

Groton Daily Independent

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Coming up

Sunday, Nov. 26

Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m., GHS Gym
United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m. (No Sunday school)

St. John's Lutheran: St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 27

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck at noon.

JH GBB hosts Clark/Willow Lake (7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.)

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

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

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes.

Tuesday, Nov. 28

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

James Valley Telecommunications Holiday Open House, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

JH GBB at Redfield (7th at 6:15 p.m., 8th at 7:15 p.m.)

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

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

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle hot dish, peas, California blend, Swedish apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Monty Cristo sandwich.

School Lunch: Scalloped potatoes with ham, corn.

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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Lincoln County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: Interstate 29, Mile Marker 61, 4 miles Southwest of Worthing, SD

When: 8:58 a.m., Saturday, November 25, 2023

Driver 1: Female, 62, Serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Passenger 1: Male, 79, Serious, non-life threatening injuries

Passenger 2: Male, 64, Fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2008 Chevrolet Suburban

Lincoln County, S.D.- A 64-year-old man died this morning resulting from injuries sustained in a one vehicle crash in Lincoln County.

The driver and front seat passenger sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2008 Chevrolet Suburban was traveling southbound on Interstate 29 near mile marker 61 and lost control of the vehicle on the icy roadway and entered the median where the vehicle rolled. The driver and front seat passenger were transported to a nearby hospital with serious, non-life-threatening injuries. They were wearing seatbelts. The backseat passenger sustained fatal injuries. He was not wearing a seatbelt.

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

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

Spink County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Hwy 20, Mile Marker 327, 5 miles East of Mellette, SD

When: 8:59 p.m., Thursday, November 23, 2023

Driver 1: Male, 68, Fatal injuries

Passenger 1: Male, 34, Serious, non-life threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 2011 Chevrolet Suburban

Spink County, S.D.- One person died Friday morning resulting from injuries sustained in a one vehicle crash which occurred Thursday evening in Spink County.

A passenger in the vehicle sustained serious, non-life threatening injuries.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2011 Chevrolet Suburban was traveling westbound on SD 20 when it entered the south ditch and struck an approach in the ditch. The driver was flown to a hospital in Sioux Falls for medical treatment but passed away on Friday morning.

The driver and passenger were not wearing seatbelts.

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

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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JVT/NVC HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSES

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Redfield - Wed, Nov. 29th 11am-2pm
Aberdeen - Thurs, Nov. 30th 10am-4pm

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NSU Men's Basketball

Wolves Break School Record in Win Against Lions

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 21 Northern State University men's basketball team kept their win streak alive, defeating Trinity Bible on Saturday, in a 48-point victory. The Wolves notched a new school record draining 20 shots from the 3-point line.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 116, TBC 68

Records: NSU 3-4, TBC 4-3

Attendance: 2023

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State scored 66 points in the first half and 50 in the second, recording their largest margin of victory in the 2023-24 season

The Wolves were efficient offensively shooting 58.2% from the floor and 45.5% from the 3-point line

NSU tallied a game leading 46 rebounds, 23 assists, four steals, and five blocks

Four Wolves scored in double figures with Josh Dilling draining 25, followed by Trey Longstreet with 14, Tobi Obiora with 13, and Jacksen Moni with 11

In addition, Longstreet's 14 were a career high as the junior hit 6-of-8 from the floor

Obiora led the team off the bench with a career high 13 points and seven rebounds

The previous made 3-pointers record was set back in 1994 against South Dakota State with 19 made

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Josh Dilling: 25 points, 4 assists, 90.0 field goal%, 87.5 3-point field goal%

Trey Longstreet: 14 points, 3 assists, 75.0 field goal%

Tobi Obiora: 13 points, 7 rebounds, 75.0 field goal%

Jacksen Moni: 11 points, 3 assists

UP NEXT

Northern State is back in action next Thursday facing NSIC foe MSU Moorhead. Tip-off time is set for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 30 from Wachs Arena.

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NSU Women's Basketball

Wolves Take Down Cougars in a Comeback Win

Aberdeen, S.D. – Out-scoring their opponents 24-6 in the fourth quarter, the Northern State women's basketball team tallied a comeback win over University of Sioux Falls. The Wolves took their first lead of the contest in the fourth going on a 17-4 run to open the final ten minutes of action.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 53, USF 49

Records: NSU 5-1, USF 2-3

Attendance: 1978

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State tallied four points in the first quarter, 16 in the second, nine in the third, and 24 in the fourth; out-scoring the Cougars by 18 in the fourth quarter

The Wolves racked up a game high 41 rebounds, 11 assist, and six steals in the win, scoring 18 points in the paint and nine points off turnovers

They added eight points off the bench and ten second chance points

The Wolves defense held the Cougars to an 11.1% clip from the 3-point line and under 40.0% from field goal range

Rianna Fillipi, Madelyn Bragg, and Brynn Alfson each scored 13 points respectively, with Alfson recording a career high in the game

In addition, Alayna Benike notched a career high with three steals in the win

Bragg drained 5-of-6 from the 3-point line while Alfson made 6-of-6 from the free throw line

Alfson dished out a team leading four assists and pulled down 15 rebounds; a couple of career highs for the senior in her first double-double of 2023-24

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Rianna Fillipi: 13 points, 4 assists

Madelyn Bragg: 13 points, 83.3 FT %

Brynn Alfson: 13 points (career high), 15 rebounds (career high), 4 assists (career high)

UP NEXT

Northern State is set to face off against Wisconsin Parkside from Marshall, Minnesota and the campus of Southwest Minnesota State on Monday. Tip-off time is set for 4 p.m. from the R/A Facility against the Rangers.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Anti-abortion groups shrug off election losses, look to courts, statehouses for path forward

BY: RACHANA PRADHAN - NOVEMBER 25, 2023 8:00 AM

Anti-abortion groups are firing off a warning shot for 2024: We're not going anywhere.

Their leaders say they're undeterred by recent election setbacks and plan to plow ahead on what they've done for years, including working through state legislatures, federal agencies, and federal courts to outlaw abortion. And at least one prominent anti-abortion group is calling on conservative states to make it harder for voters to enact ballot measures, a tactic Republican lawmakers attempted in Ohio before voters there enshrined the right to abortion in the state's constitution.

"For us, this is a civil rights battle. We have innocent human beings whose lives are being destroyed," said Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, one of the country's largest anti-abortion groups. "And we're going to keep fighting because we think those are human beings who deserve protection."

The movement is no stranger to the long game, working over decades to get the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 decision establishing a constitutional right to abortion that the high court nullified last year.

But Republican lawmakers and anti-abortion candidates have struggled to coalesce around a unified message ahead of the 2024 elections. In addition to the Ohio defeat, voters in Virginia on Nov. 7 effectively rejected Gov. Glenn Youngkin's proposal to ban abortion after 15 weeks by giving control of the state legislature to Democrats. Democrats are expected to keep capitalizing on anger over the Supreme Court's 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

In its aftermath, abortion rights supporters have successfully won campaigns in seven states. In Ohio, a state Donald Trump won by healthy margins in both 2016 and 2020, 57% of voters supported a constitutional amendment protecting abortion rights. Voters in 11 more states could see abortion-related initiatives on their ballots next year, including in Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

The Ohio vote "makes clear it's essential that the critical work of the pro-life movement must carry on with renewed energy and enthusiasm," Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, said in a statement following the Nov. 7 election results.

"The GOP already tried the 'ostrich strategy' in 2022 of ignoring the issue and hoping it would go away. It didn't work," Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America said in a memo after the Ohio vote that urged the Republican Party to clarify its stance.

As abortion opponents push ahead, there is some disagreement over the best tactics, said Mary Ziegler, a law professor at the University of California-Davis and historian on the abortion debate in the U.S.

Some anti-abortion groups want to focus more on strategies that don't depend on voters, instead "going to the points of access you have, which are state legislatures and federal courts," Ziegler said. Other organizations insist they need to win over voters, either by doing a better job selling their positions or moderating what they'll accept, to secure lasting change.

"There's a sort of underlying, 'How much do we care about voters?' divide," she said.

So far, 14 states, mostly in the South and Midwest, have enacted near-total abortion bans, and an additional seven states have instituted bans between six and 18 weeks of gestation. Anti-abortion groups are also deploying strategies to limit — if not eliminate — access to prescription medicines used for most

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abortions in the U.S.

A lawsuit threatening access to mifepristone, one of two pills for medication abortion, is making its way through the federal courts. And several anti-abortion groups are trying to revive enforcement of the Comstock Act, a 19th-century law that prohibits the mailing of "obscene" materials and information, as a way to ban the mailing of abortion pills nationwide.

The anti-abortion movement could "cancel out some of these victories at the polls that I don't think voters are aware of," Ziegler said.

"This is a movement that formed not to win elections but to advance fetal rights," she said.

Anti-abortion groups aren't unified in their messaging. SBA Pro-Life America, for example, is pushing Republican candidates to back a national 15-week abortion ban. Others say it is time to do away with that type of incremental strategy — according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 93% of abortions in 2020 occurred at 13 weeks or earlier.

"I would call it a capitulation," Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America, said of a 15-week ban.

SFLA supports enacting federal legislation banning abortion at six weeks — a time before many women realize they're pregnant — or earlier. Hawkins said SFLA would keep "passing laws and then enforcing laws" to notch victories as anti-abortion groups have for decades.

Groups are "engaged in a marathon, and not a sprint on this," she said. "We have to keep marching forward and doing what we're doing best."

Tobias, of the National Right to Life Committee, said its ongoing strategy will be lobbying state legislatures, and focusing more on when abortion should be allowed, such as in cases involving rape or incest, rather than just gestational limits. She said the organization is not calling on Congress to pass a national abortion ban because there aren't 60 votes in the Senate that would be needed to overcome a filibuster.

"We need to start talking about the reasons that women are getting abortions," she said, "and then how we can help or impact those reasons or make sure that women realize that there is other support available."

Tobias and others also threw cold water on pursuing abortion-related ballot measures of their own. "It's very clear ballot referendums are a 'get-rich-quick scheme' for the consultant class," Hawkins said.

If anything, abortion opponents want to make it more difficult for voters to enact such measures. In a Nov. 7 statement, Americans United for Life said states where abortion is heavily restricted and ballot measures are possible — including Florida, Mississippi, and Oklahoma — should move to require legislative referrals for all future amendments.

Abortion rights supporters say the next steps for their opponents aren't so simple. People are "never going to accept this idea of having fewer rights," said Gabriel Mann, spokesperson for Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights, the ballot committee that spearheaded the state constitutional amendment campaign.

"They've had five decades since Roe to convince the American people that somehow everyone would be better off sacrificing their own reproductive rights," Mann said. "They failed."

Rachana Pradhan, correspondent, reports on a broad array of national health policy decisions and their effect on everyday Americans. She came to KFF Health News from Politico, where for five years she covered health care policy and politics on national and state levels. Rachana has been involved in several high-impact projects in her time as a health care reporter, including an investigation into former HHS Secretary Tom Price's extensive use of private jets at taxpayers' expense. The investigation, which resulted in Price's resignation, was a 2018 finalist for the American Society of News Editors' O'Brien Fellowship Award and earned an honorable mention in the White House Correspondents' Association's Edgar A. Poe award. Rachana's other reporting stints include covering city government for The Daily Progress newspaper in Charlottesville, Virginia, and reporting on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act for Inside Health Policy, a health care trade publication. She graduated from James Madison University.

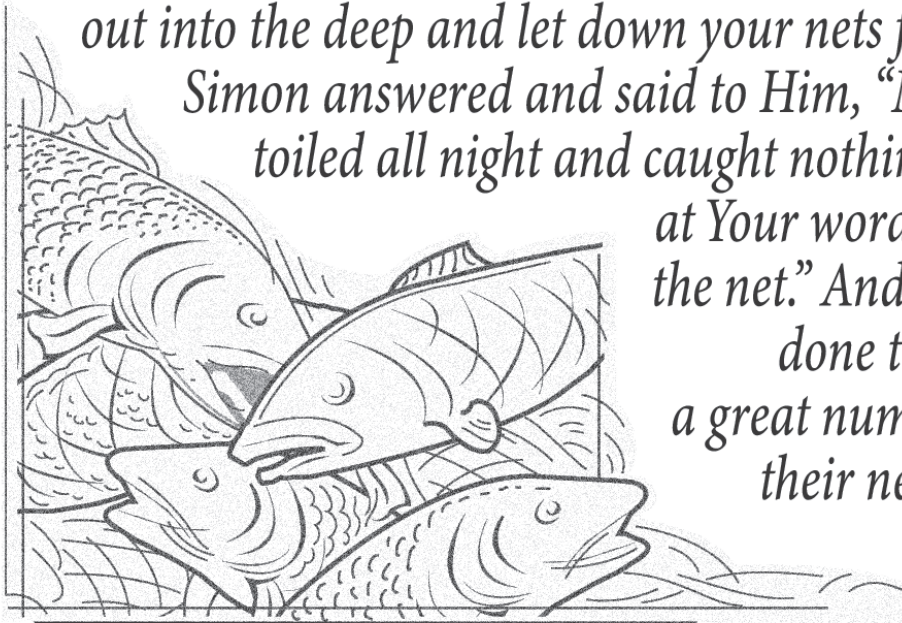
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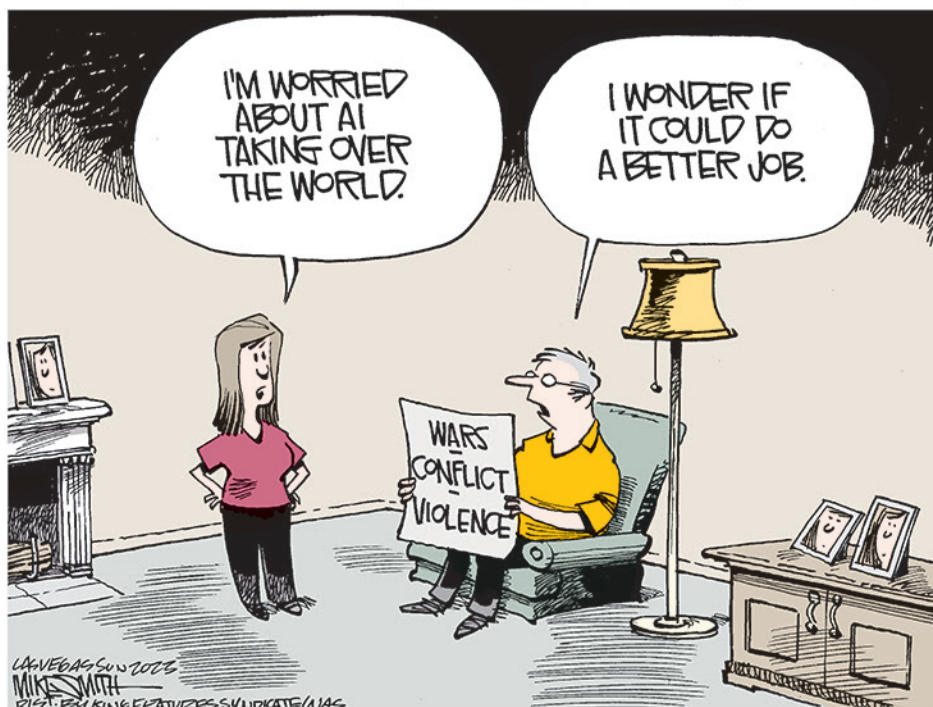
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.



LUKE 5:4-6

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

2. What method of death was for a man who blasphemed the Lord's name with a curse? *Hanging, Stoning, Starvation, Beaten*

3. Who used handkerchiefs and aprons to heal the sick and drive out demons? *Jesus, Paul, Mark, Jeremiah*

4. From John 6, what substance did Jesus miraculously walk upon? *Sea, Fire, Clouds, Broken bones*

5. What did God call the firmament? *Rapture, Armageddon, Passover, Heaven*

6. From Romans 6, what are the wages of sin? *Riches, Eternal life, Death, Freedom*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Stoning, 3) Paul, 4) Sea, 5) Heaven, 5) Death

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

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FLASH GORDON

I AM DOCTOR HANS ALEXIS ZARKOV. I AM, AT MY BEST, A MAN OF SCIENCE.

WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT AN ALIEN THREAT WAS COMING TO DESTROY THE EARTH, EVERYONE CALLED ME INSANE.

IN MY FRENZY TO FIND A WAY TO SAVE MY WORLD, I LOST MY MIND...

...PROVING THEM WRONG ABOUT THE SCIENCE... BUT RIGHT ABOUT ME.

BY THE TIME I CAME TO MY SENSES, I'D DRAGGED TWO YOUNG STRANGERS TO A PLANET AT WAR.



THEY ARE BRAVE, KIND, THE BEST OF HUMANITY-- TRAPPED HERE BECAUSE OF ME.

ONE DAY, I WILL MAKE THAT RIGHT.

FLASH, DALE AND I --DR. ZARKOV-- FOLLOWED THE TRAIL OF THE MISSING PRINCE BARIN TO THIS PLACE:



"BORROWER'S FIRTH."




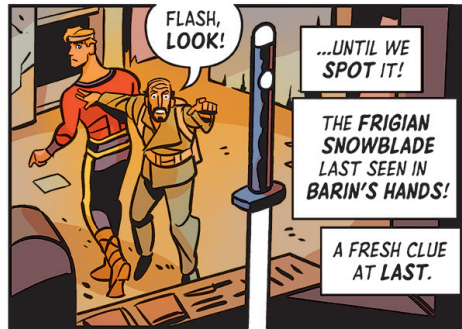
A DESERT MARKET FOR SMUGGLERS AND SCAVENGERS, UNDER THE WATCH OF THEIR UNSETTLING PEACEKEEPER, BONES MALOCK.

WE REALIZE THE TRACE WE'RE FOLLOWING -- ENERGY FROM MING'S ENGINES OF WAR -- IS ALL AROUND US.



WE'RE SURROUNDED BY STOLEN BATTLEFIELD BOUNTY.

A SEARCH OF THE MARKET TURNS UP ONLY THE SAD REFUSE OF A BLOODY WAR AND A FALLEN EMPIRE...

FLASH, LOOK!

...UNTIL WE SPOT IT!

THE FRIGIAN SNOWBLADE LAST SEEN IN BARIN'S HANDS!

A FRESH CLUE AT LAST.



CLEARLY, WE'VE ARRIVED AT THE RIGHT PLACE...

Y'HEAR WHAT THE OLD ONE CALLED THE BIG ONE?

"FLASH." AS IN FLASH GORDON.

THAT ALIEN SCUM WHO KILLED OUR EMPEROR...

DAN SCHADE 11-26-23

NEXT: WORD'S OUT

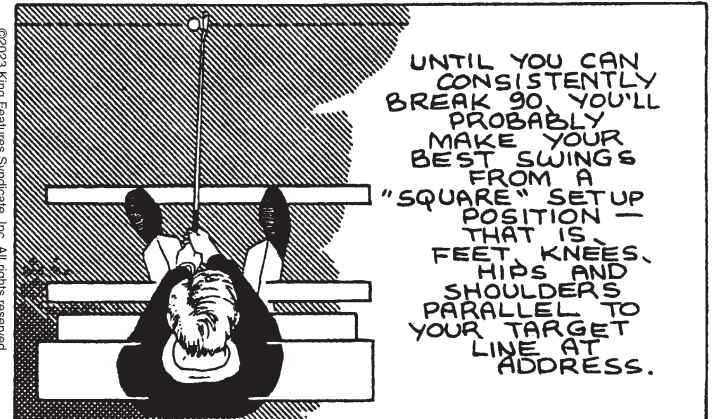
Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



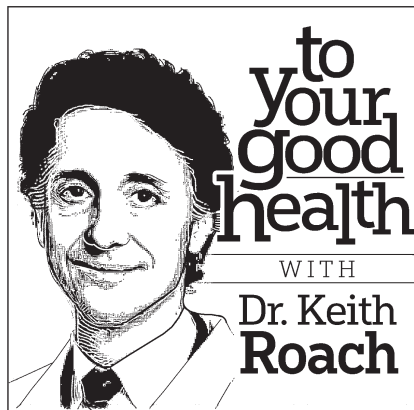
BETTER GOLFERS DRAW OR FADE MOST OF THEIR FULL SHOTS, EITHER NATURALLY OR BY DESIGN.

TO PROMOTE THOSE SHOT SHAPES, THEY SET UP EITHER SLIGHTLY CLOSED OR SLIGHTLY OPEN AT ADDRESS.

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UNTIL YOU CAN CONSISTENTLY BREAK 90, YOU'LL PROBABLY MAKE YOUR BEST SWINGS FROM A "SQUARE" SETUP POSITION -- THAT IS, FEET, KNEES, HIPS AND SHOULDERS PARALLEL TO YOUR TARGET LINE AT ADDRESS.



Vitamins for Macular Degeneration Coincide With New Cramps

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have been told at the age of 70 that I am in the early stages of the eye disease macular degeneration. The doctor told me to take PreserVision AREDS 2 vitamins. He said that I will be taking them for the rest of my life. I started them immediately, and a few nights later, I started having severe left leg cramps to the point where I woke out of a sound sleep to jump out of bed and shake off the cramp. Is this typical?
— C.L.

ANSWER: For the dry form of age-related macular degeneration, the AREDS and AREDS2 vitamins are the usual treatment. Although they are not a cure, they do slow progression of the disease.

My experience with these has been that they almost never cause side effects, and muscle cramping is not a reported side effect by the manufacturer. The timing, however, certainly is suspicious. You can try stopping them for a few days, then restarting them to see if the cramps are truly affected by the vitamins.

If they are, you have two choices. The first is to deal with cramps the same way that people who get them at night for no particular reason deal with it, which is by getting regular moderate exercise and stretching the calf and hamstring muscles before bed.

Having weight on the toes is a trigger for many people, so very light bed covers that aren't tucked in can be sur-

prisingly helpful. I've had a few readers come up with devices to keep all weight off of their toes in bed.

Your second option is to discuss an alternative with your eye professional. The AREDS and AREDS2 formulas were shown to be helpful, but some eye professionals only choose a few components of the formula.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I recently had a CT scan of my chest and pelvis that resulted in an incidental finding of "mild bibasilar atelectasis." My doctor does not seem to be concerned at all. Should they be?
— J.M.

ANSWER: "Bibasilar atelectasis" is a scary-sounding term unfamiliar to most people, so I understand why you might be concerned. "Atelectasis" refers to non-inflation of the tiny air structures in the lung called the alveoli. The bottom of the lungs are the bases, so "bibasilar atelectasis" means a partial collapse of the lung at the bases.

This is very common in people who aren't breathing deeply, such as those who undergo surgery. In healthy people, this finding is not likely to represent serious disease of the lung. Before (and while you were getting) your CT scan, you might not have been breathing very deeply, allowing a very small portion of the lungs to deflate a bit. A few really deep breaths are all that is usually needed to open up those air sacs again. Sighing is a mechanism found in virtually all animals that helps treat and prevent atelectasis.

If that was the only finding on your CT scan, and you are otherwise healthy, your doctor is right not to be concerned, although I wish that they had explained it a little better to keep you from getting concerned in the first place.

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

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"Minions: The Rise of Gru" (PG) -- Steve Carell's grouchy, yet lovable supervillain, Gru, first appeared on the big screen in 2010 during the box-office sensation "Despicable Me." The film quickly evolved into the highest-grossing animated franchise of all time, and "Minions: The Rise of Gru" was no different than its predecessors, garnering close to \$1 billion. Starring Carell as Gru and Pierre Coffin as the minions, the latest film in the franchise takes us back to 1976 where an 11-year-old Gru dreams of becoming a supervillain. But with ambitions as high as Gru's, he can't go it alone and will need to find some assistance -- specifically in the form of a yellow banana-loving species of creatures. Out now. (Peacock)

"The World to Come" (R) -- Winner of the 2020 Queer Lion award at the Venice International Film Festival, this drama film taking place in 1856 New York stars Katherine Waterston ("Fantastic Beasts") and Vanessa Kirby ("The Crown") as two respectively married women who feel severe isolation in the farmlands they live in. Both being married to emotionally lacking men, and being devoid of children, the two women start spending their downtime together and find meaningful solace in their shared moments. Eventually, they find that their bond is much deeper than friendship. Waterston and Kirby are an incredible lead duo; their performances as actresses excellently sync up to the profound and poetic dialogue of their characters. Out now. (Hulu)

"Little Richard: I Am Everything" (NR) -- Known as the "Architect of Rock and Roll," Richard Penniman, aka Little Richard, was a pioneer of his genre and lives on as a legend of popular music and culture. This documentary, which features tons of archival footage and interviews with his family and other musicians, dives into his legacy and explores his influence as a Black queer icon. It also touches on how he inspired other artists of his time and the many eras of music yet to come. The film depicts a very nuanced story that centers on the fact that Little Richard "was an omni being who contained multitudes -- he was unabashedly everything." Out now. (Max)

"Elisa & Marcela" (TV-MA) -- This Spanish-language biographical film shot entirely in black and white is one of Netflix's hidden gems and a must-watch for those who enjoy minimalistic, character-driven movies. Inspired by the true story of Elisa Sanchez Loriga and Marcela Gracia Ibeas, the film recounts how a lesbian couple managed to get married in 1901 at the Church of Saint George in A Coruna, Spain. As if told in book chapters, it details how the two women met during their time at school and formed an immediate friendship that progressed into a forbidden romantic relationship. When outside forces threaten to drive them apart, Elisa and Marcela go to great lengths to conceal their relationship, with Elisa even taking the identity of her deceased male cousin. Out now. (Netflix)



Greta Fernandez, left, and Natalia de Molina star in "Elisa & Marcela."

Courtesy of Netflix

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1. How did Mitch Ryder get his stage name?
2. Where was the Beatles' last live show?
3. Name the first Beach Boys song to top the charts in the U.S.
4. What song was Bobby Hebb best known for?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Though I know you're the kind of boy who only wants to run around, I'll keep waiting and, someday darling, you'll come to me when you want to settle down."

Answers

1. He spotted the name in a New York City phone book. He added "The Detroit Wheels" for the name of his band, and they were off and running.
2. Candlestick Park in San Francisco, California, on Aug. 29, 1966. The crowd numbered only 25,000, with 7,000 tickets not sold, even at a reduced price. That could have been due to Lennon's comments one month earlier about the Beatles being more popular than Jesus.
3. "I Get Around," in 1964.
4. "Sunny," in 1966. Numerous others released covers of the song around the world.
5. "One Fine Day," by the Chiffons in 1963. The song has been used in many soundtracks, including "The Flamingo Kid" (1984) as well as an episode of "The Simpsons."

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{Wagner}

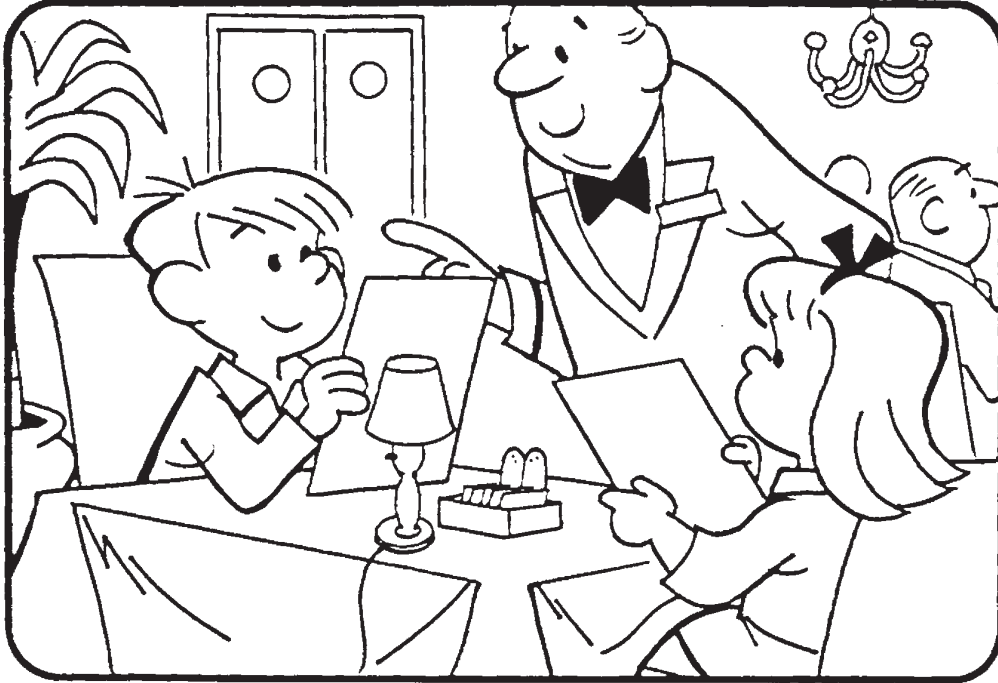
Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



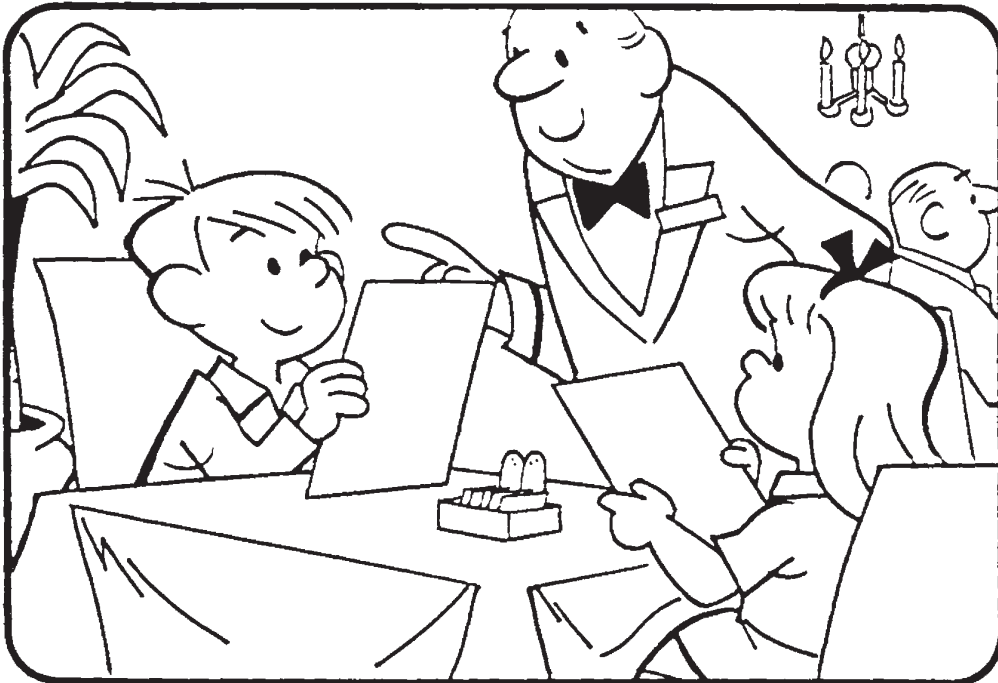
"I saw what happened on 'America's Funniest Home Videos!'"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Doors are missing. 2. Elbow is missing. 3. Lamp is missing. 4. Sleeve is shorter. 5. Light fixture is different. 6. Hair is concealed.

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* On internet memes, they call them "life hacks," simple tricks to save you perhaps time, money or simply frustration. Here's mine: Place a bowl near your entryway. Place your keys in the bowl when you come home. They stay there until you leave. No more lost keys. Now more life hacks for your tip file. -- JoAnn

* Put a dryer fabric softener sheet on the back of a fan. It sticks and will distribute a fresh scent through your room. -- T.I. via email

* Put an apple in the potato bag to keep them from growing buds. Check often. -- E.W. in Oregon

* Sharpen your scissors by cutting through aluminum foil. All you have to do is fold a piece over on itself and use your dull scissors to cut strips.

* Store popcorn in the refrigerator. You will have less unpopped kernels, because the cold temperature makes them heat more evenly. -- W.A. in Massachusetts

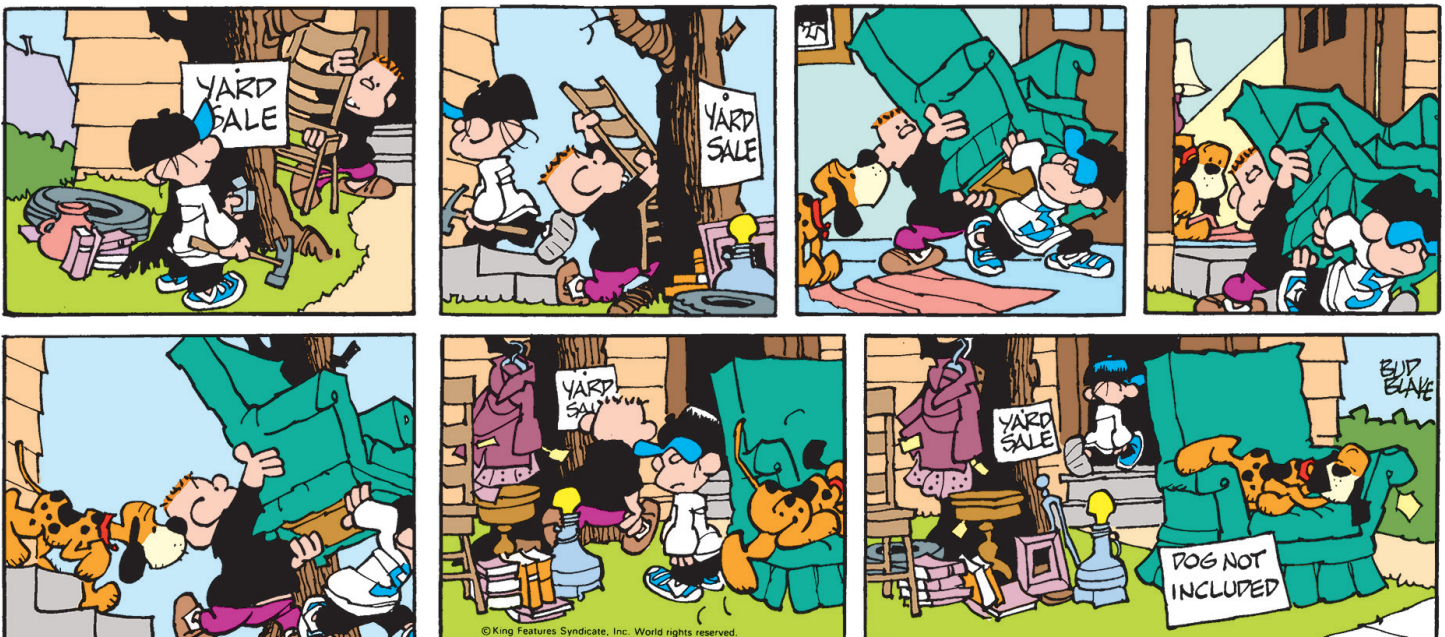
* Got chewing gum stuck in your hair? Rub with a spoonful of peanut butter. Massage into the gum-stuck hair. The oil in the peanut butter breaks down the gum, and you then can comb it out or wash out residue once you pick away the globs. How about on your clothes? Remove the garment and stick it in the freezer for several hours. The gum hardens, and you can literally peel it off in chunks. Use an old toothbrush to brush out any remaining crumbs of gum.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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 **TIGER**

by **BUD BLAKE**



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Microwave
- 4 Jubilation
- 8 Scruff
- 12 " — Believer"
- 13 Give temporarily
- 14 Big-screen format
- 15 Layered deserts
- 17 Refer to
- 18 Irrate
- 19 Breaks away
- 21 Stockholm's land
- 24 JFK's veep
- 25 Fleur-de- —
- 26 Cutting tool
- 28 Parlor pieces
- 32 Now, on a memo

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18				19		20				
21	22				23		24					
25				26		27		28		29	30	31
32			33		34		35		36			
37				38		39		40		41		
			42		43		44		45			
46	47	48				49		50				
51					52		53				54	55
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

- 34 Luau bowlful
- 36 Karate level
- 37 Prison-related
- 39 Atty.'s title
- 41 Mauna —
- 42 Soda
- 44 Steering device on a ship
- 46 Leaping antelopes
- 50 Hosp. hook-ups
- 51 Donald Duck's nephew
- 52 Like a good golf score
- 56 Greek mountain
- 57 Cannes milk
- 58 Blackbird
- 59 Favorites
- 60 PC programs
- 61 Ewe's mate
- 7 '50s Ford
- 8 "Great work!"
- 9 During
- 10 Top of the head
- 11 Former mates
- 16 Passing craze
- 20 "Survivor" ailer
- 21 High-five sound
- 22 Sagacious
- 23 Snooze
- 27 Misery
- 29 Crystalline mineral
- 30 Skin soother
- 31 Twinkler in the sky
- 33 Tropical fruits
- 35 Leb. neighbor
- 38 Texter's chuckle
- 40 Calms
- 43 "Straight Up" singer Abdul
- 45 TiVo, for example
- 46 Denny's rival
- 47 Inspiration
- 48 Nuisance
- 49 Break suddenly
- 53 Chips go-with
- 54 Santa — winds
- 55 Crater part

DOWN

- 1 Energy
- 2 Docs' bloc
- 3 Italian cheese
- 4 Forest clearings
- 5 Tiki bar necklace
- 6 Tolkien creatures

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
POPEYE
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

OH MY GOWRSH!

LOOK AT THIS INVITATION! HANDWRITTEN AN SO WARMLY PERSONAL!

IT'S A THREAT TO BEAT YOU UP THAT WAS THROWN THROUGH YOUR WINDOW.

A HANDWRITTEN THREAT! FOLKS JUHK DON'TSK SHOW THAT COURTESY NO MORE!

I TOLD POPEYE TO COME HERE AND I'D GIVE HIM THE FIGHT OF HIS LIFE.

AN' YA BETTER KEEP THAT PROMISE!

ARF! ARF!

GREAT WARMUP!

NOW LET'S GIT TH REAL FIGHT STARTED!

UH... FELLERS?

YA PROMISED A FIGHT, IF I INVITED YA FER DINNER, YA WOULDN'T LIKE IT IF I ONLY SERVED APPETIZERS.

I'LL SPEND MY RECOVERY WORKING ON MY ETIQUETTE.

THAT'S ALL I ASK.

BARNEY GOOGLE AND
SNUFFY SMITH

ALL TH' FELLERS I'M PLAYIN' CARDS WIF T'NIGHT ARE MY FRIENDS !!

BUT YO'RE MY **BESTEST** FRIENDS !!

PAW !! YA OKAY, PAW ?

SORRY TO WAKE YA, BUT YO'RE USUALLY UP BY NOW !!

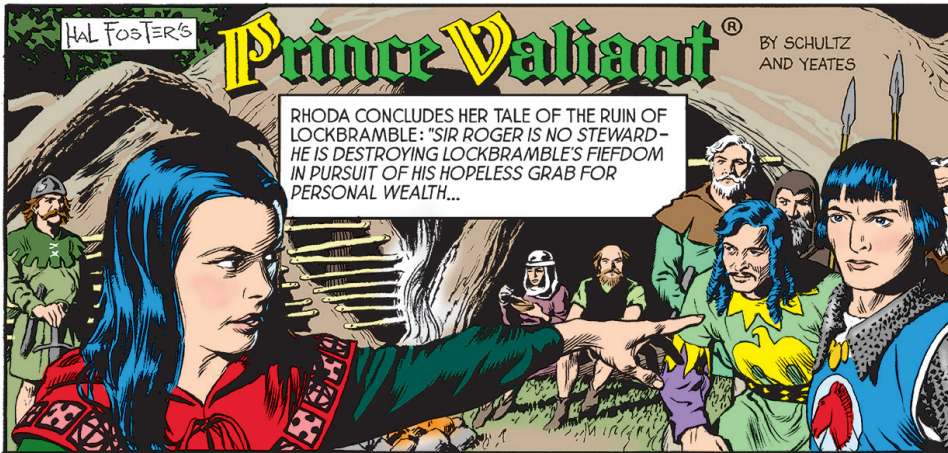
I WUZ OUT EXTRY LATE PLAYIN' CARDS, MAW !!

I WUZ GITTIN' DEALT **BODACIOUS** GOOD HANDS AN' JUST'A **RAKIN'** IN TH' DOUGH !!

SO IT TOOK ME A LOT LONGER THAN USUAL T'LOSE IT ALL !!

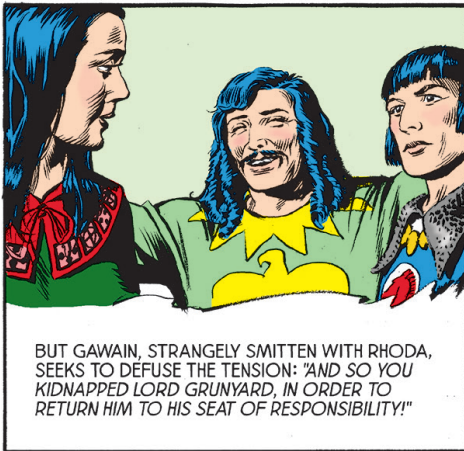
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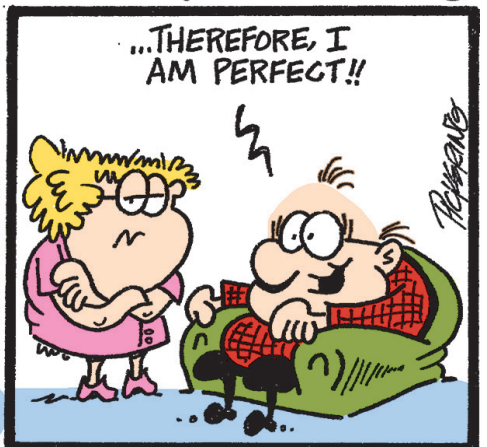
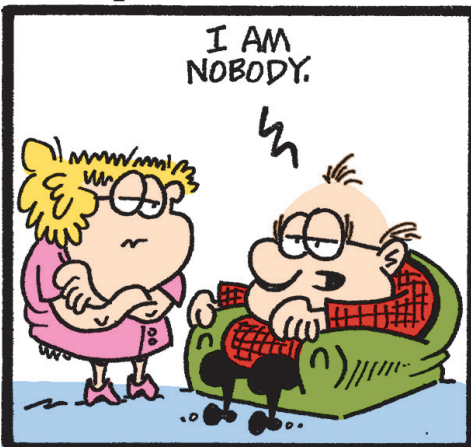
"...AND SO WE FIGHT TO END HIS RULE." REBELLION! A DANGEROUS ADMISSION TO VAL AND GAWAIN, MEMBERS OF THE MEDIEVAL ARISTOCRACY.

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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Pickering

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Books as Brain Food

Now here's a "novel" way to increase our brain function. It doesn't involve getting more exercise or eating certain foods. It doesn't include doing puzzles. We only need to grab a book and start flipping pages.

Emory University did a study that showed how there are "quantifiable changes" in brain activity when participants read a book. Granted, it was a bit more regimented than just grabbing your favorite author's latest bestseller.

In the study, participants were given a baseline brain scan each day for a few days. Then they were given the thriller "Pompeii" by Robert Harris with instructions to read 30 pages a night. Each morning they were given another brain scan. After the book was finished (about nine days), they were given more scans to see how the brain reacted. Researchers were able to track which portions of the book the participants were reading and correlate them to the brain scan images.

Here's what they learned: During reading, and for days afterward, there were significant activity increases in the parts of the brain associated with story comprehension, as well as processing language.

According to the study, the reading has to be fiction to get these brain connectivity changes, something with a narrative that describes events unfolding, and a story we can identify with.

Here's my thinking: While researchers don't know yet how long these brain changes last after reading a novel, it's at least five days. Perhaps we should spend some time in 2024 re-reading the novels that had an impact on us, as well as new narrative fiction and a few of the old classics. The reference librarian is sure to be a good source for book suggestions.

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1. What trophy -- a diamond-encrusted, alligator-skin belt with a solid gold buckle -- was awarded annually from 1950-76 to the top pro athlete of the year?

2. Joe Juranitch performed as the motorcycle-riding mascot Ragnar for what NFL team from 1994-2015?

3. What automobile endurance race was held from 1950-54 and was contested over six days and 2,100 miles through Mexico?

4. What Baseball Hall of Fame second baseman announced his retirement in June 1994, then returned to play for the Chicago Cubs for the 1996-97 seasons?

5. Name the 1969 LPGA Tour Rookie of the Year who made a record 299 consecutive cuts during her pro career.

6. How many times did Ingemar Johansson knock down Floyd Patterson in the third round of their 1959 world heavyweight championship boxing match before being declared the winner?

7. What member of the Toronto Maple Leafs scored an NHL single-game record 10 points (six goals and four assists) vs. the Boston Bruins in 1976?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. The Hickok Belt.
 2. The Minnesota Vikings.
 3. The Carrera Panamericana.
 4. Ryne Sandberg.
 5. Jane Blalock.
 6. Seven.
 7. Darryl Sittler.
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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Jumping Puppy Is Embarrassing His Owner

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Every time someone comes to visit or says hello at the park, my puppy, Jake, jumps up and tries to lick their face. It's embarrassing, and I don't know how to stop it. Can you help?
-- Sean in Providence, Rhode Island

DEAR SEAN: Jumping up is a common problem for dog owners (for dogs, not so much; they love it). So much so that it's one of the first things a trainer addresses with an owner.

What you'll need to do is to improve Jake's overall response to commands as well as train him not to jump on people. Here's how you do it, step by step:

1. Train the "sit," "stay" and "come here" commands every day, at home and at the park. Teach him to walk on the leash calmly at your side.
2. Work with a companion who will ring the doorbell from outside, while you command Jake to sit after the bell sounds.
3. Put Jake on a leash. Answer the door to the companion; when Jake tries to jump up, tug the leash once and command him to sit.

Remember to use positive reinforcement during training -- lots of praise, with a treat when he follows a command correctly. Avoid negative enforcement like scolding, yelling or hauling on the leash.

Jake will not be perfectly behaved for some time; you should keep his leash attached at home when you expect visitors. If he gets overexcited when a visitor arrives and he won't sit, take him to his crate or another room until he calms down.

Even after he masters the training and is better behaved at home and on the leash, you'll need to train him regularly so that he doesn't slip back into his jumping-up habit.

Readers, what other training tips do you have? Pass them along at ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Microplastics aren't an issue only in the world's oceans and ice caps. Researchers have discovered the tiny particles in clouds over Japan's Mount Fuji and Mount Oyama.

* A study found that students who chewed gum earned better math test scores than those who didn't.

* Ever wonder why our friends across the pond wish each other a "Happy Christmas" as opposed to Americans' "Merry Christmas"? In the 19th century, the word "merry" also meant intoxicated, so they wanted to separate it from public insobriety

* When staying at hotels, guests are more likely to interact with female robots, especially if they have human-like features, than male robots.

* Next time you're feeling stressed, try reaching for a hunk of chocolate: The sweet's smell increases theta brain waves, which triggers relaxation.

* In 1987, Marvel Comics celebrated the wedding of Spider-Man, aka Peter Parker, and his red-haired, green-eyed, longtime girlfriend Mary Jane Watson with a grand, live-action ceremony at New York's Shea Stadium. Guests of the happy couple included actors costumed as the Fantastic Four, Captain America and even the Hulk.

* Right-handed people tend to chew food on their right side, while left-handed folks are prone to chewing on their left.

Thought for the Day: "Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterwards." -- Vernon Sanders Law

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* When the D-Day forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, Adolf Hitler was asleep. TITLE: None of his generals dared to send reinforcements without his permission, and no one even dared to wake him, since he'd issued strict orders not to be disturbed.

* On its one-year anniversary, NASA's Curiosity Rover sang the "Happy Birthday" song to itself on Mars.

* Atomic bomb tests were a major tourist attraction in Las Vegas during the 1950s.

The Garden Bug



Frankincense

This fragrant substance is harvested from the *Boswellia sacra* species, also known as the olibanum. This tree is native to Oman, Yemen and Somalia, and has a long history

in folk medicine throughout Africa and Asia. In the Bible, it is one of three gifts offered to Jesus by the "wise men." It is said to control bleeding, help heal wounds, fight inflammation, improve oral health, and studies have shown it may even help treat cancer. - Brenda Weaver

Sources: www.medicalnewstoday.com, thetruthaboutcancer.com, wikipedia



by Freddy Groves

The Million Veteran Research Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs has now taken the DNA from 1 million veterans in their Million Veteran Program. The MVP research project is the first anywhere to study the health and genetic data of the veterans for the purpose of learning more and providing better care to current and future generations.

So far the projects they've researched include diabetes, PTSD, kidney disease, cancer, Gulf War illness

and more.

Joining the program is easy: Fill out the consent forms and give permission for the program to get into your health records, provide a blood sample (mail it in or have it drawn at an MVP facility), and complete all the surveys that cover lifestyle, health and exposures. Then you're in.

To be considered:

The information you provide will be kept indefinitely.

No information from the research will be placed in your health record, which means that if the blood screening or anything else turns up an illness, you won't be told. The research is for the benefit of current and future generations, not individuals.

To learn more about the program, see www.mvp.va.gov/pwa. You'll be able to read the 300-plus scientific publications and sign up for the research updates.

Be sure to scroll down the FAQ for answers to a lot of questions before you consider signing up. Look for the links that access a map showing all the MVP clinic locations. You'll only need to go in one time, unless in the future you agree to join other avenues of research, in which case additional consent would be needed. Take a long look at the drop-down section titled "Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security" to see how your DNA and health information will be secured and who else will be allowed access.

You can also call MVP with questions at 866-441-6075 or send an email to AskMVP@va.gov. If you don't have (or don't want to use) the internet to join the project or sign the consent forms, you can still arrange an in-person meeting to give your permission.

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Wishing Well®

3	5	7	6	8	5	2	7	5	3	8	3	7
P	A	D	S	C	D	E	E	E	R	H	E	V
4	5	6	3	7	6	5	4	2	7	5	6	4
N	L	E	S	E	T	I	O	N	L	G	G	G
8	6	8	7	5	2	6	3	6	5	7	3	5
A	O	L	O	H	E	A	T	L	T	P	I	F
3	8	5	3	2	3	6	5	2	6	5	7	3
G	L	U	E	R	A	S	L	G	H	D	W	T
4	5	7	2	5	7	8	2	6	4	2	8	4
O	A	I	Y	Y	L	E	R	I	O	E	N	F
3	6	7	8	2	7	4	2	3	7	8	2	8
W	G	L	G	N	P	S	E	O	O	E	W	S
6	3	8	2	3	7	2	8	7	8	7	8	8
H	R	A	E	K	W	D	H	E	E	R	A	D

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

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1. TELEVISION: What is the name of the captain in "The Love Boat"?
2. MOVIES: What is E.T.'s favorite candy in "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial"?
3. FOOD & DRINK: What is Hungary's national spice?
4. ADVERTISING: Which company's mascot is Elsie the Cow?
5. PSYCHOLOGY: What fear is represented in the condition called pluto-phobia?
6. GAMES: How many pawns are on a chessboard?
7. SCIENCE: What is the name of the giant land mass that is believed to have existed on Earth 200 million years ago?
8. GEOGRAPHY: Which of the Great Lakes is southernmost?
9. LANGUAGE: What is an octothorpe?
10. LITERATURE: Where are the novels "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" set?

Answers

1. Capt. Merrill Stubing.
2. Reese's Pieces.
3. Paprika.
4. Borden Dairy Company.
5. Fear of wealth
6. 16, eight pawns for each player.
7. Pangea.
8. Lake Erie.
9. A hashtag or pound sign.
10. Missouri.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Freedom Works Here – Round Two

When I launched the Freedom Works Here nationwide workforce recruitment campaign over the summer, I wanted people to hear South Dakota's story. I have always believed that our state has a unique story of Freedom and work ethic that would inspire the nation if they could only hear it.

This campaign gave us the opportunity to tell our story – and it's working.

Freedom-loving Americans have been moving to South Dakota at a record-breaking rate. More than 7,500 people have expressed interest in moving here. And almost 2,000 have actively worked with one of our job advisors to begin the final stages of their move. Some of these people have already filled jobs here in South Dakota! These numbers represent the folks who have gone directly through Freedom Works Here. There are even more people finding jobs in South Dakota on their own after seeing our ads.

Phase one of the Freedom Works Here campaign has been a huge success. Businesses have been telling me how much they love the campaign – and they want to know how they can partner with us to keep the ads going. Phase two will continue to recruit people from across the country to come live and work right here in South Dakota.

Even with all the success of phase one, we still have open jobs to fill. South Dakota has a strong need for more accountants. As our businesses grow and thrive, they need qualified individuals to manage their books so that they can continue their momentum. We also need more state accountants who can advance our conservative fiscal policies, build on 134 consecutive years of balanced budgets, and help the taxpayers keep as much money in their pockets as possible.

We are also seeing a large need for more homebuilders. We have led the nation in new housing development, but we can't keep up with all the folks moving here. We need to continue building enough housing to keep up with our growing population. In order to do that, we need to recruit more skilled homebuilders.

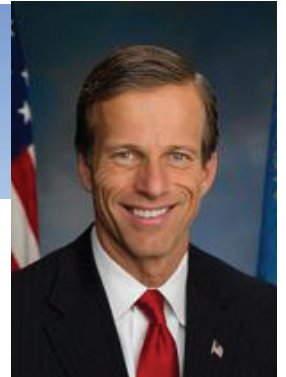
Our law enforcement officers keep our state safe. Over the last few years, as we have seen entire states turn their backs on the police, I have invited law enforcement officers to come work in a state that respects them. We have made South Dakota the Freest state in America. These law enforcement officers will help make us the safest.

Our biggest workforce need statewide today is for nurses of all classifications. Our nurses and healthcare providers are committed to ensuring that South Dakotans stay healthy. With more nurses moving here to fill those open jobs, we will continue to make South Dakota healthier for our kids and grandkids.

If you are interested in living and working in a state that values Freedom and personal responsibility, you can learn more about South Dakota at [FreedomWorksHere.com](https://www.freedomworkshere.com).

I can't wait for everyone to see the new ads for phase two of the Freedom Works Here campaign. We have told South Dakota's story to America, and people are asking for more. It's time to show the nation that Freedom still Works Here.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Secure America Starts at the Border

For the third year in a row, attempted illegal border crossings set a new record. In total, 8 million illegal immigrants have crossed into the United States since President Biden took office – one-fifth being “gotaways” that were seen by Customs and Border Protection, but evaded apprehension. Presumably, more made it through without any detection at all. The border crisis has gotten worse and worse for three years, and it’s long past time for a serious course correction from the Biden administration.

The kind of unchecked illegal immigration we’re seeing represents a serious security threat. The Department of Homeland Security recently warned that, “Terrorists and criminal actors may exploit the elevated flow [of migration] and increasingly complex security environment to enter the United States.” The Biden administration’s failure to secure the southern border has serious implications for our national security and public safety in our country.

By all indications, bad actors are in fact taking advantage of the chaos at the southern border. The Border Patrol chief recently said his agency is arresting an average of more than 47 people per day with “serious criminal histories.” In the last 12 months, 169 individuals on the terrorist watch list were caught trying to illegally enter the country. This is just the individuals who are being caught. How many of the individuals that Border Patrol fails to apprehend threaten security or safety?

The current crisis is, unfortunately, the predictable result of decisions made early on in the Biden administration. Before the president took office, his team was warned of the possibility of a migrant surge. Nevertheless, the president immediately went about dismantling his predecessor’s immigration policies and weakened our border security. He then ended pandemic-era policies that enabled expedited deportation. While the president has finally, half-heartedly acknowledged this crisis, the policy changes he has put in place are far too little and far too late. And now, the White House’s request for additional funding that would provide more resources to sanctuary cities gives Americans little confidence that the administration is actually interested in solving the crisis at the southern border.

The reality is that the solution to the border crisis is not solely a matter of money, it’s a matter of policy. Senate Republicans recently put forward a set of proposals to stem the flow of illegal immigrants. The plan would require border wall construction to proceed. It would close loopholes in our asylum system that are often abused. And it would prevent the Biden administration’s catch-and-release policies from sending illegal immigrants into the United States with court dates years into the future. It’s time we fix this problem, and Republicans are offering solutions. The question is whether our Democrat colleagues will join us in finally addressing this crisis.

Recent events should serve as a wake-up call that it’s time to protect our national security and secure the southern border. Lax enforcement and policies like catch-and-release only encourage more people to attempt to enter the United States illegally. A porous border invites the threat of terrorists and criminals. My Senate Republican colleagues and I will continue to advance these kinds of serious solutions to the border crisis.

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



Looking for Change

BIG Update

Thanksgiving is upon us again. It's a time to gather around a table with our families and friends and be thankful for all we have been given. This year, I will gather with my family to celebrate our thankfulness for each other. We'll indulge in delicious food like the classic turkey, potatoes, and stuffing.

I don't want to forget to say thank you to the veterans and farmers who work hard and sacrifice all year to provide for our food and our freedoms. They work tirelessly throughout this season to keep our nation safe and secure. As we begin this holiday season, I wish you and your families the best!

BIG Idea

Travis Sichmeller operates Sichmeller Engineering and Schwan Electric in Aberdeen. He knows how important an all-of-the-above approach is for energy security. Earlier this year, House Republicans passed the Lower Energy Costs Act to unleash American energy and lower energy costs for families, promoting the use of all fuel sources—from nuclear to fossil fuels to solar.

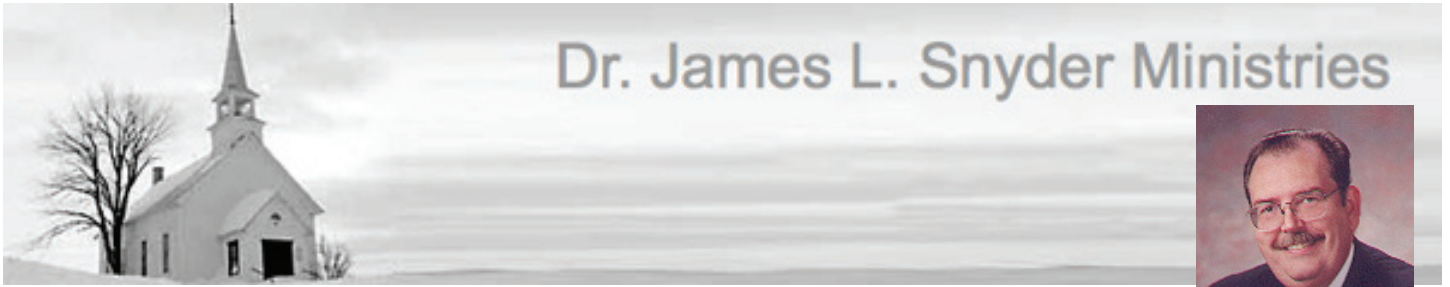
BIG News

The beginning of the holiday season calls to mind the thankfulness for family, and some of those families who are together by the gift of adoption. Each year, I have the opportunity to nominate a family who's opened their home to adoptive children as "Angels in Adoption." This year, that family is the Petersons of Aberdeen.

Zach and Katie Peterson have welcomed four of their children into their family through adoption. Their decision to adopt has not only blessed their children but has made their home filled with more love. I hold deep admiration for families like the Petersons who are true heroes to kids throughout South Dakota.

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Another Turkey in the Oven



What would Thanksgiving be without a turkey? I read somewhere that over 45 million turkeys are purchased during the Thanksgiving holiday. I'm unsure if that's correct, but I believe it comes close to the mark.

Thanksgiving is always my favorite time because the focus of Thanksgiving is food. Nobody loves food more than I do. I am always anxious for our Thanksgiving dinner to come.

This year I had a bit of apprehension before Thanksgiving. The kitchen is just next to the living room, and I was in the living room taking a little snooze, and just as I was waking up, I heard from the kitchen, "I'm going to put that turkey in the oven today."

I didn't hear the conversation leading up to that phrase, but it was a little troublesome. Am I in trouble? What did I do to get in this kind of trouble?

My goal for the day was to find out why she would stuff me in the oven. Then, maybe I can figure out how to avoid that kind of an encounter.

Throughout the years, I know I have been somewhat of a turkey. I'm not exactly sure what that means, but it has been referred to me quite often by The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. But the resemblance I have with the turkey is above my pay scale.

Nevertheless, I will play this out as best I can, and if I end up in the oven, so be it.

Cautiously, I got up and tiptoed out to the kitchen, and looking at my wife, I said, "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

Looking at me suspiciously, she asked, "What did you have in mind?"

"Anything," I said, "that would help you getting our turkey ready for Thanksgiving."

Looking at me for a moment she burst out laughing. Then she said something that has troubled me to this very day. "You want one turkey to help another turkey?"

I had no idea what she was talking about, and for the life of me, I refused to ask her what she meant. If I would've asked her what she meant, the chances are pretty good she would've told me. If I had known what she meant, I probably would have been in deep trouble.

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Slowly, I went back into the living room and set up my chair to ponder what had just happened. I then heard from the kitchen, "Yes, he said that." Then, there was a burst of laughter. I wished I knew who she was talking to.

Despite this negativity, I decided I would live this Thanksgiving time with a great deal of positivity. After all, it might be my last Thanksgiving.

It's easy to get down about something, particularly if you don't have all the facts. I often hear somebody say something and misinterpret it because I don't hear everything they say. That can get a person like me into trouble.

I can't recall all the times I got in trouble with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage because I didn't hear everything she said. She often tells me, "I know, my dear, you can hear but can't listen."

She's right on that one. It has cost me a lot down the years not being able to listen. I can hear words, but sometimes I misinterpret them to mean something altogether different and what they mean.

That was a little over a week ago, and we had a wonderful Thanksgiving with the family. The turkey on the table was very delicious. I don't think I've had a better turkey all my life.

Cautiously, as I took a bite of that turkey, I glanced over at The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I was trying to find out a clue as to what I heard on the telephone this past week. She was paying me no attention and just enjoying the family around the table.

The next day, after it was all over and all the family had gone home, I sat in the living room relaxing and watching a little TV. On my mind was that turkey we had yesterday. Then, a thought just got a hold of me at that time.

I thought that the center of our Thanksgiving dinner was the turkey. Everybody was talking about the turkey and how delicious it was. That got me thinking about my situation.

If the Thanksgiving turkey is the center of our family get-together, perhaps when my wife refers to me as a turkey, it means I'm the center of our family. That never occurred to me before. I didn't want to test it with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I thought better.

Sometimes, what you don't hear can be a blessing.

Thinking about this later that day I was reminded of what Jesus said. "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given" (Mark 4:23-24).

I have an obligation to listen to what I am hearing. This has a degree of obedience that is important in my Christian life. I will be held accountable to what I am hearing. That means it is important to hear everything. If I miss a word I could get the whole thing wrong which would have consequences in my life.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What is the status of California's giant sequoias trees and what's being done to save them from extinction?

-- M.L., Sacramento, CA

Giant sequoias, which can grow upwards of 300 feet tall with circumferences of 90+ feet around at ground level, are among the largest and longest living species on the planet today. Some are over 3,000 years old. But climate change, human activities and wildfires are threatening their very existence in their native habitat on the western slopes of California's Sierra Nevada mountains.

Biologists estimate there are about 80,000 naturally occurring giant sequoias left there and worry that another bad wildfire year—like 2015, 2017 or 2020, when National Park Service biologists clad the lower flanks of the biggest trees with tin foil to deter the flames—could decimate those remaining trees.

Giant sequoias have evolved to withstand moderate fires, but the recent infernos, exacerbated by climate change, have been catastrophic. Not only do these fires destroy the trees directly, they also hinder the natural reproduction process by killing young sequoias and preventing seeds from germinating.

While fire has been the most immediate threat in recent years, climate change in general is altering the trees' environment—and may be the final nail in their coffin. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and erratic precipitation patterns have weakened the trees, making them more susceptible to pests and disease, and disrupting the natural fire regime that they have depended on for regeneration for millennia.

To mitigate the impacts of climate change, researchers and conservationists are studying how these trees respond to changing environmental conditions. They are also implementing measures like controlled burns to mimic natural fire cycles and create a more suitable habitat for the sequoias.

Human activities, such as logging, urban development and recreation further exacerbate the challenges faced by giant sequoias. Urbanization around these groves disrupts their ecosystems, and recreational activities can harm their shallow root systems. Efforts are also being made to limit human impacts in sequoia territory. Strict regulations on logging, urban expansion and recreational activities near these groves aim to preserve the natural ecosystem and minimize disturbances to the trees.

Moreover, collaborative initiatives between government agencies, conservation organizations, and local communities are crucial for the long-term protection of these ancient giants. Public awareness campaigns, educational programs, and eco-tourism practices that emphasize responsible visitation also play a vital role in ensuring the survival of these magnificent trees. Whether or not our grandchildren will get to visit these giant sequoias may well depend on our ability to rein in carbon emissions here and around the world in time to stave off cataclysmic climate change. Indeed, the fate of these giant trees, as well as thousands of other plants and animals, hangs in the balance.

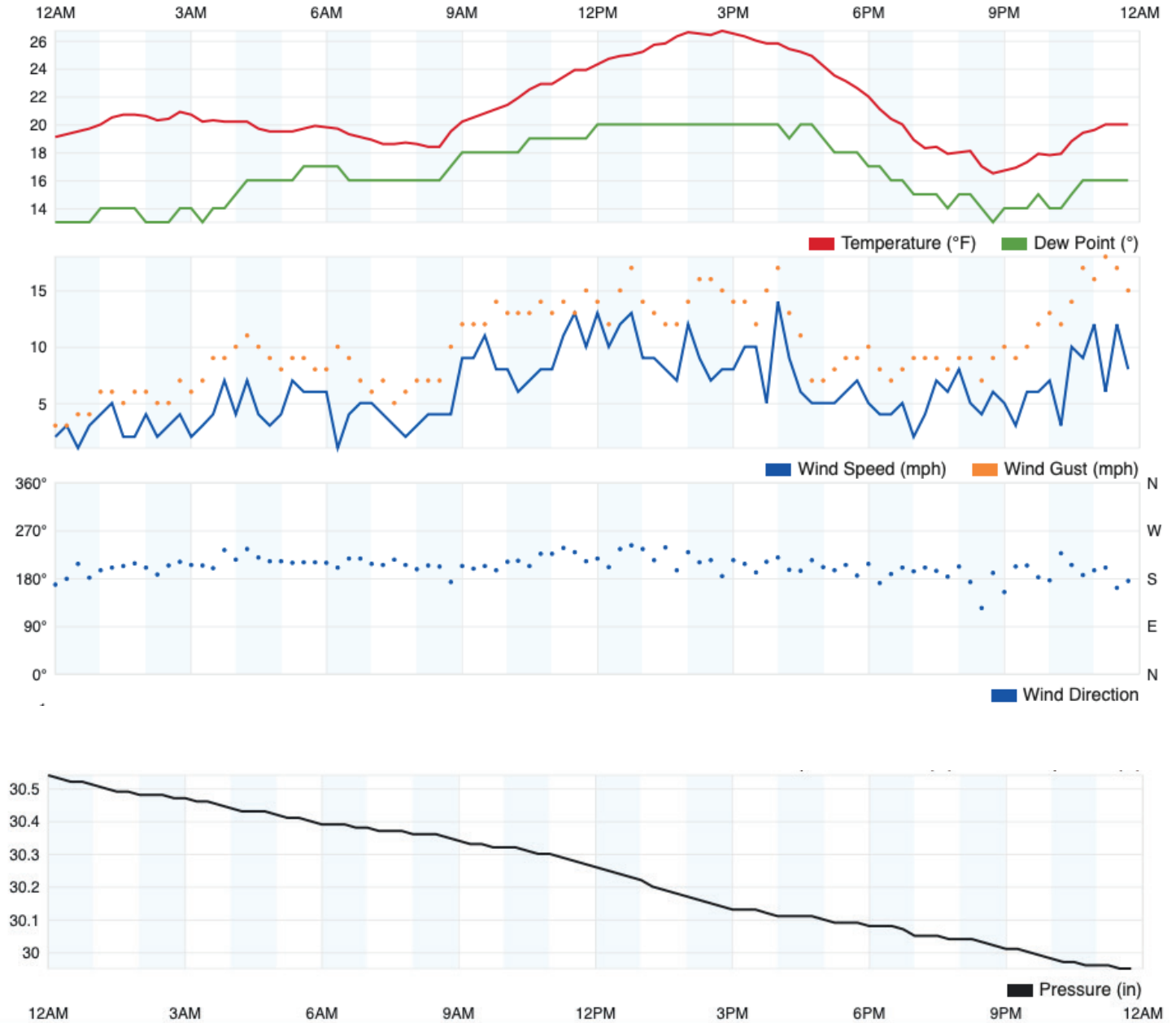


Climate change, human activities & wildfires are threatening giant sequoias very existence in their native habitat in California. Credit: Roddy Scheer

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Sun Nov 26	Mon Nov 27	Tue Nov 28	Wed Nov 29	Thu Nov 30	Fri Dec 1	Sat Dec 2
30°F 10°F	26°F 11°F	42°F 22°F	44°F 21°F	36°F 16°F	36°F 22°F	41°F 23°F
NW 18 MPH	NW 10 MPH	S 13 MPH	W 6 MPH	NW 13 MPH	S 11 MPH	SW 11 MPH



Light Snow Lingers This Morning

November 26, 2023
3:06 AM

Winds Today →

Today	Tonight	Monday
28-34°	8-18°	23-39°
Light Snow (1" or less accumulations)		Flurries

	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm
Aberdeen	36	37	37	37	37	35	33	30	25	21
Britton	36	37	37	37	38	37	35	32	29	25
Brookings	40	39	38	36	36	35	35	31	29	23
Chamberlain	39	37	38	37	36	33	32	29	23	15
Clark	36	37	37	37	37	37	35	31	28	25
Eagle Butte	41	43	43	43	41	39	36	32	26	21
Ellendale	38	40	40	39	38	37	33	31	26	21
Eureka	39	41	40	40	39	38	35	32	28	23
Gettysburg	39	41	43	40	40	38	36	32	26	22
Huron	39	39	38	38	36	33	31	28	24	22
Kennebec	41	43	45	44	44	41	38	32	26	18
McIntosh	45	46	45	45	44	41	38	35	29	23
Milbank	32	33	33	35	36	33	32	30	26	24
Miller	39	39	39	38	37	36	32	29	24	20
Mobridge	39	39	39	38	38	35	32	30	26	22
Murdo	41	43	45	44	43	40	37	32	26	20
Pierre	38	39	39	38	38	37	33	30	25	20
Redfield	38	38	39	38	38	36	33	30	25	21
Sisseton	37	37	38	37	37	37	35	32	30	26
Watertown	35	36	36	37	37	37	35	32	29	25
Webster	39	39	40	40	40	39	38	36	32	29
Wheaton	32	32	31	32	32	31	30	28	25	23



A band of snow will move ahead of a front crossing eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota this morning. Winds will also pick up behind this front, topping out anywhere from 30 to 45mph. Milder air will move in for the upcoming work week.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 27 °F at 1:54 PM

Low Temp: 16 °F at 8:41 PM

Wind: 18 mph at 11:10 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 11 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 63 in 1914

Record Low: -24 in 1996

Average High: 37

Average Low: 15

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.66

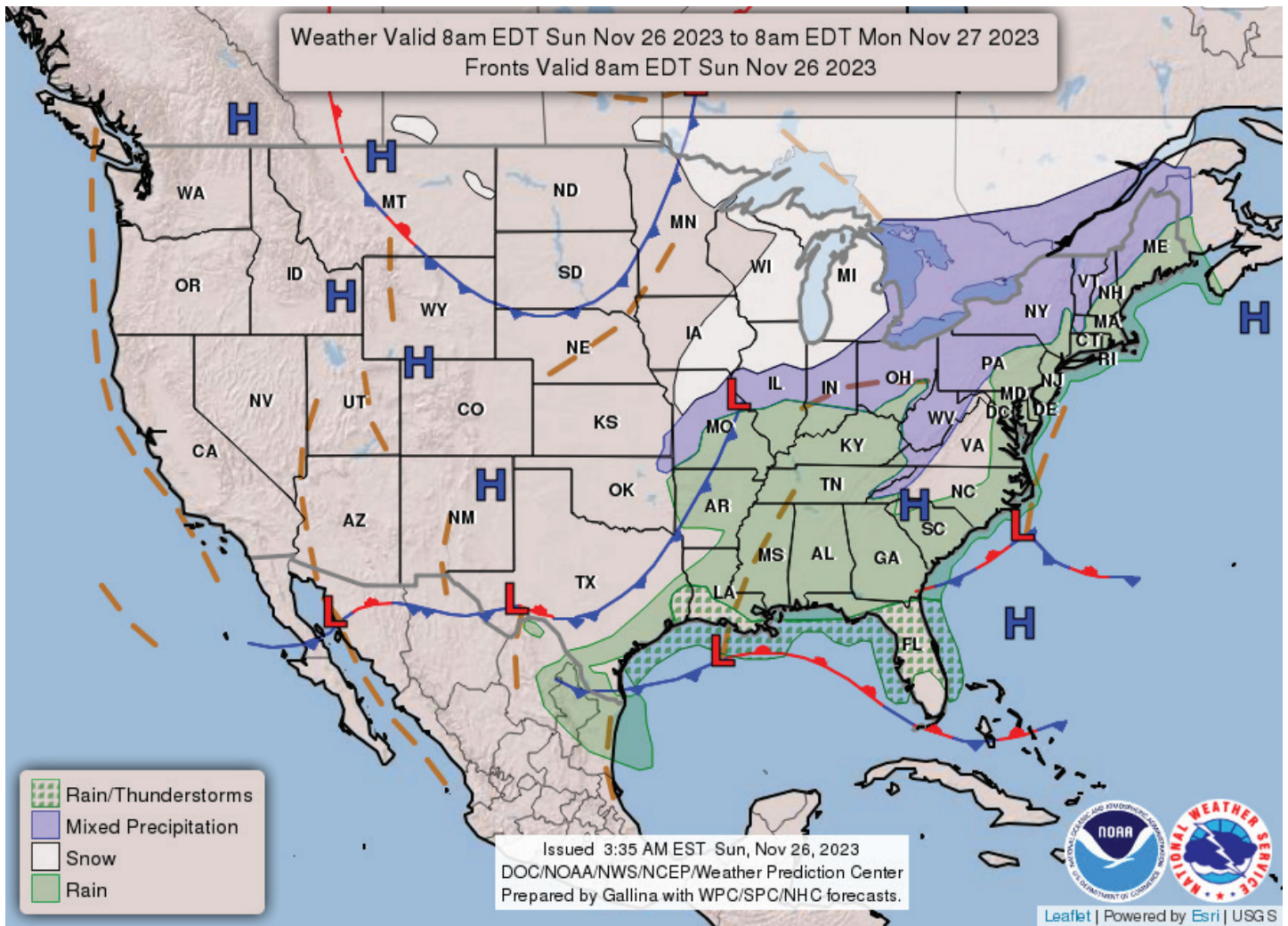
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.19

Average Precip to date: 21.13

Precip Year to Date: 23.17

Sunset Tonight: 4:55:12 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45:23 AM



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Today in Weather History

November 26, 1989: Snow began falling in western South Dakota during the early evening of the 26th and swept across the state and into west central Minnesota that night and through much of the 27th. Almost two feet of snow fell in parts of the Black Hills, while one to two inches fell in the southeast part of South Dakota. Icy roads caused by rain that preceded the snow in central and eastern parts of the state combined with strong northerly winds on the 27th to make for dangerous traveling conditions. Numerous accidents were reported, and many cars went into ditches. Some of the heavier snow amount in central, north central, and northeast South Dakota were reported at Leola with 6 inches; Mellette and Onida with 5 inches; and Eureka, Faulkton, and Aberdeen with 4 inches.

November 26, 2001: Heavy snow of 6 to 12 inches, along with strong north winds of 20 to 40 mph, caused near-blizzard conditions and challenging travel conditions across most of central and northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Snowfall amounts were 6 to 12 inches in South Dakota and 10 to 14 inches in west central Minnesota. Most schools were closed or started late on both the 26th and 27th and some businesses were also closed. Many flights were also delayed or canceled. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Eagle Butte, Fort Thompson and Webster; 7 inches at Eureka, Onida, Doland, and Watertown; 8 inches at Highmore, Miller, Onaka, Castlewood, and Selby; 9 inches at Sisseton and Peever; 10 inches at Ortonville, Faulkton, Blunt, Murdo, Kennebec, and Stephan; 11 inches at Victor and Gettysburg; 12 inches at Milbank, White Rock, and Clear Lake; 13 inches at Wheaton; and 14 inches at Browns Valley.

1888 - A late season hurricane brushed the East Coast with heavy rain and gale force winds. The hurricane passed inside Nantucket and over Cape Cod, then crossed Nova Scotia. (David Ludlum)

1896 - Snow and high winds hit the Northern Plains and the Upper Mississippi Valley, with a Thanksgiving Day blizzard across North Dakota. The storm was followed by a severe cold wave in the Upper Midwest. The temperature at Pokegama Dam MI plunged to 45 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A Thanksgiving Day storm in the northeastern U.S. produced heavy snow in northern New England and upstate New York. Snowfall totals in Maine ranged up to twenty inches at Flagstaff Lake. Totals in New Hampshire ranged up to 18 inches at Errol. Gales lashed the coast of Maine and New Hampshire. A second storm, over the Southern and Central Rockies, produced nine inches of snow at Kanosh UT, and 13 inches at Divide CO, with five inches reported at Denver CO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather over the Central Gulf Coast States during the late morning and afternoon hours. Five tornadoes were reported in Mississippi, with the tornadoes causing a million dollars damage at Ruleville, and in Warren County. In Utah, the town of Alta was blanketed with 15 inches of snow overnight, and during the day was buried under another 16.5 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A massive storm over the western U.S. produced heavy snow in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. The storm produced more than two feet of snow in the higher elevations of northern and central Utah, bringing more than sixty inches of snow to the Alta Ski Resort in the Wasatch Mountains. Winds in Utah gusted to 60 mph at Bullfrog. The storm brought much needed snow to the ski resorts of Colorado, with 19 inches reported at Beaver Creek. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2007: Lightning and heavy rain delay the start of the Monday Night Football game at Pittsburgh's Heinz Field between the Miami Dolphins and the Pittsburgh Steelers by 25 minutes. The muddy field conditions contribute to one of the lowest scoring NFL games won by the Steelers, 3-0. The teams combined 375 yards, and the winning field goal occurred with 17 seconds left in the game.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

KEEP HIM DOWN!

A group of tourists was strolling along the oceanfront when they saw a group of young boys catching crabs.

They became curious when they saw that the baskets they placed the captured crabs in had no top. As a crab was being put into one of the baskets, one of the men said, "You'd better cover the basket, or all of the crabs will climb out!"

"Oh no, sir," said one of the boys. "That'll never happen. If one of them tries to climb out, the others will pull him down."

Unfortunately, many who attend church each Sunday and call themselves "Christians" behave like those crabs. Whenever they hear of a colleague getting a promotion, or another person receiving an unusual gift or special recognition for a "job well done," or a competitor receiving a reward for their outstanding performance at work, they are unable to rejoice with the one whom God has blessed. They look for reasons to pull that one down as they try to build themselves up. How sad that gossip, jealousy, and envy rules their lives!

Paul wrote that "Love is not jealous!" In other words, if I genuinely love others as God wants me to love them, I do not become jealous when God blesses them. Instead, I rejoice at His goodness to them. Whatever we have or what others have comes from God. They are His blessings on their lives for what they have done. It's His opinion that matters, not ours!

The love that Paul writes about is not a love that comes from a human heart. It is a God-love that comes from the heart of God, and Christ dwelling in us. Only if we willingly surrender our hearts to Him will we live His love. Only then will others see Him in the way we live.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to rejoice and be happy when You bless and honor others. Fill our hearts with so much of Your love that we will be delighted for their success. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7



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
- 11/05/2023 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Fall Dinner, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- 11/11/2023 Groton American Legion Annual Turkey Party 6:30 pm.
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 11/26/2023 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
- 12/02/2023 Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.24.23

6 15 45 59 68 1

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$335,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.25.23

3 11 18 38 41 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,450,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.25.23

3 6 9 21 26 4

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 3 Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.25.23

10 12 14 26 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$68,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.25.23

1 27 30 49 62 20

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.25.23

27 33 63 66 68 9

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$352,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Fragile Gaza truce is back on track after hourslong delay in hostage-for-prisoner swap

By WAFAA SHURAFI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The tense cease-fire between Israel and Hamas appeared to be back on track early Sunday after the release of a second group of militant-held hostages and Palestinians from Israeli prisons, but the swap followed an hourslong delay that underscored the truce's fragility.

In a separate development, Hamas announced Sunday that one of its top commanders had been killed, without saying when or how.

The exchange was delayed Saturday evening after Hamas accused Israel of violating the agreement, which has brought the first significant pause in seven weeks of war marked by the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades, vast destruction and displacement across the Gaza Strip, and a hostage crisis that has shaken Israel.

Qatar and Egypt, which mediate with Hamas, announced late Saturday that the obstacles to the exchange had been overcome. The militants released 17 hostages, including 13 Israelis, while Israel freed 39 Palestinian prisoners.

Thousands of people gathered in central Tel Aviv late Saturday to call for the release of all the estimated 240 people captured by Hamas in its Oct. 7 rampage across southern Israel, which ignited the war. They accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of not doing enough to bring them back.

Pressure from the hostages' families has sharpened the dilemma facing the country's leaders, who seek to eliminate Hamas as a military and governing power while returning all the captives.

The war has already claimed the lives of more than 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians killed by Hamas in the initial attack. More than 13,300 Palestinians have been killed, roughly two thirds of them women and minors, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza.

The four-day cease-fire, which began Friday, was brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the United States. Hamas is to release at least 50 Israeli hostages, and Israel 150 Palestinian prisoners. All are women and minors.

Israel has said the truce can be extended by an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed, but has vowed to quickly resume its offensive once it ends. Israel said early Sunday that it had received a new list of hostages slated to be released later in the day, in the third of four scheduled swaps.

HAMAS COMMANDER KILLED

Hamas announced the death of Ahmed al-Ghandour, without providing further details. He was in charge of northern Gaza and a member of Hamas' top military council, and is the highest-ranking militant known to have been killed in the fighting.

Al-Ghandour, believed to have been around 56 years old, had survived at least three Israeli attempts on his life, and helped plan a cross-border attack in 2006 in which Palestinian militants captured an Israeli soldier, according to the Counter Extremism Project, an advocacy group based in Washington.

Hamas said he was killed along with three other senior militants, including Ayman Siam, who Israel says was in charge of Hamas' rocket-firing unit. The Israeli military had mentioned both men in a Nov. 16 statement, saying it had targeted an underground complex where Hamas leaders were hiding and accusing the group of concealing their deaths.

The Israeli military claims to have killed thousands of militants, without providing evidence, including several mid-ranking commanders it has identified by name.

AID AND RESPITE IN GAZA

The pause has given some respite to Gaza's 2.3 million people, still reeling from relentless Israeli bombardment that has driven three-quarters of the population from their homes and leveled residential areas. Rocket fire from Gaza militants into Israel also went silent.

War-weary Palestinians in northern Gaza, where the offensive has focused, returned to the streets to

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survey the damage Entire city blocks in and around Gaza City have been gutted by airstrikes that hollowed out buildings and left drifts of rubble in the street.

In southern Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people from the north have sought refuge, residents lined up outside gas stations for a second day, hoping to stock up on fuel. Palestinians who have tried to return to the north to see if their homes are still intact have been turned back by Israeli troops.

"Many are desperate to return to their homes, but they open fire on anyone approaching from the south," said Rami Hazarein, who fled from Gaza City last month.

The United Nations said the truce has made it possible to scale up the delivery of food, water, and medicine to the largest volume since the start of the war. It was also able to fuel for the first time since the war began, and to reach areas in the north for the first time in a month.

A BITTERSWEET MOMENT FOR HOSTAGE FAMILIES

Shortly before midnight, Hamas released the second group of hostages, 13 Israelis and four Thais. They were turned over to Egypt and then transferred to Israel, where they were taken to hospitals.

Hamas released a video showing the hostages appearing shaken but mostly in good physical condition as masked militants led them to Red Cross vehicles. Some of the hostages waved goodbye to the militants. One girl was on crutches and wore a cast on her left foot.

The Israeli hostages freed on Saturday included seven children and six women, Netanyahu's office announced. Most were from Kibbutz Be'eri, a community Hamas militants ravaged during their Oct. 7 cross-border attack. The children ranged in age from 3 to 16, and the women ranged from 18 to 67.

All the released hostages either had a family member killed in the Oct. 7 rampage or a loved one still in captivity in Gaza, a kibbutz spokesperson said.

A HERO'S WELCOME IN WEST BANK

Many Palestinians view prisoners held by Israel, including those implicated in deadly attacks, as heroes resisting occupation, and many of those who were released received a hero's welcome.

In the West Bank town of Al-Bireh, newly released teenage boys were paraded through the main square where they waved Palestinian flags as well as green banners of Hamas and yellow banners of the rival Fatah party of President Mahmoud Abbas.

The war in Gaza has been accompanied by a surge in violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Palestinian health authorities said early Sunday that five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli military raid in the northern West Bank city of Jenin that began the day before.

The military said it had arrested a suspect in the killing of an Israeli father and son at a car wash in the West Bank earlier this year. The army has conducted frequent military raids and arrested hundreds of Palestinians since the start of the war, mostly people it suspects of being Hamas members.

India's LGBTQ+ community holds pride march, raises concerns over country's restrictive laws

By SHONAL GANGULY Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — More than 2,000 people took part in a gay pride event in New Delhi, waving rainbow flags and multicolored balloons as they celebrated sexual diversity in India but also raised concerns over the country's restrictive laws.

Dancing to drums and music, the participants walked for more than two hours to the Jantar Mantar area near India's Parliament. They held banners reading "Equality for all" and "Queer and proud."

The annual event comes after India's top court refused to legalize same-sex marriages in an October ruling that disappointed campaigners for LGBTQ+ rights in the world's most populous country.

"It's not about marriage. It's about equality. Everybody should have the same right because that's what our constitution says," said Noor Enayat, one of the volunteers organizing this year's event.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court's five-judge bench heard 21 petitions that sought to legalize same-sex marriage in India.

The justices called for steps to raise awareness among the public about LGBTQ+ identity and to establish

hotlines and safe houses for those in the community who are facing violence. They also urged the state to make sure same-sex couples don't face harassment or discrimination in accessing basic needs, like opening a joint bank account, but stopped short of granting legal recognition to same-sex unions.

Legal rights for LGBTQ+ people in India have been expanding over the past decade, mostly as a result of the Supreme Court's intervention.

In 2018, the top court struck down a colonial-era law that had made gay sex punishable by up to 10 years in prison and expanded constitutional rights for the gay community. The decision was seen as a historic victory for LGBTQ+ rights.

Despite this progress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government resisted the legal recognition of same-sex marriage and rejected several petitions in favor. Some religious groups, too, had opposed same-sex unions, saying they went against Indian culture.

Homosexuality has long carried a stigma in India's traditional society, even though there has been a shift in attitudes toward same-sex couples in recent years. India now has openly gay celebrities and some high-profile Bollywood films have dealt with gay issues.

According to a Pew survey, acceptance of homosexuality in India increased by 22 percentage points to 37% between 2013 and 2019. But same-sex couples often face harassment in many Indian communities, whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian.

Sierra Leone declares nationwide curfew after gunmen attack main military barracks in the capital

BY KEMO CHAM and CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (AP) — Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio declared a nationwide curfew Sunday after gunmen attacked the military's main and largest barracks in the West African nation's capital, raising fears of a breakdown of order amid a surge of coups in the region.

The unidentified gunmen attacked the military armory within the Wilberforce barracks in the capital, Freetown, early morning, Bio said in a statement posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, adding that they were driven back by security forces and "calm has been restored."

"As the combined team of our Security Forces continue to root out the remnant of the fleeing renegades, a nationwide curfew has been declared and citizens are encouraged to stay indoors," he wrote.

The country's Ministry of Information and Education also said in a statement the government and security forces are "in control" of the situation.

No details have been immediately given about the gunmen or the reason for the attack.

Videos online, that went viral, reportedly showed soldiers patrolling Freetown's empty streets and captured the loud blasts of gunshots.

West Africa's regional economic bloc of ECOWAS — of which Sierra Leone is a member — described the incident as a plot "to acquire arms and disturb the peace and constitutional order" in the country. "ECOWAS reiterates its zero tolerance for unconstitutional change of government," the bloc said in a statement.

Sierra Leone's president was reelected for a second term in June in a disputed vote in which the main opposition party the electoral commission of conspiring with his party to rig the results.

It was the country's fifth presidential election since the end of a brutal 11-year civil war — more than two decades ago — which left tens of thousands dead and destroyed the country's economy.

Bio continues to face criticism because of debilitating economic conditions. Nearly 60% of Sierra Leone's population of more than seven million are facing poverty, with youth unemployment being one of the highest in West Africa.

Israeli forces kill at least 8 Palestinians in surging West Bank violence, health officials say

By MAJDI MOHAMMED and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

JENIN REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank (AP) — Israeli forces operating in the occupied West Bank killed at least eight Palestinians, including at least one militant, in a 24-hour period, Palestinian health officials said Sunday, as a fragile pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip entered its third day.

Violence in the West Bank has surged in the weeks since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, setting off a devastating war in the Gaza Strip. Israeli forces have killed dozens of Palestinians and arrested hundreds in the West Bank. Jewish West Bank settlers have also stepped up attacks.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said that five Palestinians were killed in the militant stronghold of Jenin, while three others were killed in separate areas of the West Bank since Saturday morning. One of those killed, in al-Bireh in the central West Bank, was a teenager, the ministry said.

The Israeli military said it killed five Palestinians in a gunbattle during its operation in the Jenin refugee camp, where it was arresting a Palestinian suspected of killing an Israeli father and son at a West Bank car wash earlier in the year.

The military said those killed were militants. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad group claimed one of the men, identified as Asaad al-Damj, 33, as a member, while the remainder were not immediately linked to militant groups. The military said, without specifying further, that it was backed by air power that struck and wounded what it said were armed Palestinians.

The military also said it was looking into the reports of the other incidents.

In the refugee camp, debris was strewn along the streets of the densely populated urban neighborhood and the wall of one house had a large hole in it.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said Israeli snipers were positioned on roofs and that military bulldozers were damaging roads and infrastructure. The reports could not immediately be independently verified, but the Israeli military said it was using "engineering equipment" to uncover explosive devices buried under roads.

In its bid to pursue militants, Israel clamped down on the West Bank immediately after the Hamas assault, closing crossings and checkpoints between Palestinian towns.

The intensified violence in the territory follows more than a year of escalating raids and arrests in the West Bank and deadly Palestinian attacks on Israelis. Before the Hamas assault, 2023 was already the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank in over two decades.

Israel and Hamas have briefly halted fire to allow for more aid to enter Gaza and permit a hostage release in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. The Israeli offensive has killed more than 13,300 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza government, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants. Vast swaths of the Gaza Strip have been flattened and some 1.7 million Palestinians have fled their homes.

In last month's surprise attack, Hamas and other Gaza militants killed some 1,200 people in Israel and took about 240 hostage. Several dozen soldiers have been killed since Israel began its ground invasion into Gaza shortly after the attack.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories as part of their hoped-for independent state.

Russia says it downed dozens of Ukrainian drones headed for Moscow, following a mass strike on Kyiv

Russian authorities on Sunday claimed that Ukraine tried to attack Moscow with dozens of drones overnight, just a day after Russia launched its most intense drone attack on Kyiv since the beginning of its full-scale war in 2022, according to Ukrainian officials.

Russian air defenses brought down at least 24 drones over the Moscow region — which surrounds but

does not include the capital — and three other provinces to the south and west, the Russian Defense Ministry and Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyenin reported in a series of Telegram updates. Neither referenced any casualties.

Andrei Vorobyev, governor of the Moscow region, wrote on Telegram that the drone strikes damaged three unspecified buildings there, adding that no one was hurt.

Russian Telegram channels reported that one drone crashed into a 12-story apartment block in the western Russian city of Tula, about 180 kilometers (113 miles) south of Moscow, injuring one resident and frightening others,

Moscow's Vnukovo and Domodedovo airports also briefly shut down because of the drone attack, according to Russia's state-run news agency Tass. Both appeared to have resumed normal operation by 6 a.m. local time, according to data from international flight tracking portals.

As of late morning Sunday, Ukrainian officials did not acknowledge or comment on the strikes, which came a day after Russia targeted the Ukrainian capital with over 60 Iranian-made Shahed drones. At least five civilians were wounded in the hourslong assault, which saw several buildings damaged by falling debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten. The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

The attack was "the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv" in the war so far, Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration, said on Saturday. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuriy Ihnat confirmed later that same day that air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the Ukrainian capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.

The attack on Kyiv was carried out on the morning of Holodomor Memorial Day, which commemorates the manmade famine in Soviet Ukraine that killed millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. It is marked on the fourth Saturday in November.

Top diplomats of South Korea, Japan and China meet to restart trilateral summit, revive cooperation

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The top diplomats from South Korea, Japan and China met Sunday to discuss when to resume their leaders' trilateral summit after a four-year hiatus and how to strengthen cooperation among the three Northeast Asian neighbors.

Closely linked economically and culturally with one another, the three countries together account for about 25% of the global gross domestic product. But efforts to boost trilateral cooperation have often hit a snag because of a mix of issues including historical disputes stemming from Japan's wartime aggression and the strategic competition between China and the United States.

"Korea, Japan and China have the potential for massive cooperation. Our three countries are neighbors that can't be separated from one another," South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin said at the start of the meeting in Busan, South Korea. "I hope we can strive together to hold the South Korea-Japan-China summit, which is at the apex of three-way cooperation, at an early date."

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said they would also push to revive three-way cooperation. Park said he hoped Sunday's meeting would also discuss ways of collaboration in the face of North Korea's evolving nuclear threats, as well as trade, climate change and personnel exchange between the three countries.

In September, senior officials of the three nations agreed to restart the trilateral summit "at the earliest convenient time."

Since they held their first stand-alone, trilateral summit in 2008, the leaders of the three countries had been supposed to meet annually. But their summit has faced on-again, off-again suspensions and remains stalled since 2019.

Their relationships are intertwined with a slew of complicated, touchy issues.

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South Korea and Japan are key U.S. military allies, hosting a total of 80,000 American troops on their territories. Their recent push to beef up a trilateral security cooperation with the United States has angered China, which is extremely sensitive to any moves it perceives as seeking to contain its rise to dominance in Asia.

But some observers say that the fact that Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden struck a conciliatory tone in their first face-to-face meeting in a year earlier this month would provide Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing with diplomatic rooms to maneuver to find ways to revive three-way cooperation.

The three ministers held bilateral talks on the sidelines.

After her meeting with Wang on Saturday, Kamikawa said she renewed Japan's demand that China remove its ban on seafood imports from Japan in response to Tokyo's discharge of treated radioactive wastewater from its tsunami-hit nuclear power plant. Wang, for his part, said China opposed Japan's "irresponsible action" of releasing the wastewater and called for an independent monitoring mechanism of the process, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Ties between South Korea and Japan deteriorated severely in past years due to issues originating from Japan's 1910-45 colonization of the Korean Peninsula. But their relations have warmed significantly in recent months as the two countries took a series of major steps to move beyond history wrangling and boost bilateral cooperation in the face of North Korea's advancing nuclear program and other shared challenges.

In a reminder of their difficult relations, however, a Seoul court earlier this week ordered Japan to financially compensate Koreans forced into sexual slavery by Japanese troops during the colonial period.

During her meeting with Park Sunday, Kamikawa called the court verdict "extremely regrettable" and urged South Korea to take appropriate steps to remedy the breaches of international law, according to Japan's consulate-general in Busan. South Korea's Foreign Ministry said the two ministers discussed the court ruling as well as ways to work together to reinvigorate three-way cooperation with China. The ministry also said that both strongly condemned the North's spy satellite launch last week.

Meeting Wang bilaterally, Park asked for China to play a constructive role in persuading North Korea to halt provocations and take steps toward denuclearization, according to South Korea's Foreign Ministry.

Wang described China as "a stabilizing force" in the region that has "always played and will continue to play a constructive role in easing the situation on the peninsula," according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. It said Wang called for stronger trade and economic ties between the two countries and criticized the "tendency to politicize economic issues."

North Korea's growing arsenal of nuclear-capable missiles poses a major security threat to South Korea and Japan. But China, North Korea's last major ally and biggest source of aid, is suspected of avoiding fully enforcing United Nations sanctions on North Korea and shipping covert assistance to the North to help its impoverished neighbor stay afloat and continue to serve as a bulwark against U.S. influences on the Korean Peninsula.

Dead, wounded or AWOL: The voices of desperate Russian soldiers trying to get out of the Ukraine war

By ERIKA KINETZ Associated Press

In audio intercepts from the front lines in Ukraine, Russian soldiers speak in shorthand of 200s to mean dead, 300s to mean wounded. The urge to flee has become common enough that they also talk of 500s — people who refuse to fight.

As the war grinds into its second winter, a growing number of Russian soldiers want out, as suggested in secret recordings obtained by The Associated Press of Russian soldiers calling home from the battlefields of the Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk regions in Ukraine.

The calls offer a rare glimpse of the war as it looked through Russian eyes — a point of view that seldom makes its way into Western media, largely because Russia has made it a crime to speak honestly about the conflict in Ukraine. They also show clearly how the war has progressed, from the professional soldiers who initially powered Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion to men from all walks of life compelled to serve

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in grueling conditions.

"There's no f----- 'dying the death of the brave' here," one soldier told his brother from the front in Ukraine's Kharkiv region. "You just die like a f----- earthworm."

The prospect of another wave of mobilization lingers, even as Moscow has been trying to lure people into signing contracts with the military. Russia's annual autumn conscription draft kicked off in October, pulling in some 130,000 fresh young men. Though Moscow says conscripts won't be sent to Ukraine, after a year of service they automatically become reservists — prime candidates for mobilization.

The AP verified the identities of people in the calls by speaking with relatives and soldiers — some of whom are still at war in Ukraine — and researching open-source material linked to the phone numbers used by the soldiers.

The conversations, picked up in January 2023 — some from near the longest and deadliest fight in Bakhmut — have been edited for length and clarity. Names have been omitted to protect the soldiers and their relatives.

The voices in these calls are of men who didn't or couldn't flee mobilization. Some had no money, no education and no options. Others believed in patriotic duty. One worked in a meat processing plant, cutting bone. Another worked at a law firm. A third, who worked as a roofer and later at a supermarket company, had a string of debts and had defaulted on his utilities payments, records show.

It is hard to say how representative these calls are of sentiment in Russia's armed forces, but their desperation is matched by a spike in legal cases against soldiers in Russia who refuse to fight.

What's happening in Ukraine is "simply genocide," the soldier in Kharkiv told his brother. "If this s--- doesn't stop, then soon we'll be leading the Ukrainians to the Kremlin ourselves," he said.

"This is just a huge testing ground, where the whole world is testing their weapons, f--- it, and sizing up their d---," he went on. "That's all."

But there are other voices, too, of men who remain committed to the fight.

"As long as we are needed here, we will carry out our task," a soldier named Artyom told AP from eastern Ukraine at the end of May, where he'd been stationed for eight months without break. "Just stop asking me these stupid questions."

The Kremlin and Russian Ministry of Defense did not respond to requests for comment.

SOLDIER: 'BONES, TEARS — ALL THE SAME, THEY ARE THE SAME AS WE ARE'

When he finally got to go home, it came at a terrible price: his brother's life.

Nicknamed "Crazy Professor" because of his disheveled hair, he was swept up in the first days of Russia's September 2022 draft. The soldier said he was assured that he wouldn't see combat and would get to go home every six months.

Neither turned out to be true.

After a few weeks of training, the Professor was sent to the front line near Bakhmut as a mortarman. He wanted out almost immediately. He was ill-equipped, at least compared to the well-camouflaged Wagner soldiers wandering around.

"They have night vision and automatic rifles with cool silencers. I have an automatic rifle from 1986 or hell knows what year," he told his brother in a January phone call.

It was his job to aim, but the Russian army's coordinates were so sloppy that soldiers ended up killing each other.

The Professor said his commander instructed them not to kill civilians, but who was a civilian and who was a combatant? Even a kid could carry a grenade, he told his brother. Where did the mortars he fired land? Had he killed children?

The worst was when he was out with young guys in his unit. There was just a strip of woods between them and the Ukrainians.

"I imagined that there, on the other side, there could be young people just like us. And they have their whole lives ahead of them," he told AP in June. "Bones, tears — all the same, they are the same as we are."

The Professor told himself he didn't really have a choice: Either fire the mortar or face criminal charges

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and end up in a pit or a prison.

"If you don't like something, if you refuse to do something, you're considered a refusenik," he told AP. "That is, you're a '500' right away. ... So we had to follow orders. Whether we wanted to or not."

The Professor never thought he'd be a refusenik one day too.

The Professor: The worst thing is that there might even be children there, you know.

Brother: And what can you do. ... You have your orders. ... It seems to me that if it had been voluntary, you wouldn't have gone.

The Professor: You know, I'm glad about that. Plus, we did such a good job that they gave us a car. The downside is, you know, how many lives were ruined for the sake of a car?

Brother: Not of your own free will.

The Professor: I'm already so tired.

Brother: I believe it. Time to come home. I wish you could come home. Not so that you could home but so that all of this could be over already.

In the spring, as the Professor's brothers drove down a road outside their hometown in Russia, a car made a U-turn into the side of their vehicle, sending it spinning as a semi bore down on them.

One brother was killed. Another survived but now cannot walk, family members told AP.

Desperate to go home to bury his brother, the Professor said he got approval from his commander for a 10-day leave. Military police in Russian-controlled territory in Luhansk let him through, he said, and he paid for his own taxi ride home. Once he got back to Russia, however, he was told he didn't have the right paperwork.

Not long after the funeral, the Professor got a message from his commanding officer: "What is happening there? Are you going to come back or stay there?"

"I'll collect the documents, and then we'll decide everything," he wrote back.

Two hours later, around midnight, his commander responded: "I'm reporting you as AWOL, unauthorized abandonment of the unit. It was nice fighting together."

Now he faces up to 10 years in prison.

He hired a lawyer. Months into a 10-day leave, he can't even apply for an extension to legalize his stay and help his family because he doesn't have the right documents. He said his brother can move around on his arms and mostly get into his wheelchair by himself, but can't function independently.

People from the military came to his home, he said. Terrified they'd arrest him if he went outside, he passed documents attesting to the dire state of his family's health to them through the window.

His lawyer told him to look on the bright side. "You are the only, well, how do I put this ... at least, you're the only healthy person here."

His mother is at the end of her endurance.

"I write everywhere, I call everywhere, too. Because he was told that he has to return to his unit," his mother told AP. "But how can he leave his brother? I have no one."

Now, the Professor has visions of dead people. They stare back at him. He can almost hear them walking nearby. Sometimes he bolts awake at night, sweating, or dives under the covers at the sound of a whistle.

He wants his old life back, that sweet time he had with his wife and baby. He has picked up some roofing work at construction sites, and his neighbor proposed a new side job: digging graves.

ARTYOM: 'EVERYBODY'S F----- MAD, F----- GLOOMY AS HELL'

Artyom left behind a string of debts in Russia. Things got even worse in Ukraine, where it was so cold he couldn't wash his underwear and his lighter kept freezing.

"It's not like I'm having any f----- fun here, day in day out. It's been f----- four months already," he told his wife in January. "Everybody's f----- mad, f----- gloomy as hell."

It was New Year's Day, and the Russians were getting bombarded by Ukrainians and not even firing back, he said.

"Yesterday we were f----- bombarded, for f---'s sake, we didn't even get a single shell out, not a single

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f----- shell," he told his wife.

The war seemed senseless to him. Why wasn't Putin satisfied with Crimea? What business did they have trying to take Kharkiv and Kyiv? Why was everyone lying about how great things were at the front?

No one was saying the one thing he wanted to hear: that he could go home.

Artyom: Yesterday we were listening to the radio and someone f----- said, "the situation with mobilized soldiers is f----- wonderful." I don't know who the f----- idiot is who said that. "Only five thousand people died."

Wife: Mhm. Of course.

Artyom: F----- s---heads. I think half of them are probably gone at this point.

Wife: Right.

Artyom: Five thousand people my ass.

Artyom doesn't have much sympathy for draft dodgers and deserters, though he can see the wisdom in making a run for it.

"That's what you have to do, given the chance," he told his wife. "This is not the best f----- place to be ... But then they're gonna say you're a f----- freak who ran away. I don't f----- need that."

He told her he'll stay put and follow orders. "If God wills it so that you're gonna f----- die, you're gonna f----- die, can't do much about it."

The AP reached Artyom by phone at the end of May. He was still in eastern Ukraine, where he'd been serving for eight months without break.

Artyom said he'd been "a little worn out mentally" when he was speaking with his wife. He said he loved his family before the war and loved them even more now. He regrets he didn't spend more time with them.

"I have to save the guys who are with me in the trenches — and myself," he said. "That's what I want to do. And to put down the Ukrainians faster and go home."

ROMAN: 'I ALREADY FEEL MORE PITY SHOOTING A BIRD THAN A PERSON'

After two months on the front lines north of Bakhmut, Roman had some advice for his friend and former colleague back in Russia: Avoid this war any way you can.

"I'm telling you honestly, if there's even a slight chance, get exempted from service. But if the summons comes for mobilization, f--- it to hell. Join Wagner or the contract soldiers, or wherever you can. God forbid the mobilized. The mobilized are the lowest."

Roman explained that professional contract soldiers are taken care of: They get to go on leave, launder their clothes and bathe. They don't have to struggle for food and water.

Meanwhile, mobilized soldiers like him are shoved in trenches with men from all walks of life, some of whom don't even know how to hold guns. They never get to leave, and their commanders — "weak wusses," he says — aren't much help. He's had to buy night vision goggles with his own money. There's not enough to eat and no clean drinking water. Soldiers are licking at snowflakes and scooping up rainwater to drink. He said he lost 30 kilos (over 60 pounds). The diarrhea hasn't helped.

"It came to the point that there were puddles, it had rained, and the guys scooped up all the puddles and drank," Roman told his friend. "Snow fell, f----- s---, and the snow didn't even reach the ground, the guys caught it and ate it."

When he arrived in Ukraine in November 2022, Roman was part of a unit of 100 men. By early January, about a third were gone.

Roman said he's been lucky twice. Once he got food poisoning and stayed back while a group of scouts went out. They never came back. Another time, he was carrying water and tripped and fell just as a shell landed, killing others nearby.

Surrounded by a horseshoe of Ukrainian troops, Roman said it was like being on the tip of a toilet seat, in constant fear that their supply lines, thin as they were, would get cut off.

Roman had to scoop a man's guts back into his body — an act that didn't save the guy's life. Another

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time, he went out to defecate in a field, and tanks started firing around him. He just kept squatting till he was done. After two months of living like this, so scared you'll shoot at the softest sound in the dark, even the strongest minds started to fray.

"We survive because we are on edge all the time," he said. "Even guys from our own side don't come close, especially at night. When we are on duty, we warn everyone that we will shoot at anything that rustles."

Roman said his cousin was killed by a shell that took out a dozen soldiers. His family managed to get his body — or at least half of his body — back to Russia, but the other 11 soldiers lay unclaimed in Ukraine.

It wasn't just the killing that did people in, it was the sense that they'd been forgotten.

Roman: Our group is made up of guys who are sufficiently strong, morally, and guys like that. It was the first wave. Guys came together who are sufficiently patriotic, roughly speaking, who knew what it was to fight. After two months, they start to lose it. For many of them, their psyche was broken.

Friend: Yeah, I understand, all of the killing of course.

Roman: Yes, the killing is everywhere. A f----- lot of corpses. Some were stabbed with a knife, but that's not the point. Psyches are not broken because of this. These are people who are professionals, it's our national army, these professionals come to our position. 'F---, it's f----- up here.' They turn around and leave. That is, they are replaced, they have rotation, they are given leave, their clothes are washed and ironed, they wash in the bathhouse, they have no problem with food, they have no problem with water. It's not like this for us. It once came to the point that there were puddles, it had rained, and the guys scooped up all the puddles and drank.

The "depressing, horrible" panic that attacked him at the beginning of his tour has subsided. The calls home help.

One night, Roman got pulled into a special mission. They snuck into a Ukrainian dugout, knives drawn, hacked up a bunch of men and captured a Ukrainian officer for questioning. Death was everywhere, on both sides of the front.

"F---, I already feel more pity shooting a bird than a person," Roman told his friend.

Contacted by the AP, both men declined to comment.

ANDREI: 'THE MOBILIZED ARE NOT CONSIDERED HUMANS'

After four months in Ukraine, Andrei concluded that his life meant nothing to Moscow.

Called up for military service from a small town in Russia's far east, he soon found himself in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk province, on the southern approach to Bakhmut.

Andrei's unit was taking heavy losses, and no one was even shooting back at the Ukrainians, he said. People were dying from friendly fire. Mobilized men like him were being forced to sign contracts.

"The mobilized are not considered humans," he told his mother. "No one gives a damn about us. They think that for 200,000 (rubles) we should die here."

Mutiny was in the air.

Andrei: Our boys are dying for nothing. It's nonsense, I tell you. This is not a war at all. When I come back, I'll tell you what's going on here. It's all bull----. I'm telling you, our boys are dying, going 300, and no one even shoots back. It's all nonsense. Our artillery is hammering our own dugouts, not theirs. What is that?

Mother: What for?

Andrei: They, like, miss the mark. ... Here, if they don't get you, your own will.

Mother: (Inaudible)

Andrei: I'm telling you, you just start going nuts here, like everything pisses you off. Because you can't do s--- about it. Nobody gives a s---. It's a half year and that's it. F--- them. If they don't relieve us, if they don't pull us out, the whole company will just walk away. They can't put a crowd of 100 people on trial.

Mother: They have no right to keep you longer.

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Andrei: No one gives a damn here. We were told the other day that they forgot about us a little bit here. But they didn't just forget about us — they f----- us.

Mobilized soldiers like him are treated worst of all, he told his mom. They're not allowed to leave — even if they get injured — because commanders fear they'll never come back.

Andrei: Well, our guys are getting killed in droves.

Mother: Judging by what I —

Andrei: I'm telling you. In droves from our side. If a contract soldier is wounded, he's sent home. If a mobilized soldier is wounded, they treat him, patch him up a bit, and tell him to go the f--- back, why the hell are you dodging? All in all, if you get sick here, you will not be sent home. They won't give a damn, and you'll die in this pit where you live in. You can't get sick here at all.

Mother: Better not get sick. (Inaudible)

Andrei: This is how s--- works here. As long as you are useful, they like know who you are. And when you become useless, then nobody needs you. They forget about you.

He said the only reason he's still alive is luck and regrets finding himself at war. "This is my only mistake in life," he said. "I will not fall into the same trap twice."

"God gives you one chance," his mother responded. "God willing, you'll come home."

In September, Andrei's mother told AP her son was home, keeping himself busy with his family and collecting pine cones from the taiga.

She said she was born in Ukraine and her mother still lives there. She said it pains her that Ukraine is now filled with "traitors and fascists."

"I hate your current rulers," she said. "Are you blind or stupid? Or can't you see that there are no normal people? Or do you want your children to turn into monkeys, like in America? What is this? I don't recognize my homeland, where I was born and went to school."

'You'll die in this pit': Takeaways from secret recordings of Russian soldiers in Ukraine

By ERIKA KINETZ Associated Press

Secretly recorded calls of Russian soldiers speaking from the front lines in Ukraine with loved ones back home offer a rare glimpse of the war through Russian eyes.

As the war in Ukraine grinds into its second winter, a growing number of Russian soldiers want out, audio intercepts obtained and verified by The Associated Press indicate. Russian soldiers speak in shorthand of 200s to mean dead, 300s to mean wounded. The urge to flee has become common enough that they also talk of 500s — people who refuse to fight.

These conversations also show clearly how the war has progressed, from the professional soldiers who initially powered Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion to men from all walks of life compelled to serve in grueling conditions.

The AP verified the identities of people in the calls by speaking with relatives and soldiers — some of whom are still at war in Ukraine — and researching open-source material linked to the phone numbers used by the soldiers. AP has withheld names and identifying details to protect soldiers and their families. The conversations, picked up in January 2023 — some from near the longest and deadliest fight in Bakhmut — have been edited for length and clarity.

As they called home, the deadliest season of the war was just beginning. Tens of thousands of Russians were about to die. Now, as Moscow scrambles to replenish its troops, the voices of these soldiers come as a warning. These are men living off rainwater, who have killed people with knives, who know that the only thing that's kept them alive is luck. Forgotten and exhausted, they want to go home.

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THE PROFESSOR

Nicknamed "Crazy Professor" because of his disheveled hair, he was swept up in the first days of Russia's September 2022 draft. He worried that he might have killed children. Now he is AWOL and haunted by visions of the dead.

"I imagined that there, on the other side, there could be young people just like us. And they have their whole lives ahead of them," he told AP in June. "Bones, tears — all the same, they are the same as we are."

ARTYOM

The war seemed senseless to Artyom, except perhaps as a way to escape the string of debts he'd left behind in Russia. Speaking from Ukraine, where he'd been serving more than eight months, he told AP that he loved his family before the war and loved them even more now. He regrets he didn't spend more time with them. In calls to his wife, he explained that everyone is "gloomy as hell," and while it made sense to run away if you have the chance, he wasn't going to desert.

"I have to save the guys who are with me in the trenches — and myself," he explained to AP in May. "That's what I want to do. And to put down the Ukrainians faster and go home."

ROMAN

Before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Roman worked at a law firm, records show. Swept up in Putin's September 2022 mobilization, he has some advice: Avoid this war any way you can. He's lived off rainwater, scooped a dying man's guts back into his body, ambushed a Ukrainian dugout with knives.

"I already feel more pity shooting a bird than a person," Roman told his friend. "I'm telling you honestly, if there's even a slight chance, get exempted from service."

ANDREI

After four months in Ukraine, Andrei concluded that his life meant nothing to Moscow. Mobilized soldiers like him are "not considered humans," he told his mom. They're not allowed to leave — even if they get sick or injured — because commanders fear they'll never come back.

"You'll die in this pit where you live," he told his mom.

"Better not get sick," she said.

AP spoke with his mother in September as she was collecting tomatoes from her garden. She said she grew up in Ukraine, but her homeland has become unrecognizable. It's filled with "traitors and fascists," she told AP. "Are you blind or stupid, or can't you see that there are no normal people? Or do you want your children to turn into monkeys like in America?"

With antisemitism rising as the Israel-Hamas war rages, Europe's Jews worry

By JAMEY KEATEN and LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — As he sits in Geneva, Michel Dreifuss does not feel all that far away from the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7 and Israel's subsequent bombardment of Gaza. The ripples are rolling through Europe and upending assumptions both global and intimate — including those about his personal safety as a Jew.

"Yesterday I bought a tear-gas spray canister at a military-equipment surplus store," the 64-year-old retired tech sector worker said recently at a rally to mark a month since the Hamas killings. The choice, he says, is a "precaution," driven by a surge of antisemitism in Europe.

Last month's slayings of about 1,200 people in Israel by armed Palestinian militants represented the biggest killing of Jews since the Holocaust. The fallout from it, and from Israel's intense military response that health officials in Hamas-controlled Gaza say has killed at least 13,300 Palestinians, has extended to Europe. In doing so, it has shaken a continent all too familiar with deadly anti-Jewish hatred for centuries.

The past century is of particular note, of course. Concern about rising antisemitism in Europe is fueled in part by what happened to Jews before and during World War II, and that makes it particularly fearsome for those who may be only one or two generations removed from people who were the victims of riots against Jews and Nazi brutality.

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What most chills many Jews interviewed is what they see as the lack of empathy for the Israelis killed during the early morning massacre and for the relatives of the hostages — about 30 of whom are children — suspended in an agonizing limbo.

“What really upsets me,” said Holocaust survivor Herbert Traube said at a Paris event commemorating the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the 1938 government-backed pogroms against Jews in Germany and Austria, “is to see that there isn’t a massive popular reaction against this.”

ACTS OF ANTISEMITISM — AND HOW THAT’S DEFINED

Antisemitism is broadly defined as hatred of Jews. But a debate has been raging for years over what actions and words should be labeled antisemitic.

Criticism of Israel’s policies and antisemitism have long been conflated by Israeli leaders such as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and by some watchdog groups. Critics say that blurring helps undermine opposition to the country’s policies and amps up perceptions that any utterance or incident against Israeli policy is antisemitic.

Some language — whether for or against Israel or the Palestinians — “makes it sound like a football match,” says Susan Neiman of the Einstein Forum in Potsdam, Germany. “We are perpetuating the idea that you’ve got to be on one side or the other instead of being on the side of human rights and justice,” she said.

Others argue that antisemites often use criticism of Israel as a placeholder for expressing their views.

The list of examples of anti-Jewish sentiment since the Oct. 7 attacks is long and documented by governments and watchdog groups across Europe.

—Little more than a month after the attack in Israel, the French Interior Ministry said 1,247 antisemitic incidents had been reported since Oct. 7, nearly three times the total for all of 2022.

—Denmark’s main Jewish association said cases were up 24 times from the average of the last nine months.

—The Community Security Trust, which tracks antisemitic incidents in Britain, reported more than 1,000 such events — the most ever recorded for a 28-day period.

That all comes despite widespread denunciations of anti-Jewish hatred — and support for Israel — from leaders in Europe since the attack.

Some of Europe’s Jews say they see it on the streets and the news. Jewish schoolchildren face bullying on their way to class, or — in one instance — have been asked to explain Israel’s actions, according to Britain’s Community Security Trust. There’s been talk of blending in better: covering skullcaps in public and perhaps hiding mezuzahs, the traditional symbol on doorposts of Jewish homes.

In Russia, a riot broke out at an airport in which there were some antisemitic chants and posters from a crowd of men looking for passengers who had arrived from Israel. A Berlin synagogue was firebombed. An assailant stabbed a Jewish woman twice in the stomach at her home in Lyon, France, according to her lawyer.

In Prague’s Little Quarter last month, staffers at the well-known Hippopotamus bar refused to serve beer to several tourists from Israel and their Czech guides, and some patrons served up insults. Police had to step in. In Berlin, Jews are still reeling from an attempted firebombing of a synagogue last month.

“Some of us are in a state of panic,” said Anna Segal, 37, the manager of the Kahal Adass Jisroel in Berlin, a community of 450 members.

COMING TO GRIPS WITH A FEELING OF DREAD

Some community members are changing how they live, Segal said. Students no longer wear uniforms. Kindergarten classes don’t leave the building for field trips or the playground next door. Some members no longer call taxis, or they hesitate to order deliveries to their homes. Hebrew-speaking in public is fading. Some wonder if they should move to Israel.

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"I hear more and more from people from the Jewish community who say they feel safer and more comfortable in Israel now than in Germany, despite the war and all the rockets," Segal said. "Because they don't have to hide there."

And in pro-Palestinian demonstrations, some protesters are shouting, "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." Some say that's a call for Palestinian freedom and is not anti-Jewish but anti-Israel; the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea includes not only Israel, but also the West Bank and east Jerusalem, where Palestinians have lived under Israeli occupation since 1967. Many Jews, though, say the chant is inherently anti-Jewish and calls for the destruction of Israel.

Faced with fears that antisemitism will spread, communities are taking action. A hotline has been set up in France to help provide psychological support for Jews. The Community Security Trust, which aims to protect the Jewish community and foster good relations with others, has joined with the British government to distribute primers on how to address antisemitism in primary and secondary schools.

Peggy Hicks, a director at the U.N. human rights office, says the actions of governments and political movements are fair game for criticism but warned against discrimination, which the Geneva-based office has long battled. In the chaos of the past weeks, she sees reason to hope.

"I've been amazed in the course of my working in human rights about the amount of compassion and the resilience of human beings," Hicks said. "People who have lost children and come together on both sides of a conflict, who have shared a loss — but from opposing sides — and who have found a way to get past the fact that they should actually be enemies."

She added: "I don't think everybody has the ability to show that kind of courage. But the fact that it exists, I think, gives us all something to aspire to."

Skyscraper-studded Dubai has flourished during regional crises. Could it benefit from hosting COP28?

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — In a city known for its excesses, whether reaching toward the sky with the world's tallest building or hard partying at its beach resorts and bars, Dubai has pulled off another record-breaking feat in the rolling dunes of its desert outskirts.

Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, named for the ruling sheikh of Dubai, stretches across some 122 square kilometers (47 square miles) and represents a pledge of billions of dollars by this city-state to reach its goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2050. It's a solar-paneled gamble in a city where casinos have yet to arrive — though it always seems to be betting big no matter the risk.

Rising rapidly from a creek-bound pearling village to a city associated with international glamor, Dubai has a long history of finding economic success amid the war-ravaged woes of the wider Middle East. Its ruling family likely views the upcoming United Nations COP28 climate talks as another such opportunity, though it carries the significant peril of becoming synonymous with a collapse in negotiations on limiting greenhouse emissions, or being overshadowed by the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

There's a risk of reputational damage to the UAE if they fail to make any traction in the talks, particularly as they are a major oil producer, said Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, a research fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute who has long studied the region.

"There is also a risk that media and civil society coverage will focus critically on issues such as the UAE's planned expansion of oil production capacity and depict the UAE as part of the problem rather than the solution in terms of climate politics," Ulrichsen added.

FROM MUD WALLS TO STEEL AND GLASS

Given the futuristic skyline of downtown Dubai — and how it gleams at night as one side of the Burj Khalifa lights up with a massive 770-meter (2,525-foot) LED display — it can be easy to forget that the city only received its first electrical generator in 1952. Before that, only candles and kerosene lamps lit the night along its eponymous Dubai Creek, where the village first grew.

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Oil, first discovered offshore of Dubai in 1966, was never at the levels found in the sands and waters of Abu Dhabi, which would become the capital of the United Arab Emirates when the country formed in 1971. Dubai instead used the oil as seed money for massive infrastructure projects that seemed to strike at just the right moment as the UAE grew into a home for some 9.3 million people — only 10% of them Emirati and the rest foreign workers and their families.

The massive Jebel Ali Port, the U.S. Navy's busiest port of call outside of the United States, is the world's largest human-made harbor. It opened in 1979, just ahead of the Iran-Iraq War. Many ships damaged in that conflict ended up dry-docking at Jebel Ali for repairs, bringing money to the area.

That money also built the Dubai World Trade Center, which in 1979 stood out as the sole high-rise in a desert expansive. Today, it is dwarfed by all the towers that followed, fueled by a boom in the city's real estate market that came with a 2002 decision to allow foreigners to own property.

That decision came after the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan started, and just before the U.S. led an invasion of Iraq. Dubai became a safe harbor for people with the means to flee the conflicts — as well as those needing to park tens of millions of dollars in suspected ill-gotten gains, once again leading to major investments. That has continued with Russia's war on Ukraine, with Russian investors injecting cash into Dubai real estate projects.

While benefiting during crises, the Emirates — a federation of seven sheikhdoms — waged a war on Yemen that saw its soldiers and allies criticized for indiscriminate strikes and abuses on the battlefield. The UAE also has ties to leaders who are viewed with great skepticism or, at the worst, targeted with financial sanctions in the West. They include Libyan military commander Khalifa Hifter and Sudan's Rapid Support Forces leader Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, who wages a civil war in Sudan with forces the State Department says have committed "conflict-related sexual violence and killings."

"One of the likely goals of UAE's hosting of COP28 is reputation laundering," said Jodi Vittori, a nonresident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who has written extensively on Dubai being a money-laundering haven. "By hosting COP28, UAE can move the media headlines from their support for the murderous RSF in Sudan and facilitation of Russian sanctions busting to their supposed support of green causes."

In response to questions from The Associated Press about criticism over its foreign policy and other issues, the Emirati government said that "the UAE is deeply committed to human rights and building upon its steady progress in this field."

"As the host of COP28, the UAE will welcome constructive dialogue and continue to work with international partners and stakeholders to deliver impactful results," the statement said. "Climate change is a global problem that demands a collective effort, and this significant, momentous event will be a conference of action."

GOING GREEN WHILE PUMPING MORE OIL

Generators have powered Dubai's growth for decades, first by noisy diesel units and later through natural gas plants that still provide the bulk of Dubai's power for its skyscrapers and crucial desalination plants to provide water. The gas comes from both Abu Dhabi and nearby Qatar.

But in recent years, Dubai has started to focus on renewable energy — despite a moment where it appeared it would launch a coal-fired power plant before switching it to use natural gas instead as its hosting of COP28 loomed.

The jewel of Dubai's clean energy efforts is Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) southeast of the city's downtown. There, solar panels stretch far into the distance, taking in the rays in a country that sees, on average, 10 hours of sunlight 350 days a year.

Towering over everything in the distance is the world's tallest solar tower at some 260 meters (850 feet). It collects the light off of 70,000 reflectors to boil salt to run an electricity-generating turbine.

In the sparse surroundings of the desert, where camels freely roam, the glowing tower appears otherworldly over the dunes.

Dubai spent billions of dollars on the plant, which involves businesses from China, Saudi Arabia and other countries. By 2030, the city hopes to get 5 gigawatts of electricity from the plant, which could power

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some 1.3 million homes based on U.S. averages. These days, peak demand in the city-state is nearly 10 gigawatts, according to the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, its sole utility provider.

Overall, the Emirates says it plans to be carbon neutral by 2050. While not specifically outlining plans to achieve the goal, projects like the solar park and Abu Dhabi's Barakah nuclear power plant, the first on the Arabian Peninsula, aim to make generating electricity a "green" endeavor.

But reporting on these projects is difficult in the Emirates, where speech remains tightly controlled. Authorities have not responded to multiple requests for AP journalists to visit the solar plant. Requests to see the country's four-reactor nuclear power plant have been pending for years.

On top of all that, while the UAE pledges to zero out its own emissions, it's also planning to ramp up oil production.

A member of OPEC, the UAE produces some 4 million barrels of crude oil a day. In the coming years, it aims to produce 5 million barrels a day, fuel that will be exported, used by other countries and contribute to climate change.

Those plans have sparked criticism by activists ahead of COP28, with most aimed particularly at the upcoming talks' president-designate, the oil company chief Sultan al-Jaber.

"The UAE must end its greenwashing campaign, abandon its plans to dramatically increase state oil and gas production and rectify the profound conflict of interest created by" al-Jaber's appointment, more than 200 groups said in a joint letter in September.

Al-Jaber, who also has led billions of dollars in Emirati investments in renewable energy, has dismissed criticism from those who "just go on the attack without knowing anything, without knowing who we are."

The U.S. has backed al-Jaber's appointment, with the White House's top energy envoy praising the Emirati strategy of bringing activists and the oil industry to COP28.

"I think that the COP28 being hosted here in this region in an oil-producing country gives us moment of opportunity of bringing together the fossil fuel industry and climate advocates to say, 'How do we work together?'" American envoy Amos Hochstein said at a summit in Bahrain last week.

WORLD'S FAIR SITE TO AGAIN HOST THE GLOBE

Dubai's \$7-billion Expo City, built for the 2020 world fair that was delayed a year by the coronavirus pandemic, will host the upcoming climate talks. In recent weeks, hard-hatted workers have been preparing the site in Dubai's far southern reaches for the event. Its exhibition center will host the talks, with the site divided into one secure side for delegates and another, more open site for advocates, business interests and others.

"The decision to host the conference at Expo City in Dubai is designed to keep Dubai firmly on the world stage and to bolster its credentials as a hub for soft power and aspirational appeal," Ulrichsen said. "Expo 2020 ... was supposed to symbolize Dubai's reemergence from the global financial crisis a decade earlier."

In the time since the Expo, Dubai has pivoted to offering the site as a new real estate development, something that will be advertised during the climate talks. One official email from the site about the talks included a link offering "spacious and secluded four-and five-bed semi-detached homes" for sale, beginning at \$1.6 million.

But the selection of Expo City also raises questions about Dubai's reliance on low-paid foreign workers in its construction boom. Many from Asian and African nations travel to the Emirates to work in jobs to send money back home. However, some find themselves trapped by abusive employers.

The Expo site work saw at least three workers killed and some 200,000 laborers exposed to high heat and potentially exploitative labor practices ahead of the world's fair. Those labor abuses continue at Expo City, renewable energy projects and elsewhere in the Emirates, according to Equidem, a labor advocacy group.

"African and Asian workers ... are doubly impacted by the global climate crisis — they migrate in response to climate impacts and find employment in exploitative industrial and service contexts where they work long hours in extreme heat," Equidem said.

While the Expo didn't draw all the world's biggest names, the climate conference already has King Charles and Pope Francis confirming they'll attend, along with other world leaders. That makes it an opportunity for Dubai, as well as a risk given the wider regional tensions over the Israel-Hamas war.

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Already, a water-and-energy deal signed between the Emirates, Jordan and Israel during the Expo has collapsed due to the war.

Meanwhile, the UAE has pledged to allow protests at the summit. The Emirati government told the AP that "participants can assemble peacefully and have their voices heard in designated areas in both the Blue and Green Zones" of the venue. The Green Zone will be accessible to the general public under Emirati control, while the Blue Zone will be the site of formal negotiations, an area governed by the U.N.

"We invite all participants to express their opinions in a positive and constructive manner, sharing solutions to address the climate crisis," the government said.

That promised openness adds to the challenge ahead for the Emirates, where political parties and unions remain illegal and protests are rare, given the threat of arrest.

There's a "hypocrisy of having a host that outright forbids and stringently represses human rights, civil society, free speech and political activity amongst its own citizens and residents," Vittori said.

Donald Trump draws cheers, some boos in Haley's backyard at Clemson-South Carolina football game

By MEG KINNARD and BILL BARROW Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Donald Trump used college football rivalry weekend to bask among his supporters in a state and region that are key to his presidential fortunes, while trying to upstage his Republican opponent Nikki Haley on her home turf at the Clemson-South Carolina football game.

The former president and current front-runner for the 2024 Republican nomination walked into Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia on Saturday night to chants of "We want Trump! We want Trump!" from fans gathered for the annual Palmetto Bowl, the state's biggest sporting event of the year.

Haley, a Clemson alumna and trustee who was twice elected South Carolina governor, did not attend.

Trump was a guest of Gov. Henry McMaster, Haley's successor. The entourage, which entered through a veritable tunnel of Trump supporters on its way to a private suite, also included South Carolina's senior U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, giving the former president a show of local political force at a game featuring Haley's alma mater.

McMaster ascended to the governor's office in 2017 when Trump elevated Haley to United Nations ambassador. Graham and Haley have mostly been allies over the years. But both men now back Trump, and the former president enjoys a wide polling lead among Republican primary voters. That includes nationally and in early nominating states like South Carolina.

At halftime, Trump came down to the field with McMaster, drawing mostly cheers and a smattering of boos as he walked around, posed for a few photos and waved. ESPN's broadcast on the SEC Network also showed the former president sitting with McMaster during the game.

Hours before kickoff, Trump's campaign announced that he had been endorsed by "more South Carolina legislators than all opposing candidates combined," including new backing from six state lawmakers who had previously supported U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, before the South Carolinian ended his presidential bid earlier this month.

Columbia was primed for Trump's visit. Around the stadium Saturday afternoon, more than a half-dozen electronic billboards around the capital city of Columbia boasted a message noting Trump's 2020 election loss and his pending legal cases: "You lost. You're guilty. Welcome to Columbia, Donald."

Some vendors around the venue, meanwhile, hawked Trump-related merchandise, including "Trump 2020" flags, from the previous election cycle. And some fans entering the stadium before Trump's arrival chanted "Let's Go Brandon!" — a derogatory reference to President Joe Biden, who defeated Trump in 2020.

Asked about the coming primary matchup with Trump, Haley spokesperson Olivia Perez-Cubas called her "the only candidate with momentum" and referenced Haley's previous come-from-behind victories.

"South Carolinians know their governor has what it takes to win because they've seen her beat the odds before — not just once, but twice," she said.

Trump has enjoyed tweaking Haley in her own state before. "In 2016, South Carolina gave us 44 out of

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46 counties – that’s not so bad,” he said at a state GOP dinner in August. “I can’t wait to win all 46. We want to win all 46.”

South Carolina falls fourth in the GOP voting calendar after Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada, with the state’s first-in-the-South primary coming up on Feb. 24, 2024. Several Southern states follow on March 5 as part of the Super Tuesday slate that puts more delegates up for grabs than any other day in the primary campaign.

Trump’s South Carolina and Super Tuesday romps in 2016 gave him a delegate lead he would never relinquish.

Haley has answered Trump in recent weeks by emphasizing her roots as she campaigns in Iowa, which opens voting nationally with its Jan. 15 caucuses.

“I’m not going anywhere,” she said recently in Ankeny, predicting a strong showing in the caucuses. “Then I go head-to-head with Trump in my home state of South Carolina. And we take it.”

Trump, who tried to buy an NFL team in the 1980s and ended up part of a failed alternative league, has enjoyed sports cameos over the years. But college football has afforded him his most generous welcomes. Earlier this fall, he attended the Iowa State-Iowa game in Ames, Iowa, including stopping at a fraternity house before kickoff. And while he was president, he attended the 2018 national championship game in Atlanta and the 2019 Alabama-LSU regular season game in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Israel and Hamas complete 2nd day of swaps after tense delay, as Gaza cease-fire holds

By JALAL BWAITEL, NAJIB JOBAIN, JOSEF FEDERMAN, SAMY MAGDY and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

AL BIREH, West Bank (AP) — Hamas militants on Saturday released 17 hostages, including 13 Israelis, from captivity in the Gaza Strip, while Israel freed 39 Palestinian prisoners in the latest stage of a four-day cease-fire.

The late-night exchange was held up for several hours after Hamas accused Israel of violating the agreement. The delay underscored the fragility of the cease-fire, which has halted a war that has shocked and shaken Israel, caused widespread destruction across the Gaza Strip, and threatened to unleash wider fighting across the region.

The war erupted on Oct. 7, when Hamas militants in Gaza burst across the border into southern Israel, killing at least 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting some 240 others, including, women, children and older people. Israel immediately declared war, carrying out weeks of airstrikes and a ground offensive that have left over 13,300 Palestinians dead, according to health authorities in the Hamas-controlled territory. Roughly two-thirds of those killed in Gaza have been women and minors.

The cease-fire, brokered by Qatar and the United States, is the first extended break in fighting since the war began. Overall, Hamas is to release at least 50 Israeli hostages, and Israel 150 Palestinian prisoners. All are women and minors.

Israel has said the truce can be extended by an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed, but has vowed to quickly resume its offensive and complete its goals of returning all hostages and destroying Hamas’ military and governing capabilities.

The plight of the hostages has gripped the Israeli public’s attention. Thousands of people gathered in central Tel Aviv on Saturday in solidarity with the hostages and their families. Many accuse Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of not doing enough to bring the hostages home. The releases have triggered mixed emotions: happiness, coupled with angst over the scores of hostages who remain in captivity.

The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced early Sunday that it had received a new list of hostages slated to be released later in the day in the third of four scheduled swaps.

In the West Bank, hundreds of people burst into wild celebrations for a second night as a busload of Palestinian prisoners arrived early Sunday. Teenage boys released in the deal were carried on the shoulders of well-wishers in the main square of the town of Al Bireh. But the mood of celebration was dampened by

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scenes of destruction and suffering in Gaza.

The start of the pause brought quiet for 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, who are reeling from relentless Israeli bombardment that has killed thousands, driven three-quarters of the population from their homes and leveled residential areas. Rocket fire from Gaza militants into Israel also went silent.

War-weary Palestinians in northern Gaza, where the offensive has been focused, returned to the streets, crunching over rubble between shattered buildings and at times digging through it with bare hands.

At the Indonesian hospital in Jabaliya, besieged by the Israeli military earlier this month, bodies lay in the courtyard and outside the main gate.

For Emad Abu Hajer, a resident of the Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza City area, the pause meant he could again search through the remains of his home, which was flattened in an Israeli attack last week.

He found the bodies of a cousin and nephew, bringing the death toll in the attack to 19. His sister and two other relatives are still missing.

"We want to find them and bury them in dignity," he said.

The United Nations said the pause enabled it to scale up the delivery of food, water, and medicine to the largest volume since the resumption of aid convoys on Oct. 21. It was also able to deliver 129,000 liters (about 35,000 gallons) of fuel — just over 10% of the daily pre-war volume — as well as cooking gas, a first since the war began.

In the southern city of Khan Younis, a long line of people with containers waited outside a filling station. Hossam Fayad lamented that the pause in fighting was only for four days.

"I wish it could be extended until people's conditions improved," he said.

For the first time in over a month, aid reached northern Gaza. The Palestinian Red Crescent said 61 trucks carrying food, water and medical supplies headed there on Saturday, the largest aid convoy to reach the area yet. The U.N. said it and the Palestinian Red Crescent were also able to evacuate 40 patients and family members from a hospital in Gaza City to a hospital in Khan Younis.

JOY AND EXPECTATION

The last-minute delay created a tense standoff on the second day of what's meant to be a four-day cease-fire. By nightfall, when hostages had been expected to emerge from Gaza, Hamas alleged that aid deliveries permitted by Israel fell short of what was promised and that not enough was reaching hard-hit northern Gaza. Hamas also said not enough longtime prisoners were freed in the first swap on Friday.

But Egypt, Qatar and Hamas itself later said the obstacles had been overcome.

Shortly before midnight, Hamas released the hostages — 13 Israelis and four Thais. The Israelis were turned over to Egypt and then transferred to Israel, where they were taken to hospitals to be reunited with their families.

Hamas released a video showing the hostages appearing shaken but mostly in good physical condition as masked militants led them to Red Cross vehicles headed out of Gaza. Some of the hostages waved goodbye to the militants. One girl was on crutches and wore a cast on her left foot as she was escorted away.

The Israeli hostages included seven children and six women, Netanyahu's office announced. Most were from Kibbutz Be'eri, a community Hamas militants ravaged during their Oct. 7 cross-border attack. The children ranged in age from 3 to 16, and the women ranged from 18 to 67.

It was a bittersweet moment for the residents of Be'eri, who have been living in a Dead Sea hotel since their community was overrun. A kibbutz spokesperson said all the released hostages either had a family member killed in the Oct. 7 rampage or had left a loved one in captivity in Gaza.

The mother of one of the released hostages, 12-year-old Hila Rotem, remained in captivity, the spokesperson said. Another, Emily Hand, is a girl whose father believed her to be dead for weeks before finding out she was held as a hostage.

At their hotel, kibbutz residents gathered in a function room, cheering in excitement as they saw the first images of their loved ones being released on television.

A HERO'S WELCOME

Some of the Palestinian prisoners were released in east Jerusalem, while the bulk returned home to a

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hero's welcome in the occupied West Bank.

Among those released was Nurhan Awad, who was 17 in 2016 when she was sentenced to 13 1/2 years in jail for attempting to stab an Israeli soldier with a pair of scissors.

In Jerusalem, Israeli troops evicted journalists who gathered outside the home of Israa Jaabis, who had been imprisoned since 2015 after being convicted of carrying out a bombing attack that wounded an Israeli police officer, and left Jaabis with severe burns on her face and hands.

Jaabis later told reporters at her home that she is "ashamed to be happy at a time when Palestine is injured."

In Al Bireh, the teenage boys were paraded through the main square where they waved Palestinian flags as well as green banners of Hamas and yellow banners of the Fatah party of President Mahmoud Abbas. "May God make them strong. May God be with the Qassam Brigades," said one of the boys, referring to Hamas' military wing.

According to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, an advocacy group, Israel is holding 7,200 Palestinians, including about 2,000 arrested since the start of the war.

The war in Gaza has been accompanied by a surge in violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Late Saturday, Palestinian health authorities said four Palestinians were killed in an Israeli military raid in the northern West Bank city of Jenin, hours after another raid in the same area killed the local governor's 25-year-old son.

A 16-year-old Palestinian boy was also killed by Israeli fire near the city of Ramallah. The Israeli army, which frequently conducts military raids aimed at local militant groups, did not immediately comment.

No. 3 Michigan beats No. 2 Ohio State 30-24 for 3rd straight win in rivalry

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — With more than two years of excellence being questioned and their coach banned from the Big House, J.J. McCarthy, Blake Corum and No. 3 Michigan stared down No. 2 Ohio State again and earned a victory that will go down as one of the biggest in the history of college football's winningest program.

Rod Moore's interception in Michigan territory with 25 seconds left sealed a 30-24 win for the Wolverines on Saturday, running their win streak over the Buckeyes to three games while staying unbeaten with Jim Harbaugh serving out a suspension.

McCarthy, a third-year quarterback who could leave Michigan having never lost to Ohio State, said Harbaugh's message to the Wolverines on Friday night echoed that of his old coach, the late Bo Schembechler.

"The whole mantra: the team, the team, the team," McCarthy said. He said Harbaugh told them: "We are that team."

Moore's pick set off a celebration on the home team's sideline. McCarthy took a knee, Michigan fans poured over the brick walls onto the field and the Wolverines (12-0, 9-0) were off to their third straight Big Ten title game.

In a season of high expectations that now has a championship-or-bust feel, Michigan is a victory away from a third consecutive College Football Playoff appearance.

"We're not done," said Corum, who ran for 88 yards and two TDs.

For coach Ryan Day and the Buckeyes (11-1, 8-1), it's another year of lamenting a loss in the most important game on the schedule for Ohio State and wondering what has happened to the program that spent a decade and a half dominating Michigan.

Day is now 1-3 against the Wolverines, losing his last three. Before that skid, Ohio State had won eight straight and 15 of 16 against Michigan, including a 7-0 record under Day's predecessor, Urban Meyer.

"We're all disappointed," Day said. "We know what this game means to so many people. To come up short is crushing."

McCarthy went 16 for 20 for 148 yards and a touchdown.

"In critical situations, I'm going to put the ball in your hands," offensive coordinator Sherrone Moore —

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filling in for Harbaugh — said he told McCarthy before the game.

The 119th Ohio State-Michigan game — the 13th top-five matchup between the schools and yet another with Big Ten and national championship implications — was guaranteed to be memorable even before it kicked off.

With Michigan being investigated by the NCAA for allegations of in-person scouting and sign stealing, and Harbaugh finishing a three-game suspension imposed by the Big Ten, the circumstances around The Game were unprecedented and the animosity between the rivals never higher.

“There’s a lot of thoughts and things that I would love to say, but all I know is this team is as good as any team in the country and they prove it every week,” said Moore, who replaced Harbaugh for the fourth time this season.

The sign-stealing scandal has caused fans all over the Big Ten, especially in Columbus, Ohio, to call into question Michigan’s resurgence under Harbaugh since 2021.

“No one cried. No one whined,” Corum said. “The job has to get done no matter what.”

The only sign of Harbaugh was on the pregame videoboard montage. Moore seemed to make all the right moves.

Michigan went 3 for 3 on fourth downs, implemented its backup quarterback for a couple of plays to gain 22 yards on the ground and executed a halfback pass to set up a fourth-quarter field goal that put Michigan up 10.

After Ohio State cut the lead to 27-24 with 8:05 left on a 14-yard touchdown pass from Kyle McCord to All-American Marvin Harrison Jr., Michigan proceeded to drain seven minutes off the clock and James Turner kicked a 37-yard field goal to make it 30-24 with 1:05 remaining.

“We’ve got to get off the field,” Day said.

McCord, Harrison and the Buckeyes had 1 minute to go 81 yards with no timeouts. They made it to the Michigan 37 before McCord’s second interception of the day on a wobbly pass toward Harrison closed it out. McCord was hit as he threw.

As expected with two of the best defenses in the country, it took a while for the offenses to get rolling.

Will Johnson picked off McCord deep in Ohio State territory to set up a fourth-and-inches touchdown dive by Corum. Michigan converted two more fourth-and-shorts on a touchdown drive that ended with McCarthy threading a needle to Roman Wilson from 22 yards out.

The Buckeyes weren’t sure Wilson held on, but the call was confirmed by video review.

Badly needing a response down 14-3 in the second quarter, Ohio State marched 73 yards and McCord hit Emeka Egbuka for a 3-yard score.

It went to the half that way after Day elected to try a 52-yard field goal on fourth-and-2 from the Michigan 34. The kick that went wide left as time expired.

After Michigan opened the second half with a 50-yard field goal by Turner, Ohio State asserted itself with a 75-yard drive, finishing it off with eight straight runs and a tying 3-yard touchdown by TreVeyon Henderson.

McCord was 18 for 30 for 271 yards.

Then it was Michigan’s turn for a long drive that Corum capped with a 22-yard touchdown, his school-record 22nd of the season.

Michigan has 44 Big Ten titles, claims three national championships during the AP poll era, dating to 1936, and leads the overall series with Ohio State 61-52-6.

The Wolverines became the first college football program to reach 1,000 wins last week, but very few of those will rank ahead of Saturday’s against the Buckeyes.

“Team 144 is the ultimate team,” Moore said.

THE TAKEAWAY

Ohio State: The last time the Buckeyes lost three straight in the rivalry was 1995-97, when John Cooper was leading the program and the Wolverines dashed Ohio State’s national championship hopes regularly. Cooper went 2-10-1 against Michigan in what was otherwise a Hall of Fame career.

Michigan: The Wolverines played most of the second half without Johnson, who went out with what Sherone Moore called a lower leg injury, and the entire fourth quarter without All-American guard Zak Zinter.

Zinter's left leg injury was serious and he needed to be carted off late in the third quarter. On the very next play, Corum broke off a long touchdown run.

UP NEXT

Ohio State: Last year, the Buckeyes snuck into the playoff after losing The Game. The back door will be much harder to get through this year with a crowded field of CFP contenders.

"The worst part is it's out of our control," McCord said.

Michigan: The Big Ten championship game in Indianapolis against No. 20 Iowa.

Derek Chauvin's family has received no updates after prison stabbing, attorney says

By MICHAEL R. SISAK AND TRISHA AHMED Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — An attorney for Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer convicted of murdering George Floyd, said Saturday that Chauvin's family has been kept in the dark by federal prison officials after he was stabbed in prison.

The lawyer, Gregory M. Erickson, slammed the lack of transparency by the Federal Bureau of Prisons a day after his client was stabbed on Friday by another inmate at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tucson, Arizona, a prison that has been plagued by security lapses and staffing shortages.

A person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Friday that Chauvin was seriously injured in the stabbing. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the attack. On Saturday, Brian Evans, a spokesperson for the Minnesota attorney general's office, said: "We have heard that he is expected to survive."

Erickson said Chauvin's family and his attorneys have hit a wall trying to obtain information about the attack from Bureau of Prisons officials. He said Chauvin's family has been forced to assume he is in stable condition, based only on news accounts, and has been contacting the prison repeatedly seeking updates but have been provided with no information.

"As an outsider, I view this lack of communication with his attorneys and family members as completely outrageous," Erickson said in a statement to the AP. "It appears to be indicative of a poorly run facility and indicates how Derek's assault was allowed to happen."

Erickson's comments highlight concerns raised for years that federal prison officials provide little to no information to the loved ones of incarcerated people who are seriously injured or ill in federal custody. The AP has previously reported the Bureau of Prisons ignored its internal guidelines and failed to notify the families of inmates who were seriously ill with COVID-19 as the virus raged through federal prisons across the U.S.

The issue around family notification has also prompted federal legislation introduced last year in the U.S. Senate that would require the Justice Department to establish guidelines for the Federal Bureau of Prisons and state correctional systems to notify the families of incarcerated people if their loved one has a serious illness, a life-threatening injury or if they die behind bars.

"How the family members who are in charge of Derek's decisions regarding his personal medical care and his emergency contact were not informed after his stabbing further indicates the institution's poor procedures and lack of institutional control," Erickson said of the prison.

A spokesperson for the Bureau of Prisons did not immediately respond to a request for comment Saturday evening.

The Bureau of Prisons has only confirmed an assault at the Arizona facility and said employees performed "life-saving measures" before the inmate was taken to a hospital for further treatment and evaluation. The Bureau of Prisons did not name the victim or provide a medical status "for privacy and safety reasons."

Prosecutors who successfully pursued a second-degree murder conviction against Chauvin at a jury trial in 2021 expressed dismay that he became the target of violence while in federal custody.

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Terrence Floyd, George Floyd's brother, told the AP on Saturday that he wouldn't wish for anyone to be stabbed in prison and that he felt numb when he initially learned of the news.

"I'm not going to give my energy towards anything that happens within those four walls — because my energy went towards getting him in those four walls," Terrence Floyd said. "Whatever happens in those four walls, I don't really have any feelings about it."

Chauvin's stabbing is the second high-profile attack on a federal prisoner in the last five months. In July, disgraced sports doctor Larry Nassar was stabbed by a fellow inmate at a federal penitentiary in Florida.

Chauvin, 47, was sent to FCI Tucson from a maximum-security Minnesota state prison in August 2022 to simultaneously serve a 21-year federal sentence for violating Floyd's civil rights and a 22½-year state sentence for second-degree murder.

Another of Chauvin's lawyers, Eric Nelson, had advocated for keeping him out of the general population and away from other inmates, anticipating he'd be a target. In Minnesota, Chauvin was mainly kept in solitary confinement "largely for his own protection," Nelson wrote in court papers last year.

Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected Chauvin's appeal of his murder conviction. Separately, Chauvin is making a longshot bid to overturn his federal guilty plea, claiming new evidence shows he didn't cause Floyd's death.

Floyd, who was Black, was killed May 25, 2020, after Chauvin, who is white, pressed a knee on his neck for 9½ minutes on the street outside a convenience store where Floyd was suspected of trying to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill.

Bystander video captured Floyd's fading cries of "I can't breathe." His death touched off protests worldwide, some of which turned violent, and forced a national reckoning with police brutality and racism.

Three other former officers who were at the scene received lesser state and federal sentences for their roles in Floyd's death.

Chauvin's stabbing comes as the federal Bureau of Prisons has faced increased scrutiny in recent years following wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein's jail suicide in 2019. It's another example of the agency's inability to keep even its highest profile prisoners safe after Nassar's stabbing and "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski's suicide at a federal medical center in June.

At the federal prison in Tucson in November 2022, an inmate at the facility's low-security prison camp pulled out a gun and attempted to shoot a visitor in the head. The weapon, which the inmate shouldn't have had, misfired and no one was hurt.

An ongoing AP investigation has uncovered deep, previously unreported flaws within the Bureau of Prisons, the Justice Department's largest law enforcement agency with more than 30,000 employees, 158,000 inmates and an annual budget of about \$8 billion.

AP reporting has revealed rampant sexual abuse and other criminal conduct by staff, dozens of escapes, chronic violence, deaths and severe staffing shortages that have hampered responses to emergencies, including inmate assaults and suicides.

Bureau of Prisons Director Colette Peters was brought in last year to reform the crisis-plagued agency. She vowed to change archaic hiring practices and bring new transparency, while emphasizing that the agency's mission is "to make good neighbors, not good inmates."

Lebanese residents of border towns come back during a fragile cease-fire between Hamas and Israel

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

KFAR KILA, Lebanon (AP) — With a cautious calm prevailing over the border area in south Lebanon on Saturday, the second day of a four-day cease-fire between Hamas and Israel, villages that had emptied of their residents came back to life — at least briefly.

Shuttered shops reopened, cars moved through the streets, and a family on an outing posed for photos in front of brightly colored block letters proclaiming "I (HEART) ODAISSEH" in one border town, with the tense frontier as a backdrop.

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Around 55,500 Lebanese are displaced by the clashes between the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and Israeli forces since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war, according to the International Organization for Migration.

The fighting has killed more than 100 people in Lebanon, including more than a dozen civilians — three of them journalists — and 12 people on the Israeli side, including four civilians.

While Lebanon and Hezbollah weren't officially parties to the cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, it has brought at least a temporary halt to the daily exchanges of rockets, artillery shelling and airstrikes. Some Lebanese took the opportunity to inspect their damaged houses or to pick up belongings.

Others came back hoping to stay.

Abdallah Quteish, a retired school principal, and his wife, Sabah, fled their house in the village of Houla — directly facing an Israeli military position across the border — on the second day of the clashes. They went to stay with their daughter in the north, leaving behind their olive orchard just as the harvest season was set to start.

They returned to their house on Friday and to an orchard where the unharvested olives were turning dry on the branches.

"We lost out on the season, but we're alright ... and that's the most important thing," Sabah said. "God willing, we'll stay in our house if the situation remains like this."

Others were less optimistic.

On the western side of the border in the village of Marwaheen, Khalil Ghanam had come on Saturday to pack up the remaining stocks from his cafe on the frontier road and take them to Beirut.

The cafe has been closed since Oct. 13, the day that Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah was killed and six other people were wounded in an Israeli strike in nearby Alma al-Shaab. Shells also fell next to the cafe, leaving mangled remnants of what used to be its outdoor seating.

"We say God willing nothing bad will happen, but the situation now is difficult, and as I see it we're heading into a long difficult period," Ghanam said.

Others never left their villages.

In Kfar Kila on Saturday, iron worker Hussein Fawaz picked through the charred shell of his house, hit by an airstrike two days earlier — no one was inside at the time, but the family's furniture, school books and household goods were destroyed.

Fawaz had sent his wife and three children to stay with relatives soon after the war began, but he stayed in the village because his parents refused to go. He still has no plans to leave.

"Where would we go? This is our land and our home. We're staying here," he said. "No one knows what will happen, but we hope things will stabilize and the war will end."

The general calm of the cease-fire was punctuated by scattered moments of tension. The Israeli military said Saturday that its air defenses intercepted a "suspicious aerial target" that entered Israeli airspace from Lebanon and that it had shot down a missile launched from Lebanon at an Israeli drone.

Meanwhile, the U.N. peacekeeping force in south Lebanon said one of its patrols in a border area was hit by gunfire from Israeli forces, causing no injuries but damaging the vehicle.

UNIFIL said in a statement that the shooting in the border village of Aitaroun occurred during "a period of relative calm" along the Lebanon-Israel border.

"This attack on peacekeepers, dedicated to reducing tensions & restoring stability in south Lebanon, is deeply troubling," UNIFIL tweeted.

The Israeli military didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Rep. George Santos says he expects to be kicked out of Congress as expulsion vote looms

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rep. George Santos said he expects to be expelled from Congress following a scathing report by the House Ethics Committee that found substantial evidence of lawbreaking by the New York Republican.

In a defiant speech Friday sprinkled with taunts and obscenities aimed at his congressional colleagues, Santos insisted he was “not going anywhere.” But he acknowledged that his time as a member of Congress, at least, may soon be coming to an end.

“I know I’m going to get expelled when this expulsion resolution goes to the floor,” he said Friday night during a conversation on X Spaces. “I’ve done the math over and over, and it doesn’t look really good.”

The comments came one week after the Republican chairman of the House Ethics Committee, Michael Guest, introduced a resolution to expel Santos once the body returns from Thanksgiving break.

While Santos has survived two expulsion votes, many of his colleagues who formerly opposed the effort now say they support it, citing the findings of the committee’s monthslong investigation into a wide range of alleged misconduct by Santos.

The report found Santos used campaign funds for personal purposes, such as purchases at luxury retailers and adult content websites, then caused the campaign to file false or incomplete reports.

“Representative Santos sought to fraudulently exploit every aspect of his House candidacy for his own personal financial profit,” investigators wrote. They noted that he did not cooperate with the report and repeatedly “evaded” straightforward requests for information.

On Friday, Santos said he did not want to address the specifics of the report, which he claimed were “slanderous” and “designed to force me out of my seat.” Any defense of his conduct, he said, could be used against him in the ongoing criminal case brought by federal prosecutors.

Instead, Santos struck a contemplative tone during the three-hour livestream, tracing his trajectory from Republican “it girl” to “the Mary Magdalene of the United States Congress.” And he lashed out at his congressional colleagues, accusing them of misconduct – such as voting while drunk – that he said was far worse than anything he’d done.

“They all act like they’re in ivory towers with white pointy hats and they’re untouchable,” he said. “Within the ranks of United States Congress there’s felons galore, there’s people with all sorts of shystie backgrounds.”

His decision not to seek reelection, he said, was not because of external pressure, but due to his frustration with the “sheer arrogance” of his colleagues.

“These people need to understand it’s done when I say it’s done, when I want it to be done, not when they want it to be done,” he added. “That’s kind of where we are there.”

Tens of thousands march in London calling for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Tens of thousands of people turned out on central London’s streets Saturday for a pro-Palestinian march calling for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza.

Police said that while the majority of people protested peacefully, 18 people were arrested including at least five people who were detained on suspicion of inciting racial hatred.

The National March for Palestine in central London was the latest in several huge protests staged in the British capital and many European cities every weekend since the Israel-Hamas war began last month.

Saturday’s protests came on the second day of a four-day cease-fire that has allowed critical humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and given civilians their first respite after seven weeks of war.

The Metropolitan Police said officers arrested a man on suspicion of inciting racial hatred after he was

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spotted carrying a placard with Nazi symbols on it. Four others were detained for distributing "literature featuring a swastika inside a Star of David."

The pro-Palestinian rallies in recent weeks have triggered heated debate in Britain over the freedom of protest as well as police powers to clamp down on what some in the Jewish community see as hateful, racist or antisemitic language or actions.

Earlier this month, the U.K.'s former interior minister, Suella Braverman, came under heavy criticism when she described pro-Palestinian protesters as "hate marchers." Critics accused her of inflaming tensions, and she was sacked by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak soon after.

On Saturday officers handed out leaflets march that sought to clarify what would be deemed a criminal offence, after the force faced pressure from senior government officials to be tougher on alleged displays of antisemitism at the protests.

"Anyone who is racist or incites hatred against any group should expect to be arrested. As should anyone who supports Hamas or any other banned organization," said Deputy Assistant Police Commissioner Ade Adekan.

"We will not tolerate anyone who celebrates or promotes acts of terrorism – such as the killing or kidnap of innocent people – or who spreads hate speech," he added.

The force said 1,500 officers were deployed to police the march.

Hundreds also gathered outside the Egyptian Embassy in London for a demonstration organized by Hizb-ut-Tahrir, the Islamist group. Police said two women who were seen holding "offensive" placards were arrested for a racially aggravated public order offense.

In Paris, a march staged for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women drew both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli activists as well as other groups.

Some protesters, waving Palestinian flags and posters reading "Free Palestine," walked in a show of solidarity with "Gaza and Palestine's women who are being murdered."

A group of Jewish women also joined the march to denounce crimes committed by Hamas, including rapes and killings, chanting, "We are women, we are proud, we are Jewish and we are angry."

Meanwhile, some pro-Palestinian protests were organized over the weekend in France's major cities including Strasbourg, Lyon and Marseille.

In Vienna, many marched amid first snow in the city, waving Palestinian flags at a "Peace for Palestine" rally. Organizers called on the Austrian government to back a cease-fire in Gaza, the release of all Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and the lifting of the Gaza blockade.

Organizers warned potential participants ahead of Saturday's demonstration that any antisemitic or far-right actions would be "stopped immediately" and offenders would be asked to leave the event.

Tens of thousands of people are also expected to take part in a march organized by the Campaign Against Antisemitism charity on Sunday to show solidarity with the Jewish community in the U.K.

Ukraine's military says Russia launched its largest drone attack since the start of the invasion

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia on Saturday morning launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting the Ukrainian capital, military officials said.

In total, Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 74 were destroyed by air defenses, Ukraine's air force said.

"Kyiv was the main target," Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on his Telegram channel.

The attack was "the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv," said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuriy Ihnat confirmed later that the air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.

At least five civilians were wounded in the hourslong assault, which saw several buildings damaged by

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falling debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten. The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

In the city's Solomiansky district, debris left a crater in the courtyard of a residential area, and the windows of a nearby building were blown out. Residents, most of them elderly, received medical attention at the scene. Others took shelter in a nearby subway station. As people were clearing up debris and broken glass in the neighborhood, the hum of a fresh wave of drones could be heard nearby.

The assault on Kyiv began at 4 a.m. local time, continuing in waves for more than six hours, and caused power outages in 77 residential buildings and 120 institutions, according to Popko. Ukraine's Energy Ministry said 17,000 people were without power in the Kyiv region as a result of the attack, noting that four power lines were damaged. Power was restored in the early afternoon.

"Our soldiers shot down most of the drones. Unfortunately, not all," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. "But we continue to work to strengthen our air defense and shoot down more."

The attack was carried out on the morning of Holodomor Memorial Day, which commemorates the manmade famine in Soviet Ukraine that killed millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. It is marked on the fourth Saturday in November.

Speaking at the Grain from Ukraine summit on Saturday, which saw leaders and parliamentary representatives from Belgium, Ireland, Finland, the Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia meet with Zelenskyy in Kyiv to discuss global food security, the Ukrainian president warned that "if (Russian President Vladimir) Putin could arrange another Holodomor for Ukraine, he would do it."

Besides Kyiv, the Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kirovohrad regions were also targeted. Meanwhile, shelling killed one person and wounded three in the southern Kherson region, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said Saturday. According to Prokudin, the region had been shelled 100 times over the previous 24 hours.

Pope Francis has a hospital checkup after coming down with the flu

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis went to the hospital Saturday for tests after he came down with the flu, but the results ruled out any respiratory problems, the Vatican said.

Francis, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, underwent a CAT scan, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said.

The test at Rome's Gemelli hospital, where Francis was treated for a respiratory infection earlier this year, was done to rule out any possible respiratory problems and came back negative, Bruni said in a statement.

Earlier Saturday, the Vatican said the pope had canceled his audiences because of the flu.

Francis is due to travel on Friday to Dubai for the COP28 conference on climate change. Bruni provided no information about any change in his plans and the Vatican on Saturday gave new details about his itinerary, suggesting the trip was still on.

Francis, who will turn 87 next month, spent three days at Gemelli in April for what the Vatican said was bronchitis after he had trouble breathing. He was discharged after receiving intravenous antibiotics.

Francis spent 10 days at the same hospital in July 2021 following intestinal surgery for a bowel narrowing. He was readmitted in June of this year for an operation to repair an abdominal hernia and remove scarring from previous surgeries.

When asked about his health in a recent interview, Francis quipped in reply what has become his standard line — "Still alive, you know."

An Israeli-owned ship was targeted in suspected Iranian attack in Indian Ocean, US official tells AP

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A container ship owned by an Israeli billionaire came under attack by a suspected Iranian drone in the Indian Ocean as Israel wages war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, an American defense official said Saturday.

The attack Friday on the CMA CGM Symi comes as global shipping increasingly finds itself targeted in the weeklong war that threatens to become a wider regional conflict — even as a truce has halted fighting and Hamas exchanges hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

The defense official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said the Malta-flagged vessel was suspected to have been targeted by a triangle-shaped, bomb-carrying Shahed-136 drone while in international waters. The drone exploded, causing damage to the ship but not injuring any of its crew.

“We continue to monitor the situation closely,” the official said. The official declined to elaborate on what intelligence the U.S. military gathered to assess that Iran was behind the attack, though authorities suspect Tehran’s paramilitary Revolutionary Guard carried out the assault.

The same drones have been used by Russia in its war on Ukraine, as recently as in a barrage launched Saturday that Kyiv described as Moscow’s biggest drone attack since the war began.

Al-Mayadeen, a pan-Arab satellite channel that is politically allied with the Iranian-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, reported that an Israeli ship had been targeted in the Indian Ocean. The channel cited anonymous sources for the report, which Iranian media later cited.

CMA CGM, a major shipper based in Marseille, France, referred questions to the Symi’s owner, Singapore-based Eastern Pacific Shipping. That company is ultimately controlled by Israeli billionaire Idan Ofer.

A statement issued on behalf of Eastern Pacific acknowledged the company being “aware of claims that a container ship under the company’s management was targeted in a possible security incident overnight on Friday.”

“The vessel in question is currently sailing as planned,” the statement said. “All crew are safe and well.”

The company through representatives declined to answer any questions. The Israeli military referred questions to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which did not respond.

In November 2022, the Liberian-flagged oil tanker Pacific Zircon, also associated with Eastern Pacific, sustained damage in a suspected Iranian attack off Oman.

In recent days, the Symi’s crew had been behaving as though they believed the ship faced a threat.

The ship had its Automatic Identification System tracker switched off since Tuesday when it left Dubai’s Jebel Ali port, according to data from MarineTraffic.com analyzed by the AP. Ships are supposed to keep their AIS active for safety reasons, but crews will turn them off if it appears they might be targeted. It had done the same earlier when traveling through the Red Sea past Yemen, home to the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.

“The attack is likely to have been targeted, due to the vessel’s Israeli affiliation through Eastern Pacific Shipping,” the private intelligence firm Ambrey told the AP. “The vessel’s AIS transmissions were off days prior to the event, indicating this alone does not prevent an attack.”

Iran’s mission to the United Nations didn’t respond to a request for comment. However, Tehran and Israel have been engaged in a yearslong shadow war in the wider Middle East, with some drone attacks targeting Israeli-associated vessels traveling around the region.

In the Israel-Hamas war, which began with the militants’ Oct. 7 attack, the Houthis seized a vehicle transport ship in the Red Sea off Yemen.

On Saturday, the British military’s United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which provides warnings to sailors in the Middle East, said “an entity declaring itself to be the Yemeni authorities” had ordered at least one ship away from a location off Hodeida, Yemen, in the Red Sea.

“Vessels in the vicinity are advised to exercise caution and report any suspicious activity,” it warned.

Iranian-backed militias in Iraq also have launched attacks on American troops in both Iraq and Syria during the war. However, Iran itself has yet to be linked directly to an attack.

"Iran has been wary of intervening in the ongoing Middle East crisis and is likely to avoid any action that might escalate the conflict," the Eurasia Group, a geopolitical risk firm, said in an analysis. "Small-scale attacks on U.S. forces and Israel by Iran's allies throughout the region suggest Tehran is willing to turn up the heat in a limited fashion, but unless the attacks cause U.S. casualties or significant damage, a major U.S. response is unlikely."

Meanwhile on Saturday, Bahrain's state-run news agency reported that its national carrier, Gulf Air, had been targeted in a hack that may have seen "some information from its email and client database" accessed.

A statement posted online by a self-described group calling itself Al-Toufan, or "The Flood" in Arabic, claimed the hacking of Gulf Air. Days earlier, another statement claimed that it hacked the Foreign Ministry and other government websites purportedly over the island kingdom's stance on the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

One of world's largest icebergs drifting beyond Antarctic waters after it was grounded for 3 decades

LONDON (AP) — One of the world's largest icebergs is drifting beyond Antarctic waters, after being grounded for more than three decades, according to the British Antarctic Survey.

The iceberg, known as A23a, split from the Antarctic's Filchner Ice Shelf in 1986. But it became stuck to the ocean floor and had remained for many years in the Weddell Sea.

The iceberg is about three times the size of New York City and more than twice the size of Greater London, measuring around 4,000 square kilometers (1,500 square miles).

Andrew Fleming, a remote sensing expert from the British Antarctic Survey, told the BBC on Friday that the iceberg has been drifting for the past year and now appears to be picking up speed and moving past the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, helped by wind and ocean currents.

"I asked a couple of colleagues about this, wondering if there was any possible change in shelf water temperatures that might have provoked it, but the consensus is the time had just come," Fleming told the BBC.

"It was grounded since 1986, but eventually it was going to decrease (in size) sufficiently was to lose grip and start moving," he added.

Fleming said he first spotted movement from the iceberg in 2020. The British Antarctic Survey said it has now ungrounded and is moving along ocean currents to sub-Antarctic South Georgia.

Pentagon's AI initiatives accelerate hard decisions on lethal autonomous weapons.

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (AP) — Artificial intelligence employed by the U.S. military has piloted pint-sized surveillance drones in special operations forces' missions and helped Ukraine in its war against Russia. It tracks soldiers' fitness, predicts when Air Force planes need maintenance and helps keep tabs on rivals in space.

Now, the Pentagon is intent on fielding multiple thousands of relatively inexpensive, expendable AI-enabled autonomous vehicles by 2026 to keep pace with China. The ambitious initiative — dubbed Replicator — seeks to "galvanize progress in the too-slow shift of U.S. military innovation to leverage platforms that are small, smart, cheap, and many," Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks said in August.

While its funding is uncertain and details vague, Replicator is expected to accelerate hard decisions on what AI tech is mature and trustworthy enough to deploy - including on weaponized systems.

There is little dispute among scientists, industry experts and Pentagon officials that the U.S. will within the next few years have fully autonomous lethal weapons. And though officials insist humans will always

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be in control, experts say advances in data-processing speed and machine-to-machine communications will inevitably relegate people to supervisory roles.

That's especially true if, as expected, lethal weapons are deployed en masse in drone swarms. Many countries are working on them — and neither China, Russia, Iran, India or Pakistan have signed a U.S.-initiated pledge to use military AI responsibly.

It's unclear if the Pentagon is currently formally assessing any fully autonomous lethal weapons system for deployment, as required by a 2012 directive. A Pentagon spokeswoman would not say.

Paradigm shifts

Replicator highlights immense technological and personnel challenges for Pentagon procurement and development as the AI revolution promises to transform how wars are fought.

"The Department of Defense is struggling to adopt the AI developments from the last machine-learning breakthrough," said Gregory Allen, a former top Pentagon AI official now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank.

The Pentagon's portfolio boasts more than 800 AI-related unclassified projects, much still in testing. Typically, machine-learning and neural networks are helping humans gain insights and create efficiencies.

"The AI that we've got in the Department of Defense right now is heavily leveraged and augments people," said Missy Cummings, director of George Mason University's robotics center and a former Navy fighter pilot. "There's no AI running around on its own. People are using it to try to understand the fog of war better."

Space, war's new frontier

One domain where AI-assisted tools are tracking potential threats is space, the latest frontier in military competition.

China envisions using AI, including on satellites, to "make decisions on who is and isn't an adversary," U.S. Space Force chief technology and innovation officer Lisa Costa, told an online conference this month.

The U.S. aims to keep pace.

An operational prototype called Machina used by Space Force keeps tabs autonomously on more than 40,000 objects in space, orchestrating thousands of data collections nightly with a global telescope network.

Machina's algorithms marshal telescope sensors. Computer vision and large language models tell them what objects to track. And AI choreographs drawing instantly on astrodynamics and physics datasets, Col. Wallace 'Rhet' Turnbull of Space Systems Command told a conference in August.

Another AI project at Space Force analyzes radar data to detect imminent adversary missile launches, he said.

Maintaining planes and soldiers

Elsewhere, AI's predictive powers help the Air Force keep its fleet aloft, anticipating the maintenance needs of more than 2,600 aircraft including B-1 bombers and Blackhawk helicopters.

Machine-learning models identify possible failures dozens of hours before they happen, said Tom Siebel, CEO of Silicon Valley-based C3 AI, which has the contract. C3's tech also models the trajectories of missiles for the the U.S. Missile Defense Agency and identifies insider threats in the federal workforce for the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency.

Among health-related efforts is a pilot project tracking the fitness of the Army's entire Third Infantry Division — more than 13,000 soldiers. Predictive modeling and AI help reduce injuries and increase performance, said Maj. Matt Visser.

Aiding Ukraine

In Ukraine, AI provided by the Pentagon and its NATO allies helps thwart Russian aggression.

NATO allies share intelligence from data gathered by satellites, drones and humans, some aggregated with software from U.S. contractor Palantir. Some data comes from Maven, the Pentagon's pathfinding AI project now mostly managed by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, say officials including retired Air Force Gen. Jack Shanahan, the inaugural Pentagon AI director,

Maven began in 2017 as an effort to process video from drones in the Middle East — spurred by U.S. Special Operations forces fighting ISIS and al-Qaeda — and now aggregates and analyzes a wide array

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of sensor- and human-derived data.

AI has also helped the U.S.-created Security Assistance Group-Ukraine help organize logistics for military assistance from a coalition of 40 countries, Pentagon officials say.

All-Domain Command and Control

To survive on the battlefield these days, military units must be small, mostly invisible and move quickly because exponentially growing networks of sensors let anyone "see anywhere on the globe at any moment," then-Joint Chiefs chairman Gen. Mark Milley observed in a June speech. "And what you can see, you can shoot."

To more quickly connect combatants, the Pentagon has prioritized the development of intertwined battle networks — called Joint All-Domain Command and Control — to automate the processing of optical, infrared, radar and other data across the armed services. But the challenge is huge and fraught with bureaucracy.

Christian Brose, a former Senate Armed Services Committee staff director now at the defense tech firm Anduril, is among military reform advocates who nevertheless believe they "may be winning here to a certain extent."

"The argument may be less about whether this is the right thing to do, and increasingly more about how do we actually do it -- and on the rapid timelines required," he said. Brose's 2020 book, "The Kill Chain," argues for urgent retooling to match China in the race to develop smarter and cheaper networked weapons systems.

To that end, the U.S. military is hard at work on "human-machine teaming." Dozens of uncrewed air and sea vehicles currently keep tabs on Iranian activity. U.S. Marines and Special Forces also use Anduril's autonomous Ghost mini-copter, sensor towers and counter-drone tech to protect American forces.

Industry advances in computer vision have been essential. Shield AI lets drones operate without GPS, communications or even remote pilots. It's the key to its Nova, a quadcopter, which U.S. special operations units have used in conflict areas to scout buildings.

On the horizon: The Air Force's "loyal wingman" program intends to pair piloted aircraft with autonomous ones. An F-16 pilot might, for instance, send out drones to scout, draw enemy fire or attack targets. Air Force leaders are aiming for a debut later this decade.

The race to full autonomy

The "loyal wingman" timeline doesn't quite mesh with Replicator's, which many consider overly ambitious. The Pentagon's vagueness on Replicator, meantime, may partly intend to keep rivals guessing, though planners may also still be feeling their way on feature and mission goals, said Paul Scharre, a military AI expert and author of "Four Battlegrounds."

Anduril and Shield AI, each backed by hundreds of millions in venture capital funding, are among companies vying for contracts.

Nathan Michael, chief technology officer at Shield AI, estimates they will have an autonomous swarm of at least three uncrewed aircraft ready in a year using its V-BAT aerial drone. The U.S. military currently uses the V-BAT -- without an AI mind -- on Navy ships, on counter-drug missions and in support of Marine Expeditionary Units, the company says.

It will take some time before larger swarms can be reliably fielded, Michael said. "Everything is crawl, walk, run -- unless you're setting yourself up for failure."

The only weapons systems that Shanahan, the inaugural Pentagon AI chief, currently trusts to operate autonomously are wholly defensive, like Phalanx anti-missile systems on ships. He worries less about autonomous weapons making decisions on their own than about systems that don't work as advertised or kill noncombatants or friendly forces.

The department's current chief digital and AI officer Craig Martell is determined not to let that happen.

"Regardless of the autonomy of the system, there will always be a responsible agent that understands the limitations of the system, has trained well with the system, has justified confidence of when and where it's deployable -- and will always take the responsibility," said Martell, who previously headed machine-learning at LinkedIn and Lyft. "That will never not be the case."

As to when AI will be reliable enough for lethal autonomy, Martell said it makes no sense to generalize.

For example, Martell trusts his car's adaptive cruise control but not the tech that's supposed to keep it from changing lanes. "As the responsible agent, I would not deploy that except in very constrained situations," he said. "Now extrapolate that to the military."

Martell's office is evaluating potential generative AI use cases – it has a special task force for that – but focuses more on testing and evaluating AI in development.

One urgent challenge, says Jane Pinelis, chief AI engineer at Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Lab and former chief of AI assurance in Martell's office, is recruiting and retaining the talent needed to test AI tech. The Pentagon can't compete on salaries. Computer science PhDs with AI-related skills can earn more than the military's top-ranking generals and admirals.

Testing and evaluation standards are also immature, a recent National Academy of Sciences report on Air Force AI highlighted.

Might that mean the U.S. one day fielding under duress autonomous weapons that don't fully pass muster? "We are still operating under the assumption that we have time to do this as rigorously and as diligently as possible," said Pinelis. "I think if we're less than ready and it's time to take action, somebody is going to be forced to make a decision."

In the US, Hmong 'new year' recalls ancestral spirits while teaching traditions to new generations

GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — For the annual fall renewal of her shaman spirit, Mee Vang Yang will soon ritually redecorate the tall altar in her living room where she keeps her father's ring-shaped shaman bells.

She carried them across the Mekong River as the family fled the Communist takeover of her native Laos four decades ago. Today, they facilitate the connection to the spiritual world she needs to help fellow refugees and their American-raised children who seek restoration of lost spirits.

"Like going to church, you're giving beyond yourself to a greater power," said the mother of six through a translator in Hmong.

It's the language spoken for the most important spiritual celebration in the Hmong calendar, the "Noj Peb Caug" — translated as "new year," but literally meaning "eat 30," since the ceremonies traditionally were tied to the fall's post-harvest abundance shared with the clan and offered to spirits.

During new year, which is celebrated mostly in November and December among Hmong Americans, shamans send off their spirit guides to regenerate their energy for another season of healing. Male heads of households who embrace traditional animist practices perform soul-calling ceremonies, venerate ancestor spirits and invoke the protection of good spirits.

"A traditional Hmong home is not just a home, but also a place of worship," said Tzianeng Vang, Vang Yang's nephew, who came to Minnesota as a teen and grew up a Christian. He's among the community leaders trying to divulge knowledge of these animist traditions so they won't be lost for his children's generation.

"You preserve it here or you have nowhere," he said.

Persecuted as an ethnic minority in their ancestral lands in China, the Hmong fled first to the mountains of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. There, tens of thousands fought for the United States in the Vietnam War. When Communist regimes swept the region, they escaped to refugee camps in neighboring Thailand and, starting in the mid-1970s, resettled largely in California farm country and Minnesota's capital city.

The majority of the approximately 300,000 Hmong in the United States are animists and believe that spirits live throughout the physical world. That includes multiple souls in a person — any of which can leave and needs to be ceremonially called back, said Lee Pao Xiong, director of the Center for Hmong Studies at Concordia University in St. Paul.

But many younger Hmong haven't learned the spiritual significance of cultural traditions, even popular ones like the Thanksgiving weekend dance, music and craft performances in one of St. Paul's largest en-

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tertainment venues, Xiong said.

"It's intricate, it's not just 'go to church and pray.' There are all these spirits to atone to. It's about spirits that you have to appease," said Xiong, who teaches classes about these traditions, which often include the ritual slaughter of cows, pigs or chickens as an offering or an exchange of spirits.

On a farm north of St. Paul, Moua Yang runs the hog butcher shop he started working on with his father when he was a child. Community members can perform rituals on site before the animals are killed.

"To me, it's a service to the community. Because they feel it's for their wellbeing," said Yang, who is Christian but employs up to 20 workers on weekends to field the dozens of requests for different Hmong ceremonies.

On a recent fall afternoon, Sai Vue took his three boys, ages 6, 4 and 3, to choose a pig there and have it slaughtered to pay back his ancestors for answering his request for help — though most of the nearly 200 pounds of pork will also feed the family for two months.

Meat is especially important for new year dishes, since it was considered a rare delicacy and thus propitious for wealth in the agricultural Hmong society.

"It's ingrained in me," said Vue, who was born in St. Paul. But he wants his boys to be comfortable with the spiritual customs, "so when they grow up it's not a big surprise."

That same day, the Hmong Village indoor market on the outskirts of St. Paul was bustling with families scouring the stalls for embroidered clothing, headwear and jewelry pieces for the new year among the fragrances of herbs and tropical fruits imported from Southeast Asia and California.

As she bought pearl strings for dressmaking to take to her grandmother in their small Wisconsin town, Janessa Moua said she's been studying Hmong since she enrolled at a Twin Cities university.

"I'm learning again what things in the house mean," she said.

At a nearby stall full of pleated black-and-pink skirts and vests strung with silver ornaments, Thormee Moua beamed at her son, a freshman lugging bags bulging with new clothes for new year festivities at his school.

"I'm so happy they can be Hmong," Moua said.

Educating youth in ancestral culture is a crucial aim of the Hmong Cultural Center just down the street from St. Paul's capitol, said its director, Txongpao Lee.

"They need to learn from parents and prepare for when they have children," said Lee, who estimates about one third of young Hmong have converted to Christianity. Acceptance of ancestral customs differs among church denominations, he added — his family's Lutheran and Catholic members vary in participation in new year rituals.

Lee leads them for his household, though his wife, Hlee Xiong Lee, has been a shaman since she fell ill when pregnant with the fourth of her seven children. Shamans, like other traditional healers across cultures, often associate the revelation of their gift with life-threatening sickness, and believe they could die if they refuse the call.

Xiong Lee's path to shamanism has been arduous, entailing rigorous training with a shaman mentor to learn how to communicate with the spirit world. But so was her journey to the United States, arriving in a small Minnesota town as a 14-year-old refugee with no English-speaking skills, too embarrassed to ask for help getting a lunch ticket on her first day of school.

She's proud of how her own children wear string bracelets and effortlessly explain to inquisitive teachers or classmates they're meant to tie the family to protecting spirits.

"They're good at adapting to my tradition and American tradition," she said.

Kevin Lee, a shaman's son who says he also first started experiencing spiritual energies when he was 5, similarly has had to navigate a regular childhood in St. Paul with his ability to connect with good and bad spirits "on the other side."

"Kids would be like, 'this guy is weird.' For me, it was just another day," he said in front of the three living-room altars in the house he shares with his parents and brother.

They will be redecorated with new paper designs for the new year after his father, Chad Lee, finishes

helping his shaman mentees and has time to send off his shaman spirit for a much-deserved break — short, though, because up to half a dozen people call for his help each day. Last year, his “angel” only got three days off, the older Lee said.

“Spiritual world is confusing, but once you find a path, everything is natural,” Chad Lee said.

The debate over Ukraine aid was already complicated. Then it became tangled up in US border security

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — As war and winter collide, a top adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged during a recent visit to Washington that the days ahead “will be tough” as his country battles Russia while U.S. support from Congress hangs in the balance.

President Joe Biden’s nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs sits idle in Congress, neither approved nor rejected, but subjected to new political demands from Republicans who are insisting on U.S.-Mexico border policy changes to halt the flow of migrants.

Linking Ukraine’s military assistance to U.S. border security interjects one of the most divisive domestic political issues — immigration and border crossings — into the middle of an intensifying debate over wartime foreign policy.

When Congress returns this coming week from the holiday break, Biden’s request will be a top item on the to-do list, and the stakes couldn’t be higher. Failure risks delaying U.S. military aid to Kyiv and Israel, along with humanitarian assistance for Gaza, in the midst of two wars, potentially undermining America’s global standing.

“It’s coming at a crucial time,” said Luke Coffey, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, which recently hosted Andriy Yermak, the Ukrainian president’s chief of staff, at the discussion in Washington.

“We’re running out of money,” Coffey said in an interview.

What just a year ago was overwhelming support for Ukraine’s young democracy as it reaches for an alliance with the West to stop Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion has devolved into another partisan fight in the United States.

Members of Congress overwhelmingly support Ukraine, embracing Zelenskyy as they did when he arrived on a surprise visit last December to a hero’s welcome. But the continued delivery of U.S. military and government aid is losing favor with a hard-right wing of Republican lawmakers and with some Americans.

Nearly half of the U.S. public thinks the country is spending too much on aid to Ukraine, according to polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Rather than approve Biden’s request, which includes \$61 billion for Ukraine, Republicans are demanding something in return.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has said the “best way” to ensure GOP support for Ukraine is for Biden and Democrats to accept border policy changes that would limit the flow of migrants across the border with Mexico.

“It’s connected,” he said in an interview with The Associated Press.

To that end, a core group of senators, Republicans and Democrats, have been meeting privately to come up with a border policy solution that both parties could support, unlocking GOP votes for the Ukraine aid.

On the table are asylum law changes pushed by the Republicans that would make it more difficult for migrants to enter the United States, even if they claim they are in danger, and reduce their release on parole while awaiting judicial proceedings. Republicans also want to resume construction of the border wall.

Democrats call these essentially nonstarters, and the border security talks are going slowly. Those who have worked on immigration-related issues for years see a political disaster in the making for all sides — Ukraine included.

“I think it’s terrible that we’re in the position we’re in,” said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn.

“But you know, we were talking all through the night and talking all day today,” he said recently, “trying to find a path forward.”

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He added: "I'm not confident we'll get there."

Republicans, even defense hawks who strongly back Ukraine, insist the money must come with U.S. border provisions.

"The reality is, if President Biden wants Ukraine aid to pass we're going to have to have substantial border policy changes," said Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., often a McConnell ally on defense issues.

The White House has requested roughly \$14 billion for border security in its broader package, with money for more border patrol officers, detention facilities and judges to process immigration cases. It also includes stepped-up inspections to stop the flow of deadly fentanyl.

Biden and his national security team recently with key senators of both parties. With Congress narrowly split, Republicans holding slim majority control of the House and Democrats a close edge in the Senate, bipartisan agreement will almost certainly be required for any legislation to advance.

Pentagon funding for Ukraine is rapidly dwindling. The Defense Department has the authority to take about \$5 billion worth of equipment from its stockpiles to send to Ukraine, but only has about \$1 billion to replenish those stocks. So military leaders are worried about the effect on U.S. troop readiness and equipping.

The need for an infusion of funding is growing "by the day" said Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh.

Overall, half the \$113 billion Congress has approved for Ukraine since the war began in February 2022 has gone to the Defense Department, according to the Congressional Research Service. The dollars are being spent to build Ukraine's armed forces, largely by providing U.S. military weapons and equipment, and replenish U.S. stockpiles.

Much of the rest goes to emergency and humanitarian aid and to support the government of Ukraine through the World Bank.

National security experts have watched the Ukrainian forces repurpose outdated American equipment that was headed for decommissioning and use it to obliterate aspects of the Russian armed forces. McConnell has noted that much of the spending stays in the U.S., flowing to defense production in states across the nation.

"Ukraine is at a critical point," said Democratic Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "The Russians are just counting on us to give up and walk away — and then they walk in."

But even border security provisions may not be enough to with over Republicans who are growing increasingly skeptical of Biden's vow to support Ukraine as long as it takes to defeat Russia.

One Republican, Rep. Mike Garcia of California, is trying to bridge the GOP divide by separating the military funds from money the U.S. spends on the Kyiv government, and pushing the Biden administration to be more open about presenting a strategy for the war's endgame.

Garcia, who drafted a 14-page report that new Speaker Mike Johnson delivered during a recent White House meeting, said even with border security, Republicans will not approve the full amount for Ukraine that Biden has requested. "If the Ukraine budget part of it is still \$61 billion, that ain't the right answer," said Garcia, a former Navy fighter pilot who flew combat missions during the Iraq War.

Other Republicans, led by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, a Donald Trump ally, have drawn an even deeper line against Ukraine aid.

Yermak, during his talk in Washington, was thankful for U.S. support, and blunt about the need for more.

"I tell you the truth, this winter will be tough for us," he said, urging Americans to back Ukraine at this "historical moment for all of us."

Palestinian militants kill 2 alleged informers for Israel and mob drags bodies through camp alleys

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinian militants in a West Bank refugee camp shot and killed two alleged collaborators with Israel early Saturday, Palestinian officials said. Mobs then kicked the bloodied corpses and dragged them through alleys before trying to tie them to an electrical tower.

The scenes, widely shared on social media, were reminiscent of the chaos in the occupied West Bank during two Palestinian uprisings against Israeli rule that erupted in 1987 and in 2000, respectively, each lasting several years. During these periods of heightened conflict, there were frequent killings of alleged informers, at times with bodies displayed in public.

Saturday's killings in the Tulkarem refugee camp laid bare the pressures tearing at Palestinian society as the Israel-Hamas war worsens what has already been a bloody year for the territory. Deadly Israeli military raids, settler attacks and Palestinian militancy in the West Bank have surged since Israel mounted its devastating offensive in Gaza in response to Hamas' Oct. 7 bloody rampage through southern Israel.

Over 230 Palestinian have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank in the past seven weeks alone, most of them during Israeli army raids targeting militants. On Saturday, Israeli forces raided the northern Palestinian town of Qabatiya seeking to arrest militants, sparking a firefight and killing a locally prominent doctor, 25-year-old Shamekh Abu al-Rub, Palestinian health officials said. Abu al-Rub was the son of Kamal Abu al-Rub, governor of the Palestinian city of Jenin.

In the Tulkarem refugee camp, a local militant group accused two Palestinians of helping Israeli security forces target the group in a major army raid that killed three key militants on Nov. 6, a Palestinian security officer said. The two alleged informers were in their late 20s and early 30s, respectively, and one was from the camp, said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

A second Palestinian official, speaking on condition of anonymity for the same reason, confirmed that Palestinian security forces were aware of the incident. The public prosecutor's office said it would have details in the coming days about a police investigation into the killings.

The local militant group — affiliated with the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed offshoot of the secular nationalist Fatah party — posted a cryptic statement just after the two men were reported killed. "We did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves," it said.

The family of one of the accused informers sought to distance itself in a statement Saturday, calling its disgraced relative a "malicious finger that we have cut off without regret."

"We affirm our complete innocence," the family added, "and we won't allow anyone to blame us for his guilt."

A Palestinian journalist in the camp, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals, said residents of the camp beat and stomped on the corpses after the two were shot and killed by militants in the streets. Videos show hundreds of Palestinians flocking to the entrance of the camp, gawking and filming with their phones as men try to hang the mutilated corpses from an electrical tower.

It apparently proved too difficult and residents ended up tossing the bodies over the walls of a U.N. school in the camp, tying their feet to a chain link fence, the journalist said. They were not taken to the hospital, she said.

Purported confession videos surfaced online showing the two men, worn out, their eyes downcast, describing their recent interactions with Israeli intelligence officials who they said paid them thousands of dollars for information.

Israel's Shin Bet security service has a long history of pressuring Palestinians to become informers, including by blackmail or by promising work or entry permits for Israel. The Shin Bet did not respond to a request for comment on the killings.

Why Finland is blaming Russia for a sudden influx of migrants on its eastern border

By VANESSA GERA and JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — When Finland joined NATO earlier this year, Russia threatened retaliation.

Now, hundreds of migrants from the Middle East and Africa have appeared at Finland's border from Russia, seeking entry into the Nordic country.

Finnish officials say the sudden surge in asylum-seekers is no coincidence. They accuse Russia of driving the migrants to the border to sow discord as payback for Finland's membership in NATO.

Here is a look at the migration challenge playing out along parts of Finland's 830-mile (1,340-kilometer) border with Russia.

WHAT HAPPENED?

There has long been a trickle of asylum-seekers showing up at border checkpoints in Finland, which is the European Union's easternmost member. But this month saw a sudden surge.

According to official statistics, more than 900 migrants have arrived in Finland so far since August, more than 800 in November alone.

Finnish authorities say they hail from countries including Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan, and that unlike in the past, the Russian authorities let them get that far even though they lack documents.

They arrive in sneakers in Finland's harsh winter conditions, most riding bicycles.

"We have proof showing that, unlike before, not only Russian border authorities are letting people without proper documentation to the Finnish border, but they are also actively helping them to the border zone," Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

HOW IS FINLAND REACTING?

Finnish authorities quickly closed four checkpoints and then three more, leaving just one Arctic crossing point open for asylum-seekers. They sent Finnish soldiers to erect barbed wire and concrete barriers along the frontier.

Finland also asked for help from EU border agency Frontex, which said it would send dozens of officers and equipment as reinforcements to the Finnish border. Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said there has been a "serious disruption of border security," but authorities also insist that they have the situation under control.

The Kremlin denies encouraging the migrants, and says it regrets the Finnish border closures. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova argued Wednesday that Helsinki should have instead tried to "to work out a mutually acceptable solution or receive explanation."

HYBRID WARFARE

Western countries have for years accused Russia and its ally Belarus of using migrants seeking safety and economic opportunity in Europe as pawns to destabilize Western democracies. European leaders called it a form of "hybrid warfare" that Moscow deploys against them, along with disinformation, election interference and cyber attacks.

Finnish Foreign Minister Valtonen told the AP that there is no doubt that Russia "is instrumentalizing migrants" as part of its "hybrid warfare" against Finland following the nation's entry into NATO — a decision prompted by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Other Western experts agree.

"The Finns are quite right the Russians have been weaponizing migration for some time allied with aggressive disinformation — the idea being simply to produce 'wedges' within societies they judge to be hostile," said Klaus Dodds, a geopolitics professor at Royal Holloway, University of London.

"This is all about destabilizing Finland," Dodds added.

DEJA VU

EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said this week that the challenges on Finland's border gave her a feeling of "deja vu."

Finnish President Sauli Niinistö noted this week that Russia, in 2015 and 2016, permitted asylum-seekers to approach border checkpoints in northern Finland. It was seen as a response to Finland increasing train-

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ing activities with NATO.

He recalled previously warning that Finland should prepare for a “certain malice” from Russia and said that “we are now constantly being reminded every day that Finland joined NATO.”

The NATO nations of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia have also faced migration pressure on their borders with Belarus — an ally of Russia — for more than two years.

A trickle, and then a sudden surge of migrants from Belarus came after the EU imposed sanctions on Belarus for a 2020 election that authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko claimed to win, but which was widely viewed as rigged.

Latvian Prime Minister Evika Siliņa told the AP on a visit to Finland this week that the Baltic nation recorded a rise in attempts by migrants to cross the Belarus-Latvia border in September, prompting it to close all checkpoints on the 107-mile (173-kilometer) border except one left open for asylum-seekers.

Siliņa said it was impossible to know the thinking of Lukashenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin. “That’s the bad thing,” she said. “We cannot predict it. We have to react and be proactive like in an emergency situation.”

WHY DOES MIGRATION PRESSURE CAUSE INSTABILITY?

Migration pressure pushes democracies to abandon some of their democratic commitment to giving people seeking asylum the right to seek protection, thereby exposing fragility of democratic systems.

Europe has been under heavy migration pressure for years, triggering a backlash in many places against migrants that has also strengthened far-right parties.

The latest case is in the Netherlands, where anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders won an electoral victory this week.

In Poland, the border crisis deepened preexisting social divisions, pitting those seeking a tough stance on migration against those favoring a more accepting approach toward migrants and refugees. The government accused those of siding with migrants as unwittingly helping hostile foreign powers.

New walls and barriers now crisscross Europe as a result of migration and Russia’s aggression. But they don’t fully work.

Poland’s Border Guard has detected 25,500 attempts this year to illegally get through the border from Belarus, where a large steel wall was completed last year.

DEBATE INSIDE FINLAND AND ARCTIC CROSSINGS

Finns are now debating whether national security — an absolute priority for any government in the country of 5.6 million because of its proximity to Russia — exceeds human right concerns.

Under international agreements and treaties valued in the Nordic countries, at least one checkpoint on a country’s borders should remain open for asylum-seekers.

Orpo’s government decided to comply with this by leaving open the Raja-Jooseppi checkpoint in the Arctic north. It is the northernmost Finland-Russia border point located in the middle of wilderness in the Lapland region, about 155 miles (250 kilometers) from Russia’s Arctic city of Murmansk.

Despite the remote location, about 55 migrants arrived to the checkpoint on Saturday, more than usual.

Buyers worldwide go for bigger cars, erasing gains from cleaner tech. EVs would help

By ALEXA ST. JOHN undefined

The negative impact on the climate from passenger vehicles, which is considerable, could have dropped by more than 30% over the past decade if not for the world’s appetite for large cars, a new report from the Global Fuel Economy Initiative suggests.

Sport utility vehicles, or SUVs, now account for more than half of all new car sales across the globe, the group said, and it’s not alone. The International Energy Agency, using a narrower definition of SUV, estimates they make up nearly half.

Over the years these cars have gotten bigger and so has their cost to the climate, as carbon dioxide emissions “are almost directly proportional to fuel use” for gas-powered cars. The carbon that goes in at

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the pump comes out the tailpipe.

Transportation is responsible for around one-quarter of all the climate-warming gases that come from energy, and much of that is attributable to passenger transport, according to the International Energy Agency.

But the negative environmental impact from SUVs could have been reduced by more than one-third between 2010 and 2022, if people had just continued buying the same size cars, according to the initiative, which is a global partnership of cleaner vehicle groups.

One fix for this could be electric vehicles.

George Parrott, an avid runner at 79, who lives in West Sacramento, California, decided to switch to cleaner vehicles in 2004 when he bought a Toyota Prius hybrid. Since then, he has owned several pure-electric cars, and currently owns both a Genesis GV60 electric SUV and a Tesla Model 3.

"This was all a combination of broad environmental concerns," he said.

Parrott and his late partner also knew their region ranks high on the American Lung Association's polluted cities list. "We were going to do anything and everything we could to minimize our air quality impact here in the Sacramento area," he said.

Not all consumers think of the energy consumption and environmental benefits the same way, especially in the U.S. While EV sales accounted for 15% of the global car market last year, that was only 7.3% in the U.S.

Meanwhile, smaller vehicles, or sedans, have lost a lot of ground in the U.S. market over the past decade. In 2012, sedans accounted for 50% of the U.S. auto retail space, with SUVs at just over 30%, and trucks at 13.5%, according to car-buying resource Edmunds. By 2022, U.S. sedan share dropped to 21%, while SUVs hit 54.5% and trucks grew to 20%.

"People don't want to be limited by their space in their car," said Eric Frehsée, president of the Tamaroff Group of dealerships in southeast Michigan. "Everyone wants a 7-passenger."

Large SUVs such as the Chevrolet Tahoe, Toyota Sequoia, or Nissan Armada have highway gas mileages of 28, 24, and 19, respectively. But even the most efficient SUVs will be less efficient than sedans because SUVs weigh so much more. A sign of progress, however, is that compact SUVs, such as the Toyota RAV4 and Honda CR-V (at 35 and 34 highway miles-per-gallon, respectively) are now leading the U.S. SUV market, accounting for about 18% of new vehicle sales last year.

More efforts by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, are also underway to improve gas-powered vehicle fuel economy and tailpipe emissions. Some initiatives could include SUVs, which has the industry up in arms.

Until recently, consumers had few electric models to choose from if they wanted to reduce the impact of their own transportation. A majority of early electrified car options were sedans, particularly in the luxury segment.

More automakers are launching larger EV types, but those could require even heavier batteries onboard. The environmental aspect also needs to be weighed if an SUV is replaced by an EV, said Loren McDonald, CEO of market analysis firm EVAdoption. "Just electrifying doesn't get us much if we also don't focus on weight and efficiency of these vehicles and smaller battery packs," McDonald said.

The industry is racing to advance battery tech to reduce the size of batteries and the amount of critical minerals needed to make them.

Figures like those from the Global Fuel Economy Initiative are sure to be pertinent at the upcoming COP28 U.N. climate change talks next week.

Today in History: November 26, China enters the Korean War

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Nov. 26, the 330th day of 2023. There are 35 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 26, 1950, China entered the Korean War, launching a counteroffensive against soldiers from the

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United Nations, the U.S. and South Korea.

On this date:

In 1825, the first college social fraternity, the Kappa Alpha Society, was formed at Union College in Schenectady, New York.

In 1864, English mathematician and writer Charles Dodgson presented a handwritten and illustrated manuscript, "Alice's Adventures Under Ground," to his 12-year-old friend Alice Pleasance Liddell; the book was later turned into "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," published under Dodgson's pen name, Lewis Carroll.

In 1883, former enslaved woman and abolitionist Sojourner Truth died in Battle Creek, Michigan.

In 1917, the National Hockey League was founded in Montreal, succeeding the National Hockey Association.

In 1941, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull delivered a note to Japan's ambassador to the United States, Kichisaburo Nomura (kee-chee-sah-boor-oh noh-moo-rah), setting forth U.S. demands for "lasting and extensive peace throughout the Pacific area." The same day, a Japanese naval task force consisting of six aircraft carriers left the Kuril Islands, headed toward Hawaii.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered nationwide gasoline rationing, beginning Dec. 1.

In 1943, during World War II, the HMT Rohna, a British transport ship carrying American soldiers, was hit by a German missile off Algeria; 1,138 men were killed.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, told a federal court that she'd accidentally caused part of the 18-1/2-minute gap in a key Watergate tape.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan appointed a commission headed by former Sen. John Tower to investigate his National Security Council staff in the wake of the Iran-Contra affair.

In 2000, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris certified George W. Bush the winner over Al Gore in the state's presidential balloting by a 537-vote margin.

In 2008, teams of heavily armed Pakistani gunmen stormed luxury hotels, a popular tourist attraction and a crowded train station in Mumbai, India, leaving at least 166 people dead in a rampage lasting some 60 hours.

In 2017, amid allegations that he had groped women in the past, Minnesota Democratic Sen. Al Franken said he felt "embarrassed and ashamed," but that he looked forward to gradually regaining the trust of voters. (Franken announced less than two weeks later that he was resigning from Congress.)

In 2020, Americans marked the Thanksgiving holiday amid the coronavirus pandemic, with many celebrations canceled or reduced; Zoom and FaceTime calls connected some families with those who didn't want to travel.

In 2021, Stephen Sondheim, the songwriter who reshaped the American musical theater in the second half of the 20th century, died at his Connecticut home at the age of 91.

Today's Birthdays: Impressionist Rich Little is 85. Singer Jean Terrell is 79. Pop musician John McVie is 78. Actor Marianne Muellerleile is 75. Actor Scott Jacoby is 67. Actor Jamie Rose is 64. Country singer Linda Davis is 61. Actor Scott Adsit is 58. Blues singer-musician Bernard Allison is 58. Country singer-musician Steve Grisaffe is 58. Actor Kristin Bauer is 57. Actor Peter Facinelli is 50. Actor Tammy Lynn Michaels is 49. DJ/record label executive DJ Khaled (KAL'-ehd) is 48. Actor Maia (MY'-ah) Campbell is 47. Country singer Joe Nichols is 47. Contemporary Christian musicians Anthony and Randy Armstrong (Red) are 45. Actor Jessica Bowman is 43. Pop singer Natasha Bedingfield is 42. Actor Jessica Camacho is 41. Rock musician Ben Wysocki (The Fray) is 39. Singer Lil Fizz is 38. MLB All-Star Matt Carpenter is 38. Actor-singer-TV personality Rita Ora is 33. Actor/singer Aubrey Peebles is 30.