who need support.

"Our hearts go out to the Sena family," the district said in a statement.

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 began their return to the air after a five-month absence brought on by the Hollywood writers strike, while actors completed the first day of 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 were among the first to return with fresh airings Monday night.

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Colbert blew a leaping kiss to his audience, which chanted his name as he took the stage at the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York for the early evening taping of his show that airs at 11:35 p.m. Eastern.

"It feels good to be back," the host said. "Now the writers strike is over with a new contract that includes protections against AI, cost of living increases, better pay for streaming, plus, thanks to the picket lines, my writers got fresh air and sunshine, and they do not care for that. Now they're back safely in their joke holes."

In a cold open to his show, Kimmel was shown on a psychiatrist's couch.

"The strike has been going on so long, I just don't know if I'll be back," Kimmel said. The shot then reveals that the therapist is his first guest Arnold Schwarzenegger, who declares, in a variation on his best-known catchphrase: "You'll be back."

Fallon taped segments for his show with Matthew McConaughey and John Mayer. He then said a third guest would be Bono from U2, who played the opening of the new Sphere venue in Las Vegas over the weekend.

A phony Bono came out encased in a small sphere. The bit fell flat, and Fallon suggested it may take some time to shake the rust off.

"I should mention not all the writers are back," he said.

Seth Meyers, the former "Saturday Night Live" head writer whose show follows Fallon's, praised the union's negotiators for the deal they won, and the chance to return.

"I am so happy to be back in a room with my writers, everybody. I missed my writers so much," he said. Then joked, "I will admit by lunch I was a little over it."

Colbert lamented having been unable to weigh in with jokes about so much news for so many months.

"I believe we have been off the air for 154 indictments," he said. "It was a crazy summer to be off. It was just packed with events."

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

Meanwhile, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists began negotiations Monday 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. The two sides will resume talks Wednesday.

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 began Monday.

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.

The two sides said in a joint statement that "several executives" from studios would be in on the talks, without providing names. But Disney CEO Bob Iger, Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos, Warner Bros. Discovery chief David Zaslav, and NBCUniversal Studio Group Chief Content Officer Donna Langley all took part directly in the negotiations with writers.

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, appeared 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.

Jacksonville sheriff says body camera video shows officers were justified in beating suspect

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

A Florida sheriff released body camera video Monday that he says shows his officers were justified when they repeatedly punched, elbowed and kned a drug suspect who appeared to resist arrest even after being zapped with a stun gun and pinned to the ground.

The suspect's attorney, meanwhile, is calling for a federal investigation of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and accused Sheriff T.K. Waters of a coverup. Friday's arrest of Le'Keian Woods drew national attention after the release of a passerby's cellphone video showing officers beating him and appearing to slam him face first onto the ground after he was handcuffed.

Waters and Mike Shell, his assistant chief for public accountability, told a news conference that the officers knew Woods had once been accused of murder, was on probation for armed robbery and had been connected to firearms and drug trafficking when they gave chase to him Friday after a traffic stop.

Mug shots taken after Woods' arrest shows him with both eyes swollen shut and bruises and cuts on his face.

"There was force used by arresting officers and yes, that force is ugly. But the reality is that all force, all violence is ugly," Waters said. "But just because force is ugly does not mean it is unlawful or contrary to (agency) policy." He said all the officers remain on the street "where they belong."

Woods is charged with resisting arrest with violence, armed trafficking in cocaine and methamphetamine and other felonies.

Harry Daniels, Woods' attorney, said he will petition the U.S. Justice Department to investigate his client's beating.

"It's unfortunate that the sheriff believes the beating of an unarmed man is justified," Daniels said. "It is obvious that he is complicit and an enabler of clear misconduct by his officers. It is not surprising that (the sheriff's office) didn't find any misconduct because they investigate themselves."

Body camera footage shows that Jacksonville officers, including Hunter Sullivan, stopped a Dodge Ram pickup in an apartment complex's parking garage. Shell said the stop came shortly after Woods completed a drug sale at a gas station. Officers are then seen pointing their guns at two men with Woods and they surrender without incident. Waters said cocaine, fentanyl, methamphetamine and a handgun were found in the truck.

The video shows Woods, however, bolting from the front passenger's seat and into the apartment complex, with Sullivan giving chase. Sullivan repeatedly yells at Woods to get on the ground or he will shoot him with his Taser stun gun. When Sullivan gets close enough, he shoots him twice with the stun gun and Woods falls face first onto the pavement.

Sullivan then jumps on top of Woods and repeatedly tells him to put his hands behind his back. Woods, who is 5-foot-8-inches tall and 160 pounds (1.7 meters and 72 kilograms), squirms and sometimes puts one hand or the other behind his back, but then moves the other beneath him.

In an arrest report also released Monday, Sullivan said he repeatedly hit Woods in the head and ribs and elbowed him in the face, fearing that he was reaching for a gun in his waistband. Detective Josue Garriga arrived and said in the report that he kned Woods in the head and shoulders while another punched him. After about two minutes, they get Woods handcuffed, according to the video.

Another body cam video shows officers still accusing Woods of resisting arrest as they try to lift him from the ground, so they slam him back. They then drag him into a sitting position on the ground.

Daniels, Woods' attorney, said that the sheriff's office had no legal reason to stop the truck. In the report, the officers said they originally tried to stop the truck because the driver wasn't wearing his seat belt, but he wouldn't pull over.

"They had no reason to engage Mr. Woods, none," Daniels said. He said Woods wasn't resisting arrest as he struggled with Sullivan and the other officers, but was trying to protect himself from an unlawful beating.

"Any man who is getting a beating is going to resist that beating or he is going to get killed," Daniels said. Woods was being held Monday at the Jacksonville jail. He has been on probation after pleading no contest to a 2017 robbery in Tallahassee in which he and his roommate tried to rob a marijuana dealer at gunpoint, according to court records.

The dealer pulled his own gun and fatally shot the roommate as Woods fled. Woods was originally charged with second-degree murder in his roommate's death, but a plea bargain was reached last year that released him without prison time.

In 2019, Garriga shot a man in a traffic stop over an unbuckled seat belt, according to public records. Prosecutors found the shooting was justified, and a lawsuit filed by the dead man's family was later settled for an undisclosed amount, federal court records show. Daniels was the family's attorney.

Generations of students remember 1968 massacre in march through Mexico City

By DANIEL SHAILER The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Chanting in unison, students marched through downtown Mexico City on Monday evening, marking 55 years since the military massacred hundreds of students in Tlatelolco plaza.

Enrique Treviño Taudres survived the massacre and now marches every year with the Pro Democratic Freedoms 68 Committee. "People know a lot and forget easily," he said, adding that the memory of Tlatelolco holds important lessons for modern Mexico.

As many as 300 people were massacred at a student protest in Tlatelolco plaza on Oct. 2, 1968, in what the Mexican government initially reported as the lawful suppression of a violent riot just 10 days before the Summer Olympics' Opening Ceremony in Mexico City.

Since then military reports have revealed at least 360 government snipers were stationed on rooftops around the square. They opened fire and, in the ensuing chaos, the military members posted round the square began shooting peaceful protesters and students.

"Look, it's a commemoration of that day but it is also a call to the current students, the current young people to be aware of the reality," said Treviño. "The best example that we grandparents can give young people is that we were conscientious and committed young people. We took to the streets."

Adolfo Cruz, a tourism student in the city, marched on Monday for the first time. "Part of this is remembering all our deceased companions because it's thanks to them we have the right to march today," Cruz said. "We also want to change things."

Mexican students today still find themselves the victims of violence and organized crime. In 2018 three university students in the western city of Guadalajara were killed by a gang and their bodies dissolved in acid. Infamously, 43 students were abducted and murdered in southern Mexico in 2014, the victims of an attack which implicated municipal, state and national authorities.

October 2nd, said Cruz, "is a commemoration, but it's also for the rights of all students," in a country where there are still "many difficulties" across the education system.

After the massacre in 1968, 25 people were officially reported dead, but later investigations identified 44 remains. Successive government inquiries have never shown exactly how many died, but eyewitnesses claimed bodies were carted away from the square and estimates range that over 300 were killed.

The Mexican government acknowledged the massacre was a "state crime" on its 50th anniversary in 2018.

Earlier on Monday, interim head of Mexico City's government Martí Bartes spoke about the historical ramifications of the tragedy.

"68 is so strong because it transformed political culture from below," he said from the Plaza of the Three Cultures, where the protest began in 1968. "68 transformed universities, massively expanded higher education, incorporated new critical thinking into the social sciences, generated activists, opened the doors to new ideas such as feminism or sexual diversity."

A rainy Monday night marked the end of a run of protests in Mexico's capital: from the anniversary of the 43 abducted students in southern Mexico last Tuesday, to a march for abortion rights Thursday. Since last

week, monuments have been hiding behind blue barricades across the city and the Marabunta Brigade, a group trained to keep protestors safe, has been busy.

Monday evening was Mario Romero's 20th protest as a member of the brigade but, he said, he was not tired, or afraid.

"I like to come out because things need to change, but nothing changes," he said.

California governor chooses labor leader and Democratic insider to fill Feinstein's Senate seat

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When California Gov. Gavin Newsom needed to fill the U.S. Senate seat of his late mentor Dianne Feinstein, he could have turned to a big-city mayor, a member of Congress or a powerful legislator.

Instead, he chose Laphonza Butler, a former union leader and Democratic insider who heads a national organization that raises money for women candidates who support abortion rights. She offered a familiar face who shares his vision for a progressive California. In choosing Butler, he also elevated someone who could become an important ally for a potential national campaign that many see in his future.

Once she is sworn in, Butler will be the only Black woman in the Senate and the first openly LGBTQ+ California senator. That, alongside her background in the labor and women's rights movements, helps harden Newsom's ties to important national Democratic constituencies.

Speaking to reporters Monday in San Francisco, Newsom praised Butler's "deep knowledge" of the legislative process and said she was the kind of candidate he would build "if I had to literally design from my imagination."

"She's the only choice," he added.

Few voters outside workaday Democratic politics would recognize her name, but Butler is well known inside the party apparatus. Her credentials include working for nearly two years with a consulting firm tied closely to the governor and founded by his top political lieutenants. She also served as a senior adviser to Kamala Harris's 2020 presidential campaign and headed Emily's List, the abortion rights group.

While Newsom could have sought a marquee name to fill the seat, "a comfort level is important. Any governor might be a little hesitant about somebody with too many degrees of separation," said Claremont McKenna College political scientist Jack Pitney.

But Newsom's choice will not be universally welcome. A competitive race for Feinstein's seat is already underway among three prominent House Democrats, Reps. Katie Porter, Adam Schiff and Barbara Lee, who is Black. The governor has said he didn't want to tip the scales in the 2024 race by choosing among those candidates.

Butler has not said if she intends to run for a full term, a decision she must make by Dec. 8.

Newsom said he told Butler to "do what you think is best for you and the state of California, and you make that judgment completely independent of any expectations from me."

Her selection drew swift criticism from Republicans, who have long struggled in a liberal-leaning state where Democrats haven't lost a statewide election since 2006.

"The last thing we need are more union activists in government," tweeted GOP Assemblyman Bill Essayli.

Butler has yet to appear in public since the appointment was announced by Newsom's office Sunday. She is expected to be sworn in Tuesday in Washington by Harris, the last Black woman to serve in the Senate.

"For women and girls, for workers and unions, for struggling parents waiting for our leaders to bring opportunity back to their homes, for all of California, I'm ready to serve," she said in a statement.

Newsom faced intense pressure from Black political leaders and advocacy groups to appoint Lee to the seat after he pledged to name a Black woman should Feinstein be unable to finish her term. Though most of those groups praised Butler, their displeasure at Newsom for snubbing Lee is likely to simmer.

State Sen. Steven Bradford, vice chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus, said he was disappointed Newsom bypassed Lee, "who is simply unmatched in her values, vision and lived experiences."

Aimee Allison, who founded She the People, a political advocacy network for women of color that also supported Lee, said in a statement she would be "delighted by the prospect of multiple talented Black women running for the Senate" in California and elsewhere.

Ballots for the March 5 primary will be mailed to voters in early February, leaving just a narrow window for Butler to raise money in a state where a statewide campaign can easily cost \$20 million or more.

Butler, 44, comes from a working-class family. Her father, a small-business owner, died from a terminal illness when she was 16. Her mother worked as a classroom aide, a home care provider, a security guard and a bookkeeper while caring for Butler and her two siblings, the governor's office said.

She has never held public office.

Butler was elected president of the state's largest labor union in the early 2010s, back when the nation was reeling from the Great Recession.

"Laphonza had this ability to get to what was in people's hearts," said Arnuflo De La Cruz, the union's current president who at the time was elected with Butler as the union's executive vice president. "She could connect with members from completely different backgrounds in all places across the state."

That work culminated in 2016 when former Gov. Jerry Brown signed a law to raise the statewide minimum wage to \$15 per hour. De La Cruz said Butler was the union's chief negotiator.

"The ability to be effective in politics is maybe a little bit about perception but certainly a lot about strength and your ability to elect people or unseat them," De La Cruz said.

Democratic state Sen. Maria Elena Durazo, a former officer in the Los Angeles Federation of Labor, said Butler was committed to lifting women out of poverty.

"She was very forceful in a way that was strategic. She didn't waste a lot of words just talking when she spoke," Durazo said. "She was considered very powerful. She didn't abuse that power."

Butler left the labor movement for campaign consulting, joining a firm alongside top advisers to Newsom and Harris. She was a senior adviser on Harris's campaign for president, which started to much fanfare but fizzled as she struggled to raise money and hone her message.

Butler has also worked for corporate clients, including Airbnb and Uber.

Newsom, who was elected governor in 2018, has now chosen both of the state's U.S. senators. The selection of Butler bears resemblance to the last time, when he tapped his close friend and confidant for the job, now-Sen. Alex Padilla.

At the time, Newsom was under pressure to select a Black woman to fill the seat of Harris, who is Black. His choice of Padilla, the state's first Latino senator, rankled Black leadership in the state who saw the seat as their own.

11 people are dead after Mexico church roof collapses. No more people believed buried in rubble

By ALFREDO PEÑA Associated Press

CIUDAD MADERO, Mexico (AP) — Eleven members of Monica Segura's family were gathered inside the Santa Cruz church in northeast Mexico for the baptism of her 1-year-old nephew when the roof collapsed killing at least 11 people.

Segura and others were near a side of the church when the roof fell Sunday and managed to escape with relatively minor injuries. Her 10-year-old daughter was buried in the rubble and remained in intensive care Monday, among 13 people who were still hospitalized.

"Everything happened in a matter of seconds," Segura said. "A beam fell and immediately the roof fell."

"I was trapped. I had my other (2-year-old) baby in my arms. Someone helped me get the baby out and I was able to get out a window and then we returned to look for my other girl," Segura said. "She was trapped in the rubble." Her 1-year-old nephew suffered a broken arm, she said.

By Monday evening the site in Ciudad Madero in Tamaulipas state had been cleared and no other victims found.

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Questions immediately turned to why the concrete and brick structure failed so suddenly. Security camera footage from about a block away showed the unusual, gabled roof simply collapsed downward. The walls did not appear to have been blown outward, nor was there any indication of an explosion.

The state security spokesman's office said it appeared to be "a structural failure."

Father Angel Vargas said he was moving from pew to pew at the start of the baptism Mass for several children when a beam gave way bringing his church's roof crashing down on dozens of people.

Vargas recounted the harrowing collapse to Radio Formula on Monday.

"Some people could get out and others no," said Vargas, who described how the roof did not collapse in some areas like around the altar, allowing himself and others to escape. "It is a terrible experience and it has been even worse because of the fact that people were lost."

Many of those gathered at the Santa Cruz church on Sunday were elderly and children, because there were about five baptisms taking place. The toll could have been much higher, because a short time earlier some 300 people had been in the sanctuary for Mass.

Authorities called off the search early Monday. After initially fearing that dozens could still be trapped under the rubble, searches led them to believe no one remained unaccounted for.

Tamaulipas Gov. Américo Villarreal said trained dogs and thermal imaging cameras had been used to search under the collapsed concrete.

"The most likely thing, I can't affirm it 100%, is that there aren't any more people trapped," Villarreal said. Describing the efforts by the dogs and rescue teams, he said "there are no indications of life inside the collapsed area."

That optimism will be put to the test when cranes start lifting chunks of the collapsed slab off the floor and the tops of pews.

Three of the dead were children, and on the list of people who had been injured were a 4-month-old baby, three 5-year-olds and two 9-year-olds.

"Unfortunately, the elderly and children were those who suffered the most, the ones who were most trapped, the ones who suffered the most deaths, I think," said Father Pablo Galván, a priest who was just outside in the church parking lot Sunday when the collapse occurred. He had just finished celebrating the main Mass.

Describing that moment, Galván said "the roof just simply and plainly collapsed, like an implosion, like when you crush a can."

"It fell, there was no time to do anything. It was like two seconds. We still can't understand what happened," Galván said.

Even though the cause of the collapse was described as structural failure, Gov. Villarreal said no problems with the church had been reported previously.

"It was over 50 years old, it was here functioning and operating with no problem, with no sign of any defect," Villarreal said.

The roof appeared to be made of relatively thin poured concrete, and photos distributed by state authorities showed the roof slab resting on the top of pews in some parts of the church. That may have left enough space to have saved some lives.

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.

UN Security Council approves sending a Kenya-led force to Haiti to fight violent gangs

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The U.N. Security Council voted Monday to send a multinational armed force led by Kenya to Haiti to help combat violent gangs, marking the first time in almost 20 years that a force would be deployed to the troubled Caribbean nation.

The resolution drafted by the United States and Ecuador was approved with 13 votes in favor and two abstentions from China and the Russian Federation.

The resolution authorizes the force to deploy for one year, with a review after nine months. The non-U.N. mission would be funded by voluntary contributions, with the U.S. pledging up to \$200 million.

The vote was held nearly a year after Haiti's prime minister requested the immediate deployment of an armed force, which is expected to quell a surge in gang violence and restore security so Haiti can hold long-delayed elections. Haiti's National Police has struggled in its fight against gangs with only about 10,000 active officers in a country of more than 11 million people.

"More than just a simple vote, this is in fact an expression of solidarity with a population in distress," said Jean Victor Génés, Haiti's foreign affairs minister. "It's a glimmer of hope for the people who have been suffering for too long."

A deployment date has not been set, although U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken recently said a security mission to Haiti could deploy "in months."

Kenyan Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Mutua said last week that the force could deploy within two to three months, or possibly early January. He also noted that key officers are being taught French.

Hours after the vote, Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry thanked the U.N. Security Council, the U.N.'s secretary general and Kenya and other countries who agreed to join the force, saying, "The bell of liberation sounded. ... We couldn't wait any longer!"

It wasn't immediately clear how big the force would be. Kenya's government has previously proposed sending 1,000 police officers. In addition, Jamaica, the Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda have pledged to send personnel.

Vassily Nebenzia, the Russian Federation's U.N. ambassador, said he did not have any objections in principle to the resolution, but that sending an armed force to a country even at its request "is an extreme measure that must be thought through."

He said multiple requests for details including the use of force and when it would be withdrawn "went unanswered" and criticized what he said was a rushed decision. "Authorizing another use of force in Haiti ... is short-sighted" without the details sought by the Russian Federation, he said.

China's U.N. ambassador, Zhang Jun, said he hopes countries leading the mission will hold in-depth consultations with Haitian officials on the deployment and explained his opposition to the resolution.

"Without a legitimate, effective, and responsible government in place, any external support can hardly have any lasting effects," he said, adding that a consensus for a transition is urgently needed as well as a "feasible and credible" timetable. "Regrettably, the resolution just adopted fails to send the strongest signal in that regard."

Génés said he's grateful the resolution was approved because a foreign armed force is essential, but noted that it's "not enough."

"Socioeconomic development must be taken into account to take care of extreme poverty," he said, adding that it is the source of many of Haiti's problems and has created fertile ground for the recruitment of young people by gangs.

About 60% of Haiti's more than 11 million people earn less than \$2 a day, with poverty deepening further in recent years as inflation spikes.

The deployment of an armed force is expected to restore peace and security to Haiti so it can hold long-awaited general elections that have been repeatedly promised by Prime Minister Ariel Henry after the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

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Haiti lost its last democratically elected institution in January after the terms of 10 remaining senators expired, leaving not a single lawmaker in the country's House or Senate. Henry has been ruling the country with the backing of the international community.

The president of the U.N. Security Council, Brazil's Sérgio França, noted that without a Haitian political solution based on free, transparent and fair elections, "no ... aid will guarantee lasting success."

International intervention in Haiti has a complicated history. A U.N.-approved stabilization mission to Haiti that started in June 2004 was marred by a sexual abuse scandal and the introduction of cholera, which killed nearly 10,000 people. The mission ended in October 2017.

The resolution approved Monday warns that mission leaders must take measures to prevent abuse and sexual exploitation as well as adopt wastewater management and other environmental controls to prevent water-borne diseases, such as cholera.

But concerns remain.

Critics of the Kenyan-led mission have noted that police in the east Africa country have long been accused of using torture, deadly force and other abuses. Top Kenyan officials visited Haiti in August as part of a reconnaissance mission as the U.S. worked on a draft of the resolution.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., told reporters that the resolution contains strong accountability and vetting language and that she's confident Kenya will be able to carry out the mission.

"I can assure you the U.S. will engage on these issues very, very aggressively," she said. "We've learned from mistakes of the past."

Monday's vote comes nearly a year after Haiti's prime minister and 18 top government officials requested the immediate deployment of a foreign armed force as the government struggled to control gangs amid a surge in killings, rapes and kidnappings.

From Jan. 1 until Aug. 15, more than 2,400 people in Haiti were reported killed, more than 950 kidnapped and another 902 injured, according to the most recent U.N. statistics. More than 200,000 others have lost their homes as rival gangs pillage communities and fight to control more territory.

Among those left homeless is Nicolas Jean-Pierre, 32, who had to flee his house with his partner and two children and now lives in a cramped school serving as a makeshift shelter with others like him. He has sent his family to temporarily live in the southern coastal city of Les Cayes to keep them safe. Jean-Pierre said he would like the foreign armed force to be based in his neighborhood "so I can have a life again."

"The sooner they get here, the better it will be," said Jean-Pierre, who is seeking work after gangs burned down the garage where he used to work as a mechanic.

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan thanked Kenya and other nations who have pledged to join the mission, saying it would bring much-needed help to Haiti's population.

"We have taken an important step today, but our work to support the people of Haiti is not done," he said.

Gaetz launches effort to bring down McCarthy, but removing the House speaker is no easy task

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, are attempting to do just that. On Monday, the far-right Re-

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publican from Florida announced he was using a procedural tool — called a motion to vacate — to try to strip McCarthy of his office.

In a speech on the House floor, Gaetz demanded McCarthy disclose the details of a supposed deal with the White House to bring forward legislation to help fund the war in Ukraine after the speaker relied on Democrats to provide the necessary votes to fund the government.

“It is becoming increasingly clear who the speaker of the House already works for and it’s not the Republican Conference,” Gaetz said.

Brushing off the threat, McCarthy told reporters at the Capitol, “I’m focused on doing the work that has to be done.”

McCarthy said there was “no side deal” on Ukraine, noting he has not spoken to Biden. Instead, he said he was asked to ensure the “transferability” of existing funds continues and said if there’s any problem with that, “we’ll fix it.”

Here’s what 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 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.

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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 speakership 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.

North Dakota state senator, his wife and 2 kids killed in Utah plane crash

By JACK DURA and MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A state senator from North Dakota, his wife and their two young children died when the small plane they were traveling in crashed soon after a refueling stop in Utah, a Senate leader said Monday.

Doug Larsen's death was confirmed Monday in an email that Republican Senate Majority Leader David Hogue sent to his fellow senators and was obtained by The Associated Press.

The plane crashed Sunday evening shortly after taking off from Canyonlands Airfield about 15 miles (24 kilometers) north of the desert recreation town of Moab, according to a Grand County Sheriff's Department

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statement posted on Facebook. The sheriff's office said the senator was the pilot and all four people on board the plane were killed.

"Senator Doug Larsen, his wife Amy, and their two young children died in a plane crash last evening in Utah," Hogue wrote in his email. "They were visiting family in Scottsdale and returning home. They stopped to refuel in Utah."

"I'm not sure where the bereavement starts with such a tragedy, but I think it starts with prayers for the grandparents, surviving stepchild of Senator Larsen, and extended family of Doug and Amy," Hogue wrote. "Hold your family close today."

A bouquet of roses was draped over Larsen's desk in the Senate chamber, just above the nameplate that reads: "D. Larsen - District 34."

The crash of the single-engine Piper plane was being investigated, the National Transportation Safety Board said in a post on X, the social media website formerly called Twitter.

An NTSB spokesman said a board investigator was expected to arrive at the scene Monday "to begin to document the scene, examine the aircraft, request any air traffic communications, radar data, weather reports and try to contact any witnesses. Also, the investigator will request maintenance records of the aircraft, and medical records and flight history of the pilot."

Officials didn't release the plane's origin or final destination. After landing at the airport, the travelers took a car into Moab before taking off in the refueled plane, NTSB spokesman Fabian Salazar said at a news conference at the airport.

The agency will have a preliminary report on the crash within a couple weeks, followed by a final report in a year to year and a half, Salazar said.

Larsen was a Republican first elected to the North Dakota Senate in 2020. His district comprises Mandan, the city neighboring Bismarck to the west across the Missouri River. Larsen chaired a Senate panel that handled industry and business legislation. He and his wife, Amy, were business owners.

Larsen served 29 years in the North Dakota Army National Guard. He mobilized twice, to Iraq from 2009-10 and to Washington, D.C., from 2013-14, according to Gov. Doug Burgum's office. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Bronze Service Star and Army Aviator Badge among other honors.

Burgum in a statement said Larsen "was a father, husband, coach, entrepreneur, businessman, state senator and lieutenant colonel in the North Dakota National Guard who committed himself fully to each of those roles with an unwavering sense of honor and duty. As a legislator, he was a tenacious advocate for individual rights and the freedoms he defended through his military service."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, who is adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said, "I cannot think of a more tragic loss for one family, and the North Dakota National Guard sends our condolences to all of (the Larsens') friends and family. Doug was a true patriot who dedicated his life, both in and out of uniform, to serving others. I had the distinct pleasure to call him a Brother in Arms."

Republican state Sen. Scott Meyer, who sat behind Larsen in the Senate, remembered him for his unique and dry sense of humor, candor on issues and passion for flying. He recalled a Saturday afternoon in the Senate chamber when Larsen talked with fellow senators for roughly an hour about flying planes and working on his private pilot's license.

"He was passionate about flying. He really was," Meyer said.

District Republicans will appoint a successor to fill out the remainder of Larsen's term, through November 2024. His Senate seat is on the ballot next year. Republicans control North Dakota's Legislature with supermajorities in the House and Senate.

Moab is a tourism-centered community of about 5,300 people near Arches and Canyonlands national parks.

Trump seethes through the start of trial in New York lawsuit accusing him of lying about his wealth

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, JAKE OFFENHARTZ and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Aggrieved and defiant, former President Donald Trump spent a day in court Monday for the sometimes testy start of a trial in a fraud lawsuit that could cost him control of Trump Tower and other prized properties.

“Disgraceful trial,” he declared during a lunch break, after listening to lawyers for New York Attorney General Letitia James excoriate him as a habitual liar. The state’s lawsuit accuses the business mogul-turned-politician and his company of deceiving banks, insurers and others by misstating his wealth for years in financial statements.

“They were lying year after year after year,” Kevin Wallace, a lawyer in James’ office, said as Trump sat at the defense table. He looked straight ahead, arms crossed, facing away from a screen that showed details of Wallace’s presentation.

Trump denies wrongdoing and voluntarily attended a trial that he called a “sham,” a “scam,” a waste of the state’s time and “a continuation of the single greatest witch hunt of all time.” Currently the Republican front-runner in the 2024 presidential race, he reiterated claims that James, a Democrat, is trying to thwart his bid to return to the White House.

“What we have here is an attempt to hurt me in an election,” he said outside court, adding, “I don’t think the people of this country are going to stand for it.”

Trump sneered at James as he passed her on his way out at lunchtime; she left smiling. Meanwhile, his campaign immediately began fundraising off the appearance.

But Trump left for the day claiming he’d scored a victory, pointing to comments that he viewed as Judge Arthur Engoron coming around to the defense view that most of the suit’s allegations are too old.

The judge suggested that testimony about Trump’s 2011 financial statement was beyond the legal time limit. Wallace promised to link it to a more recent loan agreement, but Trump took the judge’s remarks as an “outstanding” development for him.

Engoron ruled last week that Trump committed fraud in his business dealings. If upheld on appeal, the ruling could force Trump to give up New York properties including Trump Tower, a Wall Street office building, golf courses and a suburban estate. Trump has called it a “a corporate death penalty” and insisted the judge, a Democrat, is unfair and out to get him.

The non-jury trial concerns six remaining claims in the lawsuit, including allegations of conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records. Engoron said that neither side sought a jury and that state law doesn’t allow for juries when suits seek not only money but a court order setting out something a defendant must do or not do.

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

“No matter how powerful you are, and no matter how much money you think you have, no one is above the law,” she said on her way into the courthouse.

Trump says that James and the judge are undervaluing such assets as his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida. He and his lawyers also maintain that disclaimers on his financial statements made clear that they were estimates and that banks would have to perform their own analysis.

The former president, his two eldest sons, Trump Organization executives and fixer-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 marked a remarkable departure from his past practice.

Trump didn’t go 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 civil 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.

This time, “I wanted to watch this witch hunt myself,” he said outside court.

In a recent court filing, James’ office alleged Trump exaggerated his wealth by as much as \$3.6 billion.

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He claimed his three-story Trump Tower penthouse, replete with gold-plated fixtures, was nearly three times its actual size and worth \$327 million, far more than any New York City apartment ever has fetched, James said. He valued Mar-a-Lago as high as \$739 million — more than 10 times a more reasonable estimate of its worth, James maintained.

“Every estimate was determined by Mr. Trump,” Wallace said in his opening statement. He pointed to pretrial testimony by Trump Organization figures and ex-insiders including Cohen, who said the company estimated assets to get to a predetermined number “that Mr. Trump wanted.”

Wallace said the alleged scheme got the company better loan rates, saving it \$100 million in interest.

“They hid their weaknesses and convinced these banks to take on hundreds of millions of dollars in risk,” he said, adding, “While the defendants can exaggerate to Forbes magazine or on television, they cannot do it while conducting business in the state of New York.”

Defense lawyers said the financial statements were legitimate representations of prime properties that can command top dollar.

“That is not fraud. That is real estate,” attorney Alina Habba said in an opening statement. She accused the attorney general’s office of “setting a very dangerous precedent for all business owners in the state of New York.”

Defense experts will testify that valuing properties is subjective, Trump attorneys said. He and his lawyers have also argued that no one was harmed by anything in the financial statements, which were given to banks to secure loans and to financial magazines to justify his place among the world’s billionaires.

Banks that made loans to him were fully repaid. Business partners made money. And Trump’s own company flourished.

Defense lawyer Christopher Kise blasted last week’s fraud ruling, telling the judge he shouldn’t have made a decision before hearing expert trial testimony on property valuations. Engoron, tiring of the defense’s criticism, shot back: “Respectfully, what’s that expression? You’re stalking the dead horse here.”

Testimony began Monday afternoon with Donald Bender, a longtime partner at accounting firm Mazars LLP, describing how he spent 50 to 60 hours a year preparing Trump’s financial statements. Mazars cut ties with Trump last year after James’ office raised questions about the documents’ reliability.

James’ lawsuit is one of several legal headaches for Trump as he campaigns to return to the White House. He has been indicted four times since March, accused of plotting to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, hoarding classified documents and falsifying business records related to hush money paid on his behalf. He has pleaded not guilty to all the allegations.

The New York fraud trial is expected to last into December, Engoron said.

The Pentagon warns Congress it is running low on money to replace weapons sent to Ukraine

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon is warning Congress that it is running low on money to replace weapons the U.S. has sent to Ukraine and has already been forced to slow down resupplying some troops, according to a letter sent to congressional leaders.

The letter, obtained by The Associated Press, urges Congress to replenish funding for Ukraine. Congress averted a government shutdown by passing a short-term funding bill over the weekend, but the measure dropped all assistance for Ukraine in the battle against Russia.

Pentagon Comptroller Michael McCord told House and Senate leaders there is \$1.6 billion left of the \$25.9 billion Congress provided to replenish U.S. military stocks that have been flowing to Ukraine. The weapons include millions of rounds of artillery, rockets and missiles critical to Ukraine’s counteroffensive aimed at taking back territory gained by Russia in the war.

In addition, the U.S. has about \$5.4 billion left to provide weapons and equipment from its stockpiles. The U.S. would have already run out of that funding if the Pentagon hadn’t realized earlier this year that it had overvalued the equipment it had already sent, freeing up about \$6.2 billion. Some of that has been

sent in recent months.

McCord said the U.S. has completely run out of long-term funding for Kyiv through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which provides money to contract for future weapons.

"We have already been forced to slow down the replenishment of our own forces to hedge against an uncertain funding future," McCord said in the letter. "Failure to replenish our military services on a timely basis could harm our military's readiness."

He added that without additional funding now, the U.S. will have to delay or curtail air defense weapons, ammunition, drones and demolition and breaching equipment that are "critical and urgent now as Russia prepares to conduct a winter offensive."

President Joe Biden said Sunday that while the aid will keep flowing for now, time is running out.

"We cannot under any circumstances allow America's support for Ukraine to be interrupted," Biden said. "We have time, not much time, and there's an overwhelming sense of urgency."

Mark Cancian, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said if the aid doesn't keep flowing, Ukrainian resistance will begin to weaken.

"If there's no new money, they're going to start feeling it by Thanksgiving," he said.

The short-term funding bill passed by Congress lasts only until mid-November. And McCord said it would be too risky for the Defense Department to divert money from that temporary funding bill to pay for more aid to Ukraine.

Many lawmakers acknowledge that winning approval for Ukraine assistance in Congress is growing more difficult as the war grinds on and resistance to the aid from the Republican hard-right flank gains momentum.

11 people are dead after Mexico church roof collapses. No more people believed buried in rubble

By ALFREDO PEÑA Associated Press

CIUDAD MADERO, Mexico (AP) — The collapse of a church roof during a service in northern Mexico has killed at least 11 people and injured 60, and searchers said Monday that no further people were believed to be trapped in the wreckage.

State police had initially estimated about 100 people were inside the church in the Gulf coast city of Ciudad Madero when it collapsed during a baptism Sunday, and said that approximately 30 parishioners may have been trapped in the rubble when the roof caved in.

But Tamaulipas state Gov. Américo Villarreal later said only 70 were believed to have been inside. That represented a kind of miracle in itself; a parish priest said that minutes before the collapse, the main Sunday mass attended by as many as 300 people had just ended and people had exited the church.

Gov. Villarreal said that after sending search dogs and thermal imaging cameras under the collapsed concrete slab it appeared that nobody was still trapped, apart from the ten bodies already recovered.

"The most likely thing, I can't affirm it 100%, is that there aren't any more people trapped," Villarreal said. Describing the searches by dogs and rescue teams, he said "there are no indications of life inside the collapsed area."

That optimism will be put to the test when cranes start lifting chunks of the collapsed slab off the floor and the tops of pews. The state civil defense office said that the search and rescue stage of the operation had ended Monday morning.

Luis González de la Fuente, the state's civil defense coordinator, said Monday that an 11th person died at a hospital. He said it was an 18 year-old woman, who was among two people who had been listed in serious condition earlier Monday.

The collapse occurred Sunday at the Santa Cruz church in the Gulf coast city of Ciudad Madero, next to the port city of Tampico, just as a mass baptism was being held.

Three of the dead were children., and on the list of people who had been injured were a 4-month-old baby, three 5-year-olds and two 9-year-olds.

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"Unfortunately, the elderly and children were those who suffered the most, the ones who were most trapped, the ones who suffered the most deaths, I think," said Father Pablo Galván, a priest who was just outside in the church parking lot Sunday when the collapse occurred. He had just finished celebrating the main mass.

Describing that moment, Galván said "the roof just simply and plainly collapsed, like an implosion, like when you crush a can."

"It fell, there was no time to do anything. It was like two seconds. We still can't understand what happened," Galván said.

González, the state civil defense coordinator, said the initial call about the collapse reached authorities around 2 p.m. Sunday.

Questions immediately turned to why the concrete and brick structure failed so suddenly. Security camera footage from about a block away showed the unusual, gabled roof simply collapsed downward. The 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 state security spokesman's office said it appeared to be "a structural failure." But Gov. Villarreal said no problems with the church had been reported previously.

"It was over 50 years old, it was here functioning and operating with no problem, with no sign of any defect," Villarreal said.

The roof appeared to be made of relatively thin poured concrete, and photos distributed by state authorities showed the roof slab resting on the top of pews in some parts of the church. That may have left enough space to have saved some lives.

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.

Fed's Powell gets an earful about inflation and interest rates from small businesses

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

YORK, Pa. (AP) — Federal Reserve officials typically gather many of their insights and observations about the economy from some of the top Ph.D. economists in Washington.

On a visit Monday to York, Pennsylvania, Chair Jerome Powell got an earful from a group with a decidedly different perspective: Small-business people who are grappling personally with inflation, high interest rates, labor shortages and other challenges of the post-pandemic economy.

Powell, along with Patrick Harker, head of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, traveled to York to learn about the efforts of the long-time manufacturing hub, where York Peppermint Patties were once made, to diversify its economy.

The businesspeople they spoke with were generally optimistic but expressed a range of concerns: They are still having trouble finding all the workers they need. Higher interest rates have discouraged some of them from expanding. And higher costs and a chronic difficulty in acquiring enough supplies have persisted.

"We were a little blind-sided by inflation," said Julie Flinchbaugh Keene, co-owner of Flinchbaugh's Orchard & Farm Market, who spoke to Powell and Harker at the Gather 256 coffee shop while the two Fed officials conducted a walking tour. Since the pandemic struck more than three years ago, she said, "predictability is just gone. It's very hard to operate a business without predictability."

Keene noted that her parents had experienced high inflation when they ran the business back in the 1980s. But the company was much smaller then and had no employees. As a result, her father said, "I don't have any wisdom to give you."

"We'll get inflation down," Powell said after listening to her concerns.

During his tour of downtown York, Powell also met Jennifer Heasley, owner of Sweet Mama's Mambo Sauce, who makes a barbecue-style sauce and owns a food stall in the York Central Market.

When asked before his visit what she would most want to tell Powell, Heasley said, "Lower interest rates."

Heasley said she is paying a much higher rate now on her credit cards, which she sometimes uses to fund her business.

Powell's visit occurred as the Fed is monitoring the economy for signs that its streak of rate increases are having their desired effect and that inflation is continuing to cool. At their most recent meeting two weeks ago, Fed officials signaled confidence about a so-called "soft landing," in which inflation would fall back to their 2% target without a deep recession. The policymakers predicted that inflation would fall to about 2.6% by the end of 2024, with only a small rise in the unemployment rate.

But given its confidence in the economy's resilience, the Fed also signaled that it expects to keep its benchmark rate higher for longer, potentially raising it once more this year and keeping it above 5% well into 2024.

Inflation has dwindled from a four-decade high of 9.1% in June 2022 to 3.7% in August. In the meantime, the unemployment rate has defied predictions by remaining low while the economy has continued to expand.

Before the walking tour, Powell and Harker conducted a roundtable discussion with several business owners and executives, nonprofit leaders and educators.

Kevin Schreiber, CEO of the York County Economic Alliance, a business development group, told reporters that the local economy is growing at a healthy pace. At the same time, Schreiber said, many business people are worried about the next 12 to 18 months and the prospect that interest rates will stay high and inflation won't be fully conquered.

A lack of child care is another top problem for many businesses in the area, Schreiber said, because it keeps many parents out of the workforce.

Schreiber said there were 219 child care centers in the area before the pandemic. Now, there are only 170. Many of the remaining centers are operating at less than full capacity because of staffing shortages.

Tom Palisin, executive director of The Manufacturer's Association, who took part in the roundtable, said later that higher interest rates have led many local companies to pull back on acquisitions and investments in new technology.

"Companies want to invest," he said, "but they've hit the pause button."

Karikó and Weissman win Nobel Prize in medicine for work that enabled mRNA vaccines against COVID-19

By DAVID KEYTON, MIKE CORDER and MADDIE BURAKOFF Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Two scientists won the Nobel Prize in medicine on Monday for discoveries that enabled the creation of mRNA vaccines against COVID-19 that were critical in slowing the pandemic — technology that's also being studied to fight cancer and other diseases.

Hungarian-American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman were cited for contributing "to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health," according to the panel that awarded the prize in Stockholm.

The panel said the pair's "groundbreaking findings ... fundamentally changed our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system."

WHAT IS THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR?

Traditionally, making vaccines required growing viruses or pieces of viruses and then purifying them before next steps. The messenger RNA approach starts with a snippet of genetic code carrying instructions for making proteins. Pick the right virus protein to target, and the body turns into a mini vaccine factory.

In early experiments with animals, simply injecting lab-grown mRNA triggered a reaction that usually destroyed it. Those early challenges caused many to lose faith in the approach: "Pretty much everybody gave up on it," Weissman said.

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But Karikó, a professor at Szeged University in Hungary and an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Weissman, of the University of Pennsylvania, figured out a tiny modification to the building blocks of RNA that made it stealthy enough to slip past immune defenses.

Karikó, 68, is the 13th woman to win the Nobel Prize in medicine. She was a senior vice president at BioNTech, which partnered with Pfizer to make one of the COVID-19 vaccines. Karikó and Weissman, 64, met by chance in the 1990s while photocopying research papers, Karikó told The Associated Press.

WHY DO MRNA VACCINES MATTER?

Dr. Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at Britain's University of East Anglia, described the mRNA vaccines made by BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna Inc. as a "game changer" in shutting down the coronavirus pandemic, crediting the shots with saving millions of lives.

"We would likely only now be coming out of the depths of COVID without the mRNA vaccines," Hunter said.

John Tregoning, of Imperial College London, called Karikó "one of the most inspirational scientists I have met." Her work together with Weissman "shows the importance of basic, fundamental research in the path to solutions to the most pressing societal needs," he said.

The duo's pivotal mRNA research was combined with two other earlier scientific discoveries to create the COVID-19 vaccines. Researchers in Canada had developed a fatty coating to help mRNA get inside cells to do its work. And studies with prior vaccines at the U.S. National Institutes of Health showed how to stabilize the coronavirus spike protein that the new mRNA shots needed to deliver.

Dr. Bharat Pankhania, an infectious diseases expert at Exeter University, predicted the technology used in the vaccines could be used to refine vaccines for other diseases like Ebola, malaria and dengue, and might also be used to create shots that immunize people against certain types of cancer or auto-immune diseases including lupus.

HOW DID KATALIN KARIKÓ AND DREW WEISSMAN REACT?

"The future is just so incredible," Weissman said. "We've been thinking for years about everything that we could do with RNA, and now it's here."

Karikó said her husband was the first to pick up the early morning call, handing it to her to hear the news. And Karikó was the one to break the news to Weissman, since she got in touch before the Nobel committee could reach him.

Both scientists thought it was a prank at first, until they watched the official announcement.

"I was very much surprised," Karikó said. "But I am very happy."

The two have collaborated for decades, with Karikó focusing on the RNA side and Weissman handling the immunology: "We educated each other," she said.

Before COVID-19, mRNA vaccines were already being tested for diseases like Zika, influenza and rabies — but the pandemic brought more attention to this approach, Karikó said. Now, scientists are trying out mRNA approaches for cancer, allergies and other gene therapies, Weissman said.

"It's already been going on for many years, but this has just given RNA the recognition," Weissman said.

Karikó's family is no stranger to high honors. Her daughter, Susan Francia, is a double Olympic gold medalist in rowing, competing for the United States.

The prize carries a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (\$1 million) from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. The laureates are invited to receive their awards at ceremonies on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death.

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.

US health officials propose using a cheap antibiotic as a 'morning-after pill' against STDs

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. health officials plan to endorse a common antibiotic as a morning-after pill that gay and bisexual men can use to try to avoid some increasingly common sexually transmitted diseases.

The proposed CDC guideline was released Monday, and officials will move to finalize it after a 45-day public comment period. With STD rates rising to record levels, "more tools are desperately needed," said Dr. Jonathan Mermin of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The proposal comes after studies found some people who took the antibiotic doxycycline within three days of unprotected sex were far less likely to get chlamydia, syphilis or gonorrhea compared with people who did not take the pills after sex.

The guideline is specific to the group that has been most studied — gay and bisexual men and transgender women who had a STD in the previous 12 months and were at high risk to get infected again.

There's less evidence that the approach works for other people, including heterosexual men and women. That could change as more research is done, said Mermin, who oversees the CDC's STD efforts.

Even so, the idea ranks as one of only a few major prevention measures in recent decades in "a field that's lacked innovation for so long," said Mermin. The others include a vaccine against the HPV virus and pills to ward off HIV, he said.

Doxycycline, a cheap antibiotic that has been available for more than 40 years, is a treatment for health problems including acne, chlamydia and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

The CDC guidelines were based on four studies of using doxycycline against bacterial STDs.

One of the most influential was a New England Journal of Medicine study earlier this year. It found that gay men, bisexual men and transgender women with previous STD infections who took the pills were about 90% less likely to get chlamydia, about 80% less likely to get syphilis and more than 50% less likely to get gonorrhea compared with people who didn't take the pills after sex.

A year ago, San Francisco's health department began promoting doxycycline as a morning-after prevention measure.

With infection rates rising, "we didn't feel like we could wait," said Dr. Stephanie Cohen, who oversees the department's STD prevention work.

Some other city, county and state health departments — mostly on the West Coast — followed suit.

At Fenway Health, a Boston-based health center that serves many gay, lesbian and transexual clients, about 1,000 patients are using doxycycline that way now, said Dr. Taimur Khan, the organization's associate medical research director.

The guideline should have a big impact, because many doctors have been reluctant to talk to patients about it until they heard from the CDC, Khan said.

The drug's side effects include stomach problems and rashes after sun exposure. Some research has found it ineffective in heterosexual women. And widespread use of doxycycline as a preventive measure could — theoretically — contribute to mutations that make bacteria impervious to the drug.

That kind of antibiotic resistance hasn't materialized in San Francisco, but it will be important to watch for, Cohen said.

The Supreme Court opens its new term with a case about prison terms for drug dealers

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court opened its new term Monday with a case about prison terms for drug dealers and rejections of hundreds of appeals, including one from an attorney who pushed a plan to keep former President Donald Trump in power.

The court turned away attorney John Eastman's effort to have a lower-court ruling thrown out that

said Eastman and Trump had “more likely than not” committed a crime by trying to keep Congress from certifying President Joe Biden’s victory in the 2020 election.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who once employed Eastman as a law clerk, did not take part in the court’s consideration of Eastman’s appeal.

The only case 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 is at stake.

“I think this is a very hard case,” Justice Amy Coney Barrett said during 90 minutes of arguments that did not suggest how the court might rule.

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 Trump or efforts to keep the Republican 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 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.

On Monday, Thomas did not explain his decision to stay out of Eastman’s case, which involved emails that Eastman was trying to keep from the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol.

Some of those emails, since made public, are between Eastman and another lawyer, Kenneth Chesebro, in which they mention Thomas as their best hope to get the Supreme Court to intervene in the election outcome in a case from Georgia.

Trump, Eastman and Chesebro are among 19 people who have been indicted in Fulton County, Georgia, for their efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

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 and Sotomayor, who has diabetes, continues to wear a mask on the bench. One other change that resulted from the coronavirus pandemic remains: The court is livestreaming audio of all its arguments. Cameras remain forbidden.

Europe Union’s top diplomat dismisses concern about bloc’s long-term support for Ukraine

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The European Union’s foreign policy chief on Monday led a delegation of top diplomats on an unannounced visit to Kyiv and dismissed concerns about political tension in the bloc over its long-term support for Ukraine’s fight against Russia.

Though largely symbolic, the informal meeting between EU and Ukrainian diplomats demonstrated the EU’s “clear commitment” to Ukraine in its 19-month-long war, Josep Borrell said.

“The EU remains united in its support to Ukraine ... I don’t see any member state folding on their engagement,” Borrell told a news conference in the Ukrainian capital.

The gathering was the first time EU foreign ministers have met outside the bloc — and in a war zone, according to Borrell.

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The talks took place after the weekend election victory in EU member Slovakia of former Prime Minister 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 EU, the United States 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 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.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday that Biden had rallied more than 140 countries to condemn Russia's invasion and built a coalition of more than 50 countries to provide aid to Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia's finances are deteriorating in part over sanctions.

"There is a strong, very strong international coalition behind Ukraine," Jean-Pierre said. And if Russian President Vladimir Putin "thinks he can outlast us, he's wrong."

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

Borrell, at his news conference, insisted the EU is devoted to "sustained engagement" with Ukraine. "Our resolve ... is firm and will continue," he said.

He ticked off a list of ongoing commitments the 27-nation EU has made and hopes to make, including proposed military aid of 5 billion euros (\$5.3 billion) next year, a target to train some 40,000 Ukrainian troops and possible joint arms industry ventures between EU and Ukrainian defense companies.

Other signs of the EU's commitment include help with cyber defense, a demining program to enable Ukraine's postwar recovery and the reform of Ukrainian law enforcement to crack down on corruption, Borrell said.

But the EU's "strongest security commitment" for Ukraine is to grant it membership of the bloc, he 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.

"Both Ukraine and the European side are determined to move forward at maximum speed, taking into account all the reforms that Ukraine has carried out, is currently carrying out and will continue to implement," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said.

Kuleba also offered reassurances about the country's allies after the U.S. Congress left Ukraine aid out of its funding package.

Kuleba told reporters that Ukraine held discussions with representatives of both parties in 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.

Kuleba said he also urged the foreign ministers "to provide maximum support to their defense companies in building cooperation with Ukrainian defense companies."

Such cooperation recently became a frequent topic in the talks between Ukraine and its partners.

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that he did not doubt that Washington "will continue to be directly involved in the conflict."

At the same time, Putin is wagering that international support for Kyiv will sooner or later begin to flag. Peskov said the fatigue will eventually bring "fragmentation" of Ukraine's foreign assistance.

U.K. Defense Secretary Grant Shapps insisted Monday that the U.S. was "a long way" from withdrawing its support from Ukraine, and he reaffirmed the British commitment.

"Britain will, regardless of what happens elsewhere, take a leadership role," Shapps said during a meeting at the Conservative Party's annual conference in northern England.

Borrell said the peace proposal offered by Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is the only one still under discussion by international leaders, Borrell claimed, after competing efforts by China and some African leaders faded away.

Zelenskyy's 10-point plan, which demands Russia's total withdrawal from Ukrainian soil, includes establishing a special tribunal to prosecute Russian war crimes and building a European-Atlantic security architecture with guarantees for Ukraine.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said the only way to achieve peace is to "inflict an unequivocal military defeat on Russia" and then rebuild Ukraine.

"This path is achievable if the West commits to supporting Ukraine in the prolonged effort likely needed to walk down it," the agency said in an assessment published Sunday.

Few Americans say conservatives can speak freely on college campuses, an 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 Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the University of Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression.

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 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.

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"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, Connecticut. "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 Republican 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.

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

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

DENVER (AP) — When former elite fencer Kirsten Hawkes reached out to her childhood coach for advice about starting her own fencing club, their meeting immediately turned awkward.

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

Hawkes filed a complaint against the then-assistant coach with the U.S. Paralympic team to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, which is tasked with combatting sex abuse in Olympic sports. But she soon realized she was pitted against not just the coach, but one of the country's top sports attorneys.

"It just led to a sense of helplessness," Hawkes, 36, told The Associated Press after her allegations against the 52-year-old coach were ultimately rejected.

"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 SafeSport Center has come under increasing scrutiny for what critics contend is an opaque process that often takes 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 Olympics officials surveyed said SafeSport wasn't meeting its goals; nearly 25% disagreed when asked whether the center was successful in its mandate to sanction sex abuse in Olympic sports.

Formed in 2017 as 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 — more than 11 million athletes, including those like Hawkes.

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 removed from his Paralympics coaching job by USA Fencing. Then, an arbitration hearing in August overturned the probation and other sanctions.

In her ruling, the arbitrator noted her decision was 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

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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 would punish today, said communications director Hilary Nemchik.

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

“It has to be consistent,” she said.

Hawkes said as a kid, her reaction to the coach’s alleged behavior was less horrified than now.

“I think about it now and it’s really disturbing,” she said, adding that as a child “it was just less awkward” to let it pass.

Still, Hawkes said she also had good memories from her childhood fencing days and wanted to pick the coach’s brain about a business venture 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 outside 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,’” 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 refuted.

Seeking evidence the kiss was unwanted, Hawkes said she asked the hotel for surveillance video, but was told she would need 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, which she couldn’t afford.

Nemchik said the center isn’t designed to act like a criminal or civil court system, limiting powers to call witnesses and subpoena evidence — things she said “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 traumatic. It included cross-examination and what she called “slut shaming” by the coach’s lawyer, top sports attorney Howard Jacobs.

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

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.

USA Fencing CEO Phil Andrews expressed frustration about how SafeSport policies sometimes hamstring 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.”

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

barely heard.

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

Women's voices and votes loom large as pope is set 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 opens 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 periodic synods at the Vatican 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 in governance, 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 464 participants, 365 are voting members, and of them only 54 are women. While organizers insist the aim is to reach consensus, not tally votes like a parliament, 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

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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 and the issue of female deacons is formally on the synod agenda. Other groups pressing for women's ordination to the priesthood are also in Rome, even though the pope has taken the subject of women priests 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 and the call is featured in the synod's working document.

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."

Today in History: October 3, Jury finds O.J. Simpson not guilty of murder

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 3, the 276th day of 2023. There are 89 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 3, 1995, the jury in the O.J. Simpson murder trial in Los Angeles found the former football star not guilty of the 1994 slayings of his former wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and Ronald Goldman.

On this date:

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In 1941, Adolf Hitler declared in a speech in Berlin that Russia had been "broken" and would "never rise again."

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. Army troops cracked the Siegfried Line north of Aachen, Germany.

In 1951, the New York Giants captured the National League pennant by a score of 5-4 as Bobby Thomson hit a three-run homer off Ralph Branca of the Brooklyn Dodgers in the "shot heard 'round the world."

In 1961, "The Dick Van Dyke Show," also starring Mary Tyler Moore, made its debut on CBS.

In 1970, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was established under the Department of Commerce.

In 1974, Frank Robinson was named major league baseball's first Black manager as he hired by the Cleveland Indians.

In 1981, Irish nationalists at the Maze Prison near Belfast, Northern Ireland, ended seven months of hunger strikes that had claimed 10 lives.

In 1990, West Germany and East Germany ended 45 years of postwar division, declaring the creation of a reunified country.

In 2001, the Senate approved an agreement normalizing trade between the United States and Vietnam.

In 2003, a tiger attacked magician Roy Horn of duo "Siegfried & Roy" during a performance in Las Vegas, leaving the superstar illusionist in critical condition on his 59th birthday.

In 2008, O.J. Simpson was found guilty of robbing two sports-memorabilia dealers at gunpoint in a Las Vegas hotel room. (Simpson was later sentenced to nine to 33 years in prison; he was granted parole in July 2017 and released from prison in October of that year.)

In 2011, an Italian appeals court freed Amanda Knox of Seattle after four years in prison, tossing murder convictions against Knox and an ex-boyfriend in the stabbing of their British roommate, Meredith Kercher.

In 2012, Mitt Romney sparred with President Barack Obama on the economy and domestic issues in their first campaign debate.

In 2013, a smugglers' ship packed with African migrants sank off the coast of a southern Italian island, killing more than 365 people.

In 2017, Yahoo announced that the largest data breach in history had affected all 3 billion accounts on its service, not the 1 billion it had revealed earlier.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Steve Reich is 87. Rock and roll star Chubby Checker is 82. Actor Alan Rachins is 81. Former Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., is 80. Singer Lindsey Buckingham is 74. Jazz musician Ronnie Laws is 73. Blues singer Keb' Mo' is 72. Former astronaut Kathryn Sullivan is 72. Baseball Hall of Famer Dave Winfield is 72. Baseball Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley is 69. Civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton is 69. Actor Hart Bochner is 67. Actor Peter Frechette is 67. World Golf Hall of Famer Fred Couples is 64. Actor-comedian Greg Proops is 64. Actor Jack Wagner is 64. Actor/musician Marcus Giamatti is 62. Rock musician Tommy Lee is 61. Actor Clive Owen is 59. Actor Janel Moloney is 54. Singer Gwen Stefani (No Doubt) is 54. Pop singer Kevin Richardson (Backstreet Boys) is 52. Rock singer G. Love is 51. Actor Keiko Agena is 50. Actor Neve Campbell is 50. Actor Lena Headey is 50. Singer India.Arie Simpson is 48. Rapper Talib Kweli is 48. Actor Alanna Ubach is 48. Actor Seann (cq) William Scott is 47. Actor Shannyn Sossamon is 45. Rock musician Josh Klinghoffer is 44. Actor Seth Gabel is 42. Actor Erik Von Detten is 41. Actor Tessa Thompson is 40. Country singer Drake White is 40. Actor Meagan Holder is 39. Actor Christopher Marquette is 39. Actor-singer Ashlee Simpson is 39. Rapper A\$AP Rocky is 35. Actor Alicia Vikander is 35. Actor Noah Schnapp (TV: "Stranger Things") is 19.