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Sunday, May 12

GHS Graduation, 2 p.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.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.
United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Honor graduates during coffee hour and worship; Sunday School Carnival, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m. (Sunday School sings); Doris Strom's 99th Birthday, 3 p.m.

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



Monday, May 13

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, ice cream sundae, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Oatmeal.
School Lunch: French bread pizza, green beans.
Northeast Conference Girls Golf at Fisher Grove Golf Course, Redfield, 10 a.m.
Northeast Conference Junior High Track Meet at Redfield, 10 a.m.
Varsity Track at Hamlin, 3 p.m.
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
The Pantry open at the Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Baseball, Softball and T-Ball uniform pickup at City Hall, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

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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Recreational pot initiative beats petition deadline

By **STU WHITNEY**

South Dakota News Watch

Matthew Schweich hopes that when it comes to recreational marijuana legalization in South Dakota, the third time is the charm.

"Everything's on schedule," said the campaign director of South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws, whose group handed in 29,030 signatures for its recreational pot initiated measure to the Secretary of State's office in Pierre on Tuesday, the final day that signatures could be submitted for 2024.

It's been a mad dash to the finish line for the pro-legalization group, which also had a hand in putting the issue on the ballot in 2020 and 2022. The effort got a late start due to concerns about funding and didn't really hit its stride with paid circulators until February.

"I think it would have been a mistake to launch a signature drive without knowing we had the resources to do it properly," said Schweich, adding that funding for the petition drive came from the Grow South Dakota Ballot Committee (with former state legislator Deb Peters as treasurer) and Puffy's Dispensary, a West River-based medical cannabis operation.

The number of verified signatures needed to qualify initiated measures for the ballot is 17,508, which represents 5% of the total vote for governor in the last gubernatorial election. Constitutional amendments require 35,017, which is 10%.

After receiving a petition, state law requires the Secretary of State to "examine and catalog" the signatures and make them available to the public upon request for a reasonable fee. Within five days of that examination, the Secretary of State is required to generate a random sample to determine the validity of the signatures, with the validation sheets also available for public inspection.

If the recreational marijuana measure makes the ballot, the campaign will have to grapple with possible voter fatigue on an issue that will be put before South Dakota voters for a third consecutive statewide election.

In 2020, pro-legalization Amendment A passed with 54% of the vote, clearing the way for recreational marijuana to be implemented in the state. Medicinal pot was also approved by voters that year in an initiated measure.

Gov. Kristi Noem's administration challenged the recreational marijuana amendment, saying it violated the state's requirement that constitutional amendments deal with just one subject. That argument prevailed in a 4-1 decision at the South Dakota Supreme Court.

Supporters tried to pass recreational cannabis again in 2022, and South Dakotans rejected that effort, sending Initiated Measure 27 to defeat with 53% of voters against it.

Schweich acknowledges making a political miscalculation by going back to the issue in 2022 rather than "taking a breather" and waiting for 2024, a presidential election year with higher voter turnout than midterms.

"My theory was that the anger over the amendment being overturned would cause a whole bunch of voters who might not otherwise show up for the midterms to go out and vote," said Schweich, who also runs Eagle Campaigns, a political campaign service in Sioux Falls. "It was an ambitious theory, and unfortunately things didn't play out that way. It turns out that changing an electorate is very difficult."

South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws will focus on get-out-the-vote efforts rather than trying to win "the hearts and minds" of voters on an issue that they are well-versed on following the 2020 and 2022 campaigns.

Recreational marijuana is currently legal in 24 states, with supporters pointing to economic advantages

to the state economy from tax revenue. States collected nearly \$3 billion in marijuana revenues in 2022, according to the Tax Foundation.

Opponents cite potential social costs and health risks such as a higher risk of cardiovascular problems from marijuana use, as outlined in a recent study in the Journal of the American Heart Association.

If the measure makes the ballot and fails, said Schweich, there will not be a fourth consecutive time on the ballot, at least from his group.

"If we fail in 2024, which I don't think will happen, I will respect that and will not be part of putting this issue on the ballot in 2026," said Schweich.

Here's a look at the status of other ballot measures now that the deadline for submission has passed:

Seeking certification

Right to abortion

Type: Constitutional amendment

Signatures submitted: 55,000

Dakotans for Health co-founder Rick Weiland held a press conference May 1 in Sioux Falls to announce that he was handing in 55,000 signatures to the Secretary of State's office that day for his group's abortion amendment.

If successful, the measure would enshrine the right to abortion in the South Dakota Constitution and supersede a 2005 state trigger law that took effect when Roe vs. Wade was overturned. Current state law makes it a Class 6 felony for anyone "who administers to any pregnant female or prescribes or procures for any pregnant female" a means for an abortion, except to save the life of the mother.

The Life Defense Fund also announced May 1 that it intends to challenge the legality of the abortion petition based on the "unlawful and misleading actions" of Weiland and his petition circulators.

Rep. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, one of the state's leading anti-abortion advocates as co-chair of the Life Defense Fund, has accused Dakotans for Health circulators of leaving petitions unattended and providing misleading information to the public.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley sent a letter to Dakotans for Health on Oct. 31, 2023, that mentioned "video and photographic evidence" of such encounters and warned of potentially illegal actions taken by petition circulators.

Jackley said that his letter was based on "complaints and concerns raised during the petition process" and that violations, if proven, could play a role in the Secretary of State's petition certification process.

Hansen has said that his group will undertake its own process to verify abortion amendment signatures prior to certification, and affidavits can be filed by people who signed but wish to remove their signature from the petition.

Those actions will likely be part of an appeal to circuit court in Hughes County in Pierre if the Secretary of State certifies the petition and Life Defense Fund officially challenges that decision.

Weiland said his group is confident that the signatures will hold up and voters will decide the abortion amendment in November.

"These are desperate actions on our opponent's part because they know when this sticks on the ballot, it's going to pass," said Weiland. "So they're going to do everything they can to try to scare and dissuade people. But at the end of the day, it's a desperate action and we are living in desperate times when it comes to reproductive freedom. I think the will of the voters is going to prevail."

Open primaries

Type: Constitutional amendment

Signatures submitted: 46,500

Joe Kirby of South Dakota Open Primaries told News Watch that his group handed in signatures May 6 and that he is "not worried at all" about certification.

"We know the process and we've got more than enough valid signatures," he said.

Approval of this amendment would establish "top-two" primaries for governor, Congress and state legislative and county races rather than having parties hold separate primary contests. The two candidates

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who get the most votes would advance to the general election, regardless of party.

The theory is that open primaries, rather than incentivizing candidates from taking extreme positions to win a partisan primary, will help lower the volume to produce officeholders more reflective of the general electorate. This comes at a time when far-right factions such as the South Dakota Freedom Caucus have gained more traction within the Republican ranks.

All registered voters would be eligible to weigh in on which candidates advance to the general election. Currently, Independent voters in South Dakota can vote in Democratic primaries but not Republican contests.

Kirby pointed to the 2026 South Dakota gubernatorial primary as an example of how an open primary could be a "good mix of Republicans, Democrats, Independents and Libertarians on the primary ballot."

Freedom Caucus chairman Aaron Aylward, a state representative from Harrisburg, told News Watch that the proposal would essentially create "two general elections in South Dakota" and thus was unnecessary.

The only other public opposition so far has come from South Dakota Republican Party chair John Wiik and U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, who told News Watch in a March 1 statement that "our current primary system has served us well."

Initiated measures

Grocery tax repeal

Type: Initiated measure

Signatures submitted: 25,000

Dakotans for Health submitted 25,000 signatures on April 24 for a measure to prohibit the state from collecting sales tax on "anything sold for human consumption, except alcoholic beverages and prepared food."

Weiland's Take It Back initiative is also involved with the effort, which has public support from the South Dakota State Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO.

A statewide poll in November 2023 co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch showed that 61% of registered voters support the proposal, which would eliminate the 4.2% state sales tax on groceries. The measure would not affect the up to 2% sales tax on groceries charged by South Dakota municipalities.

The proposal was staunchly opposed by the Republican-dominated Legislature, which approved a cut in the state's general sales tax rate from 4.5% to 4.2% during the 2023 session that's due to expire in 2027.

The fiscal note for the grocery tax measure indicates it could reduce annual state sales tax receipts by \$124 million. Opponents said that could stress the state's budget when combined with the rate change on general sales tax.

Weiland notes that Noem promised a grocery tax cut as part of her 2022 re-election campaign, a plan ultimately rejected by lawmakers. The governor took the rare step of testifying for her grocery tax repeal bill during the 2023 session, insisting that the budget was strong enough to absorb lost revenue and that voters wanted the tax repealed.

"She's taken a lot of wind out of the sails of the opposition," said Weiland. "She has made it clear that this will not be a financial burden and that it's something that the people want."

Jim Terwilliger, Noem's top budget official as commissioner of the Bureau of Finance and Management, told News Watch that the governor doesn't support the ballot initiative because of concerns about the wording.

He added that she "still believes a repeal of the grocery tax is the best tax relief for South Dakota families if it is done in a responsible manner."

Qualified for ballot

Work requirement for Medicaid

Type: Constitutional amendment (from Legislature)

Legislators passed this Senate Joint Resolution during the 2024 session, an effort to amend the constitution to impose work requirements for Medicaid eligibility.

Supporters want to add a work requirement for adults who are not physically or mentally disabled but who are eligible for Medicaid under the expansion of the government-sponsored program that South

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Dakota voters approved in 2022. The move would still need to be approved by the federal government. Opponents frame it as a rebuke of the will of voters and cite the state's 2.1% unemployment rate, which ranks second-lowest in the nation. "Who is on Medicaid and is not working? I can answer that for you, it's the poorest of the poor," said Democratic state Rep. Kady Wittman of Sioux Falls.

References to government officials

Type: Constitutional amendment (from Legislature)

This is a Senate Joint Resolution from the 2023 session that proposes to change outdated male-only references to South Dakota's governor and other officials in the state constitution and statutes. It's a procedural update in language that is not expected to draw much opposition.

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit news organization. Read more in-depth stories at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. Contact Stu Whitney at stu.whitney@sdnewswatch.org.



MANHART

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 1

Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

- ✓ Pro Law Enforcement
- ✓ Pro Constitution
- ✓ Pro Family
- ✓ Property Rights



Visit the Campaign Site
ManhartForHouse.com or
facebook.com/ManhartLogan

Paid for by Manhart for State House

Primary Election: Vote Now Through June 4th

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Third Week Trap Shoot

The third week of the Trap Shoot League scores have been released with two Groton Area shooters having perfect scores. Turner Thompson returned to the top and was joined by Payton Mitchell with perfect scores to lead the group. Cadence Feist was one behind with a 49 while Faith Fliehs had a 48 and five more with a 47.

Name	Rd1	Rd2	Total
THOMPSON, TURNER	25	25	50
MITCHELL, PAYTON	25	25	50
FEIST, CADENCE	24	25	49
FLIEHS, FAITH	25	23	48
KAMPA, JAEGER	23	24	47
KAMPA, TRISTAN	25	22	47
HOLMES, ASHTON	23	24	47
MITCHELL, PAISLEY	23	24	47
MOREHOUSE, WESLEY	23	24	47
HANSON, LAYNE	24	22	46
POWERS-DINGER, MICHAEL	21	25	46
SMITH, TREY	22	24	46
WAMBACH, BRYSON	22	23	45
SCEPANIAK, ISAIAH	23	22	45
STANGE, TYTON	21	23	44
SPERRY, OWEN	23	19	42
THOMPSON, TARYN	22	20	42
FROST, CHARLIE	20	21	41
PIGORS, GENTRY	18	21	39
SCEPANIAK, NOAH	19	20	39
SPERRY, ASHLYN	16	18	34
KOTZER, ADELIN	16	17	33
KUTTER, IAN	18	14	32
LEICHT, TUCKER	17	13	30
HOLMES, SYDNEY	16	10	26
RUDEBUSCH, JACLYN	10	4	14



Now
HIRING!

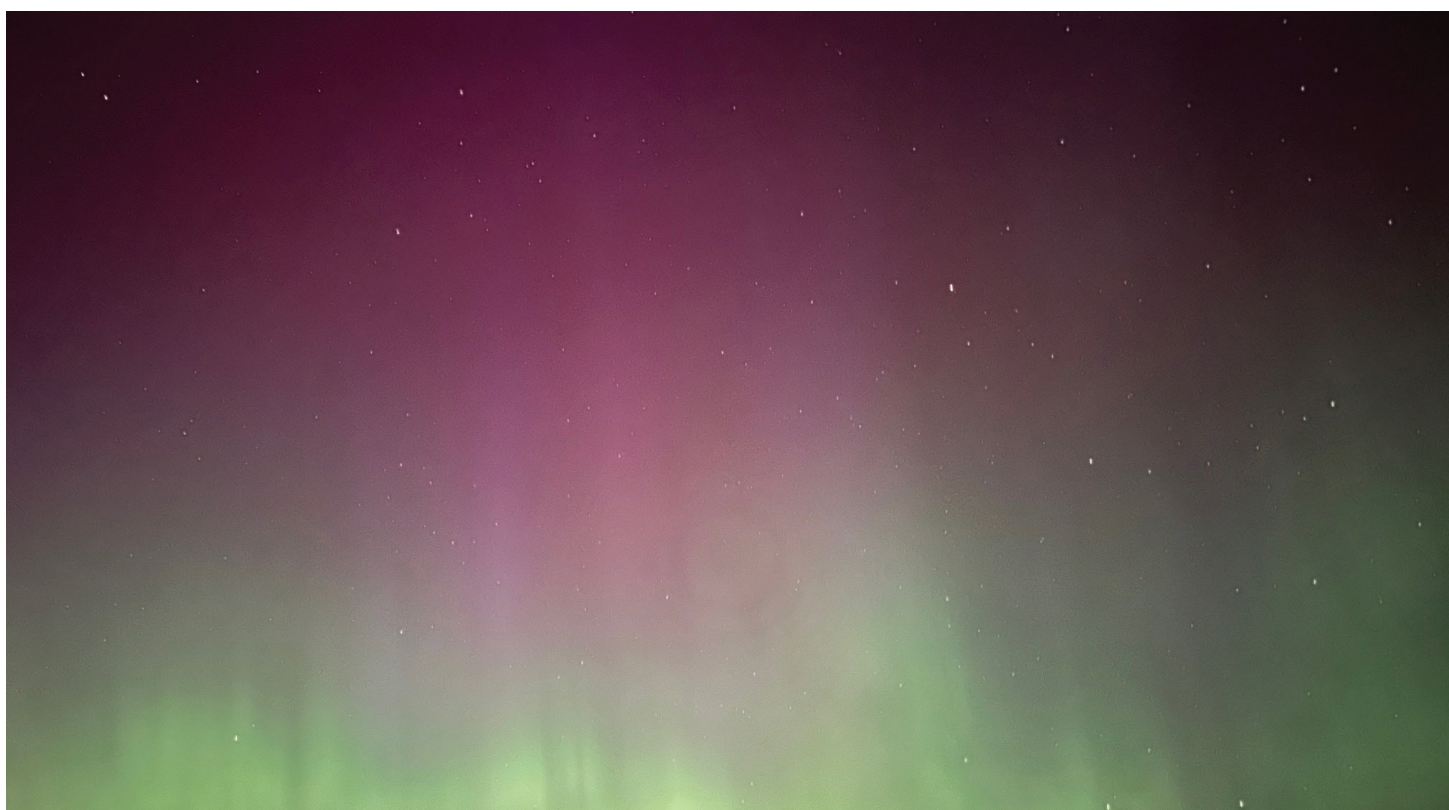
Dairy Queen in Groton is hiring! If you're looking for a fun job with lots of variety, look no further! We're looking for energetic, smiling people – we provide free meals, uniforms, competitive wages, fun atmosphere and flexible scheduling. Part-time – day, evening, week-end shifts available. We will work with your schedule. Stop in today and pick up an application.

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The Northern Lights were out again last night with these photos taken by Paul Kosel.



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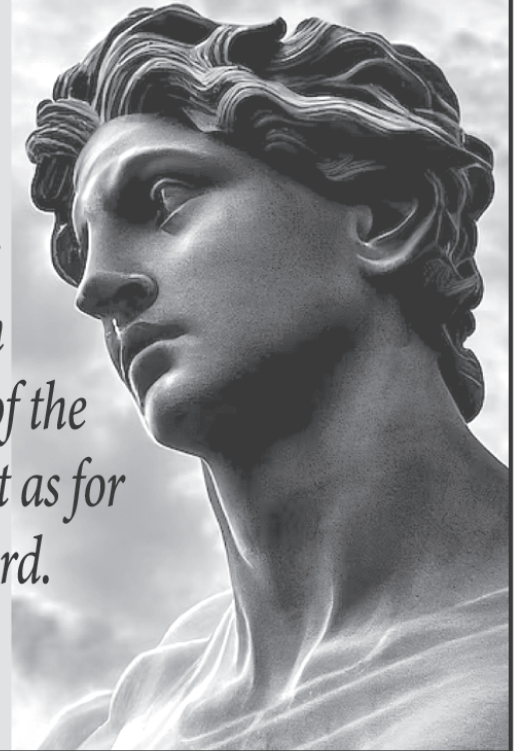
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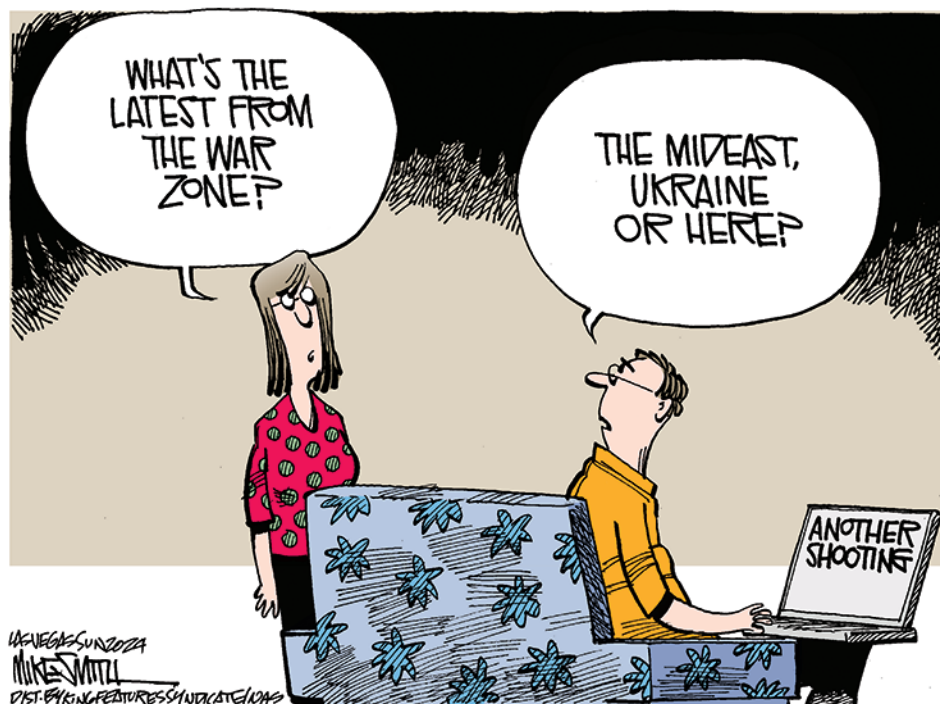
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

JOSHUA 24:15



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of 2 Thessalonians (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From Titus 1, Paul wrote that unto the pure all things are ...? *Gold, Righteous, Worthy, Pure*

3. What archangel is mentioned by name in the book of Jude? *Gabriel, Silas, Michael, Melchizedek*

4. In 1 Kings 21, who forbid Naboth to give his vineyard to Ahab? *The Lord, Jezebel, Absalom, Balaam*

5. Jared was the father of Enoch and lived how many years? *110, 450, 600, 962*

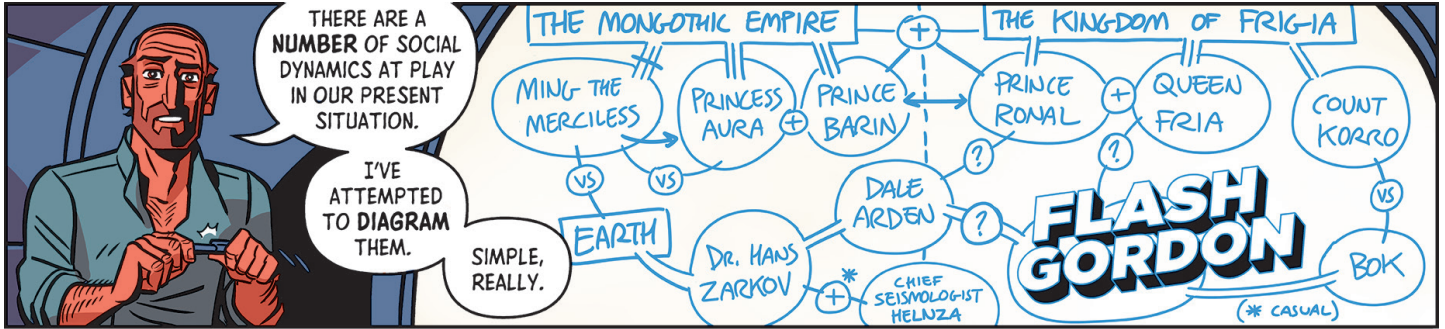
6. In Psalm 103:5, what bird's youth is renewable? *Dove, Eagle, Raven, Swallow*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Pure, 3) Michael, 4) The Lord, 5) 962, 6) Eagle

Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com.

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THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SOCIAL DYNAMICS AT PLAY IN OUR PRESENT SITUATION.

I'VE ATTEMPTED TO DIAGRAM THEM.

SIMPLE, REALLY.

THE MONGOTHIC EMPIRE

THE KINGDOM OF FRIG-IA

MING- THE MERCILESS

PRINCESS AURA

PRINCE BARIN

PRINCE RONAL

QUEEN FRIA

COUNT KORRO

DALE ARDEN

DR. HANS ZARKOV

CHIEF SEISMOLOGIST HELNZA

FLASH GORDON

BOK

EARTH

* CASUAL

FROM THE JOURNALS OF DR. HANS ZARKOV:

MONDAY: I'VE COLLATED THE INFORMATION WE HAVE ON THE MEGAFUNA KNOWN AS "THE SCREAMING STORM."



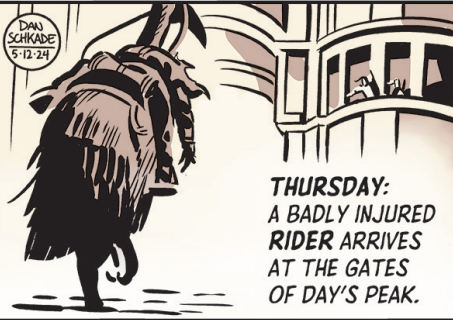
THE DATA SUGGESTS IT'S BEEN SURFACING FOR MONTHS. HOW HAS NO ONE NOTICED?

TUESDAY: DALE LEARNS THESE SURFACE POINTS ARE ALL MINING SETTLEMENTS.



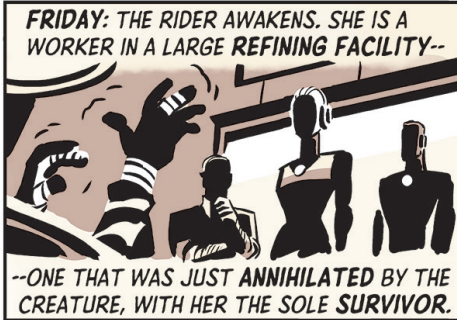
DEEP, ILLEGAL DRILLING, HIDDEN FROM THE PUBLIC -- AUTHORIZED BY COUNT KORRO.

WEDNESDAY: UPON BEING CONFRONTED, COUNT KORRO FLEES THE PALACE.



DAN SCHKADE
5-12-24

THURSDAY: A BADLY INJURED RIDER ARRIVES AT THE GATES OF DAY'S PEAK.



FRIDAY: THE RIDER AWAKENS. SHE IS A WORKER IN A LARGE REFINING FACILITY--

--ONE THAT WAS JUST ANNIHILATED BY THE CREATURE, WITH HER THE SOLE SURVIVOR.

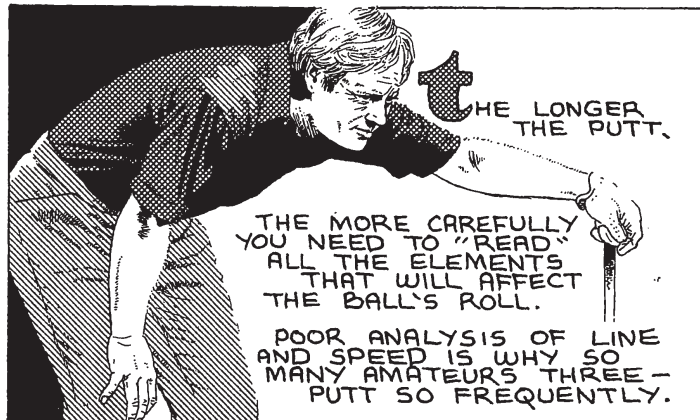


SATURDAY: IT'S CLEAR THE STORM IS STRIKING AT LARGER AND LARGER TARGETS.

SEISMIC IMAGING CONFIRMS MY FEARS: IN ONE WEEK, IT WILL REACH DAY'S PEAK.

NEXT: THE SHIELD OF FRIGIA

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



THE LONGER THE PUTT,

THE MORE CAREFULLY YOU NEED TO "READ" ALL THE ELEMENTS THAT WILL AFFECT THE BALL'S ROLL.

POOR ANALYSIS OF LINE AND SPEED IS WHY SO MANY AMATEURS THREE-PUTT SO FREQUENTLY.

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ASSESS BREAKS, GRAIN, WET OR DRY SPOTS, AND OVERALL GRASS CONDITION OVER THE ENTIRE ROUTE OF THE PUTT, AS WELL AS LOOKING AT THE LINE FROM BEHIND THE BALL. DO THAT WHILE YOUR FELLOW PLAYERS ARE SIZING UP THEIR PUTTS. TO SPEED PLAY.





Immunotherapy for Peanut Allergies Still a Work in Progress

DEAR DR. ROACH: Why can't people see an allergist and get desensitized to a peanut allergy? As a child, I was allergic to dust, pet hair, milk and other things, but I received treatments. I am not bothered by any of these now. It would seem prudent to desensitize people who have allergies that are life-threatening, like peanut allergies. -- S.S.

ANSWER: Allergy immunotherapy continues to be a commonly used and valid treatment for many allergies, including environmental allergies, insect venom allergies and, more recently, food allergies. The treatment can be used for peanut allergies, but it is certainly not perfect. So, it isn't used very often.

The goal of immunotherapy is to get a person to tolerate the allergen that they have an allergic response to. This involves giving very tiny amounts of the allergen below the level that would trigger an allergic response. Over time and under extremely close observation, the amount of the allergen is increased. For allergens like pollen, they are typically given by injection under the skin (or by drops under the tongue), but for food allergens, they are given orally.

For peanut allergies in particular, reactions are common during oral immunotherapy. For about 1 dose per 1,000 under supervision in an allergist's office, emergency treatment with epinephrine was required. Even during maintenance therapy at home, a reaction occurred 3.5% of the time, requiring treatment with 0.7% of all doses.

Although oral immunotherapy is effective at getting people to tolerate peanuts, the effectiveness is not long-lived, with only 13% of people still being able to tolerate a peanut challenge three years after discontinuing maintenance therapy. (Thirty-seven percent of people who continued maintenance therapy were able to tolerate the peanut challenge.)

Until there are significant improvements in outcomes, I am unlikely to recommend oral immunotherapy for people with peanut allergies, unless they are unable to effectively avoid exposure to peanuts and they continue to have repeated reactions. Whether they're on immunotherapy or not, patients are still advised to continue careful avoidance and have emergency treatment immediately available.

A new treatment for food allergies was just approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Omalizumab works by blocking the immunoglobulin IgE, which is critically important in allergic diseases. The study showed that 47% to 80% of subjects who were treated with omalizumab for four months (given by injection every two to four weeks) were able to tolerate a standard dose of the foods that they were allergic to (peanuts, plus at least two other foods).

However, it appears that the benefit of the treatment does not persist after the treatment is discontinued, and it is intended for use in conjunction with food allergen avoidance to protect against accidental exposures.

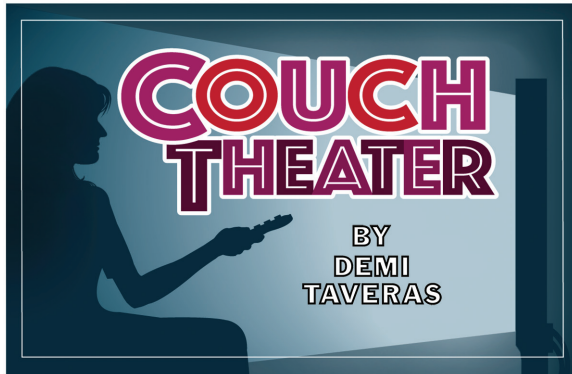
In the future, combining this new medication with oral immunotherapy could be superior to using either alone, and it can help prevent serious or fatal allergic reactions from inadvertently being exposed to peanuts. Further studies are addressing this issue.

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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Joel Edgerton, left, and Jennifer Connelly star in "Dark Matter." Courtesy of Apple TV+

"American Fiction" (R) -- This comedy-drama film led by Jeffrey Wright went on to snag the Best Adapted Screenplay award at the last Oscars, receiving five nominations in total. Wright plays Monk Ellison, an African American writer and professor based in Los Angeles. His novels,

although acclaimed by fellow academics, do not generate enough money for his publishers, so they urge him to make his book "more Black." So, Monk submits a stereotypical novel to his publishers as a joke, but when it brings him commercial success, he's forced to become the very idea of what he hates the most -- an inauthentic writer who panders to the wrong community. Co-starring Tracee Ellis Ross, Issa Rae and Sterling K. Brown, "American Fiction" premieres May 14. (Amazon Prime Video)

"He Went That Way" (R) -- "Saltburn's" Jacob Elordi takes on another psychologically tense film, but this time, it's his character who has murderous intentions. Inspired by real events that occurred with serial killer Larry Lee Raney, this crime drama picks up right as animal trainer Jim Goodwin (Zachary Quinto) picks up hitchhiker Bobby Falls (Elordi). While Bobby doesn't appear to be menacing at first, Jim quickly learns that Bobby has a thirst for killing in cold blood. Besides creating beautifully rustic scenes in the desert and getting great close-ups of Elordi, the film mostly received criticism due to its lackluster story. See for yourself when it premieres on May 17! (Hulu)

"Dark Matter" (TV-MA) -- This new sci-fi series starring Joel Edgerton ("The Great Gatsby") and Jennifer Connelly ("Top Gun: Maverick") has just hit streaming services with its first two episodes. Edgerton plays physicist Jason Dessen, an ordinary family man who suddenly gets abducted while walking home one night. When he wakes up, Jason finds himself in a completely different reality than the one he calls home. In this new reality, he finds out that he is the creator of "The Box" -- a large vessel that holds many alternate versions of Jason Dessen. Realizing that he was abducted by an alternate version of himself, Jason fights to get himself home before the alternate version of himself harms his family. Look out for new episodes every Wednesday. (May 8, Apple TV+)

In Case You Missed It

"Wine Country" (R) -- This Netflix original was Amy Poehler's feature directorial debut, and she signed on her gang of "Saturday Night Live" actress friends to help tell her first story on the big screen. Starring Poehler, Maya Rudolph, Rachel Dratch, Ana Gasteyer and Tina Fey (among others), the film follows a group of six friends who go on a trip to Napa Valley for a 50th birthday celebration. Although lots of excitement is in the air, all six women are secretly suffering with their own issues that eventually bubble up to the surface after days of drinking in Napa's hills. So, make sure to grab your favorite wine and call up your besties to watch this movie full of witty and relatable moments! Out now. (Netflix)

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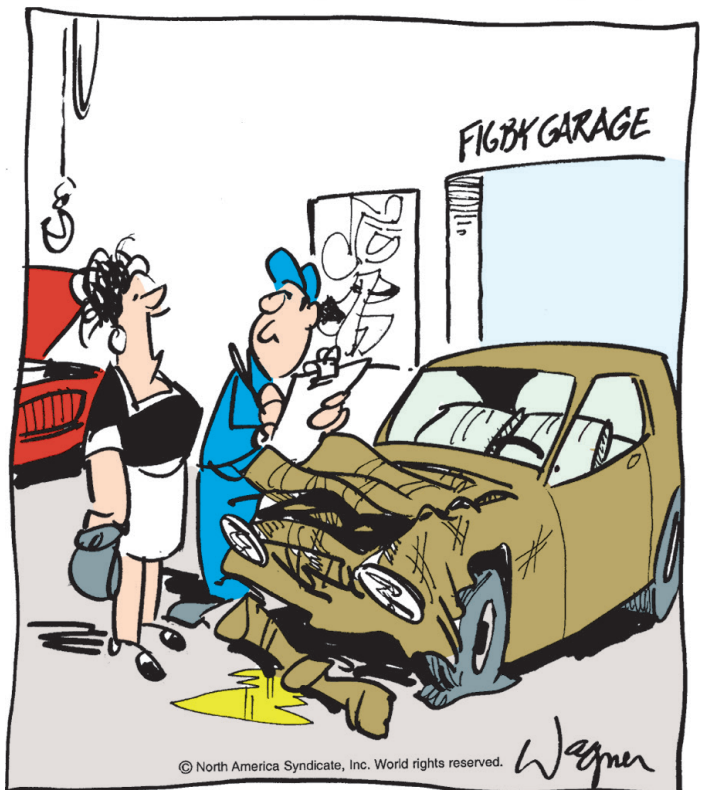
1. Name the Beatles album that was the first to contain all original material.
2. "The Morning After" was the theme song for which film?
3. Which artist was the first to release "When a Man Loves a Woman"?
4. Name the group that released "Neither One of Us (Wants to Be the First to Say Goodbye)."
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "But they're cousins, identical cousins all the way, one pair of matching bookends, different as night and day."

Answers

1. "A Hard Day's Night," in 1964, had 13 songs, all written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. The U.S. and U.K. versions differed in track listings and were released two weeks apart.
2. "The Poseidon Adventure," released in 1972. An ocean liner, on her last voyage before being scrapped, flips over in a tsunami, trapping the passengers in the upside down ship.
3. Percy Sledge, in 1966. The song shot to No. 1 on all the U.S. charts. Michael Bolton followed with a cover in 1991. His version also went to No. 1.
4. Gladys Knight & The Pips, in 1972.
5. "The Patty Duke Show" theme song, 1963-1966. Patty Duke played both parts, both the American cousin and her identical British cousin.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



"Can you make it look like my husband did it?"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

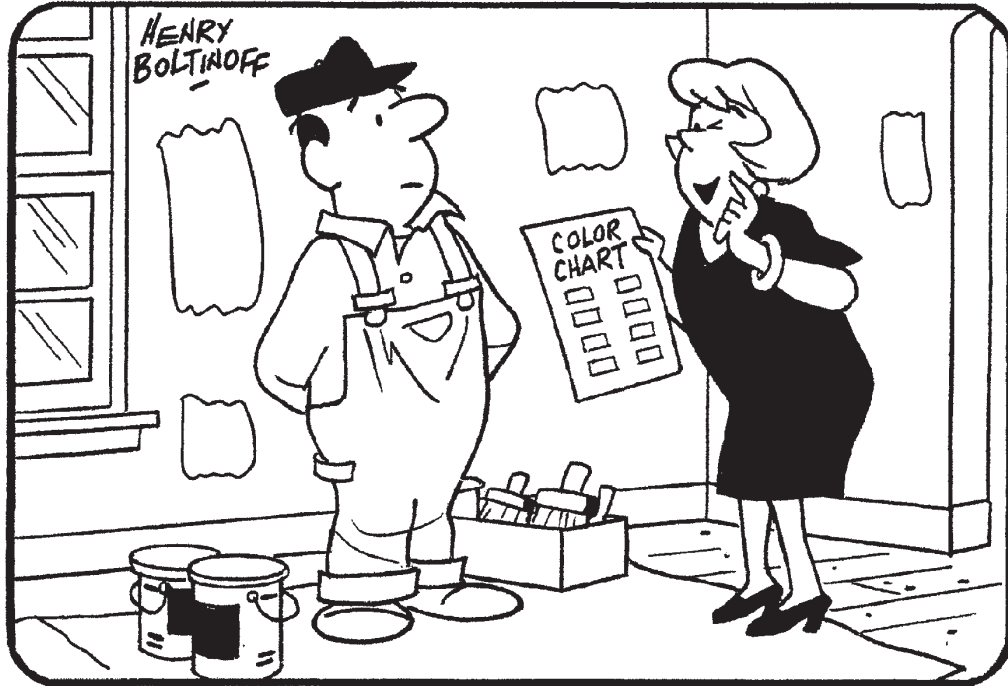


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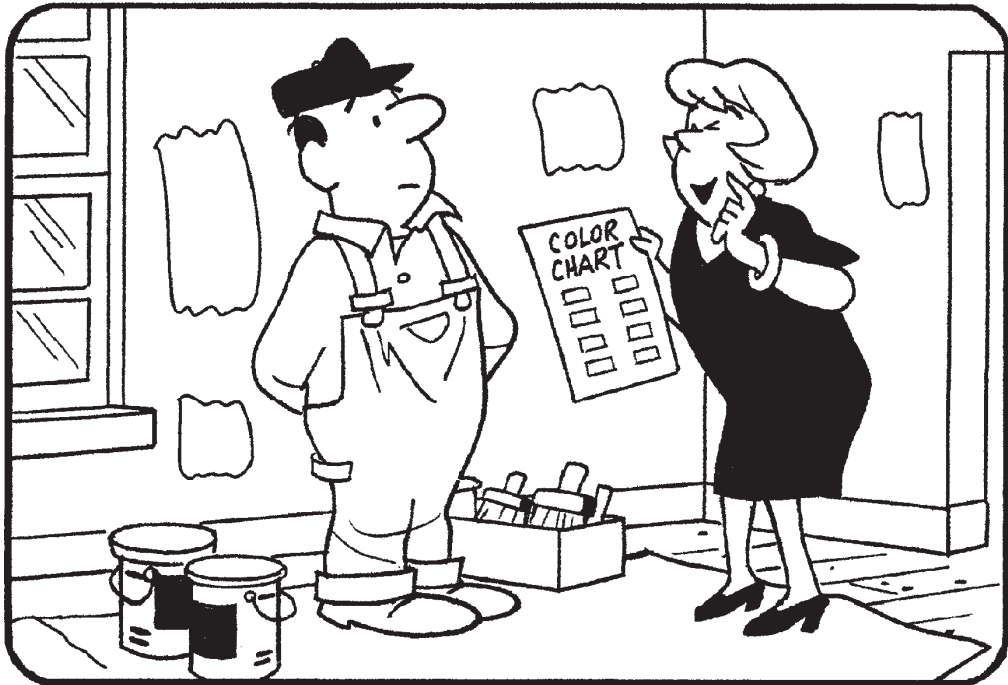
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Leg is moved. 2. Tarp is longer. 3. Paint can is larger. 4. Windowsill is different. 5. Foot is moved. 6. Top of doorway is different.

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* "Keep frosting looking glossy ... with your hair dryer. Before guests come over, give the whole cake a once over holding the hair dryer about 7-10 inches away from the frosting and set on high. It will soften the frosting, giving the cake a just-made look." -- R.L. in California

* Clean out hard-water stains and mineral deposits on your showerhead with this trick: Fill a zip-lock baggie halfway with warm vinegar. Immerse your showerhead in the baggie and secure it to the pipe with a rubber band. Let it hang for an hour or so, then release the bag and scrub the showerhead with a soft toothbrush.

* "There are so many different ways to pay bills these days that it can be hard to keep track of bills that need to be mailed.

Here's a great way to keep track of when to pay a bill so that it always gets there on time: I used to write the due dates of my bills on my calendar. Now I write the pay by date for each bill on the calendar. For bills that go in the mail, I write a date that's a week ahead of when it is due. For bills that are paid online, I write a date three days ahead of the due date, and for automatic payments, I deduct the money from the paycheck BEFORE the draft is made. Now I never miss a due date." -- T.F. in Indiana

* Change your air filter to save money. Be sure to change it once a month to keep your air conditioner working at its most efficient.

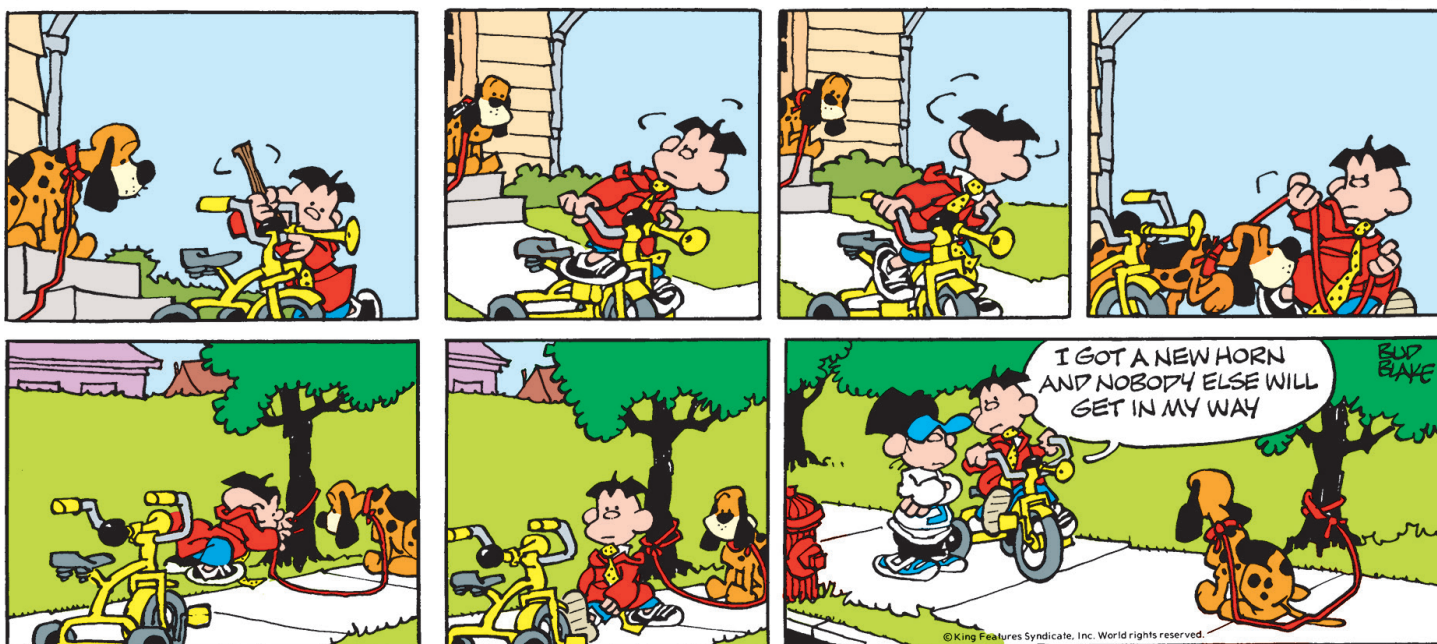
* You might not have a blackboard in your home, but keep a clean blackboard eraser around to get streaks off of freshly cleaned windows. It works really well in the car, too!

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 Reddish brown
- 5 \$ dispenser
- 8 Cries of aversion
- 12 Spiced tea
- 13 Goat's plaint
- 14 Entreaty
- 15 Mystique
- 16 Blue Angels events
- 18 Australian red wine
- 20 Fedora feature
- 21 Medicinal plant
- 23 PC key
- 24 Schubert compositions
- 28 "Monopoly" cubes
- 31 Misery
- 32 Barbs
- 34 "Science Friday" network
- 35 Adjoining
- 37 Sweeten
- 39 Rocker Nugent
- 41 Minnesota —
- 42 Penniless one
- 45 Fearsome fly
- 49 Relaxing time on the slopes
- 51 Equitable
- 52 "Understood"

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			

- 53 Lucy's TV pal
- 54 Forearm bone
- 55 Minus
- 56 Season opener?
- 57 Some July babies
- DOWN**
- 1 Early TVs
- 2 "Nope!"
- 3 Rani's dress
- 4 Royal crowns
- 5 Vast rainforest region
- 6 — chi
- 7 Painter Chagall
- 8 Supported
- 9 Acting smug
- 10 Hacks with an axe
- 11 Postpaid enc.
- 17 Mexican Mrs.
- 19 Sleep like —
- 22 Treble clef lines
- 24 Bristle
- 25 Caviar base
- 26 Fabric features
- 27 Calming drug
- 29 Tax pro
- 30 Mess up
- 33 Bygone jets
- 36 Prairie homes
- 38 Of service
- 40 — Moines
- 42 Beach bucket
- 43 Church area
- 44 Invitation notation
- 46 Story
- 47 China (Pref.)
- 48 Historic periods
- 50 White wine cocktail

— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
POPEYE
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

THAT MONSKER IS GONNA KILL ME ONE AN' ONLY SON!

I'VE TOLD YOU, PAPPY. THAT'S EL PUÑO VERDE, NOT POPEYE.

DOES YE THINK I'M AN IDIOT, WIMPY??

I CANNOT ANSWER THAT BECAUSE I AM NOT AN IDIOT.

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
"ENUFFS FISTICUFFS!"
PART 2

PROF. KILPH'S ILLEGAL FIGHT TOURNAMENT HAS COME DOWN TO A FIGHT BETWEEN SPINOCULES, A BEAST RAISED ON SPINCOAL (FOSSILIZED SPINACH), AND A FAMILIAR MASKED FIGHTER.

BOOM!

I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE WARNED YOU, "EL PUÑO."

SPINCOAL IS HIGHLY VOLATILE, SO A DIET OF IT MAKES THE PUNCHES OF SPINOCULES A TAD... EXPLODEY.

ANYTHING HE HITS IS AS GOOD AS VAPORIZED!

BONK

BAP!

KABOOM!

YOU MIGHT WANT TO DROP YOUR SPINCOAL-INFUSED ENERGY DRINK IDEA, SIR.

EXPLODING IS EXTREME. KIDS LIKE EXTREME, RIGHT?

BARNEY GOOGLE AND
SMUFFY SMITH

SO !! AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, ENNY REGRETS 'BOUT MARRYIN' ME ?

WELL, NOW THAT YA BRING IT UP...!!

SHE WUZ TALKIN' TO ME, MAW !!

WE GOT US A WEDDIN' ANNIVERS'RY COMIN' UP, PAW !!

THAT WE DO, MAW !!

KIND OF A **BIG'UN** THIS YEAR !!

SHORE IS !!

VERRRY SPECIAL MILESTONE !!

YEP !! VERY !!

WHAT DAY IS OUR ANNIVERS'RY, AN' HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN ?!

ER, UM... UM... !!

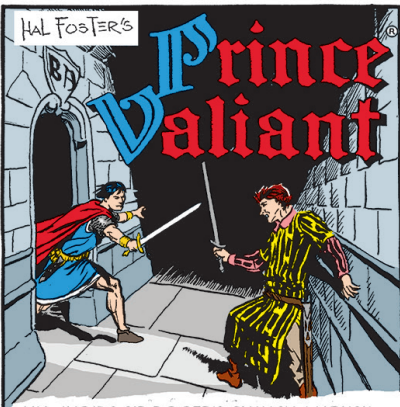
SHE DONE CAUGHT ME FLAT-FOOTED, LUKEY, FLAAAAT-FOOTED !!

OL BULL

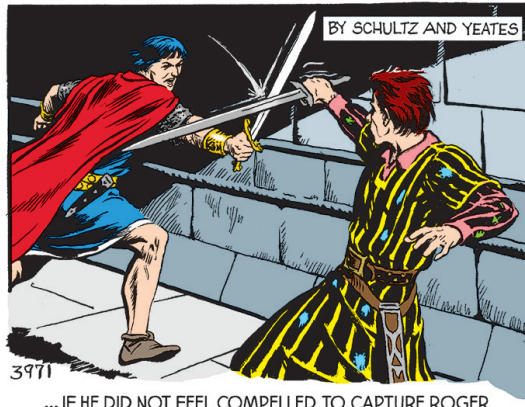
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VAL AVOIDS SIR ROGER'S CLUMSY AMBUSH, AND WOULD HAVE THE RUINOUS STEWARD PROPERLY SKEWERED...



... IF HE DID NOT FEEL COMPELLED TO CAPTURE ROGER ALIVE- THE MAN MIGHT BE DESPICABLE, BUT HE IS STILL LOCKBRAMBLE'S LEGAL GOVERNOR.



IN THE BRIDGE TOWER, GAWAIN CONSIDERS NO SUCH TENDER MERCIES TOWARD ROGER'S GREAT BULLY BARMUS DRAMFELL ...



...WHO AGAIN BULL-RUSHES HIS SLIGHTER OPPONENT IN THE MANNER THAT HAS MADE HIM SO EFFECTIVE AN ENFORCER OF HIS MASTER'S WILL.



LIKE VAL, GAWAIN HAS TRAVELED WIDELY, WATCHED ATTENTIVELY AND LEARNED SOMETHING OF THE USE OF LEVERAGE AGAINST A FOE, EVEN AS IT IS PRACTICED IN THE FAR EAST.

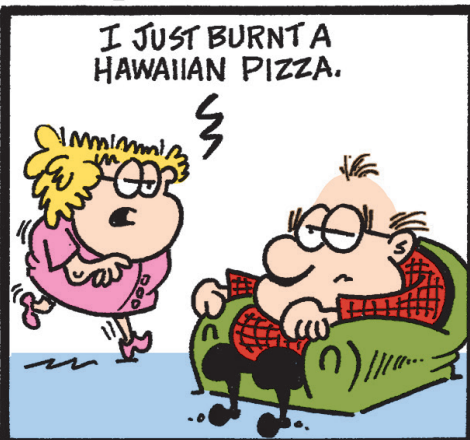


GOODBYE, BARMUS DRAMFELL.

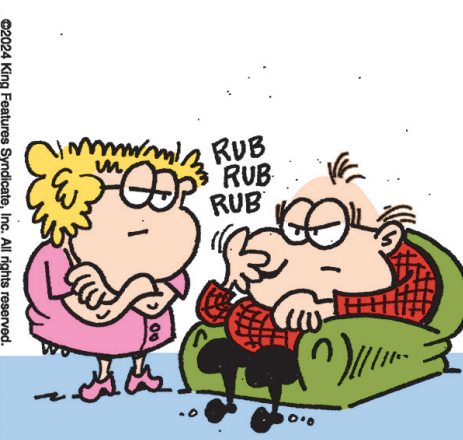
NEXT: Unfair practices

The Spats

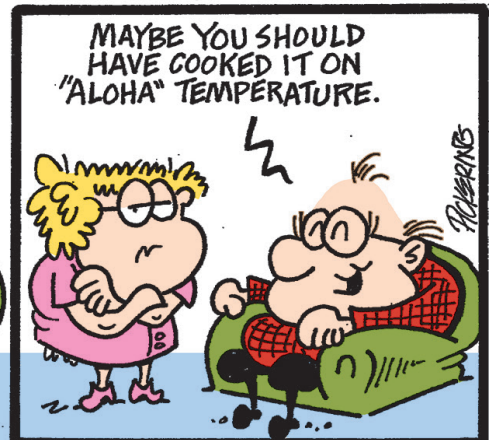
by Jeff Pickering



I JUST BURNT A HAWAIIAN PIZZA.



RUB RUB RUB



MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE COOKED IT ON "ALOHA" TEMPERATURE.

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PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Losing Friends

I'd heard that once we seniors reach a certain age, we start losing people -- friends, acquaintances, other senior relatives -- they start dying one by one. I'd reached my age unscathed by much of that loss, and was happy to consider that it might always be so, that the others I hold dear would continue being part of my days. But no, that unfortunate phase of life has caught up with me.

It got to the point where I didn't want to answer the phone, so sometimes I didn't. I would unplug it the night before and wouldn't plug it in the next day until noon. I would tell myself it was because I didn't want my sleep disturbed by the robocalls or sales pitches. But the truth was that I feared hearing about yet another death in my circle.

I had to take myself in hand to deal with the endless sadness about the ever-growing list of appearances at funerals. My way of handling the grief has been to get out of the house at least once each day, no matter what.

On Monday afternoons, I walk and socialize dogs at the humane society, working with the animals to get them more suitable for adoption. On Wednesdays, I shelve books in the library, usually the kid section.

On Friday afternoons, I deliver prescriptions for a pharmacy here in town. I was told that most of the customers are other seniors who aren't well enough to get out to pick up their own prescriptions, which has certainly been an attitude adjustment as I ponder their conditions (unhealthy) versus mine (healthy enough to play with dogs, shelve books and so on.)

The other days I walk laps at the rec center.

Getting out every day helps. But I still dread answering the phone.

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1. What member of the 1919 World Series champion Cincinnati Reds was head coach of the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles from 1941-50 and was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1969?

2. Name the Indiana University president who fired men's basketball coach Bob Knight in 2000 and went on to become president of the NCAA in 2003.

3. John Salley was the first player to win NBA championships with three different franchises. What were they?

4. What two college football rivals played in a dramatic 2016 game that became known as "The Block at the Rock"?

5. In what sport would one find participants using an epee on a piste?

6. What golf course, located in Louisville, Kentucky, first hosted the PGA Championship in 1996 and was the site of the 2008 Ryder Cup?

7. What French tennis player won the 1983 French Open and later embarked on a successful music career? (Hint: His son played in the NBA.)



Answers

1. Greasy Neale.

2. Myles Brand.

3. Detroit Pistons (1989-90), Chicago Bulls (1996) and Los Angeles Lakers (2000).

4. The Florida State Seminoles and Miami Hurricanes.

5. Fencing.

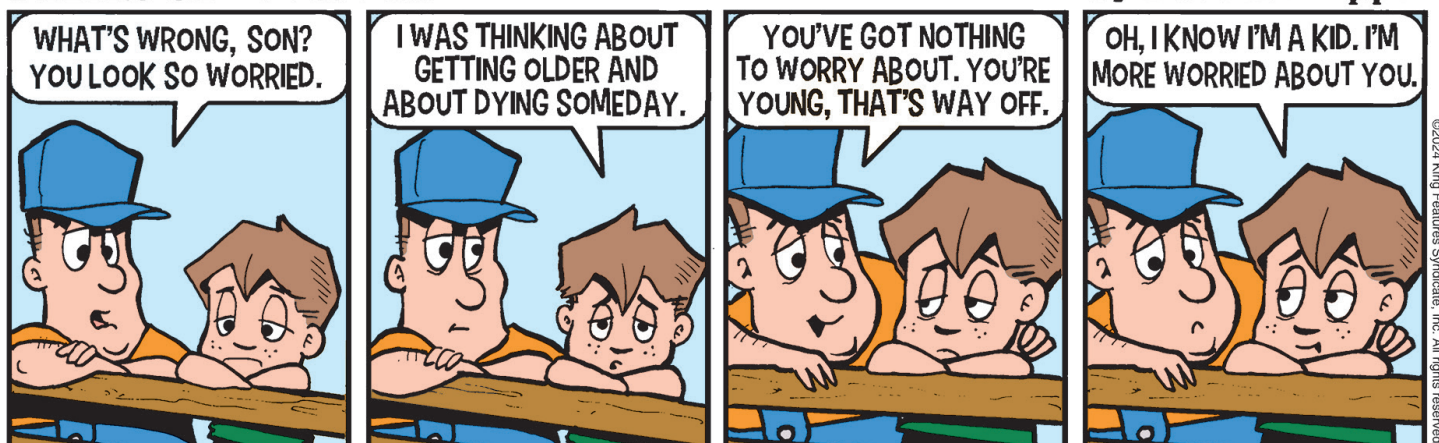
6. Valhalla Golf Club.

7. Yannick Noah.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





How long is too long to leave pets at home?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My neighbor across the hall confronted me yesterday, accusing me of mistreating my dog. She said that "Cookie" whines and barks for hours whenever I am gone, and that I need to take him with me rather than leave him alone in the apartment. I work full-time at an office that doesn't allow dogs. When I travel, I take Cookie to a sitter. But is 8 to 10 hours away too long for a dog? -- Gerald in Brooklyn

DEAR GERALD: Dogs aren't always happy about their owners going away for 8 hours a day. They can develop separation anxiety. This can manifest as nonstop barking, whining or even acting out (like destroying your slippers, pooping in the living room or worse).

Try counterconditioning, a training method recommended by the ASPCA in its article "Separation Anxiety." Each time you leave home, give your dog a treat or a puzzle toy with treats inside (which will keep him occupied for several minutes). When you get home, put the toy out of sight. The idea is that Cookie will associate your leaving with an enjoyable treat.

You can also desensitize him to your leaving by getting Cookie used to your "departure cues." For example, if you always put on a coat and pick up your keys when you leave, have a training session where you do the same thing, but then sit down and watch TV instead of leaving. You'll need to do this (and probably other moves) for several weeks, but it could help.

These are very basic training exercises, and you may need to incorporate additional training. Check out the article on www.asPCA.org, talk to Cookie's vet and consider working with a professional trainer to help curb his anxiety.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

* Football player Ronaldinho Gaucho lost a \$750,000 deal with Coca-Cola simply by taking a sip from a Pepsi.

* Some farmers started feeding their pigs waste products from the marijuana industry, such as plant stems, leaves and roots, saying it boosted the animals' appetites so they would bulk up to 30 pounds heavier than normal, also that it had the effect of making the meat taste "more savory."

* The fastest any human has ever traveled was during the re-entry of the Apollo 10 module, at a maximum speed of

24,830 miles per hour, or 7 miles per second.

* If you can convince yourself that you slept well last night, even though you didn't, your brain will be tricked into thinking you aren't tired. It's called "placebo sleep."

* When an astronaut working on the International Space Station needed a tool he didn't have, NASA came to the rescue by designing one with computer software and emailing the file to him. He then used a 3D printer to create the first object ever designed on Earth but made in space.

* Studies show that the human brain remains half-awake when sleeping in a new environment for the first time.

* Just before WWII, the U.S. created the Logan Bar, a chocolate bar that deliberately tasted "a little better than a boiled potato," as an emergency ration to prevent soldiers from snacking on it outside of emergency situations.

* Too much grape soda will make your poop turn blue.

* A shopping mall in China offers "husband storage" pods, where wives and girlfriends can leave their partners while they shop. Each pod is equipped with a TV, a gaming console and a leather massage chair.

Thought for the Day: "A comfort zone is a beautiful place -- but nothing ever grows there." -- Anonymous
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Planning your garden size

Estimate your growing space and access to sunlight, and your time, energy and resources.

If you have little time to spare and little space to garden, try one large pot set beside a sunny window as a **container garden** for plants.

If you have outdoor space but don't want a large garden, choose a sunny area with enough space for one or more **raised garden beds** of plants.

A large **in-ground garden** of plants can work if you have the space, the resources to prepare and maintain it and sunlight several hours a day.

- Brenda Weaver

Source: morningchores.com



by Freddy Groves

New rules after a dishonorable discharge

Not all of us left the service unscathed and with an honorable discharge (and all the benefits that would give us) clutched in our fist. Some of us, for one reason or another, did not make it out with an honorable or general discharge, or we even had a bad conduct discharge and/or a court martial. We left lots of benefits on the table when that happened.

That's changing, at least a little bit.

There are now finalized rules about discharge determinations that expand health care and benefits for some of those who did not get an honorable discharge. They're calling it a "compelling circumstances exception."

There are certain circumstances where prior actions can now be reviewed. They'll take into consideration a list of things, such as length of prior service, mental health at the time, any sexual harassment or assault, physical problems, anything caused by combat duty and other reasons and circumstances for the actions that caused the discharge you were given.

You have to apply to see what their determination is. You might find that they conclude, once they know all the facts, that the discharge is under conditions other than dishonorable.

If you want to apply, see: www.va.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions/.

Additionally, see the detailed factsheet at benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/COD_Factsheet.pdf.

You can apply online, over the phone or by mail, or you can even show up at a VA medical facility and ask for care. Any of those will get the ball rolling. You'll be sent a letter asking for details. Give them. It's your chance to provide evidence or make a statement about what was going on that led to the less than honorable discharge. You can mail your reply or deliver it to a VA office, and you can also ask for a hearing to present your evidence at a VA regional office.

The new rule will take effect June 25, 2024.

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Wishing Well®



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

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. GEOGRAPHY: Which European country has the largest population?
2. TELEVISION: Which sitcom features a character named Ron Swanson?
3. SCIENCE: What are the three layers of the Earth?
4. MOVIES: Which 2001 movie has a famous "bend and snap" scene?
5. MONEY: What is a modern U.S. penny made of mostly?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a common name for an animal in the Leporidae family?
7. LITERATURE: Which children's book contains the line, "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast"?
8. ANATOMY: Where is the pinna located in the human body?
9. HISTORY: Who was the fourth president of the United States?
10. BUSINESS: What did Amazon sell exclusively when it started business in 1994?

Answers

1. Russia.
2. "Parks and Recreation."
3. Crust, mantle and core.
4. "Legally Blonde."
5. Zinc.
6. Rabbit or hare.
7. "Alice in Wonderland."
8. Ear.
9. James Madison.
10. Books.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Celebrating Mothers

Being a mom and a grandma has been the biggest blessing of my life. My kids and my grandkids are motivation to get up every single day and fight for a better future for all South Dakotans.

My number one goal as Governor has always been to be able to pass down a nation that the next generation can be proud of – that my grandchildren’s grandchildren will love. With every bill that comes to my desk, every Executive Order that I sign, and every decision that I make, I always think about how it will impact the next generation.

I know I’m not the only parent that feels this way. Every mother I know inspires me because they constantly think about how the decisions they make will impact their kids’ futures. Every parent wants their kids to have a better life than they did. And we all make decisions with that goal in mind.

The mothers in our lives make sacrifices for their children constantly. They don’t get to be selfish – their kids always come first.

I have felt that unconditional love from my own mother my entire life. She taught me how God sees me, that I am “the head and not the tail,” and that I “will only be above... not underneath.” (Deuteronomy 28:13) She taught me how to be strong, how to be a leader, and how to care for other people.

I am also blessed with an incredible mother-in-law who inspires me to be a better person each day. She brings joy to everyone who knows her.

I have watched my own daughter grow into an amazing, loving, nurturing mother over the last few years. She and her husband just welcomed a third little baby into the world. I am so proud of the woman and the mother she has become.

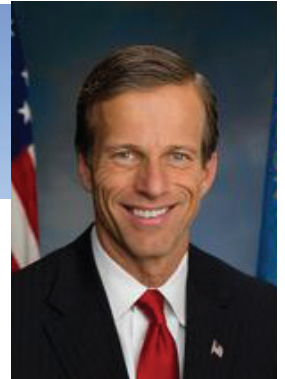
Our state has the highest birth rate in the nation – that means we have a lot of moms in South Dakota! It warms my heart to know we have so many moms out there working hard, dedicating themselves to their families, and making our state thrive.

Mothers are the strongest, toughest people I know. First Lady Elanor Roosevelt once said, “a mom is like a teabag. You can’t tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.”

As we celebrate Mother’s Day, I encourage you to thank the moms in your life for their strength. I want to thank all the mothers out there for all that you do to help lift your families and our entire state up.

Happy Mother’s Day, and God bless you.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



The Biden Regulatory Onslaught Continues

With Democrats in control of the White House and the U.S. Senate, much of my efforts lately are focused on stopping the dangerous Biden-Schumer agenda in Congress. However, the Biden administration has abused the power of regulation to enact a slew of bad policies without a single vote in Congress. All of those executive actions bear costs and consequences for our country and for the American people. A recent spate of regulations has brought the total cost of the Biden administration's new rules to a whopping \$1.47 trillion, which will be felt by workers and families across the country.

One of the areas where the Biden administration has been most prolific with new regulations is in the energy sector. For example, the president's new power plant rule would force electric generation facilities to spend millions of dollars on carbon capture systems or be forced to close, while adding significant cost burdens for new natural gas-fired power plants. The so-called "Good Neighbor" rule would also drive up the cost of producing energy and manufacturing by imposing onerous emissions standards, likely resulting in a less reliable energy supply. And there's the president's inexplicable decision to pause permits for liquefied natural gas exports at a time when our allies depend on American natural gas.

At the same time, President Biden is pushing costly environmental regulations on the American people. There was his now-dashed attempt to revive the Obama administration's Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule that would have forced farmers, ranchers, and private landowners to spend tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars on environmental strictures on their land. Now he's pushing a tailpipe emissions rule that is an effective mandate for more expensive electric vehicles. And new requirements on certain federally connected homes will add an estimated \$7,000 to the cost of construction.

The Biden regulatory regime also extends the heavy hand of government to job creators. Take for example the new overtime rule, which imposes a 65 percent hike in the overtime exemption threshold. Small businesses are likely to face the difficult choice of raising prices, reducing the number positions, or lowering workers' pay. I don't see any of those as good for workers, customers, or business owners.

Unsurprisingly, a number of regulations coming out of Washington demonstrate a lack of understanding about life in places like South Dakota. WOTUS was simply unworkable and unreasonable for farmers and ranchers. South Dakotans aren't eager to switch to electric vehicles, especially with our harsh winters and the demands we put on our cars and trucks. And last year, the Biden administration tried to prevent hunting and archery education programs from receiving federal funding. Thanks to congressional action, that regulation was stopped, but the fact that it was proposed at all is emblematic of Washington bureaucrats' overreach and their lack of understanding of our way life.

The Biden administration has not been shy about using its regulatory power. The sticker shock of \$1.47 trillion in regulatory costs is a lot, but it's even worse when you consider that President Trump had actually reduced regulatory costs at this point in his administration. Even compared to President Obama, President Biden's regulations cost almost five times as much. I shudder to consider how many more costly regulations the Biden administration is dreaming up for the future.

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



Great Faces, Great Places

BIG Update

It was great to chat with Agriculture Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) about the upcoming Farm Bill. We're getting closer to having the final text introduced, and I look forward to committee action on the bill to provide necessary updates to our ag industry. The last Farm Bill was written in 2018, before COVID-19, before inflation, and before global conflicts like Russia and Ukraine began.

My discussion with AEM was during the "Ag on the Mall" event on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Equipment manufacturers and ag retailers set up booths with views of the U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument to showcase all the new technology agriculture has to offer..

BIG News

You may have seen Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene force a vote to remove Speaker Mike Johnson from the Speaker's office this week. Her motion failed, which is for the greater good. Removing Speaker Mike Johnson from office would cause instability in the House and in America. When I'm in South Dakota, I often hear from people who want the Republican party to stick together to accomplish real wins for real Americans and want politicians to stop playing D.C. power games. I joined an overwhelming number of House Republicans to move past the Motion to Vacate so we can continue legislating.

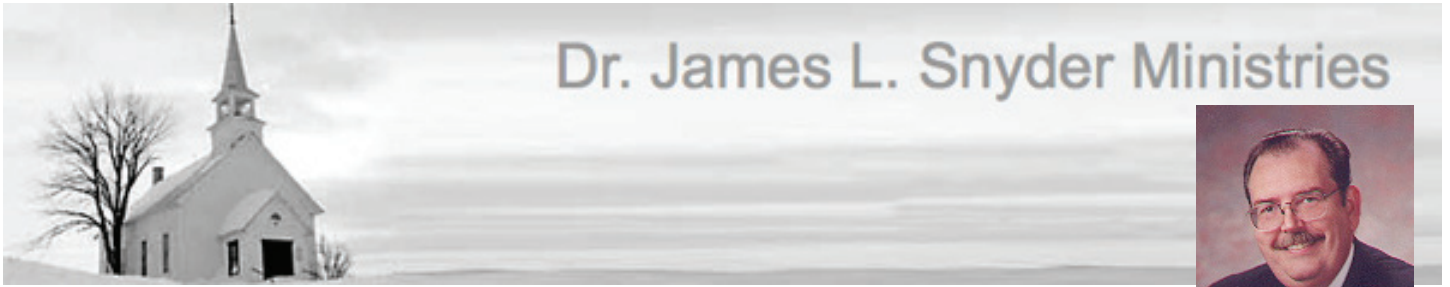
BIG Idea

The Midwest Honor Flight is an incredible organization that helps our past service members visit D.C. The veterans tour D.C. to see the war memorials that honor their service and sacrifice. For many, it's the first and only time they will get to see these memorials. The Honor Flight does a great job connecting veterans and guardians and organizing a whole day trip.

This week, 84 South Dakotans and Iowans were on the Midwest Honor Flight. I had the pleasure of meeting these veterans and thanking them for their service as they saw the World War II Memorial.

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Back in the Saddle Again



Finally, those five sick weeks of being are over, and my life is getting back to normal. Whatever normal is.

Five weeks is a long time to be sick, spend time in bed, and not know if it's morning or evening. There was a period when I was about ready to set up camp in the bathroom. That would've been a lot easier for me and less stressful.

But getting back to normal is a great delight. I'm unsure what I lost during those five weeks, but you can be sure I won't try to find out. What is behind me is behind me for good!

My first morning, I was in my office trying to figure out where I was and what project I was working on. Being at my desk behind my computer and working was a good feeling. I really didn't know how much I enjoyed it until it wasn't there anymore.

I guess being sick can have a positive aspect. While I was sick, I wasn't able to do the work that I wanted to do. That's always a terrible place to be. But now that I'm over that, I'm sitting at my desk, looking around in my office, and looking at all the books I have on my shelves. Oh, it's a wonderful feeling.

Have my books missed me as much as I missed them?

But that's behind me; now, I need to press forward.

Another aspect of getting back in the saddle again are the meals that The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage prepares. I'm not sure what she prepared while I was sick; I have very little recollection of what they were. At my first breakfast, I took a deep breath and realized how delicious my breakfasts actually were. I'm looking forward to lunch with a great deal of anticipation.

I was starting to get back into my production routine, which took me a little while. After a little time, I was back into my routine. There is so much to do, and so much joy in doing it.

One afternoon I was sitting at my desk working on a project and a thought kept coming to mind. This thought just would not go away.

I got up and got a cup of fresh coffee, hoping that would solve my little problem. I sat down at my desk and got back to work, and wouldn't you know it, that thought was still bouncing back and forth in my mind.

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I had enough to do to occupy my entire mind for the day, but for some reason, this little thought kept working its way into whatever I was doing at the time.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy thoughts that come to me whenever they come. I want something fresh and new to invade my mind. But this thought was a little bit of a rascal.

Finally, I had enough, so I sat back in my chair and focused on this thought: "Wouldn't an Apple Fritter be a nice reward for getting back in my saddle?"

I will never know where that thought came from, but instead of rejecting it, like I should've, I embraced it. All I could think of for the rest of the afternoon was that Apple Fritter.

I couldn't remember the last time I had an Apple Fritter, but I believe when I did have one, I got into trouble. According to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, Apple Fritters are not on my diet. According to her, I'm on a very strict diet.

I kept telling this thought, "You better not let The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage hear what you're saying to me." I don't think that thought was listening to me; he was only listening to himself.

The idea of munching on a fresh, warm Apple Fritter was marinating in my mind. Nothing in the world can match that kind of deliciousness.

In a couple of hours, that thought bought me hook, line, and sinker. All I could think about was a fresh, warm Apple Fritter with a nice hot cup of coffee. That picture just glowed in my mind as I thought about it.

My problem was, how do I get an Apple Fritter? I'm sure The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage would not be part of this kind of thing. She would rather I had a stalk of broccoli (yuck) than a nice Apple Fritter.

The more I thought about this Apple Fritter, the more I yearned for it. After all, I spent almost five weeks with some kind of sickness, I should have something to reward me for getting through it all.

My project is, how do I present this to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage? How do I present it in such a way that she will bite into it and let me have an Apple Fritter?

I hope this thought has friends who can help me think through this project.

That afternoon, a Bible verse came to mind.

Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Some thoughts just aren't worth the time or energy. I need to control my thinking and think thoughts worthy of God.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Have wildlife crossings become more common in North America, and are they effective at reducing wildlife kills and improving conservation efforts overall? – T.R., Detroit, MI

In recent years, North America has seen a notable increase in the implementation of wildlife crossings, reflecting a growing recognition of their importance in reducing wildlife fatalities from vehicle collisions and enhancing conservation efforts. These structures, ranging from underpasses to overbridges, are becoming more prevalent as part of a concerted effort to address the environmental impacts of roads.

The significance of these crossings is underscored by projects like one in Southern California designed largely to protect mountain lions. This project, among others, demonstrates a shift towards integrating wildlife conservation into public infrastructure planning. Similarly, the Federal Highway Administration has incorporated wildlife crossings into its programs, emphasizing safety for both animals and motorists.

Research consistently shows the effectiveness of these structures. Jennifer S. Holland of the Pew Trusts highlights the sheer number of reports of roadkill incidents, with “drivers hit[ting] 1 to 2 million animals each year,” and reports of significant decreases in road kills in areas with wildlife crossings, which also support animal migration patterns. The economic rationale is also strong: In regions like Banff, Alberta, the initial costs of wildlife crossings are often offset lowered expenses related to wildlife collisions.

Beyond the immediate benefits of reducing kills, wildlife crossings play a key role in maintaining ecological connectivity, essential for the survival and health of many species. In Banff National Park, a series of crossings allows wildlife such as grizzly bears and elk to safely navigate across busy highways.

Community engagement and educational programs have helped raise awareness about the benefits of wildlife crossings, promoting broader public support and involvement, vital for securing funding and political support for new projects. Moreover, international examples of successful wildlife crossings provide valuable lessons and inspiration. In Costa Rica, crossing designs that cater specifically to the needs of jaguars demonstrate the global applicability and adaptability of crossing technologies.

The U.S. has recognized the importance of these initiatives and is supporting them through federal funding programs, with Lauren Sforza of The Hill writing, “\$110 million in grants will be awarded to 19 wildlife crossing projects across 17 states”. This national support is instrumental in expanding wildlife crossings across the country, highlighting a commitment to biodiversity and road safety.

The proliferation of wildlife crossings in North America is a positive development that not only mitigates wildlife-vehicle collisions but also significantly contributes to biodiversity conservation. The continued expansion and improvement of these crossings are vital. As such, these structures represent a critical intersection of road safety, animal welfare and environmental stewardship.



Wildlife crossings across roads in Banff National Park have saved untold numbers of elk, bears, coyotes and other wildlife from death by automobile. Credit: Dawn Danby, FlickrCC.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

'No Going Back' for Noem after trying too hard to impress Trump

DANA HESS

These are tough times for Kristi Noem. She's frequently the butt of jokes from late-night comedians. She's been lampooned on "Saturday Night Live." Her plight inspires memes on the internet: Run, Cricket! Run!

In one of the roughest book tours in the entire history of print, Noem finds herself defending the killing of a family dog — a story she included in her book to show she knows how to make tough decisions — and dodging questions about why she made up an anecdote about meeting the reclusive dictator of North Korea, Kim Jong Un.

The book, ironically titled "No Going Back," is just one of her latest efforts to ingratiate herself with Donald Trump as she competes to be his selection to serve as his vice presidential candidate.

Sure, Noem has no one to blame but herself for her current predicament. She sought to be a national leader and instead became a national punchline. Her current fate is made all the more bitter by the fact that it certainly didn't have to be this way.

Go back in time to the pandemic when Noem was seen in some circles as a hero for keeping South Dakota businesses open. Journalists who pointed out that the state led the league in per capita COVID-19 deaths were dismissed by Noem's office as fake news. However, people didn't seem to want to know the facts. Sick of their own governments literally being in their face with mask mandates, they liked the notion that there was freedom in South Dakota.

At this point, Noem's popularity exploded. If you doubt this, don't go back and check old polls or look up what the pundits were saying then. All you need to do is ask your real estate agent, many of whom were getting calls from across the country from people intent on moving to South Dakota because of the example and policies set by Noem. These were people who were tired of being told by government how to live their lives, even if those instructions were for their own good.

Of course Noem's growing popularity put her on Trump's radar, and that's when she started to make mistakes. During her dating years, Noem may have known the value of playing hard to get. During her political years, she forgot that tactic and threw herself into a process designed to make her Trump's choice to be his V.P.

Should Trump be elected, his vice presidency is political gold. In four short years, Trump would be out of office and his vice president would likely have the inside track on getting the Republican nomination. Noem, like others competing in the veepstakes, saw a short-term chance to grab higher office.

Hindsight tells us that Noem would have been better off steering clear of the Trump circus and taking the political long view. Instead of panting after the vice presidency, the post-pandemic Noem should have split her efforts — nurturing her popularity by helping other Republican candidates while focusing on the needs of South Dakotans.

Noem could have strengthened her resume with an eventual run for the U.S. Senate or a Cabinet position in Trump's administration or a high-profile job, perhaps leading the NRA. Any of that would have helped her be a better, more well-rounded candidate should she choose to run for the presidency some time in the future.

Instead, lured by the prospect of four years serving Trump and then a possible move to the Oval Office,

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Noem has recast her image. She's Kristi the wartime governor. She's Kristi the TV pitchwoman.

Certainly "No Going Back" was written to burnish her V.P. credentials in Trump World. It's just too bad that in the rest of the world, her story has become a joke for some and a stain for others. The book and its fallout will haunt Noem if she tries to continue her political career.

Instead of taking her growing national popularity and forming a long-term political strategy, Noem chose to take part in Trump's "Apprentice"-style tryout for vice president. Now she has the distinction of being the largest national political failure from South Dakota since Sen. George McGovern lost the presidency in a landslide to Richard Nixon. The difference between the two is that McGovern was the choice of his party, but Noem made her mess while trying to be the choice of one man.

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

'Mom' legislators see their numbers, influence grow but barriers to elected office remain

Child care, money, time keep many women from running for office, experts say

BY: STATES NEWSROOM - MAY 11, 2024 6:00 AM

For the second time while serving in the Nevada Legislature, Senate Majority Leader Nicole Cannizzaro gave birth last year. And again, she publicly pledged to continue full participation in her duties.

As the nation's groundbreaker when it comes to working moms in a state capital, Nevada made history in 2019 as the only female-majority legislative body in the U.S. Still, legislators like Cannizzaro acknowledge uncertainty before deciding to grow their families while serving, the Nevada Current reported.

"What does that look like? What does it mean to be in this building and pregnant? What does it mean if I have a 1½-year-old and have to leave a meeting to pick him up at daycare? Does that make me less able to fulfill my duties? There were questions that I had as I announced my first and second pregnancy," Cannizzaro told the Current.

The number of women serving in state legislatures has more than quintupled since 1971, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University (CAWP). Nearly 33% of the 7,386 state legislative seats are occupied by 2,432 women, the center reported. Meanwhile, Vote Mama Foundation estimates 23% of lawmakers are moms.

Currently in South Dakota, 29 of 105 legislators are women, down from the state's record of 31 in 2023.

"Things within the political ecosystem have changed to be more open to women," said Kelly Dittmar, director of research at CAWP. "Having more women also begets more women."

And there are visible signs of progress at statehouses across the country as the number of mom lawmakers grow.

In Georgia, where women state representatives did not have a bathroom near the House chamber until the 1970s, there is now a lactation pod on the first floor of the Capitol. And a freshman Republican lawmaker has brought her baby to the floor daily, but more notably, the baby was given an official House name tag — labeling him the "baby of the House" — so he would have floor privileges. Just two decades ago, such a move was frowned on by House leadership.

"We talk a lot up here about how representation matters, and I believe that to be true," Georgia state Rep. Lauren Daniel, a Republican, said to her colleagues late last year.

"I hope as I stand here today, and every day, as the youngest female member of this body, that it shows any young girl in this state who may find herself pregnant that her life does not end when a new one begins," said Daniel, who first became pregnant when she was 17 and is now mother to four.

Still, moms are struggling to get elected and remain in office. Beyond child care, there are myriad impediments. It takes money and an organized campaign infrastructure. As candidates, they are confronted with gender stereotypes that they often consider in executing their campaign strategy. And the time away from young children can be daunting.

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Having run for office herself, Liuba Grechen Shirley said she sees why moms, especially moms of small children, are often missing from elected office. Grechen Shirley is the founder of Vote Mama, a political organization that seeks to increase the number of moms in office.

"If you are a mother with young children and you decide to step up and run, the first question you get asked is always 'but who will watch your kids while you campaign?'" said Grechen Shirley, who ran for Congress in 2018 in New York's 2nd Congressional District while wrangling her 1- and 3-year-old children on the campaign trail.

A run for the money

When it comes to fundraising, men dominate. A 2021 OpenSecrets report analyzing fundraising during open-seat House primary races in 2020 found white men candidates led the money race, though white women candidates maintained a significant advantage over women of color, raising three times as much as Black women in open-seat primaries, according to the report.

Women donors also give less money overall than men, comprising around one-third of money contributed to state general office and legislative races nationwide from 2019 to 2022, according to a 2023 report by CAWP. At the individual state level, financial support from women donors ranged from 14% of donations in Nebraska state races, to 46% of contributions in Colorado.

That doesn't sit right for Grechen Shirley.

Data from the Pew Research Center shows 85% of women will give birth and become mothers by the time they're 45 years old. Vote Mama's research arm, the Vote Mama Foundation, found that in 2022, 23% of state legislators were moms, and 5% had children under the age of 18.

On Capitol Hill, 37 of 541 lawmakers in 2022 were moms with children under 18, equal to 6.8% of the 118th Congress, according to Vote Mama Foundation. Put another way, there were three times as many men named John or Jon as there were moms of minor children serving.

"Vote Mama exists because of my personal experience running for Congress with two small toddlers," Grechen Shirley said. "I immediately understood why there were not more moms serving at the federal level when I was running because it is really difficult. It's unsustainable for somebody who's a working parent, somebody who's not independently wealthy, somebody who is a primary caregiver. This system was designed for wealthy older white men."

Vote Mama PAC has helped over 500 Democrats who are moms run for office. Grechen Shirley pressed the Federal Election Commission to rule in her favor to allow use of campaign funds to cover the cost of her child care so she could run in 2018. And since then, at the federal level, parents started using funds similarly.

Between 2018 and 2022, 68 federal candidates spent \$717,706 in campaign funds on child care, according to a report released by Vote Mama at the beginning of the year. About half those funds were spent by women. Grechen Shirley wants people to know that efforts to help moms run for office also help dads.

Women of color represent 77% of total Republican campaign funds spent on child care, the report says.

"This is a complete game changer and it will help diversify both parties," Grechen Shirley said.

A major barrier to running

At the state level, 70% of campaign funds spent on child care between 2018 and 2022 were spent by candidates of color, according to the same report.

Thirty-two states authorize candidates to use campaign funds for child care, but according to Vote Mama, in at least six of them, the option had never been touched. In Indiana, elections officials issued an advisory opinion allowing their use, and the South Carolina House approved legislation last month over the objections of the chamber's hardline Freedom Caucus. But the bill died with session's end Thursday after never getting a vote in the Senate.

A bipartisan pair of moms pushed for the change in Georgia by asking the state ethics commission to weigh in. The commission approved the change last summer through an advisory opinion.

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Georgia Republican state Rep. Beth Camp said she thought it was odd that federal candidates could use campaign funds for child care expenses but state candidates could not. And she says she hopes the change will encourage more parents with young children to run for office.

"It is not a partisan issue. It is a nonpartisan issue because it impacts everyone," said Camp, whose children are now adults.

Camp said she was surprised when she heard negative feedback from some colleagues who questioned why the change was needed when candidates had not used campaign funds for child care in the past.

"Well, honestly, we probably would have had more parents — not going to say women or men but more parents — enter into elected office if they'd had the opportunity," Camp said. "When you start looking at how expensive it is to provide child care, there are some people who make the decision not to take that out of their family household budget."

Rhode Island passed a law in 2021 letting state and local candidates spend campaign funds on child care. It has yet to be used by any candidate with child care burdens, man or woman.

Sen. Sandra Cano, a third-term Democratic state senator who has given birth to two children since she was elected in 2018, said she opted not to dip into her campaign war chest for child care partly due to public perception.

"I do feel I would put myself through more criticism if I did, even though it is legal," she said.

Also a factor: her family members provide most of the care for her children, Arianna, 4, and Alessandro, 1. And her parents refuse to accept her offers to pay them for it.

Lack of access to child care is a major barrier moms face when running for office and that problem continues if they win the election, Dittmar said.

"(Women) are still more likely than their male counterparts to be the caregivers," said Dittmar of the Center for American Women and Politics.

Ohio has not authorized political candidates to use campaign funds for child care.

Ohio House Minority Leader Allison Russo, a Democrat, spent thousands of dollars in extra child care costs when she first campaigned in 2018. Her daughter was a 1-year-old and her two sons were in elementary school at that time.

"It was a big, expensive part of my first campaign that we paid out of pocket," she said. "I am privileged to have the circumstance that I have with family nearby and the support network, but not everybody has that and I think if we want more parents with young children, especially women to run for office, we have to think about how do we create this support at work."

And in Indiana, Ragen Hatcher, a representative from Gary, noted that childcare access and expenses continued to pose challenges even after she was elected. The mom of four moved her family hours away from their home in northwest Indiana so she could continue to care for them while she served in the legislature. Hatcher said she'd like to see free childcare offered at the statehouse, as well as the option to enroll her kids in schools closer to the state capital.

"Being a state representative or state senator, for young parents, is difficult. And I think it may be a barrier to why many younger people, and moms, don't run for these offices," Hatcher said. "There are some things that the legislature can do to accommodate people better with younger children, and I just hope that we start doing that instead of leaving that age group out — those who may have the younger children but don't want to necessarily have to leave them at home."

The X factor

From scheduling breast pumping, dropping kids off at school, securing child care and performing the full spectrum of duties expected of women as primary caretakers for their children, campaigning as a mom is a challenge and that's before a person faces all the hurdles of serving in office as a mom, Grechen Shirley said.

"You campaign and you're working full time for up to two years with no salary ... the reality is no one talks about these things. Unless you know somebody personally who has run for office or served in of-

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vice, there's really no way to know what it will be like. It's like childbirth, unless you know someone who's gone through it, you really don't know what it'll be like," Grechen Shirley said.

And no one questions why dads run for office because having kids is viewed as an asset for men in elections, and they're good dads for taking a picture with their kids, Grechen Shirley said. But if a woman on the campaign trail or in elected office takes a picture with her kids, they're "using" their kids.

Increased representation of moms in office doesn't mean the behind-the-scenes burdens have lessened, said Jennifer Lawless, the Leone Reaves and George W. Spicer Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia and chair of its politics department.

Lawless highlighted U.S. Rep. Grace Meng, a New York Democrat, as an example. Meng has talked about the continued stress of finding child care in New York while she sits through marathon sessions on Capitol Hill.

"It seems normatively wrong that women are being asked to manage this additional aspect of serving or running," Lawless said. "We should have a political system where they should not be asked to manage something extra. Because women have been doing this for so long they've somehow figured it out."

Said Dittmar: "In holding office you're at the whims of leadership and deadlines and timelines. You can't just say, 'I'm sorry, I have to take off tomorrow because my kid is sick' if you have a major vote."

Lawless, who challenged U.S. Rep. Jim Langevin in the 2006 Democratic primary for Rhode Island's 2nd Congressional District, said the experience was "incredibly taxing," even as a single woman without children.

"I can't imagine what it would have been like to have that third component of child care factored in," Lawless said.

Because of that, some moms wait until their children are older or out of the house before running for office, but Dittmar said she thinks that's changing.

"A lot of the women who have young kids feel like there's a lot going on in the world and in their states that they need to speak up on and so you're seeing that translate into candidacy and office holding," she said.

It's those life experiences that drive moms into running for office. Without people in positions of power who have experienced the challenges of raising children, things like child care aren't prioritized issues, Grechen Shirley said.

"When you talk to men about why they ran, they say 'I thought I would be good at this job'. When you talk to a woman, a mom with young kids in particular, there's usually one particular issue that they reached out to their local representative to get help with and either never heard back from their representative or didn't get the help that they needed and they said 'you know what, I can do this job better,'" Grechen Shirley said.

For example, the female-majority in Nevada has advocated for policies such as the "pregnancy fairness act" that strengthens protections beyond federal law for pregnant and postpartum workers and endorsed a maternal mortality review committee to improve health outcomes, the Current has reported. In January, eight weeks of paid family leave for state employees after the birth or adoption of a child or to care for a family member with a serious illness took effect. Other issues, including pay equity, remain on the agenda.

Lawless didn't think achieving parity between mothers in the population and in elected office was necessary, though. More important to Lawless was working toward equal representation of women in political office and campaigns, regardless of their family status.

"Right now if we continue at the rate we are currently electing women in Congress, it won't be until 2108 that we reach parity for women," she said.

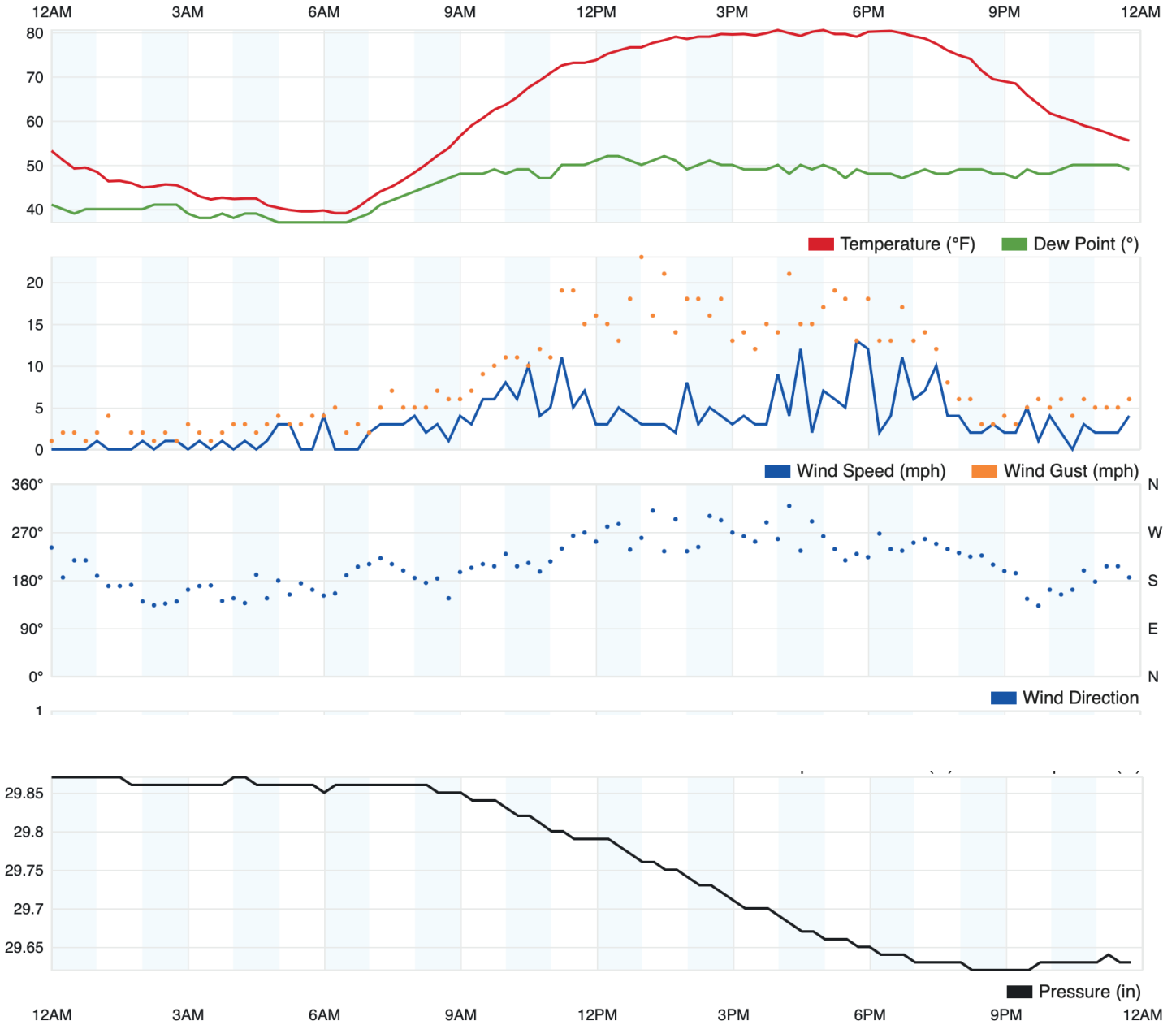
April Corbin Girnus of Nevada Current, Megan Henry of Ohio Capital Journal, Nancy Lavin of Rhode Island Current, Anna Liz Nichols of Michigan Advance, Jill Nolin of Georgia Recorder and Casey Smith of Indiana Capital Chronicle contributed to this report.

States Newsroom is the nation's largest state-focused nonprofit news organization, with reporting from every capital. We shine a light on policy and politics in all 50 states and we provide that coverage for free; no pop-ups, paywalls or ads.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 78 °F

Sunny then
Areas Smoke

Tonight



Low: 44 °F

Partly Cloudy

Monday



High: 71 °F

Sunny

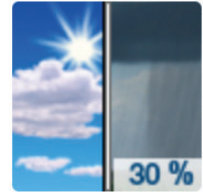
Monday Night



Low: 44 °F

Mostly Clear

Tuesday



High: 73 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Chance
Showers

Mother's Day Forecast

Mainly dry and mild with northerly
winds of 10 to 20 mph

Highs - 75-82°

Unfortunately, smoke from
wildfires in Canada will cause
a hazy sky over the area today
into tonight.

weather.gov/abr

May 12, 2024 4:28 AM

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



Mainly dry conditions with mild temperatures can be expected for Mother's Day. Unfortunately, northerly winds will bring smoke from wildfires in Canada into the area today into night.

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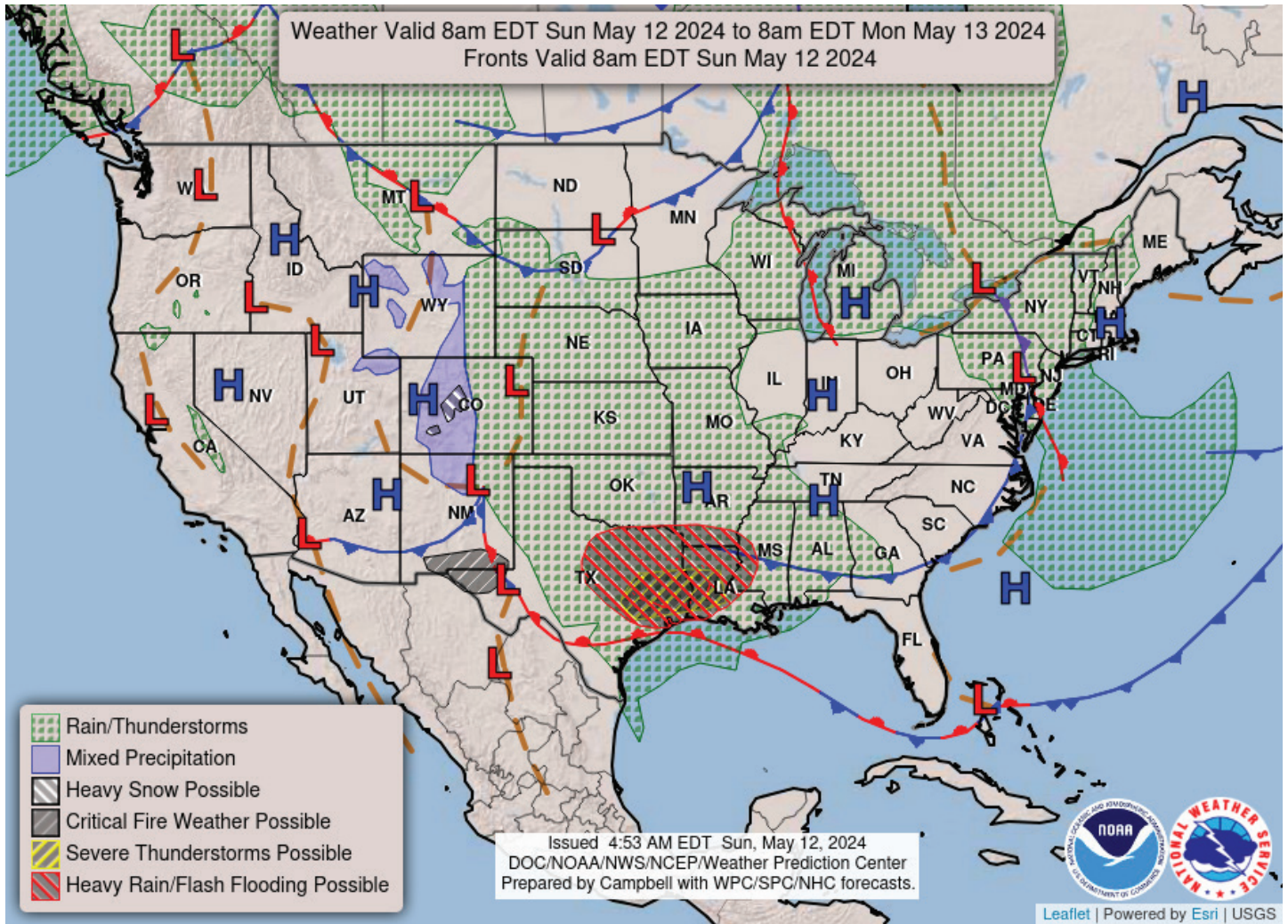
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 81 °F at 4:23 PM
Low Temp: 39 °F at 6:23 AM
Wind: 23 mph at 12:54 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 52 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 90 in 1900
Record Low: 17 in 1946
Average High: 69
Average Low: 43
Average Precip in May.: 1.32
Precip to date in May: 0.68
Average Precip to date: 5.29
Precip Year to Date: 5.21
Sunset Tonight: 8:54:46 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:01:31 am



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Today in Weather History

May 12, 1984: An F3 tornado wiped out seven farms, crippled fifteen others, killed livestock and scattered several cars and machinery in its path. The tornado first touched down seven miles north and one mile east of Clark and moved southeast through the southwestern sections of Henry until it dissipated at Grover in Codrington County. The path of destruction began on a farm where two barns, a steel grain bin, and a pole barn were demolished, and machinery was damaged. As the tornado moved further southeast, it struck the southwest sections of Henry and split into two tornadoes that moved in two different directions. One went to the northeast that inflicted no damaged and dissipated while the other went southeast that continued its destruction path to Grover. Small hail, accumulation to fifteen inches deep, was experienced at Henry and tornado damage included broken windows, numerous homes, and three trailer homes were demolished. Along the path, 80 power poles and several miles of power lines were lost, affecting the power to over 1,000 people. A small plane, southwest of Garden City, was wrapped around a pole.

1760: Ben Franklin was the first person to identify nor'easters. In a letter on this date to Alexander Small of London, Franklin described an experience that happened to him in November 1743 when storm clouds in Philadelphia blocked his view of an eclipse. Franklin assumed that the storm had blown in from the northeast because the surface winds at his location were from that direction. He was puzzled to find out later that his brother had viewed the eclipse with no problems and that the storm had arrived in Boston four hours later. The information caused Franklin to surmise correctly that the storm had moved from southwest to northeast. [Click HERE](#) to read the letter to Alexander Small.

1886: An estimated F4 tornado touched down in Vermilion County near Armstrong, Illinois, and passed between Alvin and Rossville before moving into Indiana. At least five houses were destroyed, two of which were entirely swept away. Three people were killed. Five other strong tornadoes occurred across Illinois that day: two near Mt. Carroll, one near Odell, one near Jacksonville, and one in Iroquois County.

1934 - A dust storm darkened skies from Oklahoma to the Atlantic coast. (David Ludlum)

1971 - Duststorms suddenly reduced visibilities to near zero on Interstate Highway 10 near Casa Grande AZ. Chain reaction accidents involving cars and trucks resulted, killing seven persons. (The Weather Channel)

1972 - In Texas, A cloudburst dumped sixteen inches of rain north of New Braunfels sending a thirty foot wall of water down Blueders Creek into the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers washing away people, houses and automobiles. The flood claimed 18 lives and caused more than twenty million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - A late season snowstorm struck the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies. The storm produced 46 inches of snow at Coal Creek Canyon, located near Boulder. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A heat wave persisted in central California. Afternoon highs of 100 degrees at Fresno CA and 102 degrees at Sacramento CA were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the western U.S. Eight cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Pendleton OR with a high of 92 degrees and Phoenix AZ with a reading of 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms associated with a low pressure system stalled over New York State drenched Portland ME with 4.50 inches of rain in 24 hours. Rains of 5 to 7 inches soaked the state of Maine over a four day period causing 1.3 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Texas and the Central Gulf Coast States into Missouri and Illinois. Thunderstorms spawned six tornadoes, including one which injured four persons at Doloroso MS. Thunderstorms also produced hail three inches in diameter west of Vicksburg MS, and wind gusts to 83 mph in southern Illinois, north of Vevay Park and at the Coles County Airport. High winds and heavy rain caused 1.6 million dollars crop damage in Calhoun County IL, and in southeastern Louisiana, Saint Joseph was deluged with eight inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1997: A towering F1 tornado ripped its way through the middle of Miami, Biscayne Bay, and Miami Beach right after lunch Monday, smashing cars and windows, tossing trees skyward and scaring the dickens out of thousands of people.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

HIGHER! FASTER!

A drill sergeant, wanting to get his recruits in shape, was pushing them harder and harder. Yelling at them loudly he said, "Fall on your backs. Now get your legs in the air. Now, make them go in circles like you're riding a bicycle. Higher! Faster!" he shouted. But one recruit was lying quietly with his legs in a "V" position.

Walking over to where he was lying, he glared at him and demanded, "What are you doing? You are supposed to be riding a bicycle!"

"I am, Sir," said the recruit. "But right now I'm coasting downhill!"

Paul once said, "I am focusing my energies on one thing...and...I am straining to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven." He was totally consumed with becoming who God wanted him to be so he could do what God called him to do. This took all of his energies. With the single-mindedness of an athlete in training he set aside everything that would distract him or destroy him from being an effective witness for Christ. There was no place in his training program for "coasting downhill" even if the wind was at his back.

As "saints in training" we, like Paul, must stay focused, be diligent, work earnestly, live obediently and strive constantly to receive the "prize" God has for us.

Prayer: Father, we call upon You to make us alert and aware of temptations that would limit our effectiveness. May we live disciplined, determined lives always. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:13-14



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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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.10.24

13 22 26 32 65 18

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$363,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.11.24

15 16 27 50 51 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,350,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.11.24

3 9 20 23 37 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 53 Mins 21 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.11.24

7 20 23 28 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$96,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.11.24

21 24 32 39 55 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.11.24

3 6 39 49 67 21

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$47,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Controversy follows Gov. Kristi Noem as she is banned by two more South Dakota tribes

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem is now banned from entering nearly 20% of her state after two more tribes banished her this week over comments she made earlier this year about tribal leaders benefitting from drug cartels.

The latest developments in the ongoing tribal dispute come on the heels of the backlash Noem faced for writing about killing a hunting dog that misbehaved in her latest book. It is not clear how these controversies will affect her chances to become Donald Trump's running mate because it is hard to predict what the former president will do.

The Yankton Sioux Tribe voted Friday to ban Noem from their land in southeastern South Dakota just a few days after the Sisseton-Wahpeton Ojibwe tribe took the same action. The Oglala, Rosebud, Cheyenne River and Standing Rock Sioux tribes had already taken action to keep her off their reservations. Three other tribes haven't yet banned her.

Noem reinforced the divisions between the tribes and the rest of the state in March when she said publicly that tribal leaders were catering to drug cartels on their reservations while neglecting the needs of children and the poor.

"We've got some tribal leaders that I believe are personally benefiting from the cartels being there, and that's why they attack me every day," Noem said at a forum. "But I'm going to fight for the people who actually live in those situations, who call me and text me every day and say, 'Please, dear governor, please come help us in Pine Ridge. We are scared.'"

Noem's spokesman didn't respond Saturday to email questions about the bans. But previously she has said she believes many people who live on the reservations still support her even though she is clearly not getting along with tribal leaders.

Noem addressed the issue in a post on X on Thursday along with posting a link to a YouTube channel about law enforcement's video about drugs on the reservations.

"Tribal leaders should take action to ban the cartels from their lands and accept my offer to help them restore law and order to their communities while protecting their sovereignty," Noem said. "We can only do this through partnerships because the Biden Administration is failing to do their job."

The tribes have clashed with Noem in the past, including over the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline protests at Standing Rock and during the COVID-19 pandemic when they set up coronavirus checkpoints at reservation borders to keep out unnecessary visitors. She was temporarily banned from the Oglala Sioux reservation in 2019 after the protest dispute.

And there is a long history of rocky relations between Native Americans in the state and the government dating back to 1890, when soldiers shot and killed hundreds of Lakota men, women and children at the Wounded Knee massacre as part of a campaign to stop a religious practice known as the Ghost Dance.

Political observer Cal Jillson, who is based at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, said this tribal dispute feels a little different because Noem seems to be "stoking it actively, which suggests that she sees a political benefit."

"I'm sure that Gov. Noem doesn't mind a focus on tensions with the Native Americans in South Dakota because if we're not talking about that, we're talking about her shooting the dog," Jillson said.

Noem appears to be getting tired of answering questions about her decision to kill Cricket after the dog attacked a family's chickens during a stop on the way home from a hunting trip and then tried to bite the governor. Noem also drew criticism for including an anecdote she has since asked her publisher to pull from the book that described "staring down" North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in a private meeting that experts said was implausible.

After those controversies, she canceled several interviews that were planned as part of the book tour. With all the questions about "No Going Back: The Truth on What's Wrong with Politics and How We Move America Forward," no one is even asking anymore about Noem's decision to appear in an infomercial-style video lavishing praise on a team of cosmetic dentists in Texas who gave her veneers.

Jillson said it all probably hurts her chances with Trump, who has been auditioning a long list of potential vice-president candidates.

"I think that the chaos that Trump revels in is the chaos he creates. Chaos created by somebody else simply detracts attention from himself," Jillson said.

University of South Dakota political science professor Michael Card said that if it isn't the vice-president slot, it's not clear what is in Noem's political future because she is prevented from running for another term as governor. Noem is in her second term as governor.

She could go after U.S. Senator Mike Rounds' seat or try to return to the House of Representatives, Card said.

Lithuanians vote in a presidential election as anxieties rise over Russia and the war in Ukraine

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — Lithuanians are casting votes in a presidential election on Sunday at a time when Russian gains on the battlefield in Ukraine are fueling greater fears about Moscow's intentions, particularly in the strategically important Baltic region.

The popular incumbent, Gitanas Nausėda, is favored to win another five-year term in office. But there are eight candidates running in all, making it difficult for him or any other candidate to muster the 50% of the votes needed to win outright on Sunday. In that case, a runoff will be held on May 26.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. and close 8 p.m. (1700 GMT). Results are expected late Sunday night.

The president's main tasks in Lithuania's political system are overseeing foreign and security policy, and acting as the supreme commander of the armed forces. That adds importance to the position in the relatively small nation given that it is located strategically on NATO's eastern flank as tensions rise between Russia and the West over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The Russian exclave of Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea is sandwiched between Lithuania to the north and east, and Poland to the south. There is great concern in Lithuania, and in neighboring Latvia and Estonia, about Russian troops' latest gains in northeastern Ukraine.

All three Baltic states declared independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union and took a determined westward course, joining both the European Union and NATO.

Nausėda is a moderate conservative who turns 60 a week after Sunday's election. One of his main challengers is Ingrida Šimonytė, 49, the current prime minister and former finance minister, whom he beat in a runoff in 2019 with 66% of the votes.

Another contender is Ignas Vėgėlė, a populist lawyer who gained popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic opposing restrictions and vaccines.

A referendum is also on the ballot Sunday. It asks whether the constitution should be amended to allow dual citizenship for hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians living abroad.

Lithuanian citizens who adopt another nationality currently must give up their Lithuanian citizenship, which doesn't bode well for the Baltic nation whose population has fallen from 3.5 million in 1990 to 2.8 million today.

For the first time, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe turned down an invitation by Lithuania to observe the election.

The Lithuanian government wanted to exclude monitors from Russia and Belarus, accusing the two nations — both members of the 57-member organization — of being threats to its political and electoral processes.

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights said Lithuania was breaking the rules it signed up to when it joined the organization. It said observers don't represent their countries' govern-

ments, that they must sign a code of conduct pledging political neutrality and if they break the rules they are no longer allowed to continue as observers.

With the shock of Oct. 7 still raw, profound sadness and anger grip Israel on its Memorial Day

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Ruby Chen's son, Itay, was killed in the Hamas attack on Oct. 7. But unlike scores of other families of soldiers killed that day, Chen doesn't have a grave to visit because his son's remains are held captive in Gaza.

The absence of a final resting place is being felt acutely now, as Israel marks its Memorial Day for fallen soldiers, when cemeteries are brimming with relatives mourning over the graves of their loved ones.

"Where are we supposed to go?" Chen said. "There is no burial site for us to go to."

Memorial Day is always a somber occasion in Israel, a country that has suffered through repeated war and conflict throughout its 76-year history. But Chen's torment underscores how this year it has taken on a profound and raw sadness coupled with percolating anger over the failures of Oct. 7 and the war it sparked.

Families of the fallen, along with broad segments of the public, are demanding accountability from political and military leaders over the blunders that led to the deaths of hundreds in the deadliest attack in the country's history.

"Too many people were killed on that day because of a colossal misjudgment," said Chen, who for months thought his son was still alive after he was snatched into Gaza, before receiving confirmation earlier this year that he was dead. "People who made the misjudgment need to pay, from the prime minister down."

Israel marks its Memorial Day for fallen soldiers and victims of attacks beginning at sundown Sunday with an official ceremony and smaller events the following day at military cemeteries across the country. The solemnity is then abruptly interrupted by the fanfare of Independence Day, which begins Monday evening.

Grouping the two days together is intentionally meant to highlight the link between the costly wars Israel has fought and the establishment and survival of the state, a contrast that this year will be hard to reconcile at a time when Israel is actively engaged in warfare and Israelis feel more insecure than ever.

With the trauma of Oct. 7 looming large, each day is expected to feel dramatically different from previous years.

More than 600 Israeli soldiers have been killed since Hamas launched its surprise attack on Oct. 7, when thousands of militants rampaged across southern Israeli military bases and sleepy communities on a Jewish holiday.

Roughly 1,200 people were killed that day, about a quarter of them soldiers, and another 250 were taken captive into Gaza, according to Israeli authorities. The attack sparked the war, now in its eighth month, which has killed more than 34,700 Palestinians, most of them women and children, according to local health officials.

The militants stormed past Israel's vaunted defenses, bursting through a border fence, blinding surveillance cameras and battling the country's first line of defense soldiers, many of whom were outnumbered. Itay Chen, an Israeli-American, was one of them.

Militants reached roughly 20 different locations in southern Israel, stretching into cities beyond the belt of farming communities that straddles Gaza. It took hours for the region's most powerful military to send reinforcements to the area and days for it to clear all the militants.

The attack shook Israel to its core. It shattered the broad trust the country's Jewish population has long placed in the military, which has compulsory enlistment for most Jewish 18-year-olds.

Beyond the crisis of confidence in the military, the attack smashed Israelis' faith in their government and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose public support plummeted. Thousands of people take part in weekly protests demanding early elections so that a new leadership can take over.

Military and defense leaders have said they shoulder the blame for what transpired during the attack, and the country's head of military intelligence resigned as a result. But Netanyahu has stopped short of accept-

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ing responsibility, saying he will answer tough questions after the war and even blaming his security chiefs last year in a late night post on X he later deleted. His refusal to own up to his role has infuriated many.

But many Israelis have also lost patience with the protracted war, where soldiers continue to die and where thousands have been wounded.

The war's twin aims, of defeating Hamas' governing and military capabilities and freeing the hostages, have not been accomplished, casting a shadow over events typically meant as a salute to the military's prowess, said Idit Shafran Gittleman, an expert on the military and Israeli society at the Institute for National Security Studies, a Tel Aviv think tank. Tens of thousands of Israelis also remain displaced from the country's south and volatile north.

"Since Oct. 7, Israelis have asked themselves how they will endure Memorial Day and Independence Day. And I don't think anyone has an answer," she said, adding that the one thing that might improve public sentiment is elections and a new government.

The anger that has surged is likely to boil over at the Memorial Day ceremonies, which take place at military cemeteries across the country. The ceremonies are typically seen as sacred, solemn and apolitical, even though they are attended by government ministers and lawmakers.

Some families have asked that the ministers refrain from joining, fearing a repeat of last year, when attendees at multiple ceremonies yelled at lawmakers who supported a divisive government plan to overhaul the judiciary.

"This is an event that the failing leadership and the failing security apparatus led us to," Eyal Eshel, whose daughter, Roni, was killed at a base stormed by militants on Oct. 7 and who is leading the charge to prevent ministers from attending, told Israeli Channel 12. "Respect the families' request: Don't come." Regardless, ministers are still slated to fan out across cemeteries nationwide.

But other changes are being made to reflect the somber mood, especially for Independence Day. The official ceremony marking the start of celebrations will be scaled down and have no live audience. The traditional air force flyover has been canceled.

Israelis are wondering what the right way to celebrate is — and whether there is much to celebrate at all.

"People have stopped believing that the country is able to defend us," said Tom Segev, an Israeli historian. "The basic faith in the ability of the state to ensure a good future here has been undermined."

Catalans vote in election to gauge force of separatist movement, degree of reconciliation with Spain

By JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Catalonia is holding a regional election on Sunday whose outcome will reverberate in Spain's national politics.

The ballot will be a test both for the strength of the separatist movement in the wealthy northeastern part of Spain and for the policies of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

More than 5.7 million voters are eligible to choose lawmakers for the regional parliament based in Barcelona.

Separatists have held the regional government for more than a decade. But polling and a national election in July show that support for secession has shrunk somewhat since former regional president Carles Puigdemont led an illegal — and futile — breakaway bid in 2017.

Puigdemont is a fugitive from Spain's laws since he fled the country days after his failed secession attempt. But that isn't stopping him from running in this election as he campaigns from southern France. He has said that he will return to Spain when the newly elected lawmakers convene to choose a regional president at some point after the election.

By that time, Puigdemont hopes to be cleared of any legal troubles after Spain's parliament gives final approval to a contentious amnesty for him and hundreds of other separatists.

The amnesty forms part of Sánchez's intense push to reduce tensions in Catalonia that also included the pardoning of jailed high-profile separatists. If voters don't validate that by coming out in support of

his Socialist party, then it would be a blow to the leader who heads a minority coalition in Madrid.

Sánchez has campaigned alongside Salvador Illa, the candidate of the Socialists. Illa won the most votes in a 2021 regional election but was unable to stop separatist Pere Aragonès from forming a government.

The election will feature a battle inside the separatist camp between Puigdemont's conservative Together party and Aragonès's Republican Left of Catalonia.

An upstart pro-secession, far-right party called Catalan Alliance, which rails against unauthorized immigration as well as the Spanish state, will hope to earn parliamentary representation.

A total of nine parties are running and no single one is expected to come close to winning enough votes to reach the absolute majority of 68 seats in the chamber. So deal-making will be critical.

As Israel pushes deeper into Rafah, Hamas regroups elsewhere in ungoverned Gaza

By WAFAA SHURAF, JOSEPH KRAUSS and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli forces were battling Palestinian militants across the Gaza Strip on Sunday, including in parts of the devastated north that the military said it had cleared months ago, where Hamas has exploited a security vacuum to regroup.

Israel has portrayed the southern Gaza city of Rafah as Hamas' last stronghold, saying it must invade in order to succeed in its goals of dismantling the group and returning scores of hostages. A limited operation there has expanded in recent days, forcing some 300,000 people to flee.

But the rest of the war-ravaged territory seems to provide ample opportunities for Hamas. Israel has yet to offer a detailed plan for postwar governance in Gaza, saying only that it will maintain open-ended security control over the coastal enclave, which is home to some 2.3 million Palestinians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected postwar plans proposed by the United States for the Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, to govern Gaza with support from Arab and Muslim countries. Those plans depend on progress toward the creation of a Palestinian state, something to which Netanyahu's government is deeply opposed.

With the two close allies divided, Gaza has been left without a functioning government, leading to a breakdown in public order and allowing Hamas to reconstitute itself in even the hardest-hit areas.

Palestinians reported heavy Israeli bombardment overnight in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp and other areas in the northern Gaza Strip, which has suffered widespread devastation and been largely isolated by Israeli forces for months. U.N. officials say there is a "full-blown famine" there.

Residents said Israeli warplanes and artillery struck across the camp and the Zeitoun area east of Gaza City, where troops have been battling Palestinian militants for over a week. They have called on tens of thousands of people to relocate to nearby areas.

"It was a very difficult night," said Abdel-Kareem Radwan, a 48-year-old Palestinian from Jabaliya. He said they could hear intense and constant bombing since midday Saturday. "This is madness."

First responders with the Palestinian Civil Defense said they were unable to respond to multiple calls for help from both areas, as well as Rafah, on the southern edge of Gaza. Israeli troops have been battling militants there since the army seized the nearby border crossing with Egypt last week.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the top Israeli military spokesman, said troops are fighting in all parts of Gaza, "in areas where we have not yet operated and in places where we have."

He said that in addition to Jabaliya and Zeitoun, forces were also operating in Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, towns near Gaza's northern border with Israel that were heavily bombed in the opening days of the war.

The military "is now going into Jabaliya for the second time and into Zeitoun for the third time, and it will continue to go in and out," columnist Ben Caspit wrote in Israel's Maariv daily, channeling the growing frustration felt by many Israelis more than seven months into the war.

"Hamas' regime cannot be toppled without preparing an alternative to that regime," he wrote, drawing comparisons with the American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "The only people who can govern Gaza after

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the war are Gazans, with a lot of support and help from the outside.”

Five Israeli soldiers were killed in Zeitoun on Friday, and Palestinian militants fired a barrage of 14 rockets toward the Israeli city of Beersheba that night. Another rocket launched overnight damaged a home in the Israeli city of Ashkelon, the military said Sunday.

The United Nations’ agency for Palestinian refugees, the main provider of aid in Gaza, meanwhile said 300,000 people have fled Rafah since the operation began there. Most are heading to the heavily damaged nearby city of Khan Younis or Mawasi, a crowded tent camp on the coast where some 450,000 people are already living in squalid conditions.

Rafah was sheltering some 1.3 million Palestinians before the Israeli operation began, most of whom had fled fighting elsewhere in the territory.

Israel has now evacuated the eastern third of Rafah, and Hagari said dozens of militants had been killed there as “targeted operations continued.” The United Nations has warned that a planned full-scale Rafah invasion would further cripple humanitarian operations and cause a surge in civilian deaths.

Rafah borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, which are already affected. Israeli troops have captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, forcing it to shut down. Egypt has refused to coordinate with Israel on the delivery of aid through the crossing because of “the unacceptable Israeli escalation,” the state-owned Al Qahera News television channel reported, citing an unnamed official.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said he won’t provide offensive weapons to Israel for Rafah. On Friday, his administration said there was “reasonable” evidence that Israel had breached international law protecting civilians — Washington’s strongest statement yet on the matter.

Israel rejects those allegations, saying it tries to avoid harming civilians. It blames Hamas for the high toll because the militants fight in dense, residential areas.

The war began when Hamas and other militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking another 250 hostage. They still hold about 100 captives and the remains of more than 30.

Israel’s air, land and sea offensive has killed more than 34,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, which doesn’t distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures. Israel says it has killed over 13,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Switzerland’s Nemo wins 68th Eurovision Song Contest after event roiled by protests over war in Gaza

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

MALMO, Sweden (AP) — Swiss singer Nemo won the 68th Eurovision Song Contest early Sunday with “The Code,” an operatic pop-rap ode to the singer’s journey toward embracing a nongender identity.

Switzerland’s contestant beat Croatian rocker Baby Lasagna to the title by winning the most points from a combination of national juries and viewers around the world. Nemo, 24, is the first nonbinary winner of the contest that has long been embraced as a safe haven by the LGBT community. Nemo is also the first Swiss winner since 1988, when Canadian chanteuse Celine Dion competed under the Swiss flag.

“Thank you so much,” Nemo said after the result from Saturday’s final was announced soon after midnight. “I hope this contest can live up to its promise and continue to stand for peace and dignity for every person.”

At a post-victory news conference, Nemo expressed pride in accepting the trophy for “people that are daring to be themselves and people that need to be heard and need to be understood. We need more compassion, we need more empathy.”

Nemo’s victory in the Swedish city of Malmo followed a turbulent year for the pan-continental pop contest that saw large street protests against the participation of Israel that tipped the feelgood musical celebration into a chaotic pressure cooker overshadowed by the war in Gaza.

Hours before the final, Dutch competitor Joost Klein was expelled from the contest over a backstage altercation that was being investigated by police.

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Nemo — full name Nemo Mettler — bested finalists from 24 other countries, who all performed in front of a live audience of thousands and an estimated 180 million viewers around the world. Each contestant had three minutes to meld catchy tunes and eye-popping spectacle into performances capable of winning the hearts of viewers. Musical styles ranged across rock, disco, techno and rap — sometimes a mashup of more than one.

Israeli singer Eden Golan, who spent Eurovision week in Malmo under tight security, took the stage to a wall of sound — boos mixed with cheers — to perform the power ballad “Hurricane.” Golan shot up the odds table through the week, despite the protests that her appearance drew, and ended in fifth place behind Nemo, Baby Lasagna, Ukrainian duo alyona alyona & Jerry Heil, and French singer Slimane.

Eurovision organizers ordered a change to the original title of her song, “October Rain” — an apparent reference to the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that killed about 1,200 people in Israel and triggered the war in Gaza.

The show was typically eclectic Eurovision fare, ranging from the pop-zombie folk hybrid of Estonia’s 5Miinust x Puuluup to the folk-inflected power pop of Greece’s Marina Satti and Armenia’s Ladaniva and the goofy 1990s nostalgia of Finland’s Windows95man, who emerged from a giant onstage egg wearing very little clothing.

Britain’s Olly Alexander offered upbeat dance track “Dizzy,” while Ireland’s gothic Bambie Thug summoned a demon onstage and brought a scream coach to Malmo, and Spain’s Nebulossa boldly reclaimed a term used as a slur on women in “Zorra.”

Nemo had been a favorite going into the contest, alongside Baby Lasagna, whose song “Rim Tim Tagi Dim” is a rollicking rock number that tackles the issue of young Croatians leaving the country in search of a better life.

The contest returned to Sweden, home of last year’s winner, Loreen, half a century after ABBA won Eurovision with “Waterloo” — Eurovision’s most iconic moment. ABBA did not appear in person in Malmo, though their digital “ABBA-tars” from the “ABBA Voyage” stage show did.

A trio of former Eurovision winners — Charlotte Perrelli, Carola and Conchita Wurst — performed “Waterloo” in tribute.

Though Eurovision’s motto is “united by music,” this year’s event has proven divisive. Protests and dissent overshadowed a competition that has become a campy celebration of Europe’s varied — and sometimes baffling — musical tastes and a forum for inclusiveness and diversity.

Thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched for the second time in a week on Saturday through Sweden’s third-largest city, which has a large Muslim population, to demand a boycott of Israel and a cease-fire in the seven-month Gaza war that has killed almost 35,000 Palestinians, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

Several hundred gathered outside the Malmo Arena before the final, with some shouting “shame” at arriving music fans, and facing off with police blocking their path. Climate activist Greta Thunberg was among those escorted away by police.

Klein, the Dutch performer, was ejected from the competition after a female member of the production crew made a complaint, competition organizer the European Broadcasting Union said. The 26-year-old Dutch singer and rapper had been a favorite of both bookmakers and fans with his song “Europapa.”

Dutch broadcaster AVROTROS, one of dozens of public broadcasters that collectively fund and broadcast the contest, said that as Klein came offstage after Thursday’s semifinal, he was filmed without his consent and in turn made a “threatening movement” toward the camera.

The broadcaster said Klein didn’t touch the camera or the camera operator, and called his expulsion “disproportionate.”

Tensions and nerves were palpable in the hours before the final. Several artists were absent from the Olympics-style artists’ entrance at the start of the final dress rehearsal, though all appeared at the final.

Several competitors made reference to peace or love at the end of their performances, including France’s Slimane, who said: “United by music for love and peace.”

Nemo said the Eurovision experience had been “really intense and not just pleasant all the way.”

"There were a lot of things that didn't seem like it was all about love and unity, and that made me really sad," Nemo said. "I really hope that Eurovision continues and can continue to stand for peace and love in the future. I think that needs a lot of work still."

A rural Ugandan community is a hot spot for sickle cell disease. But one patient gives hope

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

MBALE, Uganda (AP) — Barbara Nabulo was one of three girls in her family. But when a sister died, her mother wailed at the funeral that she was left with just one and a half daughters.

The half was the ailing Nabulo, who at age 12 grasped her mother's meaning.

"I hated myself so much," Nabulo said recently, recalling the words that preceded a period of sickness that left her hospitalized and feeding through a tube.

The scene underscores the lifelong challenges for some people with sickle cell disease in rural Uganda, where it remains poorly understood. Even Nabulo, despite her knowledge of how the disease weakens the body, spoke repeatedly of "the germ I was born with."

Sickle cell disease is a group of inherited disorders in which red blood cells — normally round — become hard, sticky and crescent shaped. The misshapen cells clog the flow of blood, which can lead to infections, excruciating pain, organ damage and other complications.

The disease, which can stunt physical growth, is more common in malaria-prone regions, notably Africa and India, because carrying the sickle cell trait helps protect against severe malaria. Global estimates of how many people have the disease vary, but some researchers put the number between 6 million and 8 million, with more than 5 million living in sub-Saharan Africa.

The only cure for the pain sickle cell disease can cause is a bone marrow transplant or gene therapies like the one commercially approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in December. A 12-year-old boy last week became the first person to begin the therapy.

Those options are beyond the reach of most patients in this East African nation where sickle cell disease is not a public health priority despite the burden it places on communities. There isn't a national database of sickle cell patients. Funding for treatment often comes from donor organizations.

In a hilly part of eastern Uganda that's a sickle cell hot spot, the main referral hospital looks after hundreds of patients arriving from nearby villages to collect medication. Many receive doses of hydroxyurea, a drug that can reduce periods of severe pain and other complications, and researchers there are studying its effectiveness in Ugandan children.

Nabulo, now 37, is one of the hospital's patients. But she approaches others like her as a caregiver, too.

After dropping out in primary school, she has emerged in recent years as a counselor to fellow patients, speaking to them about her survival. Encouraged by hospital authorities, she makes weekly visits to the ward that has many children watched over by exhausted-looking parents.

Nabulo tells them she was diagnosed with sickle cell disease at two weeks old, but now she is the mother of three children, including twins.

Such a message gives hope to those who feel discouraged or worry that sickle cell disease is a death sentence, said Dr. Julian Abeso, head of pediatrics at Mbale Regional Referral Hospital.

Some men have been known to divorce their wives — or neglect them in search of new partners — when they learn that their children have sickle cell disease. Frequent community deaths from disease complications reinforce perceptions of it as a scourge.

Nabulo and health workers urge openness and the testing of children for sickle cell as early as possible.

Abeso and Nabulo grew close after Nabulo lost her first baby hours after childbirth in 2015. She cried in the doctor's office as she spoke of her wish "to have a relative I can call mine, a descendant who can help me," Abeso recalled.

"At that time, people here were so negative about patients with sickle cell disease having children because the complications would be so many," the doctor said.

Nabulo's second attempt to have a child was difficult, with some time in intensive care. But her baby is now a 7-year-old boy who sometimes accompanies her to the hospital. The twin girls came last year.

Speaking outside the one-room home she shares with her husband and children, Nabulo said many people appreciate her work despite the countless indignities she faces, including unwanted stares from people in the streets who point to the woman with "a big head," one manifestation in her of the disease. Her brothers often behave as if they are ashamed of her, she said.

Once, she heard of a girl in her neighborhood whose grandmother was making frequent trips to the clinic over an undiagnosed illness in the child. The grandmother was hesitant to have the girl tested for sickle cell when Nabulo first asked her. But tests later revealed the disease, and now the girl receives treatment.

"I go to Nabulo for help because I can't manage the illness affecting my grandchild," Kelemesiya Musuya said. "She can feel pain, and she starts crying, saying, 'It is here and it is rising and it is paining here and here.'"

Musuya sometimes seeks reassurance. "She would be asking me, 'Even you, when you are sick, does it hurt in the legs, in the chest, in the head?' I tell her that, yes, it's painful like that," Nabulo said.

Nabulo said she was glad that the girl, who is 11, still goes to school.

The lack of formal education is hurtful for Nabulo, who struggles to write her name, and a source of shame for her parents, who repeatedly apologize for letting her drop out while her siblings studied. One brother is now a medical worker who operates a clinic in a town not far away from Nabulo's home

"I am very happy to see her," said her mother, Agatha Nambuya.

She recalled Nabulo's swelling head and limbs as a baby, and how "these children used to die so soon."

But now she knows of others with sickle cell disease who grew to become doctors or whatever they wanted to be. She expressed pride in Nabulo's work as a counselor and said her grandchildren make her feel happy.

"At that time," she said, recalling Nabulo as a child, "we didn't know."

A combustible Cannes is set to unfurl with 'Furiosa,' 'Megalopolis' and a #MeToo reckoning

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

The Cannes Film Festival rarely passes without cacophony but this year's edition may be more raucous and uneasy than any edition in recent memory.

When the red carpet is rolled out from the Palais des Festivals on Tuesday, the 77th Cannes will unfurl against a backdrop of war, protest, potential strikes and quickening #MeToo upheaval in France, which for years largely resisted the movement.

Festival workers are threatening to strike. The Israel-Hamas war, acutely felt in France, home to Europe's largest Jewish and Arab communities, is sure to spark protests. Russia's war in Ukraine remains on the minds of many. Add in the kinds of anxieties that can be expected to percolate at Cannes — the ever-uncertain future of cinema, the rise of artificial intelligence — and this year's festival shouldn't lack for drama.

Being prepared for anything has long been a useful attitude in Cannes. Befitting such tumultuous times, the film lineup is full of intrigue, curiosity and question marks.

The Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof, just days before his latest film, "The Seed of the Sacred Fig," is to debut in competition in Cannes, was sentenced to eight years in prison by the Islamic Revolutionary Court. The film remains on Cannes' schedule.

Arguably the most feverishly awaited entry is Francis Ford Coppola's self-financed opus "Megalopolis." Coppola, is himself no stranger to high-drama at Cannes. An unfinished cut of "Apocalypse Now" won him (in a tie) his second Palme d'Or more than four decades ago.

Even the upcoming U.S. presidential election won't be far off. Premiering in competition is Ali Abbasi's "The Apprentice," starring Sebastian Stan as a young Donald Trump. There will also be new films from

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Kevin Costner, Paolo Sorrentino, Sean Baker, Yorgos Lanthimos and Andrea Arnold. And for a potentially powder keg Cannes there's also the firebomb of "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga." The film, a rolling apocalyptic dystopia, returns director George Miller to the festival he first became hooked on as a juror.

"I got addicted to it simply because it's like film camp," says Miller, who became enraptured to the global gathering of cinema at Cannes and the pristine film presentations. "It's kind of optimal cinema, really. The moment that they said, 'OK, we're happy to show this film here,' I jumped at it."

Cannes' official opener on Tuesday is "The Second Act," a French comedy by Quentin Dupieux, starring Léa Seydoux, Louis Garrel and Vincent Lindon. During the opening ceremony, Meryl Streep will be awarded an honorary Palme d'Or. At the closing ceremony, George Lucas will get one, too.

But the spotlight at the start may fall on Judith Godrèche. The French director and actor earlier this year said the filmmakers Benoît Jacquot and Jacques Doillon sexually assaulted her when she was a teenager, allegations that rocked French cinema. Jacquot and Doillon have denied the allegations.

Though much of the French film industry has previously been reluctant to embrace the #MeToo movement, Godrèche has stoked a wider response. She's spoken passionately about the need for changes at the Cesars, France's equivalent of the Oscars, and before a French Senate commission.

In that same period, Godrèche also made the short film "Moi Aussi" during a Paris gathering of hundreds who wrote her with their own stories of sexual abuse. On Wednesday, it opens Cannes' Un Certain Regard section.

"I hope that I'm heard in the sense that I'm not interested in being some sort of representation of someone who just wants to go after everyone in this industry," Godrèche said ahead of the festival. "I'm just fighting for some sort of change. It is called a revolution."

It's the latest chapter in how #MeToo has reverberated at the world's largest film gathering, following an 82-woman protest on the steps of the Palais in 2018 and a gender parity pledge in 2019. Cannes has often come under criticism for not inviting more female filmmakers into competition, but the festival is putting its full support behind Godrèche while girding for the possibility of more #MeToo revelations during the festival.

"For me, having these faces, these people — everyone in this movie — gives them this place to be celebrated," said Godrèche. "There's this thing about this place that has so much history. In a way, it mystifies movies forever. Once your film was in Cannes, it was in Cannes."

Some of the filmmakers coming to the festival this year are already firmly lodged in Cannes lore. Paul Schrader was at the festival almost 50 years ago for Martin Scorsese's "Taxi Driver," which he wrote. After a famously divisive response, it won the Palme in 1976.

"It was a different place. It was much more collegial and lower key," said Schrader during a break from packing his bags. "I remember quite well sitting on the terrasse at the Carlton with Marty and Sergio Leone and (Rainer Werner) Fassbender came by with his boyfriend and joined us. We were all talking and the sun was going down. I was thinking, 'This is the greatest thing in the world.'"

For the first time since his 1988 drama "Patty Hearst," Schrader is back in what he calls "the main show" — in competition for the Palme d'Or — with "Oh, Canada." The film, adapted from a Russell Banks novel, stars Richard Gere (re-teaming with Schrader decades after "American Gigolo") as a dying filmmaker who recounts his life story for a documentary. Jacob Elordi plays him in '70s flashbacks.

After the Cannes lineup was announced, Schrader shared on Facebook an old photo of himself, Coppola and Lucas — all primary figures to what was then called New Hollywood — and the caption "Together again."

"I'll be there the same time as Francis. There's a question of whether either of us get invited back for closing," Schrader says, referring to when award-winners are asked to stay for the closing ceremony. "I would hope that either Francis or I could come back closing night for George's thing."

Who ultimately goes home with the Palme — the handicapping has already begun — will be decided by a jury led by Greta Gerwig, fresh off the mammoth success of "Barbie." But this year's slate will have a lot to live up to. Last year, three eventual best picture nominees premiered in Cannes: Justine Triet's Palme-winner "Anatomy of a Fall," Jonathan Glazer's "The Zone of Interest" and Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon."

What tends to really define a Cannes, though, is emerging filmmakers. Among those likely to make an impression this year is Julien Colonna, the Corsican, Paris-based director and co-writer of "The Kingdom." The film, an Un Certain Regard standout, is a brutal coming of age about a teenager girl (newcomer Ghjuvanna Benedetti) on the run with her father (Saveriu Santucci), a Corsican clan leader.

"We wanted to propose a kind of anti-mob film," Colonna says, referencing the prevalence of "Godfather"-inspired gangster dramas. "As a viewer, I'm quite bored of this. I think we need to move to something else and propose a different prism."

"The Kingdom," Colonna's debut feature film, arose out of his own anxieties around the birth of his child six years ago. It's an entirely fictional movie but it has personal roots for Colonna, who was inspired by the memory of a camping trip that he realized years later was "an entirely different matter for my father." He shot the most of the film in Corsica within a few miles of his hometown.

"This is where I grew up," says Colonna, smiling. "This is where I learned to swim. The shower where her kiss takes place is the shower where I kissed for the first time."

Local governments struggle to distribute their share of billions from opioid settlements

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Settlement money to help stem the decades-long opioid addiction and overdose epidemic is rolling out to small towns and big cities across the U.S., but advocates worry that chunks of it may be used in ways that don't make a dent in the crisis.

As state and local governments navigate how to use the money, advocates say local governments may not have the bandwidth to take the right steps to identify their communities' needs and direct their funding shares to projects that use proven methods to prevent deaths.

Opioids have been linked to about 800,000 deaths in the U.S. since 1999, including more than 80,000 annually in recent years, with most of those involving illicitly produced fentanyl.

Drugmakers, wholesalers and pharmacies have been involved in more than 100 settlements of opioid-related lawsuits with state, local and Native American tribal governments over the past decade.

The deals, some not yet finalized, could be worth a total of more than \$50 billion over nearly two decades and also come with requirements for better monitoring of prescriptions and making company documents public.

States alone fought the tobacco industry in the 1990s and they used only a sliver of the money from the resulting settlements on tobacco-related efforts.

"We don't want to be 10 years down the road and say, 'After we screwed up tobacco, we trusted small government with opioids — and we did even worse,'" said Paul Farrell, Jr., one of the lead lawyers representing local governments in the opioid suits.

He notes that with settlement money rolling out for at least 14 more years, there's time for towns to use it appropriately, and resources to help.

The goal, experts say, is to help those who are taking opioids to get treatment, to make it less likely people who use drugs will overdose and to create an environment for people not to take them in the first place.

For many, it's personal.

Suzanne Harrison and her family launched a nonprofit dedicated to getting New Jersey residents access to treatment and recovery programs after her brother and Navy veteran, King Shaffer Jr., died from a fentanyl and heroin overdose in 2016, days before he was scheduled to try another treatment program.

At the time, he was staying with a sister who lived in Moorestown, New Jersey.

That town's administration decided to hand its portion of settlement money over to Burlington County, which has used settlement funds to distribute an overdose antidote and run camps for kids affected by addiction.

"The County was in a much better position to handle this subject," township manager Kevin Aberant

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emailed, noting reporting requirements and restrictions on how the money could be used.

The major opioid settlements, which include deals with Walgreen Co., CVS Health, Walmart, Johnson & Johnson and one with OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma that is before the U.S. Supreme Court, require that most of the funds be used to combat the crisis.

More than half of the funds will be controlled by local governments, according to Christine Minhee, who runs the Opioid Settlement Tracker website. In the biggest agreements, states receive larger amounts by getting eligible local governments with populations over 10,000 to join the settlements.

Unlike most states, New Jersey required local governments to complete reports on the funding.

Using those submissions and additional reporting, The Associated Press examined the spending and decision-making processes for communities in Burlington County, which includes Philadelphia suburbs and rural areas. Fourteen communities there receive allocations and by last June the amounts ranged from \$5,000 to nearly \$88,000.

By last year, most communities in Burlington County had not spent their allotted funds yet, nor had they followed advice to gather public input, devise strategic plans, conduct assessments of their communities' needs and design processes for awarding funds.

In Mount Laurel, New Jersey, the police department was put in charge and launched outreach events around budget motels where first-responders often administer an overdose antidote. The idea is to connect people with treatment and other services, but advocates prefer police not be in charge of the spending.

Deputy Police Chief Tim Hudnall also said there is consideration of hiring peer-support navigators to try to help people address addiction.

Another New Jersey town, Willingboro, spent a little over \$57,000 on a back-to-school wellness event, where students received backpacks full of school supplies and information about mental health resources.

"We've been trying to be aggressive about it," Gary Lawery II, the deputy township manager, said of spending the funds. "If not, it's just going to sit there."

But those approaches have not relied on the kind of community needs assessments that Sara Whaley, a researcher at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health who helps develop guides for counties, says are essential.

Some service providers, such as Shaffer's sister Suzanne Harrison, have found the process frustrating. Her organization, King's Crusade, helps connect people with services, pays rent at sober living facilities and provides transportation to treatment. They've raised as much as \$80,000 a year, but there is always more demand.

Harrison said she hasn't had a chance to apply for allocations to subsidize this. Instead, the organization received \$6,625 in opioid settlement money to organize a one-time recovery community event in Evesham Township.

In Evesham, a suburb of 45,000 that's the most populous in Burlington County, most of the control over the settlement funds lies with the local alliance to prevent alcoholism and drug addiction, which is the sort of body Whaley says should be involved.

Marc Romano, director of operations for Prevention Plus of Burlington County, said he also wished there was a call for proposals for using the money. The group was paid \$2,000 to hold a painting night for women in recovery, which he said was "a nice event for recovery and recovery awareness," but the group could do more by getting funds to help support programs geared toward its mission of prevention.

Council member Heather Cooper, whose own brother was killed by a fentanyl overdose, said there are service providers in the area that can help get people into treatment, get them rides there and offer other services.

"But what we hear is families still don't know where those resources are," she said. "So I think the marketing of that has to increase."

Other governments have used different approaches.

In Arkansas, all the towns and counties pooled their money by creating the Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership.

Grants have gone to a drug task force to hire an overdose investigator and peer recovery specialist, for

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the American Indian Center of Arkansas to hire peer recovery specialists, and for a religious organization to expand its recovery housing center in projects ranging from \$100,000 to more than \$2 million.

Kirk Lane, a former police chief and director of state drug policy who now serves as director of the partnership, said it's able to steer projects to underserved parts of the state and to fill in gaps in the state's treatment, recovery and prevention systems.

He explained, "Individual mayors and county judges didn't have to worry about, 'How are we going to spend that money?'"

Rise in UK knife attacks leads to a crackdown and stokes public anxiety

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A familiar horror reached Pooja Kanda first on social media: There had been a sword attack in London. And then Kanda, who was home alone at the time, saw a detail she dreaded and knew all too well.

A man with a sword had killed a 14-year-old boy who was walking to school. Two years ago, her 16-year-old son, Ronan, was killed by two sword-wielding schoolmates while walking to a neighbor's to borrow a PlayStation controller.

"It took me back," Kanda, who lives near Birmingham, said about Daniel Anjorin's April 30 killing in an attack in London's Hainault district that also wounded four people. "It's painful to see that this has happened all over again."

In parts of the world that ban or strictly regulate gun ownership, including Britain and much of the rest of Europe, knives and other types of blades are often the weapons of choice used in crimes. Many end up in the hands of children, as they can be cheap and easy to get.

Although the number of fatal stabbings has mostly held steady in England and Wales over the past 10 years, headline-grabbing attacks and an overall rise in knife crime have stoked anxieties and led to calls for the government to do more.

"Knife-enabled" crime — in which knives were used to commit crimes or someone was caught illegally possessing one — rose 7% in England and Wales last year," the government said last month, noting some localities were not included. In London, such crimes jumped 20%. The other two U.K. countries, Scotland and Northern Ireland, keep their own statistics.

With knives so readily available, there's only so much that can be done. Of the 244 fatal stabbings in England and Wales in the 12 months ending with March 2023 — the most recent figures available — 101 were committed with kitchen knives, far surpassing any other type of blade, according to the Office of National Statistics.

But the uptick in knife crime and a steady drumbeat of shocking attacks, including those that killed Ronan Kanda, Daniel Anjorin and three people in Nottingham last year, has pushed the issue to the forefront.

"It seems like every day something like this is reported in the press," Sanjoy O'Malley-Kumar, whose 19-year-old daughter Grace O'Malley-Kumar was among the Nottingham victims, said on "Good Morning Britain" after the recent attack in London.

In last week's local elections, candidates debated policies such as stop-and-search.

Even movie star Idris Elba has weighed in.

"I can pick up a phone right now, type in knives and I'll get inundated with adverts for them," the London-born star of "The Wire" and "Luther" said during a protest in January.

Guns are heavily restricted in the U.K. and there's not much debate about it. That's partly because the 1996 massacre of 16 elementary students in Dunblane, Scotland, led to a ban on owning handguns. Firearms used for hunting are tightly regulated.

Restricting knives is trickier, but the government is trying. It's already illegal to sell a knife to someone younger than 18 or to carry one in public without a good reason, such as for work or religious purposes.

And certain types of blades are already illegal, including switchblades and so-called zombie knives, which come in various sizes, have cutting and serrated edges, and feature text or images suggesting they should

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be used to commit violence, according to the 2016 law banning them.

A new law will take effect in September banning the sale of machetes and closing a loophole that companies have exploited to get around the zombie knife ban. It remains to be seen whether the new law will have much effect, though, as machetes accounted for only 14 of the 244 stabbing deaths in the 12 months that ended in March 2023 and zombie-style knives accounted for seven.

"Knives are harder than guns to regulate and there are already large numbers out there even if they were 'banned,'" said Tony Travers, a professor of government at the London School of Economics.

History and statistics point to an enduring problem in a country where memories are still fresh of the 2017 vehicle-and-knife attack in London that killed eight people and injured almost 50. Three extremists inspired by the Islamic State group drove into pedestrians on London Bridge and then stabbed people in nearby Borough Market.

Homicides committed with sharp instruments, including knives, machetes and swords, have exceeded 200 since the 12 months that ended with March 2016, when 210 people were killed that way, according to the Office of National Statistics. They reached a record high of 282 two years later and have held roughly steady ever since, dipping slightly during the pandemic lockdown.

Whereas guns are used in about 80% of American homicides, according to U.S. government figures, blades are used in most London killings. But brazen and seemingly random attacks like the one this month in east London are unusual.

"Sporadic acts of violence are a bit like shark attacks. They're actually very, very rare, but they get lots of traction," said Iain Overton, executive director of Action on Armed Violence, a London-based charity. "I don't think randomized public homicides are particularly commonplace in the U.K."

The frequency of slashing attacks has amplified a sense of dread and distrust in cities, where most happen.

The Bristol Post published a timeline in March of more than a dozen knife incidents in that coastal city since the start of the year. It included reports on the stabbing deaths of three teenagers over an 18-day period and another teen who was stabbed to death in February.

Meanwhile, a teenage girl in Wales was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder after stabbing a student and two teachers at a secondary school April 24, police said. That was just six days before Daniel Anjorin was killed.

In Ronan Kanda's killing, one of his attackers, Prabjeet Veadhesa, then 16, bought a sword online and picked it up at the post office. He brought his mother's ID to pass the post office's security check, but no one asked to see it, according to trial testimony. Adding to the tragedy, Ronan was killed in a case of mistaken identity, police said.

The details of stabbing attacks differ, but Pooja Kanda said she sees similarities — chiefly the emotional what-comes-next: bewildered, shattered families, anger that such a thing could happen to a child or anyone again.

She petitioned the government to ban the sale of swords with exceptions and submitted 10,000 signatures, but was rejected.

The U.K. Home Office said in a statement that crimes with straight swords are rare and were not raised by the police as a specific concern, so officials focused instead on zombie-style knives and machetes in the law that takes effect in September. The Home Office said curved swords were banned in 2008.

Kanda, a working single mother, said it would be wrong to blame all knife attacks on poverty. Rather, there are many reasons they happen.

"The law is very weak. People are not scared to go to jail," she said. "There's a massive ego, a culture around it. To show how big a man you are. Kids have got this wrong idea that this is cool to do this."

Crews prepare for controlled demolition as cleanup continues at bridge collapse site

By LEA SKENE Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — After weeks of preparation, crews are scheduled to conduct a controlled demolition Sunday to break down the largest remaining span of the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge in Maryland, which came crashing down under the impact of a massive container ship on March 26.

The steel span landed on the ship's bow after the Dali lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's support columns shortly after leaving Baltimore. Since then, the ship has been stuck among the wreckage and Baltimore's busy port has been closed to most maritime traffic.

Six members of a roadwork crew plunged to their deaths in the collapse. The last of their bodies was recovered from the underwater wreckage earlier this week. All the victims were Latino immigrants who came to the U.S. for job opportunities. They were filling potholes on an overnight shift when the bridge was destroyed.

The controlled demolition will allow the Dali to be refloated and guided back into the Port of Baltimore. Once the ship is removed, maritime traffic can begin returning to normal, which will provide relief for thousands of longshoremen, truckers and small business owners who have seen their jobs impacted by the closure.

The Dali's 21-member crew will shelter in place aboard the ship while the explosives are detonated.

William Marks, a spokesperson for the crew, said they would shelter "in a designated safe place" during the demolition. "All precautions are being taken to ensure everyone's safety," he said in an email.

In a videographic released this week, authorities said engineers are using precision cuts to control how the trusses break down. They said the method allows for "surgical precision" and is one of the safest and most efficient ways to remove steel under a high level of tension. The steel structure will be "thrust away from the Dali" when the explosives send it tumbling into the water, according to the videographic.

Once it's demolished, hydraulic grabbers will lift the resulting sections of steel onto barges.

"It's important to note that this controlled demolition is not like what you would see in a movie," the video says, noting that from a distance it will sound like fireworks or loud thunder and give off puffs of smoke.

Officials previously said they hoped to remove the Dali by May 10 and reopen the port's 50-foot (15.2-meter) main channel by the end of May.

The Dali crew members haven't been allowed to leave the grounded vessel since the disaster. Officials said they have been busy maintaining the ship and assisting investigators. Of the crew members, 20 are from India and one is Sri Lankan.

The National Transportation Safety Board and the FBI are conducting investigations into the bridge collapse.

Danish shipping giant Maersk chartered the Dali for a planned trip from Baltimore to Sri Lanka, but the ship didn't get far. Its crew sent a mayday call saying they had lost power and had no control of the steering system. Minutes later, the ship rammed into the bridge.

Officials have said the safety board investigation will focus on the ship's electrical system.

Wary of wars in Gaza and Ukraine, old foes Turkey and Greece test a friendship initiative

By SUZAN FRASER and DEREK GATOPOULOS undefined

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Old foes Turkey and Greece will test a five-month-old friendship initiative Monday when Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis visits Ankara.

The two NATO members, which share decades of mutual animosity, a tense border and disputed waters, agreed to sideline disputes last December. Instead, they're focusing on trade and energy, repairing cultural ties and a long list of other items placed on the so-called positive agenda.

Here's a look at what the two sides hope to achieve and the disputes that have plagued ties in the past:

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FOCUSING ON A POSITIVE AGENDA

Mitsotakis is to meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara on Monday as part of efforts to improve ties following the solidarity Athens showed Ankara after a devastating earthquake hit southern Turkey last year.

The two leaders have sharp differences over the Israeli-Hamas war, but are keen to hold back further instability in the eastern Mediterranean as conflict also continues to rage in Ukraine.

"We always approach our discussions with Turkey with confidence and with no illusions that Turkish positions will not change from one moment to the next," Mitsotakis said last week, commenting on the visit. "Nevertheless, I think it's imperative that when we disagree, the channels of communication should always be open."

"We should disagree without tension and without this always causing an escalation on the ground," he added.

Ioannis Grigoriadis, a professor of political science at Ankara's Bilkent University, said the two leaders would look for ways "to expand the positive agenda and look for topics where the two sides can seek win-win solutions," such as in trade, tourism and migration.

EASY VISAS FOR TURKISH TOURISTS

Erdogan visited Athens in early December, and the two countries have since maintained regular high-level contacts to promote a variety of fence-mending initiatives, including educational exchanges and tourism.

Turkish citizens this summer are able to visit 10 Greek islands using on-the-spot visas, skipping a more cumbersome procedure needed to enter Europe's common travel area zone, known as the Schengen area.

"This generates a great opportunity for improving the economic relations between the two sides, but also to bring the two stable societies closer — for Greeks and Turks to realize that they have more things in common than they think," Grigoriadis said.

A HISTORY OF DISPUTES

Disagreements have brought Athens and Ankara close to war on several occasions over the past five decades, mostly over maritime borders and the rights to explore for resources in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean seas.

The two countries are also locked in a dispute over Cyprus, which was divided in 1974 when Turkey invaded following a coup by supporters of union with Greece. Only Turkey recognizes a Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence in the island's northern third.

The dispute over the exploration of energy resources resulted in a naval standoff in 2020 and a vow by Erdogan to halt talks with the Mitsotakis government. But the two men met three times last year following a thaw in relations and a broader effort by Erdogan to re-engage with Western countries.

The foreign ministers of the two countries, Hakan Fidan of Turkey and George Gerapetritis of Greece, are set to join the talks Monday and hold a separate meeting.

RECENT DISAGREEMENTS

Just weeks before Mitsotakis' visit, Erdogan announced the opening of a former Byzantine-era church in Istanbul as a mosque, drawing criticism from Greece and the Greek Orthodox church. Like Istanbul's landmark Hagia Sophia, the Chora had operated as a museum for decades before it was converted into a mosque.

Turkey, meanwhile, has criticized recently announced plans by Greece to declare areas in the Ionian and Aegean seas as "marine parks" to conserve aquatic life. Turkey objects to the one-sided declaration in the Aegean, where some areas remain under dispute, and has labelled the move as "a step that sabotages the normalization process."

Grigoriadis said Turkey and Greece could focus on restoring derelict Ottoman monuments in Greece and Greek Orthodox monuments in Turkey. "That would be an opportunity" for improved ties, he said.

Schools turn to artificial intelligence to spot guns as companies press lawmakers for state funds

By DAVID A. LIEB and JOHN HANNA Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas could soon offer up to \$5 million in grants for schools to outfit surveillance cameras with artificial intelligence systems that can spot people carrying guns. But the governor needs to approve the expenditures and the schools must meet some very specific criteria.

The AI software must be patented, “designated as qualified anti-terrorism technology,” in compliance with certain security industry standards, already in use in at least 30 states and capable of detecting “three broad firearm classifications with a minimum of 300 subclassifications” and “at least 2,000 permutations,” among other things.

Only one company currently meets all those criteria: the same organization that touted them to Kansas lawmakers crafting the state budget. That company, ZeroEyes, is a rapidly growing firm founded by military veterans after the fatal shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida.

The legislation pending before Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly highlights two things. After numerous high-profile shootings, school security has become a multibillion-dollar industry. And in state capitols, some companies are successfully persuading policymakers to write their particular corporate solutions into state law.

ZeroEyes also appears to be the only firm qualified for state firearms detection programs under laws enacted last year in Michigan and Utah, bills passed earlier this year in Florida and Iowa and legislation proposed in Colorado, Louisiana and Wisconsin.

On Friday, Missouri became the latest state to pass legislation geared toward ZeroEyes, offering \$2.5 million in matching grants for schools to buy firearms detection software designated as “qualified anti-terrorism technology.”

“We’re not paying legislators to write us into their bills,” ZeroEyes co-founder and Chief Revenue Officer Sam Alaimo said. But “if they’re doing that, it means I think they’re doing their homework, and they’re making sure they’re getting a vetted technology.”

ZeroEyes uses artificial intelligence with surveillance cameras to identify visible guns, then flashes an alert to an operations center staffed around the clock by former law enforcement officers and military veterans. If verified as a legitimate threat by ZeroEyes personnel, an alert is sent to school officials and local authorities.

The goal is to “get that gun before that trigger’s squeezed, or before that gun gets to the door,” Alaimo said.

Few question the technology. But some do question the legislative tactics.

The super-specific Kansas bill — particularly the requirement that a company have its product in at least 30 states — is “probably the most egregious thing that I have ever read” in legislation, said Jason Stoddard, director of school safety and security for Charles County Public Schools in Maryland.

Stoddard is chairperson of the newly launched National Council of School Safety Directors, which formed to set standards for school safety officials and push back against vendors who are increasingly pitching particular products to lawmakers.

When states allot millions of dollars for certain products, it often leaves less money for other important school safety efforts, such as electronic door locks, shatter-resistant windows, communication systems and security staff, he said.

“The artificial-intelligence-driven weapons detection is absolutely wonderful,” Stoddard said. “But it’s probably not the priority that 95% of the schools in the United States need right now.”

The technology also can be costly, which is why some states are establishing grant programs. In Florida, legislation to implement ZeroEyes technology in schools in just two counties cost a total of about \$929,000.

ZeroEyes is not the only company using surveillance systems with artificial intelligence to spot guns. One competitor, Omnilert, pivoted from emergency alert systems to firearms detection several years ago and also offers around-the-clock monitoring centers to quickly review AI-detected guns and pass alerts onto local officials.

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But Omnilert does not yet have a patent for its technology. And it has not yet been designated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as an anti-terrorism technology under a 2002 federal law providing liability protections for companies. It has applied for both.

Though Omnilert is in hundreds of schools, its products aren't in 30 states, said Mark Franken, Omnilert's vice president of marketing. But he said that shouldn't disqualify his company from state grants.

Franken has contacted the Kansas governor's office in hopes she will line-item veto the specific criteria, which he said "create a kind of anti-competitive environment."

In Iowa, legislation requiring schools to install firearms detection software was amended to give companies providing the technology until July 1, 2025, to receive federal designation as an anti-terrorism technology. But Democratic state Rep. Ross Wilburn said that designation was originally intended as an incentive for companies to develop technology.

"It was not put in place to provide, promote any type of advantage to one particular company or another," Wilburn said during House debate.

In Kansas, ZeroEyes' chief strategy officer presented an overview of its technology in February to the House K-12 Education Budget Committee. It included a live demonstration of its AI gun detection and numerous actual surveillance photos spotting guns at schools, parking lots and transit stations. The presentation also noted authorities arrested about a dozen people last year directly as a result of ZeroEyes alerts.

Kansas state Rep. Adam Thomas, a Republican, initially proposed to specifically name ZeroEyes in the funding legislation. The final version removed the company's name but kept the criteria that essentially limits it to ZeroEyes.

House K-12 Budget Committee Chair Kristey Williams, a Republican, vigorously defended that provision. She argued during a negotiating meeting with senators that because of student safety, the state couldn't afford the delays of a standard bidding process. She also touted the company's technology as unique.

"We do not feel that there was another alternative," Williams said last month.

The \$5 million appropriation won't cover every school, but Thomas said the amount could later increase once people see how well ZeroEyes technology works.

"I'm hopeful that it does exactly what we saw it do and prevents gun violence in the schools," Thomas told The Associated Press, "and we can eventually get it in every school."

In progressive Argentina, the LGBTQ+ community says President Milei has turned back the clock

By DÉBORA REY Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — When Luana Salva got her first formal job after years of prostitution, she was ecstatic.

A quota law in Argentina that promoted the inclusion of transgender people in the work force — unprecedented in Latin America except in neighboring Uruguay — pulled her from the capital's street corners into the Foreign Ministry last year.

Yet just months after Salva got her first paycheck, right-wing President Javier Milei entered office and began slashing public spending as part of his state overhaul to solve Argentina's worst economic crisis in two decades. Abruptly fired in a wave of government layoffs, Salva said her world began to unravel.

"The only option we have left is prostitution ... and I don't see myself standing on a corner, getting cold, enduring violence," Salva, 43, said. "This government is unaware of all that has been built to make us feel included."

Salva's sudden reversal of fortunes reflects the political whiplash being felt across Argentina. Past left-leaning presidents who enacted some of the most socially liberal policies on the continent have given way to a self-proclaimed "anarcho-capitalist" whose fiery appraisals of social justice and efforts to dismantle diversity and equity programs have made him into a global far-right icon.

"The only thing this radical feminist agenda has achieved is greater state intervention to hinder economic process," Milei said in a speech met with enthusiastic applause at the World Economic Forum in Davos,

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Switzerland, earlier this year.

Few in Argentina are more enraged by Milei's anti-woke agenda than LGBTQ+ activists, who worry his government is rolling back their hard-won gains. Since drawing attention as a brash TV personality, Milei has lambasted feminist and human rights movements as a "cult of a gender ideology."

"Unfortunately, we are going backward," said Alba Rueda, a trans woman activist and diversity adviser in the former center-left government of President Alberto Fernández, who made Argentina the first country in the region to allow nonbinary people to make "X" the gender on their national identity documents.

"What we have achieved is being discredited," Rueda said.

After taking office in December, Milei wasted no time jumping into Argentina's culture wars. He shut down the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity, banned the government's use of gender-inclusive language and closed the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism.

In an announcement timed for International Women's Day on March 8, Milei renamed the Women's Hall in the presidential palace to Hall of Heroes. To the delight of his conservative fans — and the outrage of tens of thousands of women's rights protesters outside his residence — he had portraits of historical female leaders in the room taken down and replaced with those featuring Argentina's founding fathers and soldiers.

Milei has also scrapped a decree calling for gender equality in companies and civil society groups and ended gender-focused training programs. He has repeatedly railed against abortion — or, as he calls it, "murder aggravated by the familial bond." A lawmaker from his party has presented Congress with legislation demanding the repeal of Argentina's breakthrough legalization of abortion in 2020.

It's a far cry from the past years when Argentina became the first country in Latin America to legalize same-sex marriage and a few years later recognized choosing one's own gender identity as a human right. In 2021, the Fernández administration passed its employment quota law, requiring the state to reserve 1% of all jobs for transgender, transsexual or nonbinary people who would otherwise struggle to find formal work.

Before Milei became president, efforts to fulfill the quota were just gaining traction, with 955 transgender people on the public payroll — far below the 5,551 positions allocated to them in compliance with the law. The fate of the legislation is now unclear.

"The quota does not make much sense," presidential spokesperson Manuel Adorni said. "Each position will be occupied by the best, most capable person, be it a man, a woman, a transvestite or anything else."

Some 105 transgender people have lost their civil service jobs in the last three months, according to the union representing state workers.

It's a small drop in the ocean of 15,000 state workers who have been fired as Milei races against the odds to push the state budget into surplus by the year's end.

But transgender people who benefited from the law insist each layoff has a ripple effect on Argentina's gender and sexual minorities who remain vulnerable to hate crimes and face widespread discrimination in the labor market. In 2016, 70% of trans women reported making a living from sex work. In 2022, after the law was passed, that figure fell to 56%, according to a study released last year by Buenos Aires government officials.

"The quota, for me, meant the possibility of changing my life," Salva said.

Milei's libertarian administration says the layoffs are part of its austerity program and not targeted at LGBTQ+ people. Milei has also Argentina's currency, slashed subsidies, eliminated price controls and closed other government ministries unrelated to gender and sexual identity.

But those in the LGBTQ+ community insist the president's populist shock doctrine disproportionately affects them. In his much-memed Davos speech, Milei slammed "women's ministries and international (feminist) organizations" for employing "bureaucrats who do not contribute anything to society."

"There is a focus here," said Clarisa Gambera, a gender specialist at one of Argentina's main labor unions. "Many of these people worked in gender offices of public departments that were dismantled."

LGBTQ+ activists have fought back the way the government's many other political opponents have — on the streets.

"We obtained our rights thanks to many warriors who gave up their lives for this cause," Ariel Heredia, a recently fired state worker who identifies as nonbinary, said at a recent protest in Buenos Aires. After being laid off, Heredia, 36, lost health insurance he needed to access anti-HIV medication.

In his hunt for find work, Heredia says he may need to dress as a cisgender man, hiding an identity he struggled for years to accept.

"It's a contradiction for me," Heredia said. "But I have to adapt."

Trump tells Jersey Shore crowd he's being forced to endure 'Biden show trial' in hush money case

By STEVE PEOPLES, MIKE CATALINI and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WILDWOOD, N.J. (AP) — Sandwiched between his appearances in court, Donald Trump headed on Saturday to the Jersey Shore, where he repeatedly blamed President Joe Biden for the criminal charges he's facing as the presumptive nominees prepare to face off in the November election and called his New York hush money case "a Biden show trial."

Blasting the Democratic president "a total moron," Trump before a crowd of tens of thousands repeatedly characterized the cases against him as politically motivated and timed to harm his ability to campaign.

"He's a fool. He's not a smart man," Trump said of Biden. "I talk about him differently now because now the gloves are off."

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, drew what his team called a "mega crowd" to a Saturday evening rally in the southern New Jersey resort town of Wildwood, 150 miles (241 kilometers) south of the New York City courthouse where he has been forced to spend most weekdays sitting silently through his felony hush money trial.

Lisa Fagan, spokesperson for the city of Wildwood, told The Associated Press that she estimated a crowd of between 80,000 and 100,000 attendees, based off her own observations on the scene Saturday, having seen "dozens" of other events in the same space.

Trump was joined on stage by several high-level endorsers including North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum and NFL Hall of Fame linebacker Lawrence Taylor, who is still listed as a registered sex offender after pleading guilty in New York in 2011 to misdemeanor criminal charges of sexual misconduct and patronizing an underage prostitute.

The beachfront gathering, described by Rep. Jeff Van Drew, R-N.J., as the largest political gathering in state history, was designed to serve as a show of force at a critical moment for Trump, who is facing dozens of felony charges in four separate criminal cases with the election less than six months away.

Hours before he was scheduled to take the stage, thousands of Trump loyalists donning "Never Surrender" T-shirts and red "Make America Great Again" hats crowded onto the sand between the boardwalk and carnival rides to greet the former Republican president.

"The everyday American people are 100% behind him," said Doreen O'Neill, a 62-year-old nurse from Philadelphia.

"They have to cheat and smear him and humiliate him in that courtroom every single day," O'Neill said. "This country is going to go insane if they steal the election again."

Trump's extraordinary legal woes, which include three other unrelated criminal cases, have emerged as a central issue in the campaign.

Trump has repeatedly accused the Biden administration and Democratic officials in New York of using the legal system to block his return to the White House. Prosecutors allege the former president broke the law to conceal an affair with a porn actor that would have hurt his first presidential bid.

The hush money case was filed by local prosecutors in Manhattan who do not work for the Justice Department or any White House office. The Justice Department has said the White House has had no involvement in the two criminal cases against Trump brought by special counsel Jack Smith.

On Saturday, Trump posited that even those whom he accuses of politically motivated prosecutions didn't

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bring every case they could have, pointing to the boosts his campaign has sustained with each wave of charges.

"I heard they were going to do a couple of other things and they said from Washington ... 'we're indicting him into the White House,'" Trump said. "They said, 'Don't do it.'"

While Trump seized on his legal woes Saturday, a judge's gag order — and the threat of jail — limit Trump's ability to comment publicly on witnesses, jurors and some others connected to the New York trial, which is expected to consume much of the month. The judge in the case already has fined Trump \$9,000 for violating the order and warned that jail could follow if he doesn't comply.

The order doesn't include references to Judge Juan M. Merchan, whom Trump called "highly conflicted" or District Attorney Alvin Bragg, both of whom Trump said are "doing the bidding for crooked Joe Biden."

Trump's responsibilities as a defendant have limited his ability to win over voters on the campaign trail. He spent last week's off-day from court in the general election battlegrounds of Wisconsin and Michigan. And he was campaigning with tens of thousands of voters Saturday in New Jersey, a reliably Democratic state. Parts of New Jersey have deep-red enclaves and the southern shoreline in particular draws tourists and summer homeowners from neighboring Pennsylvania, a key swing state.

Biden, meanwhile, opened his weekend with a series of fundraising events on the West Coast.

He avoided Trump's legal challenges — as he has done consistently — while addressing donors in Seattle. Instead, the Democratic president focused on Trump's recent interview with Time magazine in which the Republican former president said states should be left to determine whether to prosecute women for abortions or to monitor their pregnancies.

Saturday's visit to the New Jersey Shore resort wasn't Trump's first.

While president, Trump held a rally there in January 2020 to thank Van Drew, the New Jersey congressman who had just left the Democratic Party for the GOP as a rebuke for the former president's first impeachment.

Trump drew a crowd at the time that lined the streets, filled bars and supported numerous vendors in what is usually a sleepy city in the winter. This time, the summer season is around the corner for the resort known for its wide beaches and boardwalk games and shops.

Wildwood is in New Jersey's 2nd District, which Van Drew has represented for three terms and covers all or part of six counties in southern New Jersey. It went for Trump in 2016 and again in 2020 after earlier backing Barack Obama.

Trump is set to return to the courtroom next week, when key prosecution witness Michael Cohen, Trump's fixer-turned-foe, is expected to take the witness stand. Last week, he was visibly angry at times as he was forced to sit through testimony from former porn actor Stormy Daniels, who described a sexual encounter with the former president in shocking detail.

Trump is charged with 34 counts of falsifying internal Trump Organization business records. The charges stem from paperwork such as invoices and checks that were deemed legal expenses in company records. Prosecutors say those payments largely were reimbursements to Cohen, Trump's attorney, who paid Daniels \$130,000 to keep quiet.

The prosecution could rest its case by the end of the week. It's unclear if Trump himself will take the stand when the defense presents its case.

Back on the Jersey Shore, 65-year-old Pat Day said she felt some urgency to see Trump in person on Saturday.

"We want to see Trump before they take him out," said Day, who was visiting from the Florida Keys. "I'm worried. They're going to do everything they can so he doesn't get elected again."

Small pro-Palestinian protests held Saturday as college commencements are held

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

Small pro-Palestinian protests popped up sporadically Saturday as colleges and universities from North Carolina to California held commencement ceremonies, including dozens of graduating students at Virginia Commonwealth University who walked out on an address by Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

While some of the estimated 100 students and family members who left during the Republican governor's speech showed support for Palestinians, others held signs signaling opposition to Youngkin's policies on education, according to WRIC-TV.

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a small group of demonstrators staged what appeared to be a silent protest during commencement at Camp Randall Stadium. A photo posted by the Wisconsin State Journal showed about six people walking through the rear of the stadium, with two carrying a Palestinian flag.

Marc Lovicott, a spokesperson for campus police, said the group, which he believed were students because they were wearing caps and gowns, "was kind of guided out but they left on their own." No arrests were made.

The demonstration came after pro-Palestinian protesters at the campus agreed Friday to permanently dismantle their two-week-old encampment and not disrupt graduation ceremonies in return for the opportunity to connect with "decision-makers" who control university investments by July 1. The university agreed to increase support for scholars and students affected by wars in Gaza and Ukraine.

At the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, pro-Palestinian demonstrators splattered red paint on the steps of a building hours ahead of the school's commencement ceremony and chanted on campus while students wearing light blue graduation gowns posed for photos, the News & Observer reported. At the University of Texas, Austin, a student held up a Palestinian flag during a commencement ceremony and refused to leave the stage briefly before being escorted away by security.

And at the University of California, Berkeley, a small group of pro-Palestinian demonstrators began waving flags and chanting during commencement and were escorted to the back of the stadium, where they were joined by others, according to the San Francisco Chronicle. There were no major counterprotests, but some attendees voiced frustration.

"I feel like they're ruining it for those of us who paid for tickets and came to show our pride for our graduates," said Annie Ramos, whose daughter is a student. "There's a time and a place, and this is not it."

Saturday's events were less dramatic than what happened on other campuses Friday, when police made dozens of arrests as pro-Palestinian protest encampments were dismantled at the University of Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Those actions came hours after police tear-gassed demonstrators and took down a similar camp at the University of Arizona.

The Associated Press has recorded at least 75 instances since April 18 in which arrests were made at U.S. campus protests. Nearly 2,900 people have been arrested at 57 colleges and universities. The figures are based on AP reporting and statements from schools and law enforcement agencies.

At Virginia Commonwealth University, Youngkin, who also received an honorary doctorate of humane letters at Saturday's commencement, did not appear to address the students who left the event.

"The world needs your music," Youngkin said during his speech. "You, all of you, will be the symphony. Make it a masterpiece."

Israel orders new evacuations in Gaza's last refuge of Rafah as it expands military offensive

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAM MEDNICK and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel ordered new evacuations in Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Saturday, forcing tens of thousands more people to leave as it prepared to expand its military operation deeper into what is considered Gaza's last refuge, in defiance of growing pressure from close ally the United States and others.

As pro-Palestinian protests continued against the war, Israel's military also said it was moving into an area of devastated northern Gaza where it asserted that the Hamas militant group has regrouped after seven months of fighting.

Israel has now evacuated the eastern third of Rafah, and top military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said dozens of militants had been killed there as "targeted operations continued." The United Nations has warned that the planned full-scale Rafah invasion would further cripple humanitarian operations and cause a surge in civilian deaths.

Rafah borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, which already are affected. Israeli troops have captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, forcing it to shut down. Egypt has refused to coordinate with Israel on the delivery of aid through the crossing because of "the unacceptable Israeli escalation," the state-owned Al Qahera News television channel reported, citing an unnamed official.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said he won't provide offensive weapons to Israel for Rafah. On Friday, his administration said there was "reasonable" evidence that Israel had breached international law protecting civilians — Washington's strongest statement yet on the matter.

In response, Ophir Falk, foreign policy adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, told The Associated Press that Israel acts in compliance with the laws of armed conflict and the army takes extensive measures to avert civilian casualties, including alerting people to military operations via phone calls and text messages.

More than 1.4 million Palestinians — half of Gaza's population — have been sheltering in Rafah, most after fleeing Israel's offensives elsewhere. The latest evacuations are forcing some to return north, where areas are devastated from previous attacks. Aid agencies estimate that 110,000 had left before Saturday's order that adds 40,000.

"Do we wait until we all die on top of each other? So we've decided to leave," Rafah resident Hanan al-Satari said as people rushed to load mattresses, water tanks and other belongings onto vehicles.

"The Israeli army does not have a safe area in Gaza. They target everything," said Abu Yusuf al-Deiri, displaced earlier from Gaza City.

Many people have been displaced multiple times. There are few places left to go. Some Palestinians are being sent to what Israel has called humanitarian safe zones along the Muwasi coastal strip, which is already packed with about 450,000 people in squalid conditions.

Georgios Petropoulos, with the U.N. humanitarian agency in Rafah, said that aid workers had no supplies to help people set up in new locations.

"We simply have no tents, we have no blankets, no bedding," he said.

The World Food Program had said it would run out of food to distribute in southern Gaza by Saturday, Petropoulos said — a further challenge as parts of Gaza face what the WFP chief has called "full-blown famine." Aid groups have said that fuel will be depleted soon, forcing hospitals to shut down critical operations.

Heavy fighting was also underway in northern Gaza, where Hagari said that the air force was carrying out airstrikes. Palestinians in Jabaliya, Beit Lahiya and surrounding areas were told to leave for shelters in the west of Gaza City, warned that Israel would strike with "great force."

Northern Gaza was the first target of Israel's ground offensive launched after Hamas and other militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking another 250 hostage. They still hold about 100 captives and the remains of more than 30. Hamas on Saturday said

that hostage Nadav Popplewell had died after being wounded in an Israeli airstrike a month ago, but provided no evidence.

Israel's bombardment and ground offensives have killed more than 34,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures. Israel blames Hamas for civilian casualties, accusing it of embedding in densely populated residential areas.

Civil authorities in Gaza gave more details of mass graves that the Health Ministry announced earlier at Shifa hospital, the largest in northern Gaza and the target of an earlier Israeli offensive. Authorities said most of the 80 bodies were patients who died from lack of care. The Israeli army said "any attempt to blame Israel for burying civilians in mass graves is categorically false."

At least 19 people, including eight women and eight children, were killed overnight in central Gaza in strikes that hit Zawaida, Maghazi and Deir al-Balah, according to Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital and an AP journalist who counted the bodies.

"Children, what is the fault of the children who died?" one relative said. A woman stroked the face of one of the children lying on the ground.

Another round of cease-fire talks in Cairo ended earlier this week without a breakthrough, after Israel rejected a deal that Hamas said it accepted.

Tens of thousands of people attended the latest anti-government protest in Israel on Saturday evening amid growing pressure on Netanyahu to make a deal.

"I think the (Rafah) operation is not meant for the hostages and not meant for killing the Hamas, it's meant for just for one thing, save the government," protester Kobi Itzhaki said.

Experts say gun alone doesn't justify deadly force in fatal shooting of Florida airman

By JEFF MARTIN and CLAUDIA LAUER The Associated Press

On the afternoon of May 3, Roger Fortson opened the door of his Florida apartment with a gun in his hand and was immediately shot six times by a sheriff's deputy responding to a complaint about an argument.

Fortson's supporters point to the deputy's rapid decision to open fire and his mere presence at the apartment — where the Air Force senior airman was apparently alone and FaceTiming with his girlfriend — as proof that it was a blatantly unjustified killing and the latest tragedy involving a Black American being shot at home by law enforcement. Authorities, meanwhile, have seized on Fortson holding a gun when he answered the door to cast the shooting as a clear-cut case of self-defense for a deputy confronted with a split-second, life-or-death decision.

Investigators will consider these factors when deciding whether to charge the deputy in a case that also reflects the realities officers face every day in a country where millions of people carry guns, including in Florida, one of the largest gun ownership states.

Policing experts say Fortson simply holding a gun when he opened the door wasn't enough justification to use deadly force, but investigators will also have to consider what information the deputy knew when he responded and whether Fortson showed any behavioral indication that he posed a threat. They also say the proliferation of legal and illegal firearms is forcing officers throughout the country to have to decide faster than ever what constitutes a deadly threat.

"The speed of the shooting is pretty intense. It's happening very, very fast," Ian Adams, an assistant professor who studies criminology at the University of South Carolina and a former police officer, said after watching the deputy's body camera video of Fortson's shooting.

"The presence of a gun enhances the risk. But mere presence is not at all justification for using deadly force," Adams said.

The redacted video released Thursday by the Okaloosa County sheriff in response to allegations raised by attorneys for Fortson's family shows the deputy speaking to a woman outside the Fort Walton Beach apartment complex who described someone hearing an argument.

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The deputy, whose name and race haven't been released, bangs on Fortson's door, pauses, then knocks again, yelling that he's from the sheriff's office. Fortson eventually answers the door while holding what appears to be a gun by his side pointed at the ground. Within a few seconds, the deputy shoots Fortson six times, only then yelling for him to drop his weapon.

Sheriff Eric Aden said the deputy acted in self-defense, and he rejected assertions that the deputy was at the wrong apartment. Ben Crump, an attorney for Fortson's family, said they remain adamant that the deputy went to the wrong unit because Fortson had been home alone and on a Facetime call with his girlfriend.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is investigating.

Adams said beyond the body camera footage there has to be some behavioral indication that a person intends to cause deadly harm with their gun.

"We also live in a nation with more guns than people. If the mere presence of a gun were the standard for reasonable use of deadly force, we would be awash with police shootings," he said.

The increase in gun ownership has changed policing in ways, said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington-based think tank that focuses on critical issues in policing.

"This is a tragedy on so many levels, for everyone — for the family and for the officer. Guns accelerate decision-making and that's the challenge here," he said.

In a statement Friday, Crump focused on the deputy's quick use of deadly force, and the lack of a verbal command for Fortson to drop his weapon until after the deputy shot him.

But experts say officers aren't required to issue commands or warnings whenever they use deadly force. David Klinger, a criminal justice professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis who is also a former police officer, said the standard is to give a warning when it's feasible.

"But if pausing to give a warning or a verbal command is going to increase the risk of a deadly threat, then it isn't feasible," he said.

Scott Lacey, a former Air Force Special Operations Command officer who served in the same squadron as Fortson, said he believes Fortson's shooting was unjustified.

"When he just opens the door, sees him with a gun and unloads six rounds on the senior airman, to me that just screams unjust right away," said Lacey, who spent time as an Arizona state trooper after leaving the military. "The airman didn't raise his gun and showed no kind of hostile intent."

Lacey responded to a Facebook post from Air Force leaders that called for people on base to support Fortson's family while maintaining professionalism. Lacey called the shooting unjustified and urged the commander to instead, "Take a stand and do something," adding that he'd feel unsafe with the sheriff's department at his doorstep.

It's not the first time the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office has come under scrutiny for its use of force.

LaTanya Griffin filed a federal lawsuit against the department in August alleging that deputies used a battering ram to enter her home while serving a search warrant in 2019. Griffin, who had been asleep naked, was ordered at gunpoint to walk outside and remain nude in front of officers and the public, she said. She was never arrested or charged with a crime.

In court papers, lawyers for the sheriff's office said the deputies' actions were consistent with "established, reasonable, and generally accepted police procedure." The litigation is ongoing.

"I think the Department of Justice needs to take a look at what's happening with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office," said Kevin Anderson, a lawyer for Griffin.

In another incident six months ago, an Okaloosa County deputy reacted to the sound of a falling acorn hitting his patrol vehicle by firing multiple rounds at the vehicle, where a handcuffed Black man sat inside.

After hearing the deputy yell "shots fired" and "I'm hit," his supervisor also fired at the vehicle. The man inside survived the barrage rattled but unscathed.

Internal investigators found that the supervisor's actions were "objectively reasonable" because she was acting to protect the other deputy in what she believed was an "imminent and immediate danger of death." But the report found that the deputy who initially screamed "shots fired" hadn't acted reasonably

in firing his gun. He resigned before the investigation was completed.

In her interviews with investigators, the supervisor mentioned that deputies had been through a lot in recent weeks, including the killing of a deputy who was responding to a domestic violence call and the involvement of another in an on-duty shooting.

The shooting of Fortson came just days after four members of a U.S. Marshals Service fugitive task force were killed while serving a warrant in North Carolina. Some officer groups have suggested such killings could affect how officers perceive threats.

"I don't think the presence of previous shootings is ever going to be justification," Adams said. "There is no world where officers don't encounter a firearm risk. Officers swim in risk. But risk alone is not cause for using force, let alone deadly force."

They made one-of-a-kind quilts that captured the public's imagination. Then Target came along

By ANNA FURMAN Associated Press

Over the past two decades, Gee's Bend quilts have captured the public's imagination with their kaleidoscopic colors and their daring geometric patterns. The groundbreaking art practice was cultivated by direct descendants of slaves in rural Alabama who have faced oppression, geographic isolation and intense material constraints.

As of this year, their improvisational art has also come to embody a very modern question: What happens when distinctive cultural tradition collides with corporate America?

Enter Target. The retailer launched a limited-edition collection based on the quilters' designs for Black History Month this year. Consumer appetites proved to be high as many stores around the country sold out of the checkered sweaters, water bottles and faux-quilted blankets.

"We're actually in a quilt revival right now, like in real time," says Sharbreon Plummer, an artist and scholar. "They're so popularized, and Target knew that. It created the biggest buzz when it came out." Indeed, there has been a resurgence of interest among Gen Z and millennials in conscious consumption and the homemade — with "cottagecore" style, baking bread, DIY bracelets — but both are at odds with the realities of fast fashion.

The Target designs were "inspired by" five Gee's Bend quilters who reaped limited financial benefits from the collection's success. They received a flat rate for their contributions rather than pay proportionate to Target's sales. A spokesperson for Target wouldn't share sales numbers from the collection but confirmed that it indeed sold out in many stores.

Unlike the pay structure of the Freedom Quilting Bee of the 1960s — an artist-run collective that disbursed payment equitably to Gee's Bend quilters, who were salaried and could set up Social Security benefits — one-off partnerships with companies like Target benefit only a small number of people, in this case five women from two families.

The maxim "representation matters" is not new, but it's gaining wider traction. Still, when visibility for some doesn't translate into meaningful change for a marginalized community as a whole, how is that reconciled?

A HISTORY OF OUTSIDERS

"Every stage of the finances has been problematic," says Patricia Turner, a retired professor in World Arts and Culture and African American Studies at UCLA who traced the commodification of Gee's Bend quilts back to the white collector Bill Arnett in the 1990s. "I'm really bothered by Target's in-house designer manipulating the look of things to make it more palatable for their audience," she says of the altered color palettes and patterns.

Target spokesperson Brian Harper-Tibaldo said that quilters had the opportunity to provide input on multiple occasions throughout the process.

"We worked with five quilters from The Quilters of Gee's Bend on a variety of limited-time only items," he wrote in an emailed statement. "As is standard with limited-time collections at Target, each quilter was

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paid a discussed and agreed upon fee for their services. As outlined in our contracts, Target had the right to make final design decisions, however, with the goal of honoring their storied heritage, the process was highly collaborative.”

While thumbnail-size photos of the makers appeared on some marketing materials and the text “Gee’s Bend” was printed on clothing tags, the company’s engagement with the quilters was limited. As soon as Black History Month ended, the quilters’ names and images were scrubbed from the retailer’s site.

Target has pledged to spend more than \$2 billion on Black-owned businesses by 2025.

The situation today mirrors that of the 1990s, when some quilters enjoyed newfound visibility, others were disinterested and still others felt taken advantage of. (In 2007, several quilters brought a series of lawsuits against the Arnett family, but all cases were settled out of court and little is known about the suits because of nondisclosure agreements.)

The profit-oriented approach that emerged, which disrupted the Quilting Bee’s price-sharing structure, created “real rifts and disharmony within the community,” Turner explains, over engaging with collectors, art institutions and commercial enterprises. “To have those bonds disrupted over the commercialization of their art form, I think, is sad.”

REPRODUCING ART OUT OF CONTEXT

Quilts are made to mark major milestones and are gifted to celebrate a new baby or a marriage, or to honor someone’s loss. Repurposing fabric — from tattered blankets, frayed rags, stained clothes — is a central ethos of the community’s quilting practice, which resists commodification. But the Target collection was mass-produced from new fabrics in factories in China and elsewhere overseas.

The older generations of Gee’s Bend quilters are known for one-of-a-kind designs with clashing colors and irregular, wavy lines — visual effects borne of their material constraints. Most worked at night in houses without electricity and didn’t have basic tools like scissors, let alone access to fabric stores. Stella Mae Pettway, who has sold her quilts on Etsy for \$100 to \$8,000, has characterized having scissors and access to more fabrics now as a paradox of “advantage and a disadvantage.”

Many third- and fourth-generation artists returned to quilting as adults for a creative and therapeutic outlet, as well as a tether to their roots. After her mom died in 2010, quilter JoeAnn Pettway-West revisited the practice and found peace in completing her mother’s unfinished quilts. “As I’m making this stitch, I can just see her hand, stitching. It’s like, we’re there together,” she says. “It’s a little bit of her, a little bit of me.”

Delia Pettway Thibodeaux is a third-generation Gee’s Bend quilter whose grandmother was a sharecropper and whose bold, rhythmic quilts are now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s permanent collection. For the Target collection, she received a flat fee rather than a rate proportional to sales.

“I was kind of concerned in the beginning” about how quilts would be altered to fit with the collection, Pettway Thibodeaux says. “But then again when I saw the collection, I felt different.”

Claudia Pettway Charley, a Gee’s Bend quilter and a community manager at Nest, a nonprofit, said in an emailed statement that the collaboration was “a great way to make our designs accessible” to a wide audience.

“We had no idea how large this campaign would be and what it would mean to our community,” she said.

LOOKING FOR ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Because job opportunities are so limited in Gee’s Bend, many fourth-generation quilters have left the area to take jobs as teachers, day care workers, home health aides, and to serve in the military.

“We, as the next generation, we was more dreamers,” Pettway-West says.

National recognition has certainly brought some positive change. But more visibility — from museum exhibitions, academic research, a U.S. Postal Service stamp collection — hasn’t necessarily translated into economic gains. After all, the average annual income in Boykin, Alabama, is still far below the poverty rate at about \$12,000, according to the nonprofit Nest.

“This is a community that still, to this day, really needs recognition, still needs economic revitalization,” says Lauren Cross, Gail-Oxford Associate Curator of American Decorative Arts at The Huntington Museum of Art. “And so any economic opportunities that, you know, funnel back to them, I support.”

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Target's line in particular, though, is disconnected from the group's origins and handmade practice, she says. It's a problem that distills the very challenge at hand when something handcrafted and linked to deep tradition goes national and corporate.

"On one hand you want to preserve the stories and that sense of authenticity," Cross says.

"And on the other hand," she asks, "how do you reach a broader audience?"

Solar storm puts on brilliant light show across the globe, but no serious problems reported

By TOM KRISHER, JOSH FUNK and MARCIA DUNN Associated Press

A powerful solar storm put on an amazing skyward light show across the globe overnight but has caused what appeared to be only minor disruptions to the electric power grid, communications and satellite positioning systems.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said extreme geomagnetic storm conditions continued Saturday, and there were preliminary reports of power grid irregularities, degradation of high-frequency communications and global positioning systems.

But the Federal Emergency Management Agency said that, so far, no FEMA region had reported any significant impact from the storms. The U.S. Department of Energy said Saturday it is not aware of any impact from the storms on electric customers.

NOAA predicted that strong flares will continue through at least Sunday, and a spokeswoman said via email that the agency's Space Weather Prediction Center had prepared well for the storm.

On Saturday morning, SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet service said on its website that service had been degraded and its team was investigating. CEO Elon Musk wrote on the social platform X overnight that its satellites were "under a lot of pressure, but holding up so far."

Brilliant purple, green, yellow and pink hues of the Northern Lights were reported worldwide, with sightings in Germany, Switzerland, China, England, Spain and elsewhere.

In the U.S., Friday's solar storm pushed the lights much farther south than normal. The Miami office of the National Weather Service confirmed sightings in the areas of Fort Lauderdale and Fort Myers, Florida. Meteorologist Nick Carr said another forecaster who lives near Fort Lauderdale photographed the lights and was familiar with them because he previously lived in Alaska.

People in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and other Midwestern states were able to capture photos of bright colors along the horizon.

With the solar storm persisting through the weekend, Saturday night offered another chance for many to see the spectacle.

NOAA issued a rare severe geomagnetic storm warning when a solar outburst reached Earth on Friday afternoon, hours sooner than anticipated.

The agency alerted operators of power plants and orbiting spacecraft, as well as FEMA, to take precautions.

"For most people here on planet Earth, they won't have to do anything," said Rob Steenburgh, a scientist with NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center.

"That's really the gift from space weather: the aurora," Steenburgh said. He and his colleagues said the best views may come from phone cameras, which are better at capturing light than the naked eye.

Snap a picture of the sky, and "there might be actually a nice little treat there for you," said Mike Bettwy, operations chief for the prediction center.

The most intense solar storm in recorded history, in 1859, prompted auroras in central America and possibly even Hawaii.

This storm poses a risk for high-voltage transmission lines for power grids, not the electrical lines ordinarily found in people's homes, NOAA space weather forecaster Shawn Dahl told reporters. Satellites also could be affected, which in turn could disrupt navigation and communication services here on Earth.

An extreme geomagnetic storm in 2003, for example, took out power in Sweden and damaged power

transformers in South Africa.

Even when the storm is over, signals between GPS satellites and ground receivers could be scrambled or lost, according to NOAA. But there are so many navigation satellites that any outages should not last long, Steenburgh noted.

The sun has produced strong solar flares since Wednesday, resulting in at least seven outbursts of plasma. Each eruption, known as a coronal mass ejection, can contain billions of tons of plasma and magnetic field from the sun's outer atmosphere, or corona.

The flares seem to be associated with a sunspot that is 16 times the diameter of Earth, NOAA said. It is all part of the solar activity ramping up as the sun approaches the peak of its 11-year cycle.

What's the history of 'outside agitators'? Here's what to know about the label and campus protests

By GRAHAM LEE BREWER Associated Press

Historically, when students at American universities and colleges protest — from the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter — there's a common refrain that "outside agitators" are to blame. College administrators and elected officials have often pointed to community members joining protests to dismiss the demands of student protesters.

Experts say it's a convenient way for officials to delegitimize the motivations of some political movements and justify calling in law enforcement to stop direct actions that are largely nonviolent and engaging in constitutionally protected speech.

"This tactic shifts focus away from genuine grievances and portray radical movements as orchestrated by opportunistic outsiders," said Shanelle Matthews, a professor of anthropology and interdisciplinary studies at the City University of New York and a former communications director for the Movement for Black Lives.

Over the last few weeks, students on campuses across the country have built encampments, occupied buildings and led protests to call on colleges and universities to divest their endowments from companies profiting from the Israel-Hamas war. Several college and city leaders have pointed to the threat of outsiders when describing the protests — and some have responded by cancelling or shifting plans for commencement ceremonies.

Here's what to know about the phrase "outside agitators" used during historic student movements.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (1960s-1970s)

Protest movements are typically comprised of local community members and organizers from other parts of the state or country that work together toward a common goal. In the 1960s, state and local officials often focused on this hallmark of community organizing and suggested that civil rights protests were organized by people outside of a given community.

In 1960, a group of Black college students took out a full page ad in Atlanta newspapers called "An Appeal for Human Rights" that expressed solidarity with students everywhere protesting for civil rights. Segregationist politician and then-Georgia Gov. Ernest Vandiver suggested it was created by foreigners and called it a calculated attempt "to breed dissatisfaction, discontent, discord and evil."

"It did not sound like it was prepared in any Georgia school or college; nor in fact did it read like it was written even in this country," he told the press.

The idea that outside agitators were involved in civil rights protests became so common that Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out against the label in his letter from the Birmingham Jail in 1963.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," King wrote. "Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial 'outside agitator' idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds."

Former President Richard Nixon hoped to tie the 1970 shooting deaths of Kent State students by the National Guard to outside agitators, but the FBI was unable to provide such a link. The students had been protesting the Vietnam War.

During the Civil Rights Movement, the label was used as a weapon against community members who

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spoke up or provided support to protesters and organizers, said Dylan C. Penningroth, an author and historian who teaches law and history at the University of California, Berkeley.

"It delegitimizes internal dissent against the status quo. So anyone who speaks up against the status quo, whatever that is, is by definition an outsider," he said.

It also ignores the fact that local civil rights organizers often take cues from other protest movements, Penningroth said, and building solidarity with others around the country is often an important part of enacting change.

BLACK LIVES MATTER (2013-present)

Nearly a half-century later, the 2014 killing of Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, sparked widespread protests against police brutality.

Again, outside agitators were frequently invoked and blamed for destruction, looting and the burning of buildings.

The same language was used to describe protests in the wake of the 2020 killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, which resulted in over 10,000 arrests nationwide.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz suggested that 80% of those who participated in the unrest that followed in Minneapolis were from out of state. But an Associated Press analysis found that 41 of the 52 people cited with protest-related arrests had Minnesota driver's licenses.

PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTS (2024)

The number of people arrested in connection with protests on college and university campuses against Israel's war in Gaza has now topped 2,800. The Associated Press has tallied at least 70 incidents on at 54 schools since the protests began at Columbia on April 18.

Officials have used outside agitator rhetoric in a handful of examples nationwide. After dozens of students were arrested in May 4 demonstrations at the University of Virginia, a top law enforcement official suggested outsiders had "bull horns to direct the protesters on how to flank our officers."

"We're receiving intelligence that outside agitators are starting to get involved in these campus protests," Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares told Fox News on May 6.

In anti-war protests on campuses at Atlanta's Emory University, Boston's Northeastern University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, school officials and law enforcement have made inaccurate claims about the presence of non-students.

NYC PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTS (2024)

On April 30, New York City police officers in riot gear entered Columbia University's campus and cleared an encampment, arresting more than 100 people. New York City Mayor Eric Adams has repeatedly cited the presence of "outside agitators" to justify the use of police force.

"There is a movement to radicalize young people and I'm not going to wait until it's done and all of a sudden acknowledge the existence of it," Adams said at a May 1 news conference.

Pressed for specifics, though, the mayor and police officials have had little to say. Adams has repeatedly said that he decided police intervention was necessary in Columbia's demonstrations after learning that the husband of one "agitator" was "arrested for federal terrorism."

But the woman referenced by the mayor wasn't on Columbia's campus that week, isn't among the protesters who were arrested and has not been accused of any crime.

Nahla Al-Arian told The Associated Press she was visiting the city last month and briefly stopped by the campus to see the protest encampment. She also said Adams was mischaracterizing the facts about her husband, a former computer engineering professor who was charged two decades ago with giving illegal support to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group in the 1980s and 1990s.

Students involved in the Columbia protests have told The AP it is true that some people not affiliated with the university have been on campus and played an active role in the demonstrations, but they have vehemently denied that those allies were leading or "radicalizing" the students.

"While it's true that people with nefarious intentions crash protests, it's the exception rather than the rule," Matthews said. "Given that, people should be wary of this narrative."

Russia says it has captured 5 villages in northeast Ukraine as more than 1,700 civilians flee

By VASILISA STEPANENKO and EVGENIY MALOLETKA Associated Press

VOVCHANSK, Ukraine (AP) — Moscow's forces captured five villages in a renewed ground assault in north-eastern Ukraine, the Russian Defense Ministry said Saturday, and Associated Press journalists in the city of Vovchansk described multiple buildings destroyed after Russian airstrikes and barrages of Grad rockets.

Ukrainian officials didn't confirm whether Russian had taken the villages, which lie in a contested "gray zone" on the border of Ukraine's Kharkiv region and Russia.

Ukrainian journalists reported that the villages of Borysivka, Ohirtseve, Pylna and Strilecha were taken by Russian troops on Friday. Russia said the village of Pletenivka was also taken.

In an evening statement Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said fighting was still ongoing in the settlements of Strilecha and Pletenivka, as well as Krasne, Morokhovets, Oliinykove, Lukyantsi and Hatyshche.

"Our troops are carrying out counterattacks there for a second day, protecting Ukrainian territory," he said.

The Institute for the Study of War said Friday that geolocated footage confirms at least one of the villages was seized. The Washington-based think tank described recent Russian gains as "tactically significant."

The renewed assault on the region has forced more than 1,700 civilians residing in settlements near the fighting to flee, according to Ukrainian authorities. It comes after Russia stepped up attacks in March targeting energy infrastructure and settlements, which analysts predicted were a concerted effort by Moscow to shape conditions for an offensive.

On Saturday, Russia continued to pummel Vovchansk with airstrikes and Grad rockets as police and volunteers raced to evacuate residents. At least 20 people were evacuated to safety in a nearby village. Police said that 900 people had been evacuated the previous day.

AP journalists who accompanied an evacuation team described empty streets with multiple buildings destroyed and others on fire. The road was littered with newly made craters and the city was covered in dust and shrapnel with the smell of gunpowder heavy in the air. Mushroom clouds of smoke rose across the skyline as Russian jets conducted multiple airstrikes.

The AP journalists witnessed nine air attacks during the three hours they were there.

"The situation in Vovchansk and the settlements along the border (with Russia) is incredibly difficult. Constant aviation strikes are carried out, multiple rocket missile systems strikes, artillery strikes," said Tamaz Hambarashvili, the head of the Vovchansk military administration.

"For the second day in a row, we evacuated all the inhabitants of our community who are willing to evacuate," he said. "I think that they are destroying the city to make (local) people leave, to make sure there are no militaries, nobody. To create a 'gray zone.'"

Evacuees bade tearful goodbyes to their neighbors as they were taken away from their homes.

"You lie down and think — whether they will kill you now, or in an hour, or in three," said resident Valentyna Hrevnova, 75. "I hope that they (Russians) will not come, but ours (Ukrainians) will be here."

Vera Rudko, 72, was among those who left.

"We drove through Vovchansk in the city center," Rudko said. "I can't look at this without tears. Everything is trembling. We didn't sleep these two nights at all."

Russia's recent push in Kharkiv seeks to exploit ammunition shortages before promised Western supplies can reach the front line, and pin down Ukrainian forces in the northeast and keep them away from heavy battles underway in the Donetsk region where Moscow's troops are gaining ground, analysts said.

Russian military bloggers said the assault could mark the start of a Russian attempt to carve out a "buffer zone" that President Vladimir Putin vowed to create earlier this year to halt frequent Ukrainian attacks on Belgorod and other Russian border regions. Fears also mount that without adequate supplies, Russia might even be able to cut supply routes and besiege the city of Kharkiv, where 1.1 million people reside.

Ukrainian officials have downplayed Russian statements about captured territory, with reinforcements being rushed to the Kharkiv region to hold off Russian forces.

On Telegram, Kharkiv region Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said that heavy fighting continued in the areas around Borysivka, Ohirtseve, Pylna and Oliynykove, but that the situation was under control and there was no threat of a ground assault on the city of Kharkiv.

In the meantime, artillery, mortar and aerial bombardments hit more than 30 different towns and villages in the region on Saturday, killing at least three people and injuring five others, Syniehubov said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed Friday evening that Russian forces were expanding their operations. He also called on the country's Western allies to ensure that promised deliveries of military aid would swiftly reach the front lines.

"It is critical that partners support our warriors and Ukrainian resilience with timely deliveries. Truly timely ones," he said in a video statement on X. "A package that truly helps is the actual delivery of weapons to Ukraine, rather than just the announcement of a package."

The attack was launched from two areas in the Kharkiv region early Friday, Ukrainian officials and analysts said. Russian assault groups attempted to break through Ukrainian defensive lines in the city of Vovchansk and in the region north of the village of Lyptsi.

Separately, Ukrainian forces also launched a barrage of drones and missiles on Friday night, Russia's Ministry of Defense said, with air defense systems downing 21 rockets and 16 drones over Russia's Belgorod, Kursk and Volgograd regions. One person died in a drone strike in the Belgorod region, and another in the Kursk region, local officials said.

Another strike set ablaze an oil depot in Ukraine's Russian-occupied Luhansk region, killing four people and wounding eight more, Leonid Pasechnik, the region's Moscow-installed leader, said on the messaging app Telegram on Saturday.

There was also shelling in the Russian-occupied Donetsk region Saturday, where three people died when an explosion hit a local restaurant, said Denis Pushilin, the area's Kremlin-appointed leader. Eight more people were wounded, including a child.

In the war's early days, Russia made a botched attempt to quickly storm Kharkiv but retreated from its outskirts after about a month. In the fall of 2022, seven months later, Ukraine's army pushed them out of Kharkiv. The bold counterattack helped persuade Western countries that Ukraine could defeat Russia on the battlefield and merited military support.

Flash floods kill more than 300 people in northern Afghanistan after heavy rains, UN says

By RAHIM FAIEZ Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Flash floods from unusually heavy seasonal rains in Afghanistan have killed more than 300 people and destroyed over 1,000 houses, the U.N. food agency said Saturday.

The World Food Program said it was distributing fortified biscuits to the survivors of one of the many floods that hit Afghanistan over the last few weeks, mostly the northern province of Baghlan, which bore the brunt of the deluges Friday.

In neighboring Takhar province, state-owned media outlets reported the floods killed at least 20 people.

Videos posted on social media showed dozens of people gathered Saturday behind the hospital in Baghlan looking for their loved ones. An official tells them that they should start digging graves while their staff are busy preparing bodies for burial.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesman for the Taliban government, posted on the social media platform X that "hundreds ... have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries."

Mujahid identified the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Ghor and Herat as the worst hit. He added that "the extensive devastation" has resulted in "significant financial losses."

He said the government had ordered all available resources mobilized to rescue people, transport the injured and recover the dead.

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The floods hit as Afghanistan is still reeling from a string of earthquakes at the beginning of the year as well as severe flooding in March, said Salma Ben Aissa, Afghanistan director for the International Rescue Committee.

"Communities have lost entire families, while livelihoods have been decimated as a result," she said. "This should sound an alarm bell for world leaders and international donors: we call upon them to not forget Afghanistan during these turbulent global times."

The IRC said that apart from the lives lost, infrastructure including roads and power lines had been destroyed in Baghlan, Ghor, Kunduz, Badakhshan, Samangan, Badghis and Takhar provinces. It said the agency is preparing to scale up its emergency response in affected areas.

The Taliban Defense Ministry said in a statement Saturday that the country's air force has already begun evacuating people in Baghlan and had rescued a large number of people stuck in flooded areas and transported 100 injured to military hospitals in the region.

Richard Bennett, U.N. special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, said on X that the floods are a stark reminder of Afghanistan's vulnerability to the climate crisis and both immediate aid and long-term planning by the Taliban and international actors are needed.

At least 70 people died in April from heavy rains and flash floods in the country. About 2,000 homes, three mosques, and four schools were also damaged.

US special operations leaders are having to do more with less and learning from the war in Ukraine

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

FORT LIBERTY, N.C. (AP) — Forced to do more with less and learning from the war in Ukraine, U.S. special operations commanders are juggling how to add more high-tech experts to their teams while still cutting their overall forces by about 5,000 troops over the next five years.

The conflicting pressures are forcing a broader restructuring of the commando teams, which are often deployed for high-risk counterterrorism missions and other sensitive operations around the world. The changes under consideration are being influenced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including lessons learned by British special operations forces there.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command, which bears the brunt of the personnel cuts, is eyeing plans to increase the size of its Green Beret teams — usually about 12 members — to bring in people with more specialized and technical abilities. One possibility would be the addition of computer software experts who could reprogram drones or other technical equipment on the fly.

But similar changes could ripple across all the military services.

"A 12-person detachment might be upgunned," said Gen. Bryan Fenton, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command. He said an Air Force pilot, Navy ship driver, cryptologist or cyber expert may be needed as battlefields become more challenging and high tech.

The United States is "taking a lot of lessons learned out of the experience in Ukraine, mostly through the eyes of our U.K. special operations partners, who not only have done that in their formations, but they've also learned very quickly that they needed other elements of their joint force," he told The Associated Press in an interview.

As an example, he said British commandos needed Royal Air Force pilots to help advise on drone operations and Royal Navy teammates "to help them understand, more than a SOF (special operations forces) teammate could, the way a ship in the Black Sea navigates."

The bulk of the cuts stem from the Army's decision to reduce the size of its force by about 24,000 and restructure its troops as the U.S. shifts from counterterrorism and counterinsurgency to focus more on large-scale combat operations. The Army also has struggled to meet recruitment goals and had to reduce the overall size of its force.

Army Special Operations Command, which Fenton said is absorbing about 4,000 cuts ordered over the

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past year and a half, is looking at bringing in people with high-tech skills.

"I think one of the questions is how much can you teach a Green Beret versus some of these specialties are extremely technical," said Maj. Gen. Patrick Roberson, deputy commander of the command at Fort Liberty in North Carolina. "You can teach a person about how to use a drone. But then to say, I want to have a software engineer program that drone, that's something different."

The cuts to Army special operations forces have triggered some congressional opposition, including during recent Capitol Hill hearings where lawmakers noted the impact at Fort Liberty. Fenton also spoke bluntly at the hearings about the growing demand for special operations forces.

He said U.S. regional commanders around the world consistently want more and that cutting the forces means "we'll be able to meet less of what they demand. And I think we owe the secretary of defense our assessment as we go forward."

For years, during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the number of special operations forces and support staff grew, particularly since they were often spread out in small, remote bases where they needed additional security and other logistical help. Now, Pentagon leaders say the numbers can shrink a bit.

Fenton said a cut of about 2,000 personnel in special operations was ordered by the department about a year and a half ago, including about 750 in the Army. That was followed this year by a cut of 3,000 in Army special operations. The cuts are to be spread out across five years.

"So the real Army reduction in totality is almost 4,000, and the remaining 1,000 will come from the joint force, SEALs, Marine raiders, other Army units," said Fenton.

For Roberson, the question is where to cut his Army troops. "Cuts have a way of crystallizing your focus and your view of, okay, what's important to me? What's the future? What do I really need to have," he said in an interview in his Fort Liberty office.

He and other Army leaders said a significant percentage of the special forces cuts are in slots that are already open so would not affect existing personnel. Roberson estimated that at least 30% of the cuts are in those open jobs.

For other reductions, he said he is looking for redundancies, including among trainers and instructors. Army leaders have also said that psychological operations and civil affairs, both part of the Army command, are facing cuts.

"At the end of 20 years of war, it's always a good time to look back and say, OK, what did I have when this started? What did I learn? What did I do, what was important to me?" Roberson said.

And even if all teams are not boosted in size, he said the Army needs to be able to quickly augment them with specialists. In some cases a mission might need just a couple technical support members, and other times could need six or seven, he said.

More broadly, as his forces absorb the cuts, their training must also be changed or increased to include more technology, robotics or sensors and signals intelligence information, Roberson added. Right now, he said, his troops are experimenting with the various options at the National Training Center in California and out in the field in Iraq and Syria.

Adaptability is the key, he said, and "we have to figure out how we're going to make the most of this."

Solar storm hits Earth, producing colorful light shows across Northern Hemisphere

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — An unusually strong solar storm hitting Earth produced stunning displays of color in the skies across the Northern Hemisphere early Saturday, with no immediate reports of disruptions to power and communications.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a rare severe geomagnetic storm warning when a solar outburst reached Earth on Friday afternoon, hours sooner than anticipated. The effects of the Northern Lights, which were prominently on display in Britain, were due to last through the weekend and possibly into next week.

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Many in the U.K. shared phone snaps of the lights on social media early Saturday, with the phenomenon seen as far south as London and southern England.

There were sightings "from top to tail across the country," said Chris Snell, a meteorologist at the Met Office, Britain's weather agency. He added that the office received photos and information from other European locations including Prague and Barcelona.

NOAA alerted operators of power plants and spacecraft in orbit, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to take precautions.

"For most people here on planet Earth, they won't have to do anything," said Rob Steenburgh, a scientist with NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center.

The storm could produce northern lights as far south in the U.S. as Alabama and Northern California, NOAA said. But it was hard to predict and experts stressed it would not be the dramatic curtains of color normally associated with the northern lights, but more like splashes of greenish hues.

"That's really the gift from space weather: the aurora," Steenburgh said. He and his colleagues said the best aurora views may come from phone cameras, which are better at capturing light than the naked eye.

Snap a picture of the sky and "there might be actually a nice little treat there for you," said Mike Bettwy, operations chief for the prediction center.

The most intense solar storm in recorded history, in 1859, prompted auroras in central America and possibly even Hawaii. "We are not anticipating that" but it could come close, NOAA space weather forecaster Shawn Dahl said.

This storm poses a risk for high-voltage transmission lines for power grids, not the electrical lines ordinarily found in people's homes, Dahl told reporters. Satellites also could be affected, which in turn could disrupt navigation and communication services here on Earth.

An extreme geomagnetic storm in 2003, for example, took out power in Sweden and damaged power transformers in South Africa.

Even when the storm is over, signals between GPS satellites and ground receivers could be scrambled or lost, according to NOAA. But there are so many navigation satellites that any outages should not last long, Steenburgh noted.

The sun has produced strong solar flares since Wednesday, resulting in at least seven outbursts of plasma. Each eruption, known as a coronal mass ejection, can contain billions of tons of plasma and magnetic field from the sun's outer atmosphere, or corona.

The flares seem to be associated with a sunspot that's 16 times the diameter of Earth, NOAA said. It is all part of the solar activity ramping up as the sun approaches the peak of its 11-year cycle.

NASA said the storm posed no serious threat to the seven astronauts aboard the International Space Station. The biggest concern is the increased radiation levels, and the crew could move to a better shielded part of the station if necessary, according to Steenburgh.

Increased radiation also could threaten some of NASA's science satellites. Extremely sensitive instruments will be turned off, if necessary, to avoid damage, said Antti Pulkkinen, director of the space agency's heliophysics science division.

Several sun-focused spacecraft are monitoring all the action.

"This is exactly the kinds of things we want to observe," Pulkkinen said.

Some older Americans splurge to keep homes accessible while others struggle to make safety upgrades

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Brenda Edwards considers the four bedroom ranch-style house where she has lived for 20 years her forever home. It's where the 70-year-old retired nurse and her 79-year-old husband want to stay as their mobility becomes more limited.

So she hired an interior designer for \$20,000 and spent another \$95,000 to retrofit their house in Oakdale,

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California. She had the kitchen aisles widened to accommodate a wheelchair in case she or her husband ever need one. The bathroom now has a walk-in steam shower and an electronic toilet seat that cleans the user when activated.

"We felt comfortable," Edwards said in explaining why the couple decided to invest in the property instead of downsizing. "We have a pool. We have a spa. We just put a lot of love and effort into this yard. We want to stay."

Even if they wanted to move, it wouldn't make financial sense, Edwards said. Their house is almost paid for, and "it would be too hard to purchase anything else," she said.

Like Edwards and her husband, a vast majority of adults over age 50 prefer the idea of remaining in their own residences as long as possible, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll. But staying put is becoming less of a choice. Some baby boomers and older members of Generation X are locked into low mortgage rates too good to give up. Skyrocketing housing prices fueled by lean supply further complicate the calculations of moving house.

Despite feeling tied down, a subset of these older adults have enough extra cash to splurge on upgrades designed to keep their homes both enjoyable and accessible as they age. The demand for inconspicuous safety bars, lower sinks, residential elevators and other amenities has given home improvement chains, contractors, designers and architects a noticeable lift.

Home Depot, the nation's largest home improvement chain, is revamping its Glacier Bay brand to include sleeker grab bars and faucets that are easier to use. Rival Lowe's created a one-stop shop in 2021 that offers wheelchair ramps, teak shower benches, taller toilets and other products geared toward older boomers.

"They aspire for bathrooms that exude beauty and elegance, with essential accessibility features seamlessly integrated," Lowe's Trend and Style Director Monica Reese said of the target customers.

Toto USA, a subsidiary of a Japanese company that introduced a luxury bidet toilet seat in 1980, markets the bathroom fixture to older people by saying it can help prevent urinary tract infections and reduce the burden on caregivers.

Toto USA research showed a 20 percentage point spike in ownership of the Washlet seats among consumers ages 46-55 between early 2020 and the end of last year. The increase indicates customers are thinking ahead, said Jarrett Oakley, the subsidiary's director of marketing.

"The growing older demographic is more knowledgeable about renovations and planning for their future needs, especially as they prepare to age in place," Oakley said. "They're looking to future-proof their homes thoughtfully and with a focus on luxury."

Wendy Glaister, an interior designer in Modesto, California, who worked with Edwards, reports more clientele in their late 50s and early 60s remodeling their homes for the years ahead. The typical bathroom renovation in California costs \$45,000 to \$75,000, she said.

"Your home is your safe place," Glaister said. "Your home is where you hosted your family for holidays."

The need to age-proof properties will become more urgent in the decade ahead. By 2034, people age 65 and older are expected to outnumber those under age 18 for the first time in U.S. history, according to a U.S. Census report revised in 2020.

But the issue has exposed a divide between well-heeled and lower-income boomers regarding their ability to remain in place safely.

Cathie Perkins, 79, a retired teacher who has chronic fatigue syndrome, had a local non-profit group modify the first-floor apartment she owns in Beaverton, Oregon. The changes, which cost about \$3,000, included replacing her tub shower with a walk-in version and installing a higher toilet.

Perkins values her independence and said retirement facilities are beyond her means. "I am on a fixed income," she said. "I have Social Security, and I have a pension."

According to a 2023 analysis of the 2011 American Housing Survey by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, less than 4% of U.S. homes combine single-floor living with no-step entry, and halls and doorways wide enough for wheelchairs.

The Harvard center analysis found that 20% of survey respondents age 80 and above with incomes below \$30,000 reported accessibility challenges, compared to 11% for those with incomes of \$75,000 or more.

Jennifer Molinsky, director of the center's Housing an Aging Society program, urges policymakers to address the shortage of affordable housing that's a good fit for older adults.

"There are all these options for those people who have a lot of money," Molinsky said. "But there's a lot of disparity. There are people, through no fault of their own or for systemic reasons, who may not have the money to modify."

Gene Carr, 67, and Sallie Carr, 65, have lived in their two-story, four-bedroom house in Henderson, North Carolina, for 27 years. The married couple had the money and vision to renovate in August 2022, hoping to stay in their home for at least another 20 years.

They hired builders to put a master bedroom and a bathroom on the first floor, both wheelchair-accessible. As the project neared completion a year ago, Gene Carr had a minor stroke that he describes as a "wake-up call." His condition has improved, but the renovations make it easier to deal with ongoing balance issues, Carr said.

"We've got two pets that are old, and they don't like going up and downstairs anymore either," he said.

As retailers respond to the discomfort with aging itself in U.S. culture, Nancy Berlinger, a senior research scholar at the Hastings Center in Garrison, New York, who collaborates with Molinsky, encourages future home renovators to stay open-minded.

"We've all learned to love OXO Good Grips utensils and other simple, practical designs that work, so we can learn to love grab bars, too," she said.

Trump is increasingly directing personal attacks against independent rival Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Donald Trump is known for leveling constant and often personal attacks on top rivals such as Joe Biden. Lately, he's increasingly taking that same approach against independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Among the recent jabs, Trump this past week posted a roughly four-minute video online in which he called Kennedy "fake," a "Democrat 'Plant'" and "Radical Left Liberal who's been put in place" to help the Democratic president. Trump railed against Kennedy's family as "a bunch of lunatics."

"He is not a Republican so don't think you're going to vote for him and feel good," the former president and presumptive Republican nominee told supporters in the Truth Social post.

Directing such fierce attacks at Kennedy may signal concern from Trump and his campaign about the independent's bid in what's expected to be a tight November election, when a third-party hopeful siphoning even a small amount of support could sink one of the major candidates.

Six months out from an Election Day in which many Americans have voiced their dissatisfaction at a rematch between Trump and Biden, Kennedy has been offering himself as an alternative. Some of the issues Kennedy focuses on — stalwart support for Israel and criticism over COVID-19 lockdowns — could appeal more to conservative voters than Democrats.

Polls at this point show far more Republicans than Democrats have a favorable opinion of Kennedy, although many Americans don't know who he is. A February Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll found that about half of Republicans, 53%, had a favorable view of him, compared with 30% of Democrats. About one-quarter in each case said they didn't know enough about Kennedy to say.

Kennedy's campaign argues that he threatens both Trump and Biden, who boasts support from several members of Kennedy's own family and called the endorsements "an incredible honor." The president has largely ignored Kennedy, who previously challenged him for the Democratic nomination before launching an independent bid.

Kennedy has gone after Trump as well, challenging him to a debate when both men speak — on separate days — at the Libertarian Party convention later this month. Kennedy claims Trump's backers are "wavering" in their support.

But Kennedy faces steep challenges.

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As an independent candidate, his name appearing on ballots isn't automatic. He has had to work to secure ballot access across the 50 states, a process that Kennedy has said will be completed by this summer. According to his campaign, he has achieved that marker in five states — California, Delaware, Michigan, Oklahoma and Utah — with enough signatures collected for eight others. Officials haven't verified those numbers in some states.

Kennedy has argued that his fairly strong showing in a few national polls gives him a reason to consider himself competitive, though horse-race polls are generally unreliable this far out from an election. This isn't a new trend for third-party candidates in presidential elections. During the 2016 campaign, early national polls showed libertarian Gary Johnson's support in the high single or low double digits; he ultimately received only about 3% of the popular vote.

Supporters flocking to Kennedy's events, including a recent comedy showcase in a Detroit suburb, describe themselves as coming from across the political spectrum, from those who traditionally back third-party presidential efforts to disaffected Democratic and Republican voters. That included those who have previously backed both Biden and Trump, but are either jaded by or unenthusiastic about them now.

Ben Carter, a registered nurse from White Lake, Michigan, said that he supported Trump in 2016 but "couldn't do it again," opting for Biden four years later. This year, Carter said he admired Kennedy's willingness to take on difficult topics, seeing the independent candidate as willing to voice unpopular opinions but doing so in a way more palatable than Trump.

"I just don't hear Kennedy going out, lying about things. Trump, he just stands up in front of the camera and baldfaced lies about stuff that we know are true," Carter said. "He has his opinions that you might not agree with, but I haven't seen him stand up in front of a crowd and just lie to people."

Trump's supporters admit they are curious about Kennedy's bid, even if they remain fiercely loyal to Trump. "He's super interesting," Kim Hanson, a financial consultant from Hartford, Wisconsin, said on the sidelines of Trump's recent rally in Waukesha, Wisconsin. "I love hearing from him."

But Hanson, a Trump supporter, said she worried that the novelty appeal of voting for Kennedy could detract from Trump's support.

"I am concerned about people voting for people they think aren't going to get in, and they aren't voting for Trump," she said.

There are some issue areas where Kennedy and Trump seem aligned.

Like Trump, Kennedy has been a fierce defender of Israel in its war with Hamas. In April, he suggested that the prosecution of rioters who violently attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, might be politically motivated, partly aligning himself with the false portrayal being pushed by Trump and his allies.

Kennedy levied some criticism on Trump, saying the attack on the Capitol happened with Trump's "encouragement" and "in the context of his delusion that the election was stolen from him." But Kennedy also said that as president, he would appoint a special counsel to examine whether Trump allies were unfairly singled out for prosecution.

Kennedy has also blamed Trump for economic damage to the middle class. Kennedy called pandemic-era lockdowns "the worst thing that he did to this country," while acknowledging in that same speech that Trump "gets blamed for a lot of things that he didn't do."

Like Trump, Kennedy — a lifelong Catholic who has described himself as "pro-choice" — has taken conflicting stands on abortion. He supported, then retreated, from the idea of a 15-week federal abortion ban, but says he disagrees with Trump that the matter should be left to state governments.

Bernard Tamas, a Valdosta State University professor who studies third-party presidential campaigns, pointed out that Kennedy's policy positions, such as his vaccine skepticism and adamant support of Israel in the war with Hamas, are "more likely to appeal to conservative voters," an apparent threat to Trump at this stage.

"It is quite possible that RFK will damage Trump more (than Biden), especially since there is unlikely to be any other moderate independent candidate for the never-Trumpers to vote for," Tamas said.

Tamas said that even single-digit support for Kennedy could affect the general election outcome.

"Losing even a small percent of votes to candidates like RFK Jr. could easily flip the election from one

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major party candidate to the other," Tamas said.

Brian Schimming, chair of the Wisconsin Republican Party, said he expects Kennedy to draw support away from Trump and Biden, perhaps from Trump earlier in the campaign but more from Biden down the stretch. He said Republicans have greater enthusiasm for the former president than Democrats do for the incumbent.

"But what does an incidental voter, or a voter who says to themselves consciously that they don't feel strongly enough about either of these candidates, do?" said Schimming, a veteran Republican operative in Wisconsin. "In the end, they peel off votes from the weaker candidate because they're dissatisfied, who in my mind is Biden."

Desiree Sherdin, a small business owner from Germantown, Wisconsin, said at Trump's rally in her state that Kennedy's views "tend to go left" of her preference even though she agreed with his skepticism of vaccines. She said she was sticking with Trump, and imagined many others would, too.

"People who are loyal to Trump are fiercely loyal," she said.

Today in History: May 12

More than 87,000 dead or missing in China earthquake

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, May 12, the 133rd day of 2024. There are 233 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 12, 2008, a devastating 7.9 magnitude earthquake in China's Sichuan province left more than 87,000 people dead or missing.

On this date:

In 1780, during the Revolutionary War, the besieged city of Charleston, South Carolina, surrendered to British forces.

In 1932, the body of Charles Lindbergh Jr., the 20-month-old kidnapped son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh, was found in a wooded area near Hopewell, New Jersey.

In 1933, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration were established to provide help for the needy and farmers.

In 1943, during World War II, Axis forces in North Africa surrendered. The two-week Trident Conference, headed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, opened in Washington.

In 1949, the Soviet Union lifted the Berlin Blockade, which the Western powers had succeeded in circumventing with their Berlin Airlift.

In 1958, the United States and Canada signed an agreement to create the North American Air Defense Command (later the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD).

In 1970, the Senate voted unanimously to confirm Harry A. Blackmun as a Supreme Court justice.

In 1975, the White House announced the new Cambodian government had seized an American merchant ship, the Mayaguez, in international waters. (U.S. Marines gained control of the ship three days after its seizure, not knowing the 39 civilian members of the crew had already been released by Cambodia.)

In 1982, in Fatima, Portugal, security guards overpowered a Spanish priest armed with a bayonet who attacked Pope John Paul II. (In 2008, the pope's longtime private secretary revealed that the pontiff was slightly wounded in the assault.)

In 1986, the military action-drama film "Top Gun," starring Tom Cruise and Kelly McGillis and released by Paramount Pictures, had its world premiere in New York.

In 2009, five Miami men were convicted in a plot to blow up FBI buildings and Chicago's Sears Tower; one man was acquitted.

In 2011, CEOs of the five largest oil companies went before the Senate Finance Committee, where Democrats challenged the executives to justify tax breaks at a time when people were paying \$4 a gallon for gas.