

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, Sept. 29

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 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.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 30

School Breakfast: French toast.

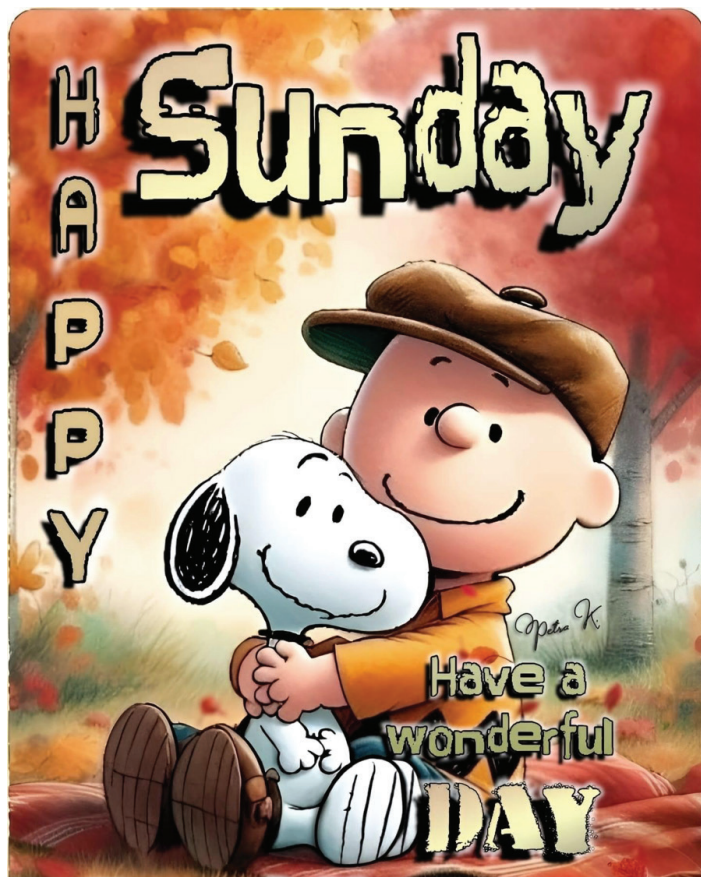
School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, green beans, vanilla pudding, Mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Region 1A Golf at Milbank, 10 a.m.

Cross Country at Olive Grove Golf Course, Groton, 4 p.m.

JH FB hosts Clark/Willow Lake, 7th grade only, 4 p.m.

JV Football hosts Clark/Willow Lake, 5 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Florence/Henry: 7th/C at 5 p.m. | 8th/JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow

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

Pantry open, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., community center

Tuesday, Oct. 1

Senior Menu: Goulash, green beans, pineapple/oranges, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, tater tots

Volleyball at Great Plains Lutheran (5 at 5 p.m., JV at 6:15 p.m., varsity to follow)

Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

United Methodist Bible Study, 10 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1:30 p.m.

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Northern State Football Rallies Together in 30-24 Victory over Winona State

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University football team put a capital W in the win column on Saturday, defeating Winona State University from Dacotah Bank Stadium. The Wolves tallied the first of the season and battled back with 13 points in the fourth to secure to win. It was a game of numerous season highs for the Wolves including points scored, rushing yards, passing yards, tackles for a loss, and sacks.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 30, WSU 24

Records: NSU 1-4 (1-3 NSIC), WSU 1-3 (1-2 NSIC)

Attendance: 4877

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern tallied three points in the first, 14 in the second, and 13 in the third; they held a 17-7 lead at half time

The Wolves struck at 9:48 in the first on a 36-yard field goal by Jeremy Caruso

Winona State answered back, closing out the quarter with a 7-3 lead

That lead did not last long as NSU and Hank Kraft went up 10-7 on a 10-yard run by the Timber Lake native at 14:25 in the second

Daniel Britt connected with Ty Wiley on a 32-yard passing touchdown and the Wolves were up 17-7, holding that lead throughout the second

The Warriors scored a pair of rushing touchdowns in the second at just under the seven minute mark and as the clock struck zeros

Trailing 21-17 heading into the final 15-minutes of regulation, Northern regained the lead with an 18-yard receiving score by Tanner Branson from Colton Hackel

Wyatt Block took things into his own hands in the fourth, rushing for 70 yards in the quarter including a 2-yard touchdown at 3:54

Winona State closed out the contest with a 48-yard field goal, however it wasn't enough to overcome the 30-21 deficit

Northern led the contest with 18 first downs, 190 yards rushing, and 325 yards of total offense; they scored four of the five times they entered the red-zone and possessed the ball for over 32-minutes

The Wolves defense recorded six tackles for a loss, three of which were sacks for a loss of eight yards, three pass break-ups, one forced fumble, and one interception

Britt threw for 94 yards, completing 9-of-14 attempts with a touchdown, while Hackel notched 41 yards passing, going 2-for-2 with a touchdown

Block led the rushers with a season high 88 yards, averaging 6.3 yards per rush with a 29-yard long

Wiley and true freshman Cade Kaiser led the receivers with 57 and 55 yards respectively, averaging 9.5 and 18.3 yards per catch

For the third straight game, Jake Adams recorded double digit tackles, leading the team with 15 including 1.5 for a loss

Elijah Jopp and Charlie Larson followed with nine and eight respectively

Matthew Baker, Max Van Landingham, and Gabe Gutierrez combined for the team's three sacks in the win, while Luke Gunderson grabbed the interception, followed by Lynden Williams' forced fumble in the second

13 total Wolves recorded multiple tackles in the game with five recording five or more

Caruso went 1-for-1 in field goal attempts and 3-for-4 in PATs; he also led the contest averaging 61.8 yards per kickoff with 371 total yards

Wiley notched a season best 41-yard kick return, notching 94 total return yards in the win

The Wolves improved to 20-26 all-time against the Warriors with the win

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Daniel Britt: 94 yards passing, 62.3 pass completion%, 49 yards rushing

Wyatt Block: 88 yards rushing (70 in the 4th), 1 touchdown

Ty Wiley: 57 receiving yards, 1 touchdown, 94 KO return yards, 41-yard KO return

Jake Adams: 15 tackles, 1.5 tackles for a loss

UP NEXT

Northern State remains at home next Saturday, hosting Bemidji State University. Kick-off is set for 2:30 p.m. in the annual Gypsy Days game.

No. 22 NSU Netters Defeat Vikings in Second Face-off of the Season

Sioux Falls, S.D. – The No. 22 Northern State University volleyball team bounced back on Saturday afternoon, defeating Augustana University in 5-sets. The Wolves rallied back after a 2-1 deficit, securing their tenth victory of the year.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 3, AU 2

Records: NSU 10-2 (2-2 NSIC), AU 7-6 (3-1 NSIC)

Attendance: 411

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern opened the match with a 25-20 victory Augustana took the second and third with scores of 25-23 and 25-17

The Wolves sealed the match with a 25-20 win in the fourth and 15-8 win in the fifth

NSU led the match with 13 blocks, eight aces, and a .226 attack percentage

They added 63 kills, 55 assists, and 75 digs, and hit a match high .417 in the fifth

Hanna Thompson led three Wolves in double figures with 15 kills and added five digs and three blocks

Natalia Szybinska and Abby Brooks followed with 13 and 12 kills respectively and combined for ten blocks

Keri Walker paced the offense, dishing out 45 assists and adding seven digs, five kills, two blocks, and one ace

Abby Meister led the Wolves defense with a season best 30 digs, followed by Mia Hinsz with a career high 16

Victoria Persha led the team alongside Brooks with six blocks and added seven kills and three aces

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STAND-OUTS

Hanna Thompson: 15 kills, 5 digs, 3 blocks

Keri Walker: 45 assists, 7 digs, 5 kills, 2 blocks

Abby Meister: 30 digs, 2 assists

Mia Hinsz: 16 digs, 1 ace, 1 assist

UP NEXT

The Wolves return home next Friday, October 4 facing Minnesota State at 6 p.m. from Wachs Arena.



A dust devil was making its way through a field on Saturday. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Netters take third at CSDC Tourney

The Tigers took the Tiger's spot at the CSDC Tournament. Normally, Mobridge-Pollock plays in the Central South Dakota Conference Tournament; however, this year, the Mobridge-Pollock Tigers elected to play at the Pentagon this year leaving an opening that the Groton Area Tigers snagged into the schedule. Groton Area took third place.

Groton Area defeated Highmore-Harrold in the first match, 25-10 and 25-15. The second set was tied five times and there were three lead changes. Trailing 11-8, Groton Area would score eight straight points to take a 16-11 lead and would go on to win, 25-15. There was one tie early in the first set, but Groton Area never trailed for the 25-10 win.

Rylee Dunker, 5 kills, 1 dig; Taryn Traphagen, 4 kills; Jayden Penning, 3 kills, 1 ace serve, 4 digs; Chesney Weber, 2 kills, 4 ace serves, 3 digs, 4 assists; Jerica Locke, 1 kill, 5 ace serves, 2 digs; Faith Traphagen, 1 kill, 1 dig; Kella Tracy, 1 kill, 1 dig; Elizabeth Fliehs, 2 ace serves, 4 digs, 6 assists; Sydney Locke, 1 ace serve, 1 dig.

Addison McDonnell led Highmore-Harrold with three kills.

The match was played in the elementary gym. Right after that match, the Tigers had a 10 minute rest before engaging Wolsey-Wessington in the main gym.

The first set was tied eight times and there were five lead changes before Wolsey-Wessington would pull out the 25-23 win. The Lady Warbirds never trailed in the second set and would win, 25-18.

Chesney Weber, 9 kills, 2 ace serves, 6 digs, 1 block, 9 assists; Rylee Dunker, 8 kills; Faith Traphagen, 3 kills, 2 digs; Jaedyn Penning, 1 kill, 4 digs; Taryn Traphagen, 1 kill, 1 block; Kella Tracy, 1 kill, 1 dig; Laila Roberts, 1 kill, 4 digs; Jerica Locke, 3 ace serves, 13 digs; Elizabeth Fliehs, 2 digs, 11 assists; Talli Wright, 2 assists.

Tatum Luce led the Lady Warbirds with 10 kills while Samara Clemente had five kills and one ace serve and Timber Haeder had five kills and one block.

And once again, Groton Area only had a 10 minute rest before playing in the third place match against Faulkton. Groton Area had a 14-point rally in the first set to post a 25-4 win. In the second set, Faulkton had the early lead before Groton Area tied it at seven. After a tie at 10, Groton Area got the upper hand and went on to win, 25-18.

Jayden Penning, 6 kills, 7 digs; Rylee Duner, 7 kills, 1 dig; Chesney Weber, 6 kills, 8 digs, 9 assists; Faith Traphagen, 2 kills, 1 dig; Taryn Traphagen, 1 kill; Kella Tracy, 1 kill, 1 dig; Jerica Locke, 3 ace serves, 9 digs; Elizabeth Fliehs, 3 digs, 6 assists; Sydney Locke, 2 ace serves, 2 digs; Laila Roberts, 4 ace serves, 6 digs.

Jaedyn Penning and Rylee Dunker were named to the CSDC All Tournament Team.

The matches were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Fans of Jaedyn Penning, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms and The Meathouse in Andover.



Elizabeth Fliehs led Groton Area in assists in the Highmore-Harrold match with six. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Laila Roberts led the Tigers in digs in the Highmore-Harrold match with five digs. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jaedyn Penning goes for the kill. She had three kills in the Highmore-Harrold match. (Photo by Paul Kosel)














Taryn Traphagen jumps up to get the kill as she had four in the Highmore-Harrold match. (Photo by Paul Kosel)









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Boys Soccer drop pair of games

James Valley Christian defeated Groton Area on Thursday in boys soccer action played in Huron, 7-1. Logan Olson scored the lone goal. Then on Saturday, Groton Area went to Freeman Academy, losing, 7-0.

Boys Soccer		Season		Seed Pts	
#	Name	W	L T	PCT	PTS
1	 Vermillion	6	2 1	.722	42.944
2	 James Valley Christian	10	3 0	.769	42.769
3	 Freeman Academy	7	2 3	.708	41.542
4	 Rapid City Christian	5	3 1	.611	41.167
5	 Belle Fourche	6	5 0	.545	40.545
6	 St. Thomas More	5	7 1	.423	40.115
7	 West Central	3	5 2	.400	39.400
8	 Groton Area	2	7 3	.292	37.875
9	 Custer	2	8 2	.250	37.083
10	 Hot Springs	2	10 0	.167	36.583
11	 Dakota Valley	0	8 0	.000	36.250

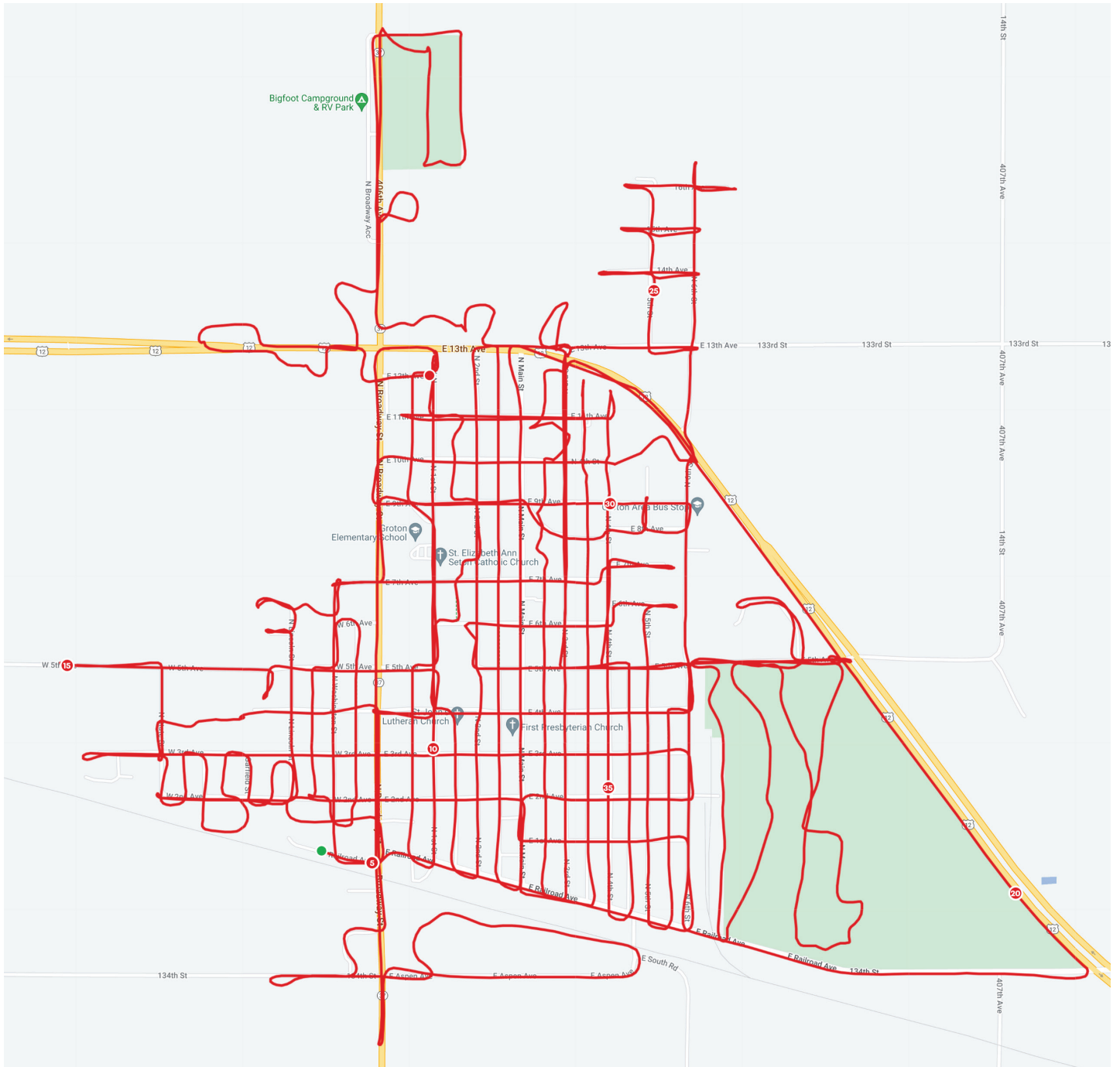
Girls Soccer		Season		Seed Pts	
#	Name	W	L T	PCT	PTS
1	 Sioux Falls Christian	8	2 2	.750	44.083
2	 Groton Area	6	1 1	.812	42.938
3	 West Central	7	3 0	.700	41.600
4	 Dakota Valley	6	4 0	.600	41.400
5	 St. Thomas More	3	8 0	.273	38.364
6	 Garretson	3	8 1	.292	37.292
7	 Belle Fourche	1	7 1	.167	36.833
8	 Vermillion	1	8 0	.111	36.222

Region 1A Volleyball		Season		Seed Pts	
#	Name	W	L	PCT	PTS
1	 Groton Area	9	5	.643	42.857
2	 Milbank	10	7	.588	41.059
3	 Aberdeen Roncalli	5	5	.500	40.300
4	 Britton-Hecla	11	4	.733	40.267
5	 Sisseton	8	6	.571	39.500
6	 Webster Area	5	9	.357	39.286
7	 Redfield	3	11	.214	36.429

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Adult mosquito control conducted Saturday night



Adult mosquito control was conducted Saturday evening. The wind was east at 5 mph and temperature was in the 70s. 15.2 gallons of Perm-X 4x4UL was used in the 36 mile trek.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



...So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

HEBREWS 9:28

Detail of "The Ascension"
by John Singleton Copley (1775)

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. In Matthew 8, which prophet's words did Jesus claim to be fulfilling, as He was healing people? *Iddo, Esaias, Gad, Medad*

3. Who wrote, "Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court"? *Ezekiel, Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea*

4. From Genesis 19, in addition to fire, what did God rain down upon Sodom and Gomorrah? *Hail, Lightning, Brimstone, Mud*

5. Whose grave was marked by a pillar erected by her husband, Jacob? *Abigail, Lillith, Puah, Rachel*

6. From Judges 16, who slept through a haircut? *Manoah, Samson, Adam, Uriah*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Esaias, 3) Ezekiel, 4) Brimstone, 5) Rachel, 6) Samson

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

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WORD'S OUT.

FROM THE HUNDRETH FLOOR OF THE PALACE TO THE GUTTERS OF TRADETOWN.

THERE'S A FUGITIVE AT LARGE IN THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL.

AND HIS NAME IS **FLASH GORDON**

HERE'S THE FACTS:

A COUPLE POWER MEN SNUCK FLASH OUT OF THE PALACE. HE'S A WANTED MAN IN THIS CITY...

...BUT HIS LADY'S BEEN TAKEN BY THE "TRUE HEIRS OF MING," SEE.

AND HE'S NOT LEAVING UNTIL HE FINDS HER.

THE SPACEMAN'S NO DOPE. HE KNOWS HE CAN'T TRACK DOWN THE HEIRS BY HIMSELF.

SO HE COMES HERE TO THE TOUGH SIDE OF TOWN AND STARTS MAKING A SCENE.

DAN SCHWABE 9-29-24

'CAUSE HE KNOWS WHEN THERE'S TROUBLE BETWEEN OUTLAWS, THAT'S WHEN I SHOW UP.

BONES MALLOCK.

I'M GOOD AT TRACKING DOWN LOWLIFES, AND I OWE THE SPACEMAN A FAVOR.

HE'S LUCKY HE'S CUTE.

NEXT: HEIR'S GAME

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

GRASS INTERVENING BETWEEN CLUBFACE AND BALL AT IMPACT CAUSES THE BALL TO FLY LOWER AND ROLL FARTHER BY DECREASING BACK-SPIN.

ALLOW FOR THAT BY PLAYING MORE LOFTED CLUBS FROM "FLIER" LIES.

RECOGNIZE, TOO, THAT GRASS COMING BETWEEN CLUBFACE AND BALL MINIMIZES SIDESPIN, MAKING IT TOUGH TO FADE OR DRAW SHOTS PREDICTABLY.

SO PLAN AND PLAY FOR THE BALL TO FLY PRETTY STRAIGHT FROM ROUGH.

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Multiple Myeloma Patients Can Live Longer With Proper Treatment

DEAR DR. ROACH: Can someone have diffuse multiple myeloma with serious symptoms (like bone pain, pale skin, amber-colored urine, constipation, fatigue, insomnia, excessive sweating, and dizziness) and still be alive after four years? -- J.O.

ANSWER: Multiple myeloma is a type of cancer of the bone marrow. The cells in the bone marrow (called plasma cells) stop responding as they should and make large amounts of antibodies. Unfortunately, these antibodies don't help you fight off infections; they consist of a single clone that usually doesn't have any discernible activity.

What myeloma does do is crowd out the rest of the cells in the bone marrow so that the person can't make adequate red blood cells (causing pale skin and dizziness), blood-clotting cells (predisposing people to bleeding), and other immune system cells. This puts a person at a high risk for infection.

The myeloma cells can get into the bone and cause bone pain. The high metabolic activity can also cause dizziness and sweating, and many cancers cause more nonspecific symptoms like fatigue, insomnia and constipation. Myeloma can also damage the kidney.

Although myeloma is generally considered incurable, new treatments have greatly improved the prognosis. In people with the standard type of myeloma, survival is eight years with the usual treatment. With a stem-cell transplant, survival with average-risk myeloma is over 12 years. Some highly aggressive forms of myeloma have a much worse survival rate.

I don't have enough information to tell whether you have standard or high-risk myeloma. Your symptoms suggest that your disease isn't under good control. But the majority of people treated with the best available treatments do live longer than four years.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I've had stronger body odor during the past few months and can't figure out why. I am a healthy, 69-year-old woman in great shape. There hasn't been any changes in my exercise regimen, diet or medications at all. Why is this happening? -- K.D.

ANSWER: Body odor is mostly caused by bacteria that live on the skin. These bacteria can change under a variety of conditions. One of those conditions is sweat, so a change in sweat due to a change in temperature or humidity can favor the growth of different bacteria, which affects your body odor.

It was a very hot summer for most of the country, so this could've been a possibility. Also, the regular sweat that perspires is different from the sweat we have under times of high stress or anxiety, and many people recognize that this also leads to a particular odor.

Although exercise, changes in diet, and some medications can change the bacteria that live near the sweat glands, you've eliminated all of these. Hormonal changes (most notably among adolescents) lead to different bacteria, but menopause can also have a similar effect (although age 69 typically isn't a time when we see major hormone changes in women).

Medical issues like diabetes or kidney or liver disease lead to changes in body odor that some, but not all, people can recognize. Finally, if you are living with someone, their skin bacteria can become your skin bacteria, so this is another possibility.

Regular soap and water, as well as deodorants, are effective for most people, but I've had a handful of patients who benefitted from the cleansers we use prior to surgery, like chlorhexidine gluconate. They can dramatically change the body bacteria and restore equilibrium.

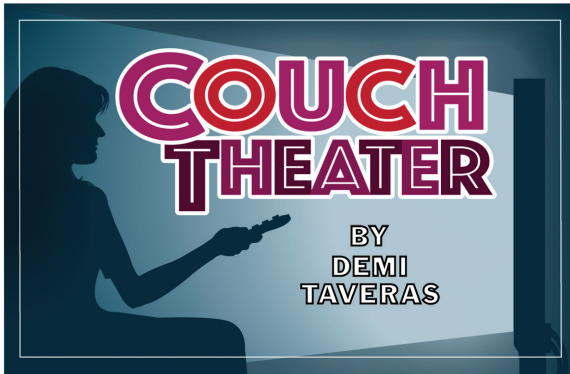
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Naomi Ackie, left, and Channing Tatum star in "Blink Twice." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Blink Twice" (R) -- Zoe Kravitz, who recently portrayed the alluring Catwoman in "The Batman" (2022), has decided to make her directorial debut after a decades-long career in acting, and it's safe to say that we didn't know how badly we needed Kravitz as a director until now. In the

age of Netflix films and Marvel blockbusters, this psychological thriller is a palette-cleanser that makes you wonder why more directors aren't making films this original, thought-provoking and refreshing. Naomi Ackie ("I Wanna Dance with Somebody") excels as timid cocktail waitress Frida, who gets whisked away with her best friend, Jess, to a billionaire's private island. Once there, Frida and Jess are showered with anything they could possibly want, but as the days start to blur together and their recreational activities catch up to them, the girls wonder if they're caught in a trap. Remember, girls, blink twice if you're in danger! Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"Ezra" (R) -- Max (Bobby Cannavale) is a stand-up comedian yet to hit it big, who lives with his father, Stan (Robert De Niro). Besides his comedy, the light of Max's life is his autistic son, Ezra, even though Max often disagrees with his co-parent, Jenna (Rose Byrne), on how to help Ezra get accustomed to the outside world. After Ezra's actions accidentally cause a scare, his doctor transfers him to a special-needs school and gives him medication, much to Max's dismay. So, Max haphazardly decides to "kidnap" his son and embark on a road trip that will hopefully bring Ezra out of his own world into the real one. Tony Goldwyn ("Scandal"), who also co-stars in the film, directed this heartwarming drama out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Hold Your Breath" (R) -- Premiering Oct. 3, this psychological thriller takes place in 1930s Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl that ravaged American farmlands. A young mother named Margaret, played by the ever-expressive Sarah Paulson ("Mr. & Mrs. Smith"), works tirelessly to protect her family against the dust storms. One night, Margaret's oldest daughter, Rose, reads the harrowing tale of The Grey Man -- a spirit who travels in the dust that makes you do terrible things if you breathe him in. Although Margaret dismisses the story at first, certain signs of a sinister presence appear throughout her rural community, eventually trickling down to her family. So, Margaret must brace herself to hold her breath and fight if she's to weather the storm. Annaleigh Ashford ("American Crime Story") and Ebon Moss-Bachrach ("The Bear") co-star in this selection from the Toronto International Film Festival. (Hulu)

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1. Which singer released "All Alone Am I"?
2. What was the limbo?
3. Name the singer-songwriter who released "Will It Go Round in Circles."
4. Which group released "Owner of a Lonely Heart"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I belong to another whose love has grown cold, but I promised forever to have and to hold."

Answers

1. Brenda Lee, in 1962. The original song was Greek, written for a Greek film. Lee's English language version topped

the Billboard chart and stayed there for five weeks.

2. The limbo was a dance done by bending backward and moving under a horizontal pole without touching it and without touching the ground while the pole was gradually moved lower and lower.

3. Billy Preston in 1973. The song topped the charts in the U.S. and in Canada but also charted in Australia and South Africa.

4. Yes, in 1983. The song had its beginnings in South Africa when it was recorded on a 4-track tape player.

5. "Please Help Me, I'm Falling," by Hank Locklin, in 1960. After spending nine months on the country chart, the song showed up near the top of the Hot 100 chart. Several artists have released covers over the years, including the Everly Brothers and John Fogerty.

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GRIN *and* BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



"Sorry, folks ... the great outdoors is full."

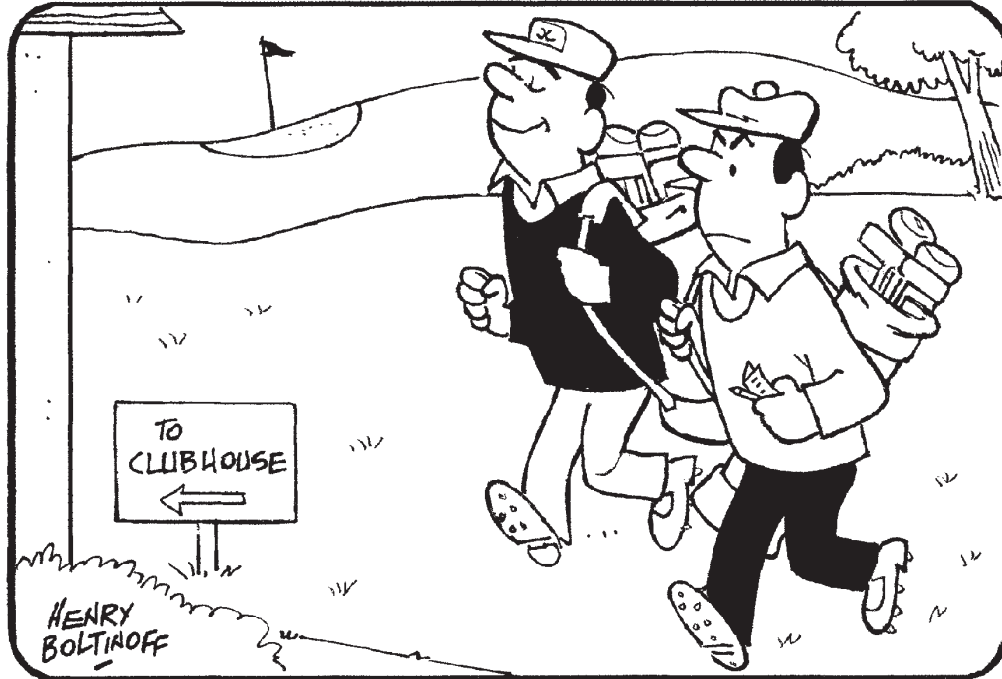
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

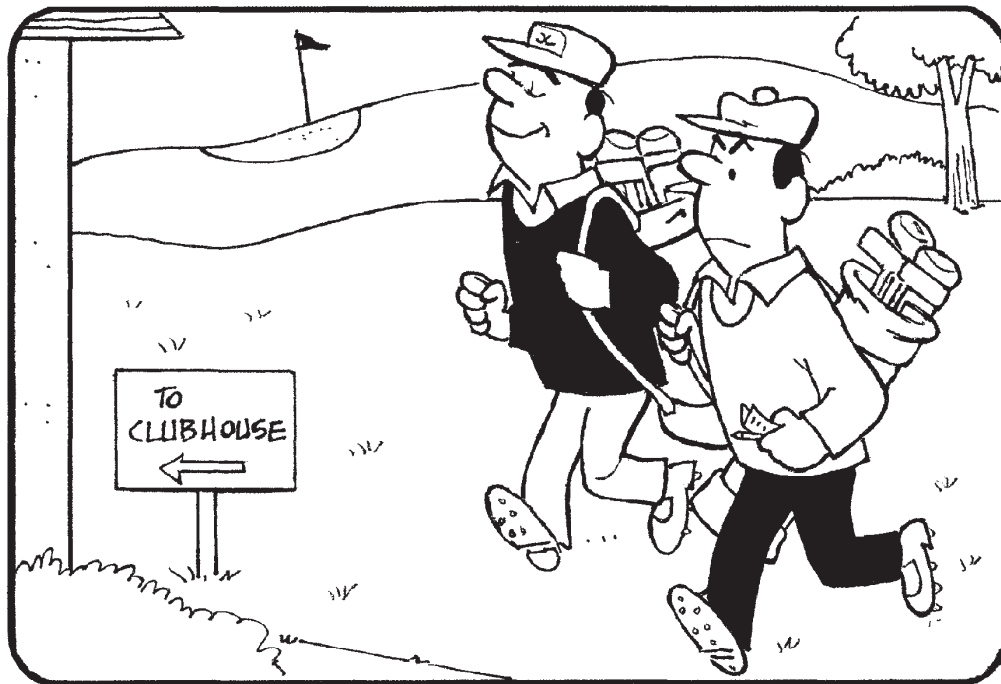


HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Leg is moved. 2. Arm is lower. 3. Flagstick is moved. 4. Tree is different. 5. Shoulder pad is missing. 6. Sign is taller.

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* Fill your salt and pepper shakers a fourth of the way with uncooked white rice. Dry rice will allow the salt or pepper to flow more freely from the shaker. If your shaker is opaque, you can tell when it's time to add more salt or pepper when the shaker starts to rattle.

* Mark old toothbrushes with masking tape so you can tell the difference between cleaning brushes and those you use for your teeth. You can clean a toothbrush in the dishwasher. Put it with the silverware.

* Because fabric softeners can leave residue in the dryer's lint trap, clean yours out at least every other month. Just scrub

with plain old soap and water.

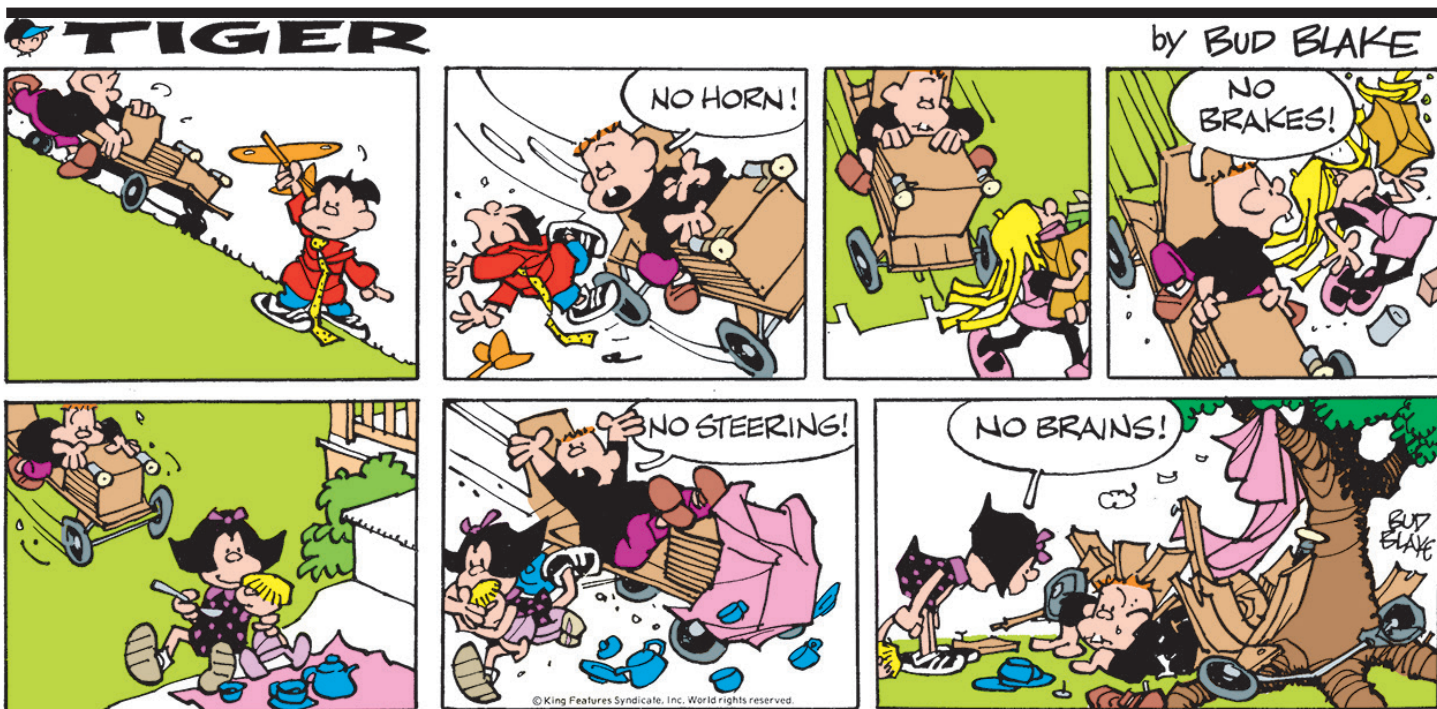
* "Add this to the list of wonderful cleaners for wood floors: tea. Just brew a couple of cups and use the tea as you would your regular wood floor cleaner. It's nice and shiny afterward." -- P.L. in Oregon

* Use a turkey baster to "squirt" pancake batter into your frying pan. Mix the batter as normal and unscrew the top of the baster to load. You can use it to make letters for fun kids' breakfasts. No drips!

* If you have trouble opening the lid on glass jars, try using a pair of standard dishwashing gloves. They work to grip both the lid and the jar. They work especially well if your hands are the least bit moist. -- D.Y. in Pennsylvania

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

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Buddy
- 4 Rm. coolers
- 7 Bashes
- 12 Epoch
- 13 Speck
- 14 Mowing sites
- 15 Goal
- 16 Handel compositions
- 18 Author Harper
- 19 Purse part
- 20 Trudge
- 22 Mess up
- 23 Prejudice
- 27 Mardi Gras VIP
- 29 Borneo beasts
- 31 Pocket breads

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16			17					
18				19								
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38					39	40			41	42	43	44
				45				46		47		
48	49	50	51							52		
53						54				55		
56						57				58		

- 34 Harley rider
- 58 Homer's neighbor
- 11 Snake's warning
- 36 Roof overhang
- 35 Delphi figure
- 17 Tropical tuber
- 37 Birdseed holder
- 37 In shape
- 21 Preprandial prayer
- 40 Steinway product
- 38 Title for Helen Mirren
- 1 Daily trio
- 23 Entices
- 42 Shroud city
- 39 Gorilla
- 2 Disney mermaid
- 24 Pen filler
- 43 Blazing
- 41 Wild guess
- 3 Star's bit part
- 25 Get older
- 44 Greeted a bully
- 45 Cornell and Yale, e.g.
- 4 Big fusses
- 26 Old map letters
- 45 Borodin's "Prince —"
- 47 E.T.'s craft
- 5 Brain layer
- 28 Immigrant's subj.
- 46 Gives a darn?
- 48 Citrus drink
- 6 Fab Four drummer
- 30 Hitter's stat
- 48 Texter's "Heavens!"
- 52 Carnival city
- 7 Dud
- 31 Group of seals
- 49 Estuary
- 53 Sal of "Exodus"
- 8 Hearing thing
- 32 Nest egg acronym
- 50 Busy insect
- 54 Just out
- 9 Prefix with night
- 33 Highland hat
- 51 Opposite of paleo-
- 55 Rage
- 10 Rock producer Brian

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



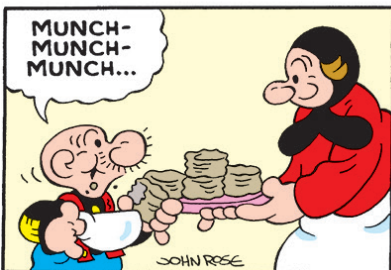
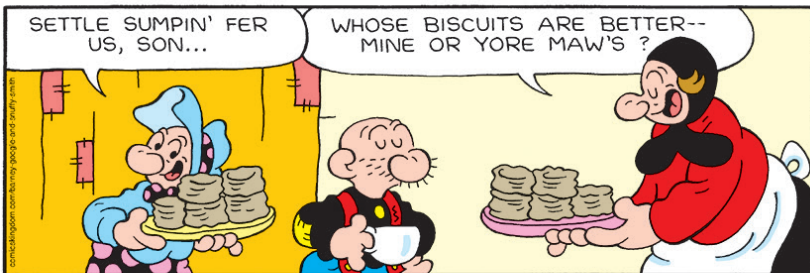
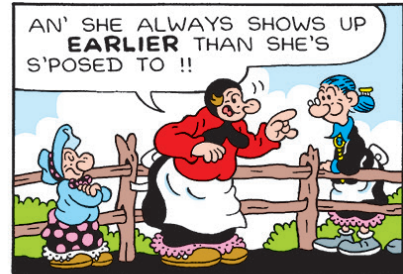
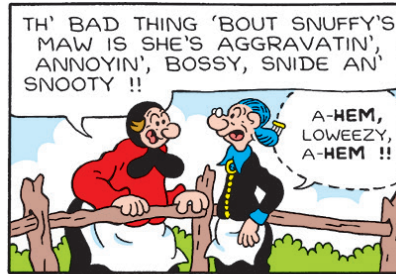
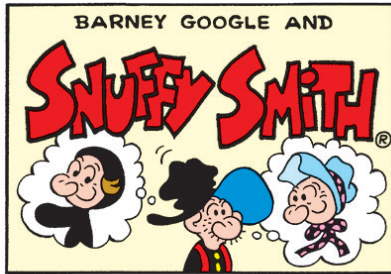
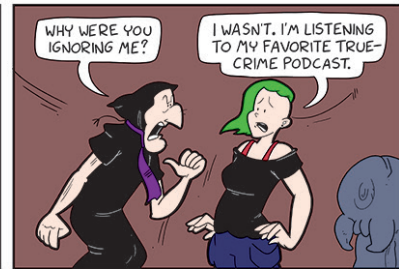
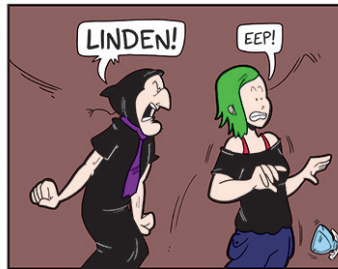
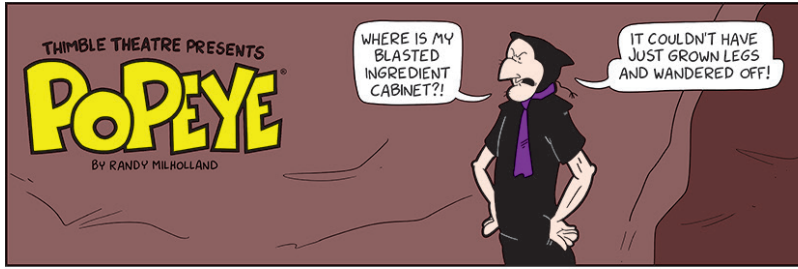
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BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN
IN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

KOPERVAS

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Hal Foster's **Prince Valiant** BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE WHOM VAL CAUGHT STEALING ABOARD HIS SHIP HAS DISAPPEARED INTO THE COLD TINTAGEL WATERS, AND NO TRACE OF HIM CAN BE FOUND.

VAL SUSPECTS FROM HIS SWORDCRAFT THAT THE STRANGER IS NOT A MAN OF THE NORTH OR THE WEST...

YEATES 8/4/13



... BUT RATHER OF THE FAR EASTERN LANDS, AND THAT MIGHT BE ENOUGH - HE TELLS BUKOTA AND NATHAN TO MAINTAIN THE SEARCH FOR THE INTRUDER, AND THEN BOLTS FOR CAMELOT.



VAL RIDES HARD THROUGH THE NIGHT, REACHING CAMELOT AND HIS FAMILY'S QUARTERS JUST BEFORE DAWN. HE STRIDES DIRECTLY TO KAREN'S BEDCHAMBER...

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... AND DEMANDS OF HIS ALARMED DAUGHTER: "WHERE ARE THE MEN THAT GUARD YOU QUARTERED? SHOW ME NOW!"

KAREN CHOOSES NOT TO QUESTION HER FATHER. SHE SHOWS HIM HER SERVANTS' CHAMBER - AND, AS VAL SUSPECTED, THERE IS A MAN MISSING ...

NEXT: Foreign intrigue

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

WHEN I WAS A KID WE WERE POOR.

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HOW POOR WERE YOU?

OUR THANKSGIVING DINNER WAS JUST TWO ROCKS AND A WALNUT.

TRASSING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Gearing up for winter

I think I'm ready for winter. I say that with fingers crossed because, truly, around here you just never know, despite what the annual Almanac says. How about you? Are you ready to get through the coming winter?

One of the biggest and most important items on my to-do list was to find a new (and reliable) snow plow guy. It had to be someone with not only a plow on the front of his truck to take care of the heavy stuff in the driveway, but also a crew that would do the shoveling and ice chipping on the sidewalk and steps.

It's not only for my safety, keeping everything free of ice. The grocery delivery people need a safe walking surface as well. Last year I kept putting notes on the delivery order. Instead of "small bananas, please," my notes were along the lines of "BEWARE!! Ice on the sidewalk!! BEWARE!!"

As far as supplies, I've stocked up on canned goods, dry packaged foods, gallons of water, batteries and paper goods. (If you do this, keep an eye on the expiration dates of the food.) By stocking up, I'll need to go out to get groceries less often or have fewer deliveries.

And I haven't forgotten the cat. He'll be taken care of as well, with several cases and bags of his favorite food. I will, however, need to drive several towns away to the pet specialty prescription store.

And the car, scheduled for oil change and tire rotation ... check. Clear plastic on windows ... check. Batteries in the smoke detectors ... check. Mittens, hat, vest to wear under coat ... check, check, check.

A winter activity to be considered for cold weather: writing a novel. National Novel Writing Month (nanowrimo.org) began in 1999 to challenge people to complete a 50,000-word novel during the month of November. Interested? Check the website for loads of suggestions, tools and help!

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1. Sebastian the Ibis is the mascot of what university's athletic teams?

2. What two heavyweight boxers were dueling on the Las Vegas Strip in November 1993 when James "Fan Man" Miller crashed his powered paraglider into the ring?

3. What auto-racing facility in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley opened in 1910 and hosted open-wheel and NASCAR races until it closed in 2004?

4. Who was captain of the 2006 Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes? (Hint: He was hired as the Hurricanes' head coach in 2018.)

5. What team selected Tennessee's Chamique Holdsclaw with the first overall pick in the 1999 WNBA Draft?

6. He has two Super Bowl rings as a cornerback for the New England Patriots. His son, also a cornerback, was a 2021 draft pick by the Los Angeles Chargers. Who is he?

7. Outfielder Andre Dawson's plaque in the National Baseball Hall of Fame depicts him wearing the cap of what team?



by Ryan A. Berenz

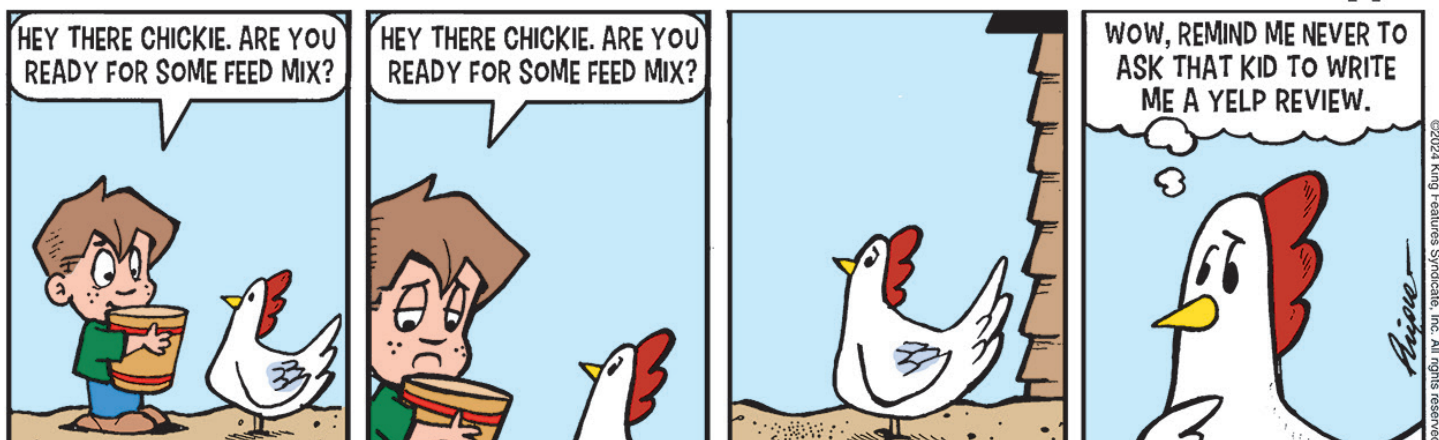
Answers

1. The University of Miami Hurricanes.
2. Riddick Bowe and Evander Holyfield.
3. Nazareth Speedway.
4. Rod Brind'Amour.
5. The Washington Mystics.
6. Asante Samuel Sr.
7. The Montreal Expos.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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Ticks are still out well into fall

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My dog "Austin" was recently diagnosed with Lyme disease. He's responding very well to treatment with antibiotics. Still, I'm wracking my brain as to how he was exposed. I check him for ticks every time we go out hiking, and I've never found one. I avoid trails in the deep woods during the summer months, when there's a lot of brush and ticks are out. What can I do to protect him from another tick bite? -- Zack in Asheville, North Carolina

DEAR ZACK: I'm glad to hear Austin is on the mend! Lyme disease in dogs can be very debilitating.

The most important tool in the tick-fighting arsenal is prevention. Use a flea and tick preventive treatment

-- like a topical ointment or a chewable medication -- to arm your dog in advance of going outside. Oral treatments often have the added advantage of heartworm medication to prevent this dangerous transmitted disease in dogs from fleas and mosquitoes.

Avoiding the deep woods in summer is one way to reduce the chance of acquiring a tick (or three, or four), but ticks can lurk right in your yard and around the neighborhood. Keep the lawn mowed and brush trimmed back, and remove any debris piles around your property. Vacuum carpets weekly and sweep and mop the floors regularly.

Check Austin every day for ticks, even on days that you don't go out hiking. It's not unheard of to miss a tick in a dog's fur, before it's latched on to the skin -- and you have a 48-hour window to locate and remove an attached tick before Lyme exposure occurs.

Finally, talk to the vet about whether a Lyme vaccine would be a good choice for your dog.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* There's a surgical procedure called selective amygdalo-hippocampectomy that removes half of the brain's amygdala -- and with it, much of the patient's sense of fear.

* Obituary writers have their own awards, which are called The Grimmys.

* Londoners in the 1600s were advised to keep "fart jars" -- consisting of trapped fart odors -- on hand to combat bubonic plague. The idea was that the potent smell would somehow purify the air!

* During World War II, the term "security blanket" was slang for measures meant to keep military information secret, or covered up.

* Future Martians might marvel at the Valles Marineris (a.k.a. Mariner Valley) the same way Earthlings marvel at the Grand Canyon. The huge rift is more than eight times the length of the Grand Canyon, and four times as deep.

* The Eiffel Tower leans slightly toward the shade on sunny days.

* Forbes estimates that Barbie's Dream House would be worth around \$16 million if it were real. The three-story house has seven rooms, an elevator, a garage and a pool.

* In 1897, Indiana state legislators tried to pass a bill that would have legally redefined the value of pi as 3.2.

* A game show in Japan featured one item in a room that was replaced with a look-alike item made of chocolate or other candy. Contestants would try to find it by biting into various objects.

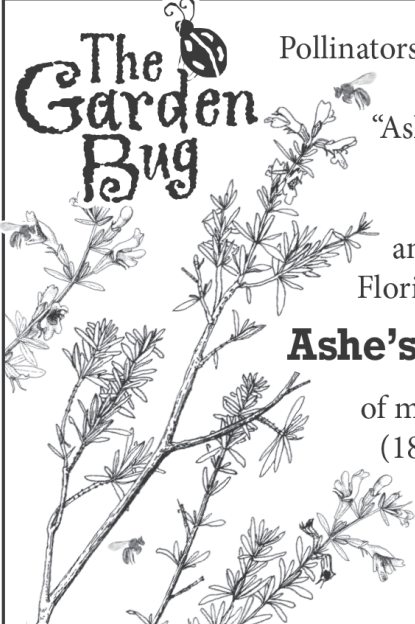
* The ancient Greeks believed that pearls were the hardened tears of joy from Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

* Elton John has pianos named after Aretha Franklin, Nina Simone and Diana Krall.

* There's a five-story, blood-red waterfall in Antarctica.

Thought for the Day: "The greatness of a man lies not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively." -- Bob Marley

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The Garden Bug

Pollinators like the Blue Calaminta Bee rely on this rare wild mint, also known as "Ashe's Savory" or "Ohoopie Wild Basil." It has only been found in two places: along the Ohoopie River in Georgia and the sand pines and scrub of central Florida. It has gray-green foliage and light pink or pale purple blossoms. It is one of many plants named after William Ashe (1872-1932), who was a pioneer forester of the United States Forest Service.

Ashe's Calamint

— Brenda Weaver

Sources: www.fws.gov, www.wildflower.org



by Freddy Groves

Proving a negative?

An elderly Vietnam-era veteran is being hounded by a government agency that is insisting he pay back a loan ... a loan he never took out.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) says he took out the loan in 2021 and if he doesn't pay it back, they will take 15% of his Social Security check until it's paid for.

The veteran has tried to tell them he never applied for nor received any loan, that he hadn't owned a business (and therefore didn't qualify for a business loan), and the SBA wants him to prove it.

How do you prove a negative?

It seems that the SBA would have records of where they sent that loan money, if indeed the loan was issued. But no, they're insisting the veteran prove he didn't get the loan.

Granted, there were billions of dollars handed out to fraudsters and thieves in the SBA loan program during the pandemic. But again, how do you prove a negative?

The average monthly Social Security check this year is around \$1,782. Taking away 15% leaves \$1,514. Even before deducting that 15%, it's not a lot of money, and the veteran probably doesn't have a lot to spare at the end of the month.

At this point, taking the veteran's Social Security money is on hold -- for now -- after a local investigative reporter got involved and made calls.

But a quick look on the internet shows that this veteran is only one of many this has happened to -- people being nailed for loans they never received. When they complain, all are being told to send in a long list of financial documents, such as tax returns. At first glance it looks like a scam to steal personal information.

If you're the victim of fraud such as this, deal directly with the SBA Office of Inspector General and file a complaint. As an added step, consider submitting a FOIA request for all documents related to the problem, such as the loan application itself.

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Wishing Well®

7	8	5	8	2	5	6	2	4	8	4	5	7
E	A	A	K	L	S	R	I	N	I	E	W	X
2	7	4	2	6	5	4	2	4	5	2	6	3
F	P	W	E	E	E	B	I	R	E	N	M	E
7	2	3	4	6	4	2	7	4	6	2	7	6
R	B	V	I	A	D	A	E	G	I	L	S	N
7	8	4	7	4	3	8	2	7	4	5	3	6
S	N	E	F	T	E	D	A	E	O	T	N	P
2	4	2	3	4	2	6	5	3	7	8	4	7
N	L	C	T	O	E	O	L	F	E	L	V	L
3	5	3	6	3	8	4	3	8	6	3	8	7
U	I	L	I	W	Y	E	E	G	S	E	E	I
8	6	3	7	6	8	5	7	5	8	7	8	8
S	E	K	N	D	T	F	G	E	U	S	R	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. MOVIES: Which animated film was the first to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture?
2. SCIENCE: What is a common name for the Aurora Borealis?
3. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the third U.S. president?
4. GEOGRAPHY: Where are the Maldives (islands) located?
5. MUSIC: Who was the first woman inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?
6. TELEVISION: What is Dorothy's job on "The Golden Girls"?
7. MATH: Which number doesn't have a Roman numeral equivalent?
8. LITERATURE: In the Harry Potter series of novels, what was Lord Voldemort's name before he changed it?
9. ANIMAL KINGDOM: Which dog breed doesn't "bark"?
10. FAMOUS QUOTES: Who wrote the poetic line about fall, "Nature's first green is gold"?

Answers

1. "Beauty and the Beast."
2. Northern Lights.
3. Thomas Jefferson.
4. Indian Ocean.
5. Aretha Franklin.
6. Substitute teacher.
7. Zero.
8. Tom Marvolo Riddle.
9. Basenji.
10. Robert Frost, "Nothing Gold Can Stay."

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Round 'Em Up

"There's nothing better for the inside of a man than the outside of a horse." That quote hung on a gate on our family farm and ranch growing up. It wasn't until years later that I realized who said those words: the Gipper himself, President Ronald Reagan.

We have two incredible events in late September in South Dakota that showcase just how much men and women can accomplish on "the outside of a horse." On the last Friday in September, we celebrate the Buffalo Roundup at Custer State Park. And that same Thursday through Saturday, cowboys and cowgirls ride horses (and bulls) at the Governor's Cup in Sioux Falls. Our western heritage is celebrated on both sides of the state in just one weekend – I love it!

The Buffalo Roundup might be my very favorite event on the calendar every year. It's quite a spectacle as 1,500 bison thunder through our beautiful Custer State Park. It's also a celebration of America's history.

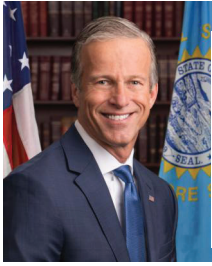
Less than 150 years ago, there were fewer than 1,000 bison left alive in the United States. That number is over 500,000 today largely thanks to our state bison herd at Custer State Park. The legendary Scotty Philip started our state herd and became known as "the man who saved the Buffalo."

When I was in Congress, I led efforts to name the bison as America's National Mammal, and we got that bill passed in 2016. And I hold the years that I've helped round up the bison at our annual Buffalo Roundup among my most precious memories. About 20,000 visitors join us every year (we actually broke our record in 2023 at more than 22,500). If you haven't seen it for yourself, you should join us next year!

The Governor's Cup is the final event in the CINCH Playoffs – meaning it is the final opportunity to qualify for the National Finals Rodeo. This is the second year running that we've held this fantastic rodeo in Sioux Falls. Dozens of the best rodeo cowboys and cowgirls duke it out for a \$1 million purse, making it "The Richest Rodeo in South Dakota History."

Rodeo is our state sport in South Dakota, and I've prioritized bringing the biggest and best rodeo competitions to our state. In July 2020, the Professional Bull Riders rodeo in Sioux Falls was the first major indoor sporting event to take place with fans in the stands anywhere in the country since the COVID pandemic started. Freedom and rodeo go hand in hand, and folks across the country have found themselves coming back to rodeo because of its celebration of American values.

I hope you have the opportunity to enjoy one or both of these events – if not this year, then sometime soon! Our western heritage is such a beautiful symbol of the Freedoms that make America so special. We should take the opportunity to enjoy this heritage every chance that we get.



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Broadband Blunders Leave Americans Disconnected

President Biden promised that his infrastructure law would make high-speed internet “available everywhere in America,” and he put Vice President Harris in charge of broadband initiatives to accomplish that goal. Three years later, this administration’s signature broadband program – the \$42 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program – has not connected a single household to the internet. In fact, not a single BEAD project has started construction and none are expected to begin until sometime next year or later.

So what’s taking so long? The BEAD program is a sad story of government inefficiency and progressivism run amok. Rather than focusing on delivering broadband service to unserved areas, the Biden-Harris administration chose to load up the BEAD program with a wish list of requirements that Congress never envisioned. There are climate change mandates, biased technology mandates, it prioritizes government-owned networks, union labor, and DEI hiring practices; and it even attempts to impose price controls in direct violation of the law. As a result, what should have been a straightforward application and approval process has become a mess.

Then there’s the Biden-Harris administration’s poor implementation of the program. During debate on the bill that authorized the program, I expressed reservations about the agency tasked with running it. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has previously fumbled administering broadband expansion programs with much smaller budgets than the \$42 billion now under its charge. Not to mention another agency, the Federal Communications Commission, has the expertise and capacity to better administer broadband deployment programs like BEAD.

Unfortunately, my fears have been realized. One state official testifying before Congress said this of the program’s implementation: “NTIA’s functional requests are akin to building a plane while flying it without having the necessary instructions to be successful. NTIA has provided either no guidance, guidance given too late, or guidance changing midstream, all with a lack of appreciation for state operations and costs and the needs of our telecommunication providers.” Another state official called BEAD “the most burdensome federal program” she has ever managed.

While the president touts his administration’s efforts on expanding internet access, the reality is hardly worthy of boasting. And the vice president seems to have been about as effective as the “broadband czar” as she has as the “border czar,” which is to say she has failed at both. Three years into a \$42 billion program, not a single dollar has been allocated, not a single project has begun, and not a single household is better off.

Rural and unserved communities were promised an internet connection, but this administration’s mandates and poor management have prevented that connection from being delivered. My Republican colleagues and I will continue our oversight efforts into the failure of this program – unfortunately, it’s one of many failures we’ve seen of the Biden-Harris administration.

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Strikes, Shortages, and Salutes

BIG Update

Port workers at East and Gulf Coast ports are threatening to strike on October 1 if they can't reach an agreement with their employers. A port strike would be devastating to the economy, costing \$5 billion each day. Not only is there a financial impact, but a strike would create a weeks or months-long backlog of shipments. These ports handle nearly half of our agricultural exports to international markets, especially during harvest time. More than half of imported apparel and shoes come through these ports, and a strike could significantly delay gifts for Christmas, which is quickly approaching. I hope both sides can reach an agreement before Tuesday to prevent another supply chain crunch.

BIG Idea

This week, I met with the Associated General Contractors to discuss Biden's harmful Project Labor Agreement rule, which is hamstringing our contractors' ability to bid on projects and could cause delays for the work at Ellsworth Air Force Base. I recently hosted a roundtable in Rapid City to talk to more contractors about the impact this rule will have on their business. I've been working to stop this burdensome rule to keep our construction projects on time and on budget.

BIG News

During my most recent Vietnam Veteran Pinning Ceremony in Sioux Falls, I recognized and pinned my 1,100th Vietnam-era veteran. When veterans returned home from the war, many weren't received with gratitude for his or her service. I've partnered with the Vietnam War Commemoration project to give Vietnam-era veterans a long-awaited, proper welcome home. During each ceremony, I hear stories of the veterans' life and service, shake their hand, and give them a pin that says, "A grateful nation thanks and honors you."

I've hosted pinning ceremonies big and small across the state and was recently notified by the Department of Defense that I am a "Top Performer" for being in the top 15% of participating organizations for the number of veterans we have honored.

If you or someone you know served in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War era, you can nominate them on my website at <https://dustyjohnson.house.gov/services/vietnam-veteran-commemoration> or by calling 605-275-2868. The program ends soon so don't wait to nominate!

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September 23-27, 2024

Welcome back to another edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up! It's been a while since I've been able to give an update of my work in Washington. I was back in South Dakota for all of August, where I was able to make visits across the state. I attended the Brown County

Fair in Aberdeen, went 4,850 feet underground at the Sanford Underground Research Facility outside of Lead, spoke with two of the South Dakota Legislature's summer study groups: the artificial intelligence (AI) working group in Pierre and the Ellsworth working group in Rapid City, visited with teachers in Brandon and met with many other South Dakotans.

Toward the end of August, I had an unexpected eye surgery which prevented me from traveling back to DC at the beginning of September. This past week, I was cleared by my doctor to travel back to DC. It was good to return to usual business in DC – hearings, meetings, votes and briefings. Read more about it in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakotans I met with: South Dakota representatives from the Basin Electric Power Cooperative; South Dakota members of Associated General Contractors; leaders from South Dakota's Impact Aid schools; South Dakota members of the National Federation for Independent Business; Vicki Lowry with Rapid City Head Start; Jenny Briest with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation; and Madhu Gottumukkala, Secretary of South Dakota's Bureau of Information and Telecommunications.

Met with South Dakotans from: Bonesteel, Box Elder, Bullhead, Chamberlain, Custer, Dupree, Eagle Butte, Fort Pierre, Geddes, Hill City, Kenel, Madison, Martin, McLaughlin, Mobridge, Mount Vernon, New Underwood, Pierre, Pine Ridge, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Timber Lake, Tulare, Wagner, Wall, Winner and Yankton.

Other meetings: Jason Ambrosi, President of the Air Line Pilots Association; General Randy George, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army; Robin Vince, CEO at BNY; Olivier Nduhungirehe, Rwanda's new Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Tom Siebel, Chairman of C3.ai. I attended a coffee and conversation event with Charlie Cook. I also had our weekly Senate Bible Study, where our verse of the week was Philippians 4:8.

Votes taken: 7 – most of these were on nominations to a position within the Department of State as well as judicial positions in Wisconsin and the U.S. Tax Court. Most importantly, we voted on a Continuing Resolution to keep the government funded into December.

As you may recall, the House and Senate have a deadline of September 30 each year to complete our appropriations process, which delegates funding to different areas of the federal government. When this process isn't complete by the September 30 deadline, the federal government shuts down unless both chambers pass a Continuing Resolution (CR). A CR extends funding to a set deadline (December 20 in this case) to give us more time to complete the appropriations bills, which is why it's commonly called a "stopgap" funding bill.

I voted yes on the CR this week. While our government funding process is dysfunctional at best, it's critical for our nation, particularly our defense and national security, that we keep government open and funded. This clean CR continues to fund the government at the same levels as last year through December

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20, 2024. It also includes additional funding for the Secret Service so the agency can beef up security for presidential candidates.

Hearings: I had two closed hearings in the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Classified briefings: We had a busy week with five classified briefings: a briefing on Guam as part of my work on the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC); a briefing with SASC's Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee; our bi-weekly cyber education seminar; a briefing on activity in the Red Sea; and an all-senators briefing on election security.

Letter to President Biden: This week, I joined a letter with Senator John Thune (R-S.D.) and Representative Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) to President Biden urging him to issue a major disaster declaration for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe following extreme weather, particularly strong winds, that occurred July 13 and 14, 2024. Read more about it [here](#).

Legislation introduced: I introduced a bill to leverage AI for national pandemic preparedness and response through a program called MedShield. Given the millions of deaths and trillions of dollars in economic costs resulting from COVID-19, we need to make strategic investments in pandemic prevention and preparedness. I believe AI should play a key role in those efforts. Read more about this legislation [here](#).

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, Vermillion, Waubay and Wakonda.

Steps taken this past week: 57,348 steps or 28.37 miles



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

How Can I Get My Sneeze Back?

I've had a lot of health issues during this past year, and now that I seem to be over them, something else has taken their place.

I have had a sneezing fit for the past two weeks that I've never experienced before. Every time I sneeze, it is in triplets. I don't know why I have to sneeze three times, and I have tried to keep myself from sneezing three times, but so far, I lost that battle.

Once, when I started to sneeze, I closed my mouth, which was a mistake because everything came out of my nose. That was not a very pretty sight.

Sneezing may become more of an issue as you age. I know it's a big issue for me, and I'm confused about how to deal with it.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage says I must have some allergy. I confided in her that the only allergy I have is broccoli. I tell her I have one of my sneezing fits every time she eats broccoli.

Whether it's true or not is immaterial. It's just something I can use against her when she complains about my sneezing fits.

I've been trying to figure out how to make something good out of these sneezing fits, and so far, I have failed. When I get close to a solution, I have one of my sneezing fits and forget what I was thinking about.

Just thinking about my sneezing fits makes me sneeze.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage told me, "Be careful, you might sneeze your brains out." Then she laughed.

I responded, "Oh, my dear you're too late for that. I've already sneezed my brains out."

Obviously, brains aren't as important as I thought they were.

I have been sneezing for about two weeks, and it seems to be getting worse. Not only do I sneeze, but with the sneeze comes some disgusting phlegm. Several times, the whole front of my shirt was soaked in that disgusting phlegm. Unfortunately, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is the first to see it, and she always responds in the negative.

I have to be careful where I'm standing when a sneeze hits. There are no warnings about the sneeze, and if I'm facing somebody when I sneeze, well, you know the rest of the story.

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I'll get through it as long as I don't sneeze in the direction of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

This past week, we were at a restaurant to celebrate something. I'm unsure what we were celebrating, but it doesn't matter. We were having a great time, but I was still in that sneezing fit—sneezing all the time.

I try to be very careful when sneezing because I don't want to sneeze on someone, particularly The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. But when a sneeze comes, it surprises me and those around me.

We were at a restaurant, ordered our meal, and were in the middle of eating our meal, and it was a wonderful time together. I forget what I ordered, but whatever it was, it was delicious, and I enjoyed it.

Right in the middle of eating my meal, I had a sneezing fit. I've had some practice with these sneezing fits, and I knew I needed to be careful which direction I was looking. Because I was seated across the table from The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, when I started sneezing, it would've been in her direction.

Knowing that would not be a very good thing to do, I immediately turned my head to the right and sneezed three times. At the time, my mouth was full of what I was eating, and it all came spewing out.

The worst thing about that sneezing fit was I was facing our waitress and I got my sneezing fit all over the front of her. Oh boy! Was I in trouble. At least I didn't sneeze it in my wife's direction or that might've been the end of my sneezing fits for the rest of my life.

At the time, I didn't know what to do because the front of that waitress was full of yucky, sneezing phlegm. What do you do in a situation like that?

I apologized and asked her if there was anything I could do to help. She looked at me and said, "No, you've done enough already." Then she walked away to the back of the restaurant.

I don't know when I was more humiliated than at that time. But when I sat back and regained some control of myself, I realized that there were customers all around, and all of them saw exactly what I did. I just felt like everybody in that restaurant was staring at me.

It's not that I don't like attention; I'm just not too fond of this kind of attention.

I leaned across the table and asked The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, "Do you know how I can take back that sneeze?" She just looked at me and then looked down at her plate. That's the first time I remember that she couldn't figure out a solution to a problem.

I then thought about a Bible verse, Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

No matter my problem, if I trust God I can get through it.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: How can I keep my pets safe during the increasingly frequent heat waves we are experiencing lately?

-- Mary B., Bern, NC

Summer may be over but the heat still lingers in much of the U.S. and elsewhere. As such, the need to keep pets safe becomes an increasing concern. Heat poses great risks to animals, especially those with fur. Understanding the risks and the safety measures that can be taken can help our pets stay safe and happy.

Heatstroke is a critical condition that can happen both in animals and humans. It occurs when the body becomes unable to regulate its temperature. Symptoms in animals include excessive panting, drooling, lethargy and vomiting. Seeking immediate attention is crucial, so move your pet to a cool area, provide water, and in severe cases contact your vet. To reduce the risk of heatstroke, keep pets in at peak hours of heat, instead opt for morning and evening when it is cooler. This is generally before 10am and after 4pm.

Constant access to water and shade are also advised to prevent issues caused by heat. Use cooling mats, fans and ice packs to keep pets from overheating. Swap outdoor activities for indoor ones or consider buy mental stimulation toys and puzzles. Moreover, never leave your pets in a parked car: Even on an 85-degree day, a car with slightly opened windows can reach temperatures of 120 degrees.

Hot surfaces also pose significant risks, as asphalt and concrete can get hot under direct sunlight and burn paw pads or noses. If possible, walk pets on grassy areas. If this is not an option due to your area, consider purchasing pet shoes or boots which protect vulnerable paws from not only burns, but also sharp objects and potentially dangerous substances if pets lick their paws. These precautions go a long way in keeping pets safe when navigating the hotter months of the year, especially for those living in cities.

When the mercury does rise, be prepared for things to go wrong. Do your best to keep your pet out of harm's way, but if things still go awry, keep a pet first aid kit with water, cool towels and a pet-safe thermometer on hand, and know the location of your nearest emergency vet clinic. Learn to identify the signs that your pet may be having a medical episode. If left untreated, irreversible damage and even death can occur. This is especially necessary in brachycephalic animals, animals with short muzzles such as pugs or Persian cats, whose facial structure makes it difficult to use panting to cool themselves.

By taking measures to keep pets safe and being prepared for emergencies, you ensure their well-being.

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· .. EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.



Keeping your pet safe during a heat wave can be a challenge. Credit: Pexels.com.

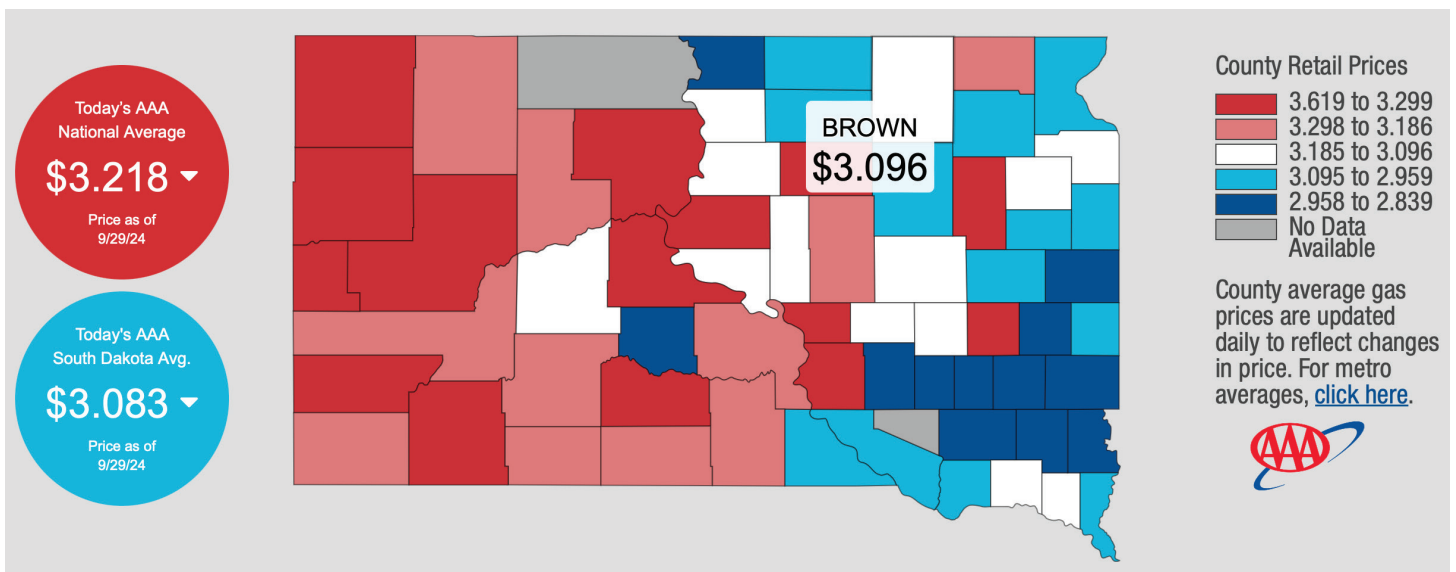
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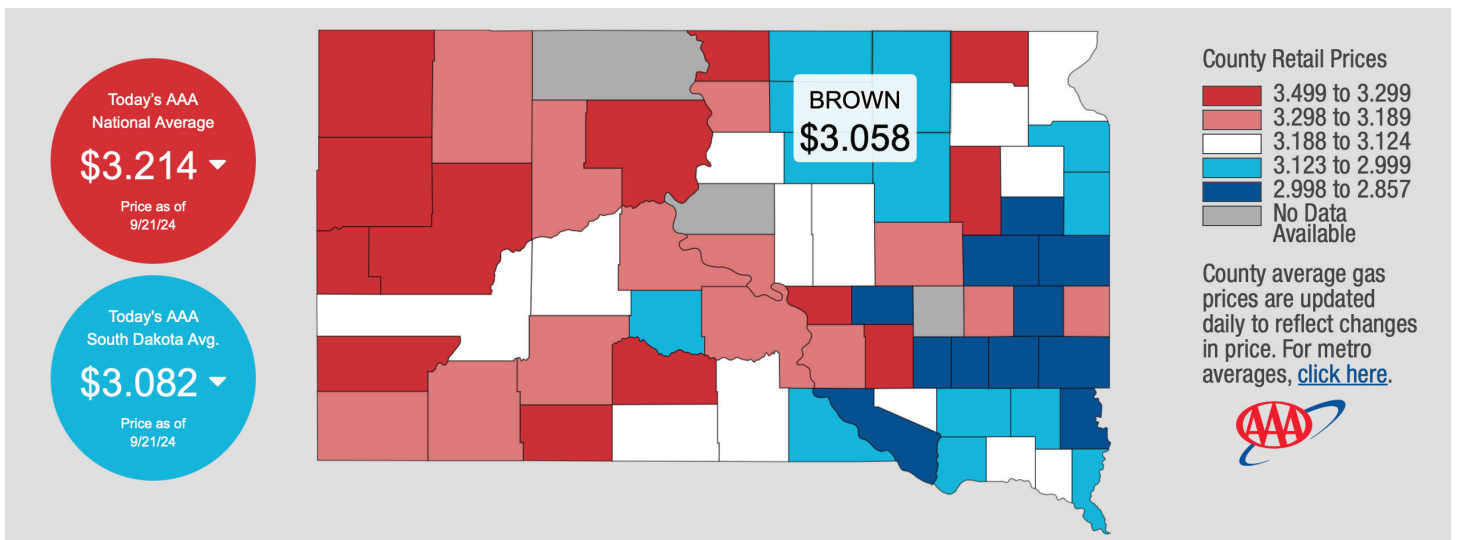
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.083	\$3.286	\$3.720	\$3.282
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.088	\$3.285	\$3.701	\$3.285
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.084	\$3.266	\$3.720	\$3.284
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.244	\$3.438	\$3.871	\$3.389
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.812	\$3.969	\$4.458	\$4.403

This Week



Last Week



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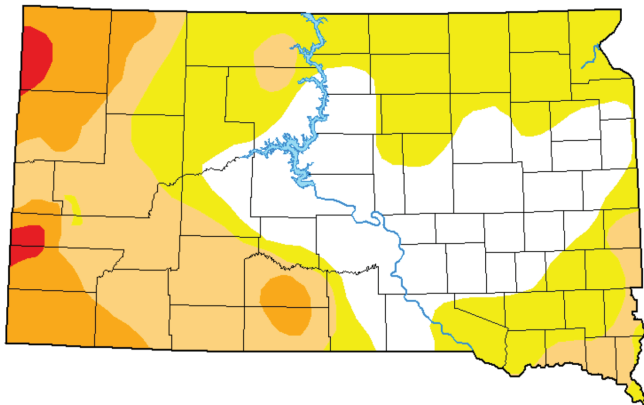
Drought Classification

None
D0 (Abnormally Dry)
D1 (Moderate Drought)

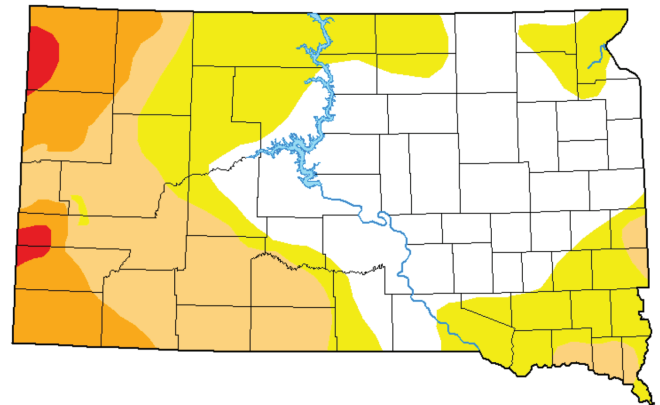
D2 (Severe Drought)
D3 (Extreme Drought)

D4 (Exceptional Drought)
No Data

Drought Monitor

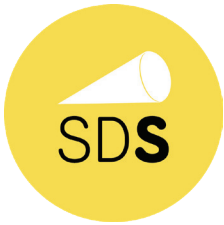


September 24



September 17

Aside from Kansas, where rainfall provided widespread drought relief, most of the High Plains experienced unchanged or worsening drought conditions. On September 22, topsoil moisture rated very short to short ranged from 29% in North Dakota to 84% in Wyoming, with values also above 50% in Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska. Wyoming led the region on that date with 68% of its rangeland and pastures rated very poor to poor, followed by South Dakota at 44%.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

2024 initiated measures offer lessons for future elections

by **DANA HESS**

In the run-up to the Nov. 5 election, South Dakota voters should be hearing quite a bit about seven ballot issues. Looking back, there are some lessons inherent in the way some of those ballot issues were handled in this election cycle.

People seem to like medical marijuana.

One of the first stories of this election cycle was a petition effort to ban medical marijuana. That effort never got off the ground or anywhere near the ballot.

While recreational marijuana has had a tough time on the ballot and in the courts, people seem to like medical marijuana just fine. It would have been a shame to vote on a ban after the South Dakota Legislature has gone to the trouble of filing multiple bills in an effort to nail down all the regulations needed for a medical marijuana program.

It's probably best not to run two ballot campaigns at once.

Dakotans for Health took on the task of putting two issues on the ballot in the same year: Amendment G, which would legalize abortions, and Initiated Measure 28, which is intended to eliminate the state sales tax on groceries.

Dakotans for Health now faces a lawsuit from Life Defense Fund alleging, among other things, that it tricked voters into signing the abortion petitions when they thought they were signing the grocery tax cut petitions. No matter how the court rules, there won't be time at this late date to get Amendment G off the ballot if Dakotans for Health loses.

If a win at the ballot box is in doubt, go to court.

The effort by Life Defense Fund to hash out the fate of Amendment G in the courts, rather than the ballot box, can be seen as a reaction to the fate of abortion ballot initiatives in other states. As it stands now, abortion rights are 7-0 since the demise of Roe v Wade. Voters in seven states have beaten back efforts to enshrine abortion restrictions in state constitutions or have won with initiatives that protect abortion rights.

Being short-sighted on the issues can be costly.

Lawmakers are faced with some tough choices if voters decide they like the idea of cutting the state sales tax on groceries. The Legislature had its chance to eliminate that sales tax in 2023, but chose instead to opt for a cut that took the state sales tax from 4.5% to 4.2%, with a sunset in 2027. No one was clamoring for that cut; the GOP-controlled Legislature used it as a way to enhance their Republican credentials.

With that tax cut carving out an estimated \$100 million hole in state revenue, lawmakers are now faced with the potential passage of Initiated Measure 28, eliminating the state sales tax on groceries. That will mean another estimated \$134 million in lost revenue, or more, depending on interpretations of the measure's language. The easiest way to handle the sales tax cut on groceries would be to reverse the 2023 tax cut, but raising the state sales tax is hardly a way to enhance your credibility as a Republican.

While Republicans were behind the original tax cut as well as a failed attempt in 2024 to make it permanent, they have steadfastly refused to make any sort of headway on cutting property taxes, an issue that has property owners all over the state howling for action. As usually happens when the Legislature won't take action, there's a property tax ballot issue already getting teed up for the 2026 election.

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Despite its popularity with voters, the initiated measure concept is under siege.

Just about every legislative session offers a new law designed to hamper the initiated ballot measure process. Fortunately, those have been shot down in committee, overruled by the courts or vetoed by voters.

Conservative Republican activist and entrepreneur Chris Larson went to all the trouble to set up a website that encourages citizens to vote no on four of the ballot issues. His thinking on the initiative ballot process likely reflects that of many of his fellow Republicans. "I think the initiated ballot system we have is not great for South Dakota," Larson told The Dakota Scout, asserting that it shouldn't be used to change the constitution.

Given the way conservative Republicans have saturated the state's Legislature, a citizen petition process is the only way that South Dakotans would ever find themselves with the chance to weigh in on abortion rights, the legalization of marijuana, eliminating the state sales tax on groceries or the future of carbon capture pipelines.

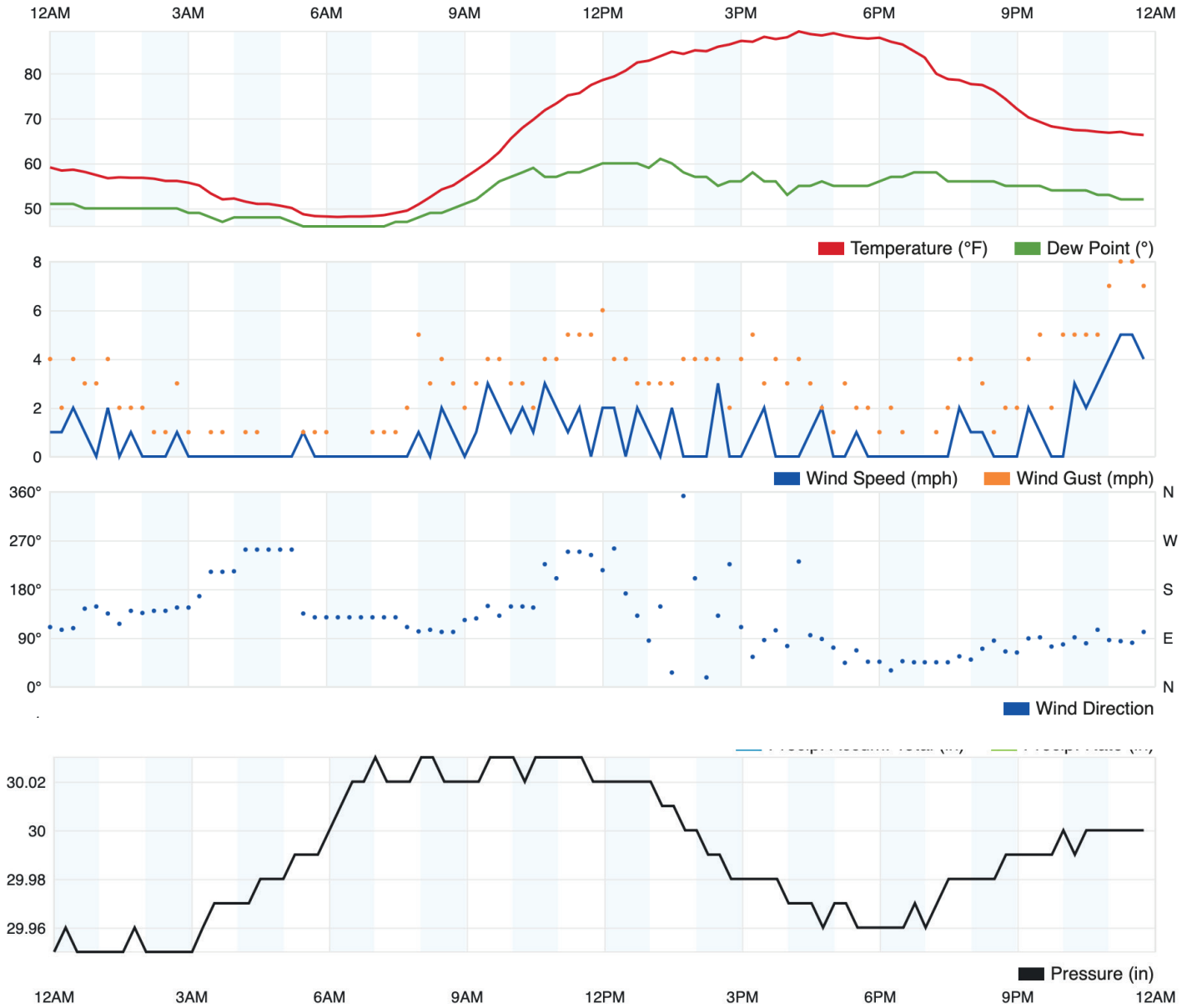
With seven issues on the ballot this year, at least a few of which get under the skin of Republican lawmakers, there's likely to be more legislation that tries to throw up roadblocks to the ballot petition process. However, with that process enshrined in the state constitution, the only way its opponents can get rid of it altogether is to, well ... put it on the ballot.

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 93 °F

Sunny then
Sunny and
Breezy

Tonight



Low: 62 °F

Mostly Clear
and Breezy

Fire Weather Watch

Monday



High: 74 °F

Sunny and
Breezy

Monday Night



Low: 40 °F

Mostly Clear

Tuesday



High: 66 °F

Mostly Sunny

Upcoming Weather Forecast

Sunday
HOT!
High: 88-100°F
Low: 59-64°F
Weather:
Red Flag Warning
Hot, Dry, and Windy

Monday
WINDY
High: 67-77°F
Low: 38-43°F
Weather:
Fire Weather Watch
Dry and Windy

Tuesday
High: 65-72°F
Low: 48-52°F
Weather: *Mostly Sunny*

 [weather.gov/abr](https://www.weather.gov/abr)
September 29, 2024 4:15 AM

Sunday will see hot, dry, and windy conditions that have led to a Red Flag Warning being issued. Monday will see windy conditions, which have led to a fire weather watch. Take care to avoid activities that cause sparks or flames, because if a fire start, they will grow quickly.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 90 °F at 4:26 PM

Low Temp: 48 °F at 6:15 AM

Wind: 7 mph at 11:52 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 49 minutes (lost 22 minutes since last Sunday)

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1897

Record Low: 11 in 1939

Average High: 69

Average Low: 41

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.92

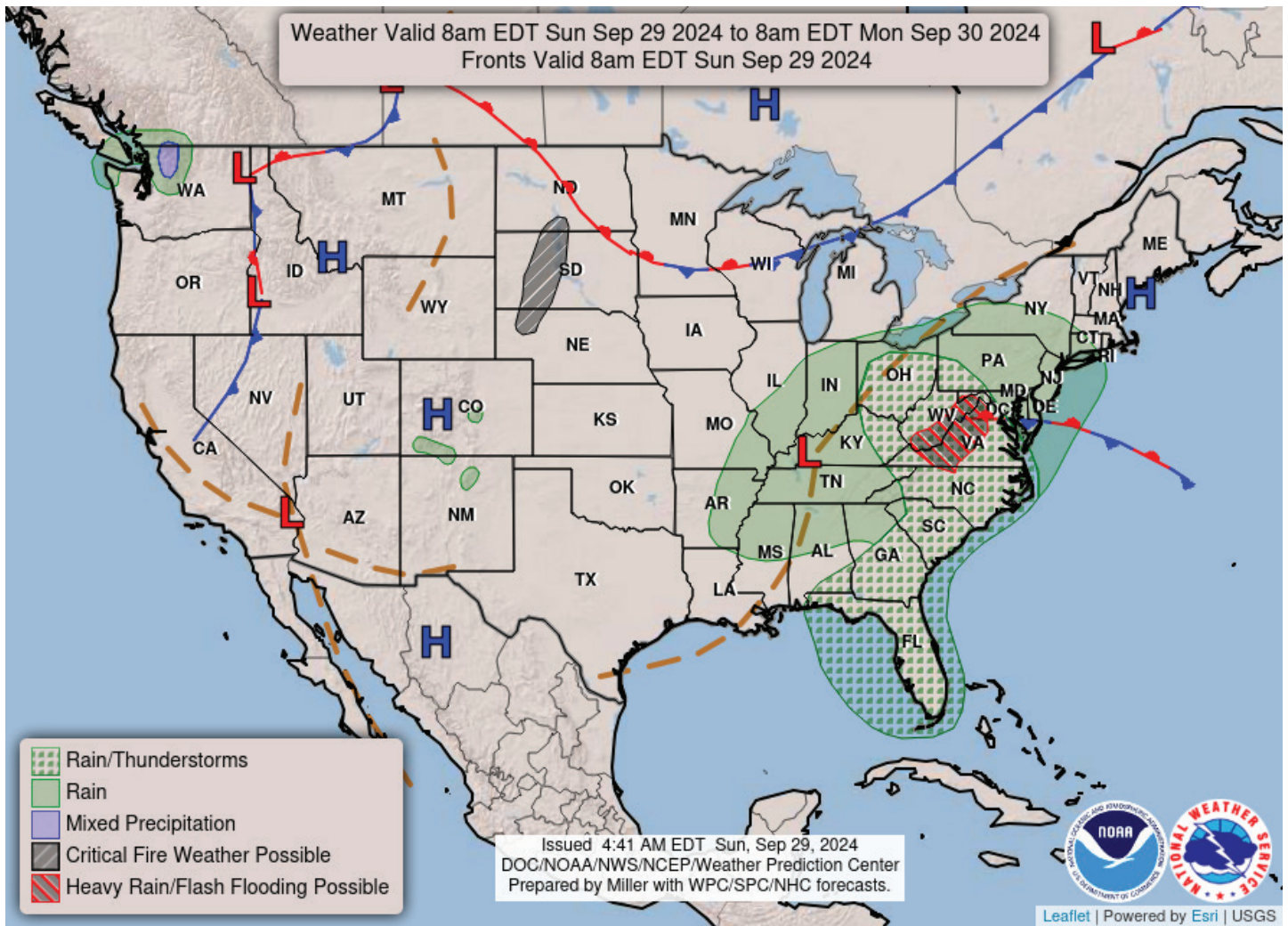
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.33

Average Precip to date: 18.26

Precip Year to Date: 19.75

Sunset Tonight: 7:17:15 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:28:54 am



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Today in Weather History

September 29, 1982: An early snowfall in the Black Hills resulted in the breakage of tree branches and caused power outages in parts of Lead and Nevada Gulch.

1927 - An outbreak of tornadoes from Oklahoma to Indiana caused 81 deaths and 25 million dollars damage. A tornado (possibly two tornadoes) cut an eight-mile long path across Saint Louis MO, to Granite City IL, killing 79 persons. The damage path at times was a mile and a quarter in width. The storm followed a similar path to tornadoes which struck in 1871, 1896, and 1959. (The Weather Channel)

1959 - A storm produced 28 inches of snow at Colorado Springs, CO. (David Ludlum)

1983 - Heavy rains began in central and eastern Arizona which culminated in the worst flood in the history of the state. Eight to ten inch rains across the area caused severe flooding in southeastern Arizona which resulted in thirteen deaths and 178 million dollars damage. President Reagan declared eight counties of Arizona to be disaster areas. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - A week of violent weather began in Oklahoma which culminated in one of the worst flooding events in the history of the state. On the first day of the week early morning thunderstorms caused more than a million dollars damage in south Oklahoma City. Thunderstorms produced 4 to 7 inches of rain from Hobart to Ponca City, and another round of thunderstorms that evening produced 7 to 10 inches of rain in north central and northeastern sections of Oklahoma. (Storm Data)

1987 - A slow moving cold front produced rain from the Great Lakes Region to the Central Gulf Coast Region. A late afternoon thunderstorm produced wind gusts to 62 mph at Buffalo NY. Warm weather continued in the western U.S. In Oregon, the afternoon high of 96 degrees at Medford was a record for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - High pressure brought freezing temperatures to parts of Vermont and New York State. Burlington VT dipped to 30 degrees, and Binghamton NY reported a record low of 34 degrees. The high pressure system also brought cold weather to the Central Rocky Mountain Region. Alamosa CO reported a record low of 18 degrees, and Gunnison CO was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of just five degrees above zero. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - Seven cities reported record high temperatures for the date, as readings soared into the 80s and low 90s in the Northern Plateau and Northern Plains Region. Record highs included 91 degrees at Boise ID, and 92 degrees at Sheridan WY. The high of 100 degrees at Tucson AZ marked their 51st record high of the year, and their 92nd day of 100 degree weather. (National Weather Summary)



REWARDED BECAUSE...

"Give and it will be given unto you," said Jesus. But it does not end there. He continued His promise by adding, "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

As we come to the close of our "Seeds of Wisdom," there can be no more fitting words for us to consider than the words in the last verse of Proverbs: "Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate." God does indeed reward those who are faithful to His Word, who follow His instructions and minister to the needs of their family.

This "wife of noble character" did many "good things." As a result of her godly living and disciplined life, she is to be recognized and rewarded by being "praised at the city gate." The city gate is where the husband had been recognized for his wife of "noble character." But, now the recognition is focused on her for a life of selfless-service, family-focus, and faithfulness.

It's her turn to be praised. Imagine a husband leading a chorus of praise at the city gate? "Let's give a shout for my wife of 'noble character!' Give her the recognition she deserves!"

This is no ordinary woman: she is a "gracious woman who attained honor." What a model wife and mother! What a tribute to a life well lived! What an example for all women!

Boaz once said to Ruth: "And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsman know you are a woman of noble character."

Prayer: God, bless all mothers everywhere who seek to honor You, their husbands and children as women of "noble character." May we honor them for honoring You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. Proverbs 31:31

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:
09.27.24

29 46 53 69 70 23

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$93,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.28.24

12 13 47 48 51 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$10,120,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.28.24

7 20 23 38 48 11

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 14 Mins
51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.28.24

5 12 15 22 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$46,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.28.24

6 7 17 20 57 10

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.28.24

3 11 13 24 39 22

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$258,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
Cancelled: Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary Salad Luncheon
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

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News from the Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central High School def. Yankton, 25-14, 25-18, 32-30

Aberdeen Christian def. James Valley Christian, 25-16, 25-8, 25-12

Deubrook def. Colome, 25-12, 25-11

Douglas def. Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud, 25-15, 25-21, 25-18

Gayville-Volin High School def. Arlington, 25-17, 25-14

Groton def. Faulkton, 25-4, 25-18

Groton def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-10, 25-15

Sioux Falls Christian def. Dell Rapids, 29-27, 25-21

Wessington Springs def. Jones County, 27-25, 25-15

Wolsey-Wessington def. Groton, 25-23, 25-18

Belle Fourche Invitational=

Custer def. Edgemont, 25-10, 17-25, 28-25

Edgemont def. Belle Fourche, 25-19, 25-23

Edgemont def. Wall, 26-24, 25-23

CSDC Tournament=

Miller def. Faulkton, 25-21, 25-13

Miller def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-7, 25-9

Championship=

Miller def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-19, 21-25, 25-14

GPL Tournament=

Britton-Hecla def. Tiospa Zina, 25-9, 25-15

Great Plains Lutheran def. Britton-Hecla, 25-17, 25-18

Great Plains Lutheran def. Milbank, 25-8, 25-14

Great Plains Lutheran def. Tiospa Zina, 25-19, 25-5

Milbank def. Britton-Hecla, 25-23, 25-20

Milbank def. Tiospa Zina, 25-12, 25-11

Sanford Pentagon Tournament=

Blue Bracket=

5th Place=

Gretna East, Neb. def. Warner, 25-18, 25-22

Pool 1=

Chester def. Dell Rapids, 25-19, 16-25, 25-23

Dell Rapids def. Western Christian, Iowa, 25-12, 25-16

Western Christian, Iowa def. Chester, 25-23, 25-21

Pool 2=

Dakota Valley def. Warner, 23-25, 25-17, 25-19

Warner def. Unity Christian, Iowa, 25-10, 25-18

Pool 3=

Gretna East, Neb. def. Tea, 25-6, 25-18

Sioux Falls Christian def. Gretna East, Neb., 25-17, 25-19

Quarterfinals=

Sioux Falls Christian def. Warner, 25-19, 25-15

Orange Bracket=

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Pool 1=

Arlington def. Colman-Egan, 29-27, 25-23

Arlington def. Rapid City Christian, 25-21, 25-16

Mobridge-Pollock def. Arlington, 25-18, 30-28

Mobridge-Pollock def. Colman-Egan, 20-25, 25-18, 25-17

Mobridge-Pollock def. Rapid City Christian

Pool 2=

Gayville-Volin High School def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-16, 25-17

Gayville-Volin High School def. Platte-Geddes, 22-25, 25-22, 25-23

White Bracket=

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Ethan, 25-12, 25-22

Championship=

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Winner, 25-22, 25-11

Pool 1=

Menno def. Canistota, 25-11, 25-22

Parker def. Menno, 25-21, 25-22

Winner def. Menno, 25-21, 25-22

Pool 2=

Ethan def. Howard, 25-13, 25-18

Ethan def. Wagner, 25-19, 25-21

Wagner def. Florence-Henry, 19-25, 25-20, 25-19

Wagner def. Howard, 25-20, 25-10

Pool 3=

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Freeman, 25-3, 25-12

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Hanson, 25-16, 25-11

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-16, 25-11

Spartan Tourney=

Dell Rapids St Mary def. Jones County, 19-25, 25-18, 25-21

Dell Rapids St Mary def. Lower Brule, 25-7, 25-10

Dell Rapids St Mary def. Tripp-Delmont-Armour, 25-20, 20-25, 25-23

Jones County def. Tripp-Delmont-Armour, 22-25, 25-21, 25-12

Wessington Springs def. Colome, 25-19, 25-11

Wessington Springs def. Deubrook, 25-18, 25-17

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

South Dakota rolls to 42-13 win over Southern Illinois in MVFC opener

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Aidan Bouman threw two touchdown passes, Travis Theis and Charles Pierre Jr. ran for two scores each and South Dakota beat Southern Illinois 42-13 in a Missouri Valley Football Conference opener Saturday that matched two top-25 FCS teams.

Bouman was 11 of 17 for 247 yards passing. He found JJ Galbreath behind the SIU defense for an 80-yard score for the first of three Coyotes touchdowns in the second quarter that led to a 35-7 halftime lead. The last was Bouman's 61-yard connection with Quaron Adams in the final minute before the break.

Theis had 147 yards on 25 carries with TD runs of 1 and 20 yards for the Coyotes (3-1, 1-0), ranked fifth in the coaches poll. Pierre added 124 yards on 15 carries. Galbreath finished with 100 yards receiving.

Hunter Simmons finished 23-of-41 passing for 306 yards with two touchdowns for the Salukis (2-3, 0-1), ranked No. 17.

South Dakota outgained SIU 549-366 including 302 on the ground to the Salukis' 60.

Austrians vote as a far-right party hopes for its first national election win

By STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — Austrians voted Sunday in a national election that the far-right Freedom Party is hoping to win for the first time, tapping into anxieties about immigration, inflation, Ukraine and other concerns following recent gains for the hard right elsewhere in Europe.

Herbert Kickl, a former interior minister and longtime campaign strategist who has led the Freedom Party since 2021, wants to become Austria's new chancellor. He has used the term "Volkskanzler," or chancellor of the people, which was used by the Nazis to describe Adolf Hitler in the 1930s. Kickl has rejected the comparison.

But to become Austria's new leader, he would need a coalition partner to command a majority in the lower house of parliament — and rivals have said they won't work under Kickl.

And a win isn't certain, with recent polls pointing to a close race. They have put support for the Freedom Party at 27%, with the conservative Austrian People's Party of Chancellor Karl Nehammer on 25% and the center-left Social Democrats on 21%.

Nehammer said as he voted that "it is important from my point of view to provide stability as a responsible politician but also the political center, so that the radicals don't get a chance."

More than 6.3 million people age 16 and over are eligible to vote for the new parliament in Austria, a European Union member that has a policy of military neutrality.

Kickl has achieved a turnaround since Austria's last parliamentary election in 2019. In June, the Freedom Party narrowly won a nationwide vote for the first time in the European Parliament election, which also brought gains for other European far-right parties.

In 2019, its support slumped to 16.2% after a scandal brought down a government in which it was the junior coalition partner. Then-vice chancellor and Freedom Party leader Heinz-Christian Strache resigned following the publication of a secretly recorded video in which he appeared to offer favors to a purported Russian investor.

The far right has tapped into voter frustration over high inflation, the war in Ukraine and the Covid pandemic. It has also built on worries about migration.

In its election program, the Freedom Party calls for "remigration of uninvited foreigners," for achieving a more "homogeneous" nation by tightly controlling borders and suspending the right to asylum via an "emergency law."

Gernot Bauer, a journalist with Austrian magazine Profil who recently co-published an investigative biography of the far-right leader, said that under Kickl's leadership, the Freedom Party has moved "even further to the right." He describes Kickl's rhetoric as "aggressive" and says some of his language is deliberately provocative.

The Freedom Party also calls for an end to sanctions against Russia, is highly critical of western military aid to Ukraine and wants to bow out of the European Sky Shield Initiative, a missile defense project launched by Germany.

The leader of the Social Democrats, a party that led many of Austria's post-World War II governments, has positioned himself as the polar opposite to Kickl. Andreas Babler has ruled out governing with the far right and labeled Kickl "a threat to democracy."

While the Freedom Party has recovered, the popularity of Nehammer's People's Party, which currently leads a coalition government with the environmentalist Greens as junior partners, has declined since 2019.

During the election campaign, Nehammer portrayed his party, which has taken a tough line on immigration in recent years, as "the strong center" that will guarantee stability amid multiple crises.

But it is these crises, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and resulting rising energy prices, that have cost the conservatives support, said Peter Filzmaier, one of Austria's leading political scientists.

Under their leadership, Austria has experienced high inflation averaging 4.2% over the past 12 months,

surpassing the EU average.

The government also angered many Austrians in 2022 by becoming the first European country to introduce a coronavirus vaccine mandate, which was scrapped a few months later without ever being put into effect. And Nehammer is the third chancellor since the last election, taking office in 2021 after predecessor Sebastian Kurz — the winner in 2019 — quit politics amid a corruption investigation.

But the recent flooding caused by Storm Boris that hit Austria and other countries in Central Europe brought the environment back into the election debate and helped Nehammer slightly narrow the gap with the Freedom Party by presenting himself as a “crisis manager,” Filzmaier said.

The People’s Party is the far right’s only way into government.

Nehammer has repeatedly excluded joining a government led by Kickl, describing him as a “security risk” for the country, but hasn’t ruled out a coalition with the Freedom Party in and of itself, which would imply Kickl renouncing a position in government.

The likelihood of Kickl agreeing to such a deal if he wins the election is very low, Filzmaier said.

But should the People’s Party finish first, then a coalition between the People’s Party and the Freedom Party could happen, Filzmaier said. The most probable alternative would be a three-way alliance between the People’s Party, the Social Democrats and most likely the liberal Neos.

“It’s going to be a tight race — that’s why I absolutely want to vote,” voter Isabell Hacker said in Vienna. She said she hopes for “everything except Kickl.”

Israel-Hamas war latest: Israeli military says it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official

By The Associated Press undefined

The Israeli military said Sunday it killed Nabil Kaouk, another high-ranking Hezbollah official, a day after the Lebanese militant group confirmed the death of multiple commanders, including longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah.

This also came hours after an Israeli airstrike on northeast Lebanon killed 11 people. Israel says it’s carrying out attacks on Hezbollah targets in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the number of those displaced by the conflict from southern Lebanon has more than doubled and now stands at more than 211,000, according to the United Nations.

Hezbollah and Israel have traded near-daily strikes since the Israel-Hamas war started after the Palestinian militant group stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, sparking fears of regional war.

Here is the latest:

Israeli military says it has dismantled a Hamas tunnel in central Gaza

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military says it has uncovered and dismantled a Hamas tunnel in central Gaza that was over a kilometer (0.6 miles) long.

It said Sunday that the tunnel ran near residential buildings, and that inside were several rooms and equipment used by militants for prolonged stays.

The military released footage showing the entrance to the tunnel, a long staircase leading down and what appeared to be an iron blast door.

Hamas is believed to have built hundreds of kilometers (miles) of tunnels across Gaza to evade Israeli airstrikes. The militants have also used the tunnels to hold hostages captured in the Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war and to launch ambushes against Israeli forces.

Israel has announced the destruction of several large tunnels throughout the war.

Suez Canal revenue drops by 60%

CAIRO — Egypt’s president says its revenues from the Suez Canal have dropped by 60%, or more than \$6 billion, in recent months as attacks by Yemen’s Houthi rebels disrupt Red Sea shipping.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi spoke during a graduation ceremony Sunday at the Police Academy in Cairo.

“The ongoing developments are very serious and could lead to expanding the conflict’s theater,” he said.

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Attacks by the Iran-backed Houthis have led shipping firms to divert traffic around the Red Sea and, by extension, the Suez Canal linking it to the Mediterranean.

The Houthis say they are targeting ships linked to Israel, the United States and Britain in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza. However, many of the targeted vessels have no connection to Israel or the war.

The canal is a major source of foreign currency for Egypt's battered economy.

In July, Adm. Osama Rabie, chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, said the canal's annual revenues dropped to \$7.2 billion from \$9.4 billion the year before. He said 20,148 vessels transited through the canal in the fiscal year 2023-24, down from 25,911 the year before.

Israel says it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official

The Israeli military said it killed Nabil Kaouk, a high-ranking Hezbollah official, in a strike in a southern Beirut suburb on Saturday.

Sunday's announcement came a day after Hezbollah confirmed the killing of leader Hassan Nasrallah. There was no immediate comment from the Lebanese militant group.

Kaouk is the deputy head of Hezbollah's Central Council. He also served as Hezbollah's military commander in south Lebanon from 1995 until 2010.

In 2020, the U.S. Treasury sanctioned Kaouk and another member of Hezbollah's council, Hassan al-Baghdadi.

Israeli strikes kill at least 4 people in the Gaza Strip

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Palestinian officials say Israeli strikes have killed at least four people in the Gaza Strip.

Two people were killed in separate strikes early Sunday in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. That's according to the nearby Awda Hospital, which received the bodies. It said another six people were wounded.

In northern Gaza, first responders recovered two bodies after a strike on a house early Sunday, according to the Civil Defense, which operates under the Hamas-run government.

The Gaza Health Ministry says over 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war, more than half of them women and children. It does not say how many of those killed were militants. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostage. Around 100 captives are still being held in Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Militants killed and wounded in eastern Syria, media and war monitor say

DAMASCUS, Syria — A number of militants were killed and wounded in eastern Syria early Sunday near a strategic border crossing with Iraq in apparent airstrikes, pro-government media and an opposition war monitor reported.

Pan-Arab television network Al-Mayadeen cited unnamed sources saying that at least eight Syrians were killed in the strike by the Bou Kamal crossing in Israeli airstrikes.

It was unclear how they confirmed Israeli jets were behind the strikes.

Meanwhile, Britain-based opposition war monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said five airstrikes killed at least 15 militants, among them leaders, and wounded at least 20 others. The Observatory said the strikes targeted headquarters and warehouses in the city of Deir al-Zour and surrounding towns.

Pro-government radio station Sham FM said that prior to the blasts heard in Deir al-Zour, explosions were heard at a U.S. military base in northeastern Syria following rocket and drone attacks.

None of the reports could be independently verified.

The U.S. military's Central Command, which has launched airstrikes on Iranian military personnel and Tehran-backed militant groups in Syria's eastern Deir al-Zour province, didn't immediately return a request for comment.

The Israeli military doesn't usually acknowledge its strike on Syria. However, when it does so, it says it targets Iran-backed militants.

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Nearly 250,000 people are in shelters following Israeli strikes, Lebanese official says

BEIRUT — Hundreds of thousands of people in Lebanon have been displaced from the ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, a Lebanese cabinet minister spearheading the country's emergency response said.

Environment Minister Nasser Yassin said the government estimates that about 250,000 people have left their homes and taken refuge in government-run shelters and informal ones. However, he told the Associated Press the total number is about "four times as many directly affected and/or displaced outside the shelters."

The United Nations said that as of Friday, 211,319 people were forced to relocate, and that was before some intensive Israeli airstrikes over Beirut's southern suburbs in recent days.

The Lebanese government has converted schools and other facilities into temporary shelters. Still, many are sleeping on the streets or in public squares, as the government and non-governmental organizations try to find them places to stay.

Thousands in Iran protest Nasrallah's killing

TEHRAN, Iran — Thousands of people have gathered across Iran to protest the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike.

State TV aired footage of protests in several major cities on Sunday. At Iran's parliament, lawmakers chanted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel."

Iran helped establish Hezbollah in the 1980s and has provided the Lebanese militant group with sophisticated weaponry and training.

The airstrike that killed Nasrallah on Friday also killed Gen. Abbas Nilforushan, a senior officer in Iran's Revolutionary Guard. The Guard officially confirmed Nilforushan's death on its website Sunday, after it had been widely reported in state media the day before.

Lebanese military calls for calm

BEIRUT — In its first statement since the recent escalation with Israel and following the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, Lebanon's military called for calm among the Lebanese "at this dangerous and delicate stage."

Government officials fear that the country's deep political divisions at a time of war could rekindle sectarian strife and violence in the small Mediterranean country.

"The Israeli enemy is working to implement its destructive plans and spread division among the Lebanese," the military said.

Military vehicles have been deployed in different parts of the capital as thousands of displaced people continue moving from the south to Beirut.

Israeli airstrike kills 11 in northeast Lebanon

BEIRUT — Lebanon's state news agency says an Israeli airstrike early Sunday on a village in northeast Lebanon destroyed a home, killing 11 people.

Six of the bodies were recovered from under the rubble as the search continued for the remaining five in the village of al-Ain, reported National News Agency.

In southern Lebanon, the Islamic Risala Scout Association said five of its members were killed while performing their duties. It said four of the men killed were from the southern village of Tayr Debba while the fifth was from nearby Kabrikha.

More than 700 people have been killed in Lebanon since Sept. 23 when Israel intensified its airstrikes around the country forcing tens of thousands to flee their homes in south Lebanon, the eastern Bekaa Valley and Beirut's southern suburb known as Dahiyeh.

A missile falls in Jordan

AMMAN, Jordan — Jordan's military says a Grad missile fired from Lebanon fell in an open area without causing casualties or damage.

The missile was likely fired at Israel by Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, which has intensified its rocket attacks after its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, was killed in an Israeli airstrike on Friday.

Jordan and Israel, which share borders, signed a peace treaty in 1994. The Western-allied Arab country

also helped intercept missiles fired at Israel by Iran in April.

Jordan has been fiercely critical of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians and has repeatedly called for a cease-fire in Gaza. It has also said it will not allow its territory to become a battlefield as tensions mount between Israel and Iran.

El-Sissi warns Israeli operations threaten the region

CAIRO — Egypt's president warned that Israeli military operations in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon are pushing the region to the brink and called for international action.

Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, one of the mediators between Israel and Hamas, called for "an immediate and comprehensive cease-fire" in both Gaza and Lebanon amid an unprecedented escalation between Israel and Hezbollah. His remarks came after Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, was killed in an Israeli airstrike.

El-Sissi's comments came in a phone call late Saturday with Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati, according to a statement from the Egyptian president's office. He also gave orders to send medical and humanitarian aid to Lebanon immediately.

Along with the United States and Qatar, Egypt has for months spearheaded negotiations between Israel and Hamas to end the war in Gaza. But negotiations have repeatedly stalled amid mounting fear of an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah, an ally of Hamas. Diplomats see a cease-fire in Gaza as the best way to avert a regional war.

Pope wraps troubled visit to Belgium by praising victims and demanding abusers be judged

By NICOLE WINFIELD and RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Pope Francis demanded Sunday that sexually abusive clergy be judged and their bishops stop covering up their crimes as he ended a troubled visit to Belgium by responding to the outrage over the scandal here that has devastated the church's credibility.

"Evil must not be hidden. Evil must be brought out into the open," Francis told some 30,000 people at Belgium's sports stadium, drawing applause repeatedly as the crowd took in what he was saying.

Francis deviated from his prepared homily to respond to the meeting he held with 17 abuse survivors on Friday night, where he heard first-hand of the trauma and suffering they endured and the tone-deaf response of the church when they reported the crimes.

Belgium has had a wretched legacy of abuse and cover-up, none more symbolic of the church's hypocrisy than the case of Bruges Bishop Roger Vangheluwe. He was allowed to quietly retire in 2010 after he admitted that he had sexually abused his nephew for 13 years.

Francis only defrocked him this year — 14 years later — in a move clearly seen as finally dealing with a problem before his arrival in Belgium.

Once here, he couldn't escape the criticism. Belgium's king demanded the church work "incessantly" to clean up the scandal, and the prime minister insisted that victims' needs be placed first, in a remarkable dressing-down from the leadership of the once-staunchly Catholic country.

"In the church there is room for everyone, everyone, but everyone will be judged and there is no place for abuse. There is no place for the covering up of abuse," Francis said in his homily. "I ask the bishops not to cover up abuse. Condemn the abusers and help them to recover from this disease of abuse."

Expressions of outrage from Belgium's leaders

Francis' visit to Belgium was always going to be difficult, given the country's history of clerical sexual abuse and overall secularizing trends which have emptied its majestic cathedrals and churches.

But it's unclear if he or his entourage expected such sharp public expressions of outrage or the pointed calls for reform from Belgium's intellectual elite.

The main reason for the trip was to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the Leuven/Louvain Catholic University, the oldest Catholic university in the world and long the Vatican's academic fiefdom in Belgium.

But the rector of the Dutch campus told Francis that the abuse scandal had so harmed the church's

moral authority that it would do best to reform if it wants to regain credibility and relevance. Rector Luc Sels suggested that opening up greater roles for women – including the priesthood – and being more welcoming to LGBTQ+ Catholics would be a good place to start.

Francis heard a similar call from the Francophone campus, where students staged a reading of an articulated critique of his landmark environmental encyclical “Praised Be” in which they called for a “paradigm shift” in the way the church views women.

They noted that the encyclical virtually ignores women, cites no female theologians and contributes to women’s “invisibility” in the church and society. Women have long complained they have a second-class status in the church, barred from the priesthood and positions of power despite doing the lion’s share of the work educating the young, caring for the sick and passing on the faith.

Catholic university rebukes the pope for his views on women

Francis, an 87-year-old Argentine Jesuit, said he liked what they said. But he repeated his frequent refrain about women being the “fertile” nurturers who complement men, and that regardless “the church is woman.”

His words drew a remarkable rebuke from the Catholic university that invited him. As soon as he finished speaking, Louvain issued a statement expressing its “incomprehension and disapproval” of his views on women, which it said were “deterministic and reductive.”

“We cannot agree on his position for sure,” said rector Françoise Smets. “We are fighting against discrimination for women, and we would like women to have another role in the society and in the church also.”

Valentine Hendrix, a 22-year-old international relations masters student at Louvain, told reporters that students had hoped that Francis might respond positively to their appeal. While others applauded at the end of Francis’ remarks, she refused and said his comments on abortion and women’s role meant that he had “given up on a committed dialogue.”

“We had expectations, even if we saw that he disappointed us in just a few hours,” she said.

Francis has made several reforms during his 11-year pontificate, allowing women to serve as acolytes, giving them the vote in his periodic synods, or meetings, and appointing several women to high-ranking positions in the Vatican. He has said women must have greater decision-making roles in the church.

But he has ruled out ordaining women as priests and has refused so far to budge on demands to allow women to serve as deacons, who perform many of the same tasks as priests. He has taken the women’s issue off the table for debate at the Vatican’s upcoming three-week synod because it’s too thorny to be dealt with in such a short time. He has punted it to theologians and canonists to chew over into next year.

Could a doping probe strip Salt Lake City of the 2034 Olympics?

The IOC president says it’s unlikely

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — In his first visit back to Utah since awarding Salt Lake City the 2034 Winter Games, the International Olympic Committee president sought to ease worries that the city could lose its second Olympics if organizers don’t fulfill an agreement to play peacemaker between anti-doping authorities.

Thomas Bach on Saturday downplayed the gravity of a termination clause the IOC inserted into Salt Lake City’s host contract in July that threatens to pull the 2034 Games if the U.S. government does not respect “the supreme authority” of the World Anti-Doping Agency.

Olympic officials also extracted assurances from Utah politicians and U.S. Olympic leaders that they would urge the federal government to back down from an investigation into a suspected doping coverup.

Utah bid leaders, already in Paris for the signing ceremony, hastily agreed to the IOC’s conditions to avoid delaying the much anticipated announcement.

Bach characterized the contract language Saturday as a demonstration of the IOC’s confidence that the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency will fall in line with WADA. He implied that WADA, not the Olympic committee, would be responsible in the unlikely occasion that Salt Lake City loses the Winter Games.

“This clause is the advice to our friends in Salt Lake that a third party could make a decision which could

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have an impact on our partnership," Bach said.

Tensions have grown between WADA and its American counterpart as the U.S. government has given itself greater authority to crack down on doping schemes at international events that involve American athletes. U.S. officials have used that power to investigate WADA itself after the global regulator declined to penalize nearly two dozen Chinese swimmers who tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

With its contract curveball, the IOC attempted to use its little leverage to ensure that WADA would be the lead authority on doping cases in Olympic sports when the U.S. hosts in 2028 and 2034.

Salt Lake City's eagerness to become a repeat host — and part of a possible permanent rotation of Winter Olympic cities — is a lifeline for the IOC as climate change and high operational costs have reduced the number of cities willing and able to welcome the Winter Games. The Utah capital was the only candidate for 2034 after Olympic officials gave it exclusive negotiating rights last year.

Utah bid leaders should have the upper hand, so why did they agree to the IOC's demands?

Gene Sykes, chairman of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, said he doesn't view the late change to the host contract as a strong-arm tactic, but rather a "reasonable accommodation" that secured the bid for Utah and brought him to the table as a mediator between agencies.

He expects the end result will be a stronger anti-doping system for all.

"It would have been incredibly disturbing if the Games had not been awarded at that time," Sykes told The Associated Press. "There were 150 people in the Utah delegation who'd traveled to Paris for the single purpose of being there when the Games were awarded. So this allowed that to happen in a way that we still feel very confident does not put Utah at any real risk of losing the Games."

"The IOC absolutely does not want to lose Utah in 2034," he added.

Sykes is involved in an effort to help reduce tensions between WADA and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, while making sure the U.S. stands firm in its commitment to the world anti-doping system that WADA administers.

The White House's own director of national drug control policy, Rahul Gupta, sits on WADA's executive committee, but the global agency this month has tried to bar Gupta from meetings about the Chinese swimmers case.

For Fraser Bullock, the president and CEO of Salt Lake City's bid committee, any friction between regulators and government officials has not been felt on a local level. His decades-long friendship with Bach and other visiting Olympic leaders was on full display Saturday as he toured them around the Utah Olympic Park in Park City.

"There's no tension — just excitement about the future of the Games and the wonderful venues and people of Utah," Bullock told the AP. "We are 100%."

At least 129 are dead in floods and landslides in Nepal

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Rescuers in Nepal recovered dozens of bodies from buses and other vehicles that were buried in landslides near the capital Kathmandu, as the death toll from flooding rose to at least 129 with dozens missing, officials said Sunday.

The weather improved on Sunday following three days of monsoon rains, and rescue and clean-up efforts were underway. Kathmandu remained cut off Sunday as three highways out of the city were blocked by landslides.

Rescuers retrieved 14 bodies overnight from two buses that were headed to Kathmandu when a landslide buried them. Another 23 bodies were dug out from vehicles Sunday on the same spot, about 16 kilometers (10 miles) from Kathmandu, and workers searched for others who may have been buried.

A statement by the Nepal police said another 86 people were injured in the flooding and landslides while 62 are missing. The death toll was expected to rise as reports come in from villages across the mountain-

ous country.

Residents in the southern part of Kathmandu, which was inundated on Saturday, were cleaning up houses as water levels began to recede. At least 34 people were killed in Kathmandu, which was the hardest hit by flooding.

Police and soldiers were assisting with rescue efforts, while heavy equipment was used to clear the landslides from the roads. The government announced it was closing schools and colleges across Nepal for the next three days.

The monsoon season began in June and usually ends by mid-September.

Appeals stretch 4 decades for a prisoner convicted on little police evidence

By MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

NEW KENSINGTON, Pa. (AP) — The four men who put Steve Szarewicz away for murder all changed their stories at one time or another, yet Szarewicz still sits behind bars. That's where he has been for almost 43 years.

A jury convicted him of killing Billy Merriwether, 25, who was shot twice in the back of the head and once in the chest, his body left facedown off a country road in western Pennsylvania on a rainy February morning in 1981.

There were no fingerprints, no eyewitness testimony and no DNA evidence linking Szarewicz to the scene. Investigators never found the murder weapons. Instead, the case rested on the words of four jailhouse informants who all testified that Szarewicz confessed to them.

Three of the four recanted: one in an interview with a famed newspaper reporter; one in a written statement to defense investigators; and another to Szarewicz's lawyer, who signed an affidavit recounting the exchange. Another inmate told the court the fourth witness against Szarewicz fabricated his story to settle a score.

Nevertheless, a Pittsburgh jury in 1983 found the informants' testimony believable enough to convict Szarewicz, despite qualms they voiced to the judge about the lack of physical evidence.

Today the conviction is still on appeal, with Szarewicz asking the state Superior Court to reduce his life sentence to 10 to 20 years, effectively setting him free.

The Pennsylvania Innocence Project has taken a keen interest in the case, particularly because of how heavily prosecutors leaned on the jailhouse informants' testimony. A national database of more than 3,400 exonerations since 1989 includes more than 200 in which jailhouse informants played a role in the wrongful convictions.

'On the altar of a jury'

Prosecutors' use of informants has undergone "some sea changes in the last 40 years," driven by concerns about their reliability, said Marissa Boyers Bluestine with the Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice at the University of Pennsylvania's law school.

"If you have a strong enough case by the prosecutor, they don't want to use an informant, that's not their 'go-to' evidence," she said.

Complicating matters for Szarewicz, Pennsylvania has one of the nation's strictest frameworks for criminal appeals and post-conviction procedures, said Liz DeLosa, a lawyer with the Pennsylvania Innocence Project who has spent years investigating Szarewicz's case.

For instance, the state has no way to waive procedural issues, even in the face of "compelling evidence of actual innocence," she said. Her organization believes there are reasons to question the integrity of the conviction and is considering whether to formally represent Szarewicz.

When courts do reverse convictions based on informant testimony, it's usually because prosecutors made some agreement with the witness and didn't reveal it, said professor Bruce Antkowiak, a lawyer at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and a former defense attorney and prosecutor.

"Our court system places the issue of credibility on the altar of a jury," Antkowiak said. "And if a jury

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heard these witnesses and made the determination that they were truthful, appellate courts are loathe to make any change at all."

A dead man's final days: nervous and broke

Merriwether's troubles were piling up when he was killed. Unemployed and living on public assistance, he was known as someone who "would fight at the drop of a hat," an acquaintance told detectives at the time.

Three weeks before, a man who said Merriwether had bullied him stabbed Merriwether several times in a bar fight, landing him in the hospital. Merriwether himself was charged with beating a woman during a convenience store robbery. And there were reports that some guys in his New Kensington neighborhood with ties to organized crime were after him because they thought he had stolen from them. He was worried enough to spend part of his last days at target practice with a handgun.

Merriwether had trouble in his romantic life, too. Both he and his girlfriend were married to other people. And his girlfriend's father — a now deceased local mobster named Mitch Roditis — was ticked off that Merriwether, who was Black, was dating his white daughter.

The day Merriwether was killed, a friend told police, he came to her house before dawn, nervous, broke and saying he needed \$1,500 by 9 a.m.

Around 7 that morning, a dog walker about 23 miles (37 kilometers) northeast of Pittsburgh reported hearing a single blast that sounded like a gunshot. Moments later, three more rang out. A nearby road crew saw a car speed by with two men in it. They pulled off, then drove away, leaving Merriwether's dead body behind.

A clean polygraph and a jury with questions

Prosecutors laid out a simple theory of the crime: it had been a \$5,000 murder-for-hire mob hit. They argued Roditis, who was never charged, got Szarewicz and two other men to kill Merriwether over him dating Roditis' daughter.

Szarewicz, who knew Merriwether from the neighborhood where they grew up, experienced a turbulent childhood after his father had died while he was in grade school. By the time he was accused of the killing at age 23, Szarewicz had an arrest record that included armed robbery, receiving stolen property, gun charges and drug offenses.

The murder case "was no prize," the prosecutor, former Allegheny County Assistant District Attorney Chris Conrad, recalled in an interview this spring. "It wasn't one where you walk in and you get confessions and fingerprints and just great physical evidence. There was no physical evidence. You had to fight to find a motive."

A polygraph examiner concluded Szarewicz told the truth when he said he wasn't involved in the murder, but polygraphs aren't admissible in court. Still, Szarewicz says he would take another one today.

In court, he testified that he was staying with one of his sisters and her boyfriend just outside Greensburg, Pennsylvania, some 30 miles (48 kilometers) away when Merriwether was killed. The couple backed him up.

But retired steelworker Vince Rattay, a former member of the jury who is now in his mid-90s, recalled that Szarewicz's attitude on the stand hurt his defense. "Maybe it would have been better if they didn't have him as a witness," Rattay said in a phone interview in May. "He was cocky."

And jurors had another qualm about the case: they asked the trial judge if they could convict someone without physical evidence. He said they would have to be more specific.

When the guilty verdict came down, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported, Szarewicz said: "God in heaven knows I am innocent."

A long trail of appeals going nowhere

Szarewicz has steadfastly maintained his innocence, launching one appeal after another, sometimes handled by lawyers but often representing himself. He has hit dead ends over and over, losing a string of lower court decisions and being turned away by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Much of Szarewicz's focus has been on the jailhouse informants, who detectives housed together for a time shortly before Szarewicz was charged. Three of those four witnesses were related to one another.

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In September of 1982, witness Dave Cannon wrote a letter saying it wouldn't be right for Szarewicz to go to prison and that Cannon had been willing to testify only because he thought it could help him get out of jail. Three days later, Cannon met with a defense investigator and said Szarewicz never told him anything about being involved with Merriwether's murder.

At trial, Cannon changed his story again, testifying that he wrote the letter because he was afraid of Szarewicz. Contacted by The Associated Press by phone in March, Cannon stood by his statement that Szarewicz confessed to him inside the Allegheny County Jail.

"The bottom line is he did it," Cannon said. "He thought it made him look (like) a big wheel. I thought he was a punk."

And if he were asked to testify again? "I won't cooperate at all," Cannon said. "It's been too long. I now have memory problems."

Key witnesses recant their stories

Eight months after Szarewicz's conviction, another one of the informants who testified against him, Ernie Bevilacqua, wrote in an affidavit: "I lied about everything I said about Steve and I would go to court to help him and to say what really happened." He later reiterated the sentiment in an interview with investigative reporter Bill Moushey in the visiting room of Western State Penitentiary. Moushey's notes say Bevilacqua told him "it was all a big set up from the start."

Years later, when a court-appointed investigator asked Bevilacqua about the exchange, Bevilacqua changed his story again. Like Cannon, he said he recanted only because he was afraid of Szarewicz, his friends and fellow prisoners.

Approached by an AP reporter at his home in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, in April, Bevilacqua said he also has memory problems and ordered the reporter away. He tore up a letter seeking comment and called police to complain.

The third informant who flip-flopped in Szarewicz's case was Rick Bowen.

About six months after Szarewicz was convicted, Bowen approached defense attorney Pat Thomassey in the Westmoreland County courthouse. Thomassey later signed an affidavit saying Bowen "indicated to me that, in fact, he had lied in the case against Steven Szarewicz in order to make a deal for himself and to avoid being prosecuted for various crimes." Bowen, who died in Missouri in 1997, later denied the exchange.

The fourth informant to testify against Szarewicz, Kenny Knight, did not respond to multiple messages left with family members or to a note left at his home in April. When police first interviewed him about Merriwether's murder, he didn't implicate Szarewicz, even when asked. He said later he feared Szarewicz and that he withheld information because he did not want to get involved.

At a post-trial hearing, Knight invoked his Fifth Amendment constitutional right to avoid self-incrimination and refused to testify.

Witness credibility was 'low as a snake's belly'

Thomas Fitzgerald, the lead detective in Merriwether's murder, said in April he is convinced the informants told the truth when they implicated Szarewicz.

"It's the jury's decision," Fitzgerald said. "Bring back the same jury and ask them again."

But in a 1992 court proceeding — some nine years after Szarewicz's conviction — a judge declared the witnesses' credibility "about as low as a snake's belly." Prosecutor Maria Copetas did not defend them.

"There is an extraordinary amount of evidence on the record which indicates that in fact (they) have recanted at some point, and then recanted their recantations, and then refused to testify in court," Copetas told the judge.

That was around the time, Szarewicz said, that his defense lawyer offered a guilty plea to third-degree murder, even though Szarewicz still maintained his innocence.

"At least I would have had a life," he later wrote to the AP. But he says the district attorney declined.

Prosecutors and the courts stand firm

Allegheny County prosecutors have long fought to uphold Szarewicz's conviction, and the courts have agreed.

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In the most recent rulings, Allegheny County Judge Kevin Sasinoski said Szarewicz's most recent claims weren't sufficient to win a post-trial appeal. Szarewicz said he had discovered post-trial evidence that Bowen got a deal from prosecutors in exchange for his testimony and that Bevilacqua had changed his story to a court-appointed investigator.

Allegheny County District Attorney Stephen Zappala's office subsequently told an appeals court that "recantation evidence is 'notoriously unreliable', and if it involves an admission of perjury, 'it is the least reliable source of proof.'"

Szarewicz also recently filed his first clemency petition, but even he acknowledges his claim of actual innocence may be a problem. The Pardons Board likes to see contrition.

The Innocence Project wrote Zappala a 14-page letter in September 2021 that outlined their concerns and asked if prosecutors would review the case and open their files. The office's response was that the matter would be reviewed.

Zappala and his team declined multiple requests for comment from the AP.

Szarewicz's sister, Suzy Patton, says she would welcome him to live in her Pittsburgh area home if he ever gets released. She believes he is innocent and thinks he would not be in prison if the family had money.

These days Szarewicz spends time working on his own case and sometimes helping other inmates with theirs. He has a janitorial job that pays about \$75 a month, walks regularly and participates in Bible study.

And from his shared cell at the State Correctional Institution-Houtzdale, he hopes for a break.

"If I did not have my faith, I am sure I would most likely not be alive to fight another day," Szarewicz wrote a few years ago. "Is there anybody out there who is appalled by this clear abuse of the system? If so, help, please?"

Israel says it has killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official in an airstrike

By MELANIE LIDMAN and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military said Sunday that it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official in an airstrike as the Lebanese militant group was reeling from a string of devastating blows and the killing of its overall leader, Hassan Nasrallah.

The military said Nabil Kaouk, the deputy head of Hezbollah's Central Council, was killed on Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, and it was not known where the strike took place.

Several senior Hezbollah commanders have been killed in Israeli strikes in recent weeks, including founding members of the group who had evaded death or detention for decades and were close to Nasrallah himself.

Hezbollah has also been targeted by a sophisticated attack on its pagers and walkie-talkies that was widely blamed on Israel. A wave of Israeli airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon has killed at least 1,030 people — including 156 women and 87 children — in less than two weeks, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from their homes in Lebanon by the latest strikes. The government estimates that around 250,000 are in shelters, with three to four times as many staying with friends or relatives, or camping out on the streets, Environment Minister Nasser Yassin told The Associated Press.

Hezbollah has continued to fire rockets and missiles into northern Israel, but most have been intercepted or fallen in open areas, causing few casualties and only scattered damage.

Kaouk was a veteran member of Hezbollah going back to the 1980s and served as Hezbollah's military commander in southern Lebanon during the 2006 war with Israel. He often appeared in local media, where he would comment on politics and security developments, and he gave eulogies at the funerals of senior militants. The United States had announced sanctions against him in 2020.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack out

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of Gaza triggered the war there. Hezbollah and Hamas are allies that consider themselves part of an Iran-backed "Axis of Resistance" against Israel.

Israel has responded with waves of airstrikes, and the conflict has steadily ratcheted up to the brink of all-out war, raising fears of a region-wide conflagration.

Israel says it is determined to return some 60,000 of its citizens to communities in the north that were evacuated nearly a year ago. Hezbollah has said it will only halt its rocket fire if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which has proven elusive despite months of indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas led by the United States, Qatar and Egypt.

Maya Rudolph as Harris and Dana Carvey as Biden open the 50th season of 'Saturday Night Live'

NEW YORK (AP) — "Saturday Night Live" began its 50th season with a parade of former co-stars, including Maya Rudolph as Vice President Kamala Harris, Andy Samberg as her husband Doug Emhoff and Dana Carvey as President Joe Biden.

"We've got to stay focused," Rudolph-as-Harris said at a mock rally in the show's cold open. "If we win, together, we can end the drama-la and the trauma-la and go relax in our pajama-las."

After bringing out running mate Tim Walz, played by comedian and actor Jim Gaffigan, she invited Samberg-as-Emhoff to the stage and then, almost as an afterthought, Biden, played by the oldest of the group, the 69-year-old Carvey.

"A lot of people forget I'm president, including me," said Carvey, best known on the show for playing President George H.W. Bush in the late 1980s.

Rudolph and Carvey jointly delivered the "Live from New York, it's Saturday night" that launched season 50 of the sketch comedy institution.

Rudolph's return to play Harris — she won an Emmy for playing her previously — had been reported, but it was not certain when she would appear. The guest spots from Carvey, Samberg and Gaffigan were all surprises.

"Designing Women" star Jean Smart, fresh off winning her sixth Emmy for her lead role in "Hacks," was host, a role the 73-year-old has somehow never played in a four-decade career.

"I remember watching the first episode of 'SNL' and thinking, 'someday I'm going to host that show,'" Smart said in her opening monologue. "And this is the first Saturday that fit my schedule."

That first episode came on Oct. 11, 1975, with Lorne Michaels at the helm, just as he is now.

George Carlin hosted and the nation got its first dose of the Not Ready for Prime Time Players: Chevy Chase, John Belushi, Gilda Radner, Dan Akroyd, Jane Curtin, Laraine Newman and Garrett Morris.

There were two musical guests — Billy Preston and Janis Ian — playing two songs apiece, the norm in the early days.

The country singer and rapper Jelly Roll had the music role to himself Saturday, singing his songs "Liar" and "Sober." Like Smart, he was a first-timer.

Smart introduced Jelly Roll with her "Hacks" co-star Hannah Einbinder, the daughter of original cast member Newman.

That debut show is documented and reenacted in the newly released Jason Reitman film "Saturday Night," part of a wave of reflection and celebration the show is getting on the cusp of its 50th anniversary.

Despite the showy guest stars on this Saturday night, regular cast members took on the bulk of the show, which quickly settled into its regular routine.

James Austin Johnson was back playing Donald Trump at his own rally, saying he wanted Biden as an opponent instead of Harris.

"We miss Joe Biden, folks," Johnson's Trump said. "What we wouldn't give to have him stand next to me and be old."

Colin Hanks and Michael Che returned for another season of the mock-news "Weekend Update."

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"There were so many insane political stories this summer and everyone kept asking, 'Are you are you so bummed you aren't on the air right now?'" Jost said to open the segment. "And I was like, 'I have a feeling there's going to be more that happens when we get back.'"

Rudolph, Carvey, Gaffigan and Samberg joined Smart, Jelly Roll and the cast on stage for the traditional sign-off.

Upcoming episodes are scheduled to feature host Nate Bargatze with musical guest Coldplay, Ariana Grande with Stevie Nicks, Michael Keaton with Billie Eilish and John Mulaney with Chappell Roan.

Those shows will lead up to a three-hour primetime special on Feb. 16 that will serve as the official 50th season celebration. It's sure to feature a wide range of the many stars the show has spawned, including Bill Murray, Eddie Murphy, Billy Crystal, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Robert Downey Jr., Mike Myers, Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, Tina Fey, Amy Poehler and Will Ferrell.

Climate change and harsh weather in France bring challenges to Chablis wine country

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

LIGNORELLES, France (AP) — On a brisk late September morning in the heart of Chablis wine country, grape pickers haul large and heavy buckets over their shoulders, drenched in sweat as they climb the very steep slope of the Vau de Vey vineyard.

It's the final day of the harvest at the Domaine Roland Lavantureux winery, and workers are handpicking the last of the prized Chardonnay grapes that will eventually be transformed into the bright and high-end Premier Cru that is bottled by the estate.

But wine lovers around the world may struggle to get their hands on the 2024 "millesime" — wine that comes from a single year's harvest. It will be available in smaller quantities than usual.

Much of France's wine country faced one of the wettest years on record in 2024 so far amid a changing climate, after years of challenges to vineyards and wine quality caused by drought and heat. At the Lavantureux estate, the picking lasted just nine days — about half the usual time — after a year of unpredictably harsh weather marked by frost, hail, record rainfall and the spread of a dangerous fungus that has left Chablis growers on edge.

"I have been working here since 2010. This is my most difficult year," says winemaker David Lavantureux, who follows in the footsteps of his father Roland, a winemaker himself. "And all the old-timers will tell you the same thing. It's been a very difficult year because the weather has been so unpredictable. We have not been spared a single thing."

The ordeal began in April with the frost. Then in May, a double hailstorm pummeled the region. Then came relentless rain, right up to the harvest. According to the Burgundy wine federation, some 1,000 hectares (nearly 2,500 acres) of vines in the Chablis country were affected by the May storm. And the excess moisture allowed a destructive mildew fungus to thrive.

Disease devastates the vineyard

Once entrenched, the disease causes huge crop losses and can also affect wine quality. Together with his brother Arnaud, David fought hard to try and control mildew with various treatments, which were washed away by the rain and didn't prove effective.

"On our estate, we're looking at losses of 60 to 65%," David Lavantureux said. "It's going to be a low-yield year."

The weather impact wasn't confined to the Lavantureux estate. Wet conditions across France have wreaked havoc on many wine-growing regions this year. Mildew, combined with episodes of frost and hail, have reduced overall production. The French ministry of agriculture estimates that it will amount to 39.3 million hectoliters, below both 2023 levels (-18%) and the average for the past five years (-11%).

"It's been a very tough year, both physically and mentally," Arnaud says. "We're relieved the harvest is over. I'm exhausted."

The challenges of this year will inevitably influence the wines produced at the family winery, resulting in

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a 2024 vintage with distinct characteristics.

"Balances are not at all the same," adds Arnaud. "There's more acidity. Maturity is less optimal. But the goal is to craft the wine so that, in the end, the balance is as perfect as possible."

Adapting to a changing climate

Located in the northern part of the Bourgogne region, the vineyards of Chablis have traditionally benefited from a favorable climate — cold winters, hot summers and annual rainfall between 650-700 millimeters (25-27 inches).

But climate change is altering those conditions, bringing unseasonably mild weather, more abundant rainfall, and recurrent spring frosts that were less common in the past.

The frost damage is particularly frustrating. A similar phenomenon hit French vineyards in recent years, leading to big financial losses. And scientists believe the damaging 2021 frost was made more likely by climate change.

"There was a period when we thought that with global warming setting in, Chablis would be safe from frost," David Lavantureux says. "And finally, over the last 15 years, it's come back even stronger."

To adapt, winemakers have been adopting creative solutions. Cutting the vines later helps delay bud burst and reduce the vulnerability to late frost, while keeping a larger foliage above the fruit shields the grapes from the scorching sun in hot summers.

During frost threats, many growers use expensive methods such as lighting candles in the vineyards. They also install electric lines to warm the vines, or spray water on the buds to create a thin ice layer that ensures the blossom's temperature remains around freezing point but doesn't dip much lower.

Throughout the Burgundy region, anti-hail devices have also been deployed in a bid to lessen the intensity of hailstorms.

"It helps reduce risk, but it's never 100% protection," David Lavantureux says. "We saw that again this year with several hailstorms, two of which were particularly severe."

Looking ahead

Fortunately for the Lavantureux family, two very good years in 2022 and 2023 should help mitigate the financial losses induced by the reduced 2024 harvest as international demand for Chablis remains solid, especially in the United States.

In June, the Burgundy wine association said that Chablis wine exports to the U.S. reached 3 million bottles, generating 368 million euros (\$410 million), a 19% increase compared to the previous year.

"We've put this harvest behind us," says Arnaud Lavantureux "Now it's time to think on the next one."

At least 64 dead after Helene's deadly march across the Southeast

By STEPHEN SMITH, KATE PAYNE and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

PERRY, Fla. (AP) — Massive rains from powerful Hurricane Helene left people stranded, without shelter and awaiting rescue, as the cleanup began from a tempest that killed at least 64 people, caused widespread destruction across the U.S. Southeast and knocked out power to millions of people.

"I've never seen so many people homeless as what I have right now," said Janalea England of Steinhatchee, Florida, a small river town along the state's rural Big Bend, as she turned her commercial fish market into a storm donation site for friends and neighbors, many of whom couldn't get insurance on their homes.

Helene blew ashore in Florida's Big Bend region as a Category 4 hurricane late Thursday with winds of 140 mph (225 kph).

From there, it quickly moved through Georgia, where Gov. Brian Kemp said Saturday that it "looks like a bomb went off" after viewing splintered homes and debris-covered highways from the air. Weakened, Helene then soaked the Carolinas and Tennessee with torrential rains, sending creeks and rivers over their banks and straining dams.

Western North Carolina was isolated because of landslides and flooding that forced the closure of Interstate 40 and other roads. All those closures delayed the start of the East Tennessee State University

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football game against The Citadel because the Buccaneers' drive to Charleston, South Carolina, took 16 hours.

There have been hundreds of water rescues, none more dramatic than in rural Unicoi County in East Tennessee, where dozens of patients and staff were plucked by helicopter from a hospital rooftop Friday. And the rescues continued into the following day in Buncombe County, North Carolina, where part of Asheville was under water.

"To say this caught us off guard would be an understatement," said Quentin Miller, the county sheriff.

Asheville resident Mario Moraga said it was "heartbreaking" to see the damage in the Biltmore Village neighborhood and neighbors have been going house to house to check on each other and offer support.

"There's no cell service here. There's no electricity," he said.

While there have been deaths in the county, Emergency Services Director Van Taylor Jones said he wasn't ready to report specifics, partially because downed cell towers hindered efforts to contact next of kin. Relatives put out desperate pleas for help on Facebook.

The storm, now a post-tropical cyclone, was expected to hover over the Tennessee Valley on Saturday and Sunday, the National Hurricane Center said.

It unleashed the worst flooding in a century in North Carolina. One community, Spruce Pine, was doused with over 2 feet (0.6 meters) of rain from Tuesday through Saturday.

And in Atlanta, 11.12 inches (28.24 centimeters) of rain fell over 48 hours, the most the city has seen over two days since record keeping began in 1878.

President Joe Biden said Saturday that Helene's devastation has been "overwhelming" and pledged to send help. He also approved a disaster declaration for North Carolina, making federal funding available for affected individuals.

With at least 25 killed in South Carolina, Helene is the deadliest tropical cyclone for the state since Hurricane Hugo killed 35 people when it came ashore just north of Charleston in 1989. Deaths also have been reported in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

Moody's Analytics said it expects \$15 billion to \$26 billion in property damage. AccuWeather's preliminary estimate of the total damage and economic loss from Helene in the U.S. is between \$95 billion and \$110 billion.

Evacuations began before the storm hit and continued as lakes overtopped dams, including one in North Carolina that forms a lake featured in the movie "Dirty Dancing." Helicopters were used to rescue some people from flooded homes.

Among the 11 confirmed deaths in Florida were nine people who drowned in their homes in a mandatory evacuation area on the Gulf Coast in Pinellas County, Sheriff Bob Gualtieri said.

None of the victims were from Taylor County, which is where the storm made landfall. It came ashore near the mouth of the Aucilla River, about 20 miles (30 kilometers) northwest of where Hurricane Idalia hit last year at nearly the same ferocity.

Taylor County is in Florida's Big Bend, went years without taking a direct hit from a hurricane. But after Idalia and two other storms in a little over a year, the area is beginning to feel like a hurricane superhighway.

"It's bringing everybody to reality about what this is now with disasters," said John Berg, 76, a resident of Steinhatchee, a small fishing town and weekend getaway.

Climate change has exacerbated conditions that allow such storms to thrive, rapidly intensifying in warming waters and turning into powerful cyclones sometimes in a matter of hours.

Helene was the eighth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which began June 1. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above-average season this year because of record-warm ocean temperatures.

A tiny tribe is getting pushback for betting big on a \$600M casino in California's wine country

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — For decades a small, landless tribe in Northern California has been on a mission to get land, open a casino and tap into the gaming market enjoyed by so many other tribes that earn millions of dollars annually.

The Koi Nation's chances of owning a Las Vegas-style casino seemed impossible until a federal court ruling in 2019 cleared the way for the tiny tribe to find a financial partner to buy land and place it into a trust to make it eligible for a casino.

Now the tribe of 96 members has teamed up with the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, which owns the biggest casino in the world, and is waiting for U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to decide whether the 68-acre (27-hectare) parcel the tribe bought for \$12.3 million in Sonoma County in 2021 is put into trust.

Placing the land into trust would allow the Koi to move closer to building a \$600 million casino and resort on prime real estate in the heart of Northern California's wine country.

The decision comes as the U.S. government tries to atone for its history of dispossessing Indigenous people of their land, in part through a federal legal process that goes beyond reinstating ancestral lands and allows a tribe to put land under trust if it can prove "a significant historical connection to the land."

The Koi Nation, a Southeastern Pomo tribe whose ancestors lived in Northern California for thousands of years, faces mounting opposition from other tribes and even California Gov. Gavin Newsom over its plans for the Shiloh Resort and Casino, which would include a 2,500-slot machine casino and 400-room hotel with spa and pool.

If approved, the casino would be built near Windsor, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) north of San Francisco, near two other Native American casinos a few miles away: Graton Resort and Casino in Rohnert Park and River Rock Casino in Geyserville.

The money generated would allow tribal members a better life in one of the country's most expensive regions, including educational opportunities for young tribe members, said Dino Beltran, Vice Chairman of the Koi Nation's Tribal Council.

"It has taken us years to be on the same playing field as every other tribe in the United States and now the same tribes that have established themselves are against us. It's a very sad thing," Beltran said.

Among the most vocal critics of the Koi Nation's project is Greg Sarris, chairman of Graton Rancheria, a federation of Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo people with more than 1,500 members. The tribe's casino is the biggest in the Bay Area and is undergoing a \$1 billion expansion.

Sarris, who last year was appointed by Newsom to the University of California Board of Regents, said the Koi Nation are Southeastern Pomo people whose ancestral home is in Lake County, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northeast of the project site.

The tribe, Sarris said, is not linguistically, culturally or historically connected to Sonoma County and he accused the tribe of cherry-picking land that already draws tourists.

"They are claiming that part of their deep historical connection is they had a family member in the early 20th century who lived in Sonoma County," Sarris scoffed.

The Indian Gaming Regulation Act, enacted by Congress in 1988, sets rules for how and where Native American tribes can operate casinos, and generally limits them to ancestral lands that have been returned to the tribe.

But the law also makes a "restored lands" exception for federally recognized tribes that do not have a reservation — or rancheria, as they are called in California — to build a casino outside their ancestral land if the tribe can show historical and modern connections to the area where the gambling facility will be located. The land also has to be near where a significant number of tribal members reside.

"Generally speaking, tribes cannot game on any land that is taken into trust after 1988 but there are important exceptions to that general prohibition that are meant to be fair to tribes that did not have land

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in 1988," said Kathryn Rand, an expert on tribal gaming law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas's International Center for Gaming Regulation.

Before white colonizers arrived in California, Koi Nation's ancestors lived on an island in Lake County and traded with other tribes in Northern California, according to the tribe's website.

In 1916, the U.S. government approved land in Lake County for Koi Nation's rancheria about 28 miles (45 kilometers) north of the proposed casino site. The land was eventually declared uninhabitable by the Bureau of Indian Affairs because of its rocky terrain and many Koi families moved south to neighboring Sonoma County, mainly to Sebastopol and Santa Rosa, where the tribe is now headquartered.

Four decades later, the federal government took that land and sold it for an airport, leaving the tribe landless. After a lengthy court battle, a federal judge in 2019 ruled the Koi Nation had the right to pursue buying land for a casino.

Michael Anderson, a Koi Nation attorney, said a historic trail used by the tribe from the Clear Lake basin to Bodega Bay, on Sonoma County's Pacific Coast, runs through a portion of the property, which supports the legal requirement of having a "significant historical connection to the land."

Anderson said their legal case is strong. But, "the politics is a whole different thing," he added.

Sarris, whose casino gives millions to small, non-gaming tribes and has become a major donor to California politicians, said the Koi Nation has previously tried to get land under trust to open a casino in Solano and Alameda Counties — both in the San Francisco Bay Area — and accused the tribe of "reservation shopping."

Anderson said the term was offensive and Sarris is simply trying to protect his lucrative casino from competition.

"This is about market protection, that's the heart of it," Anderson said.

Newsom and local politicians also oppose the project along with the Dry Creek Band of Pomo Indians, which operates River Rock Casino.

Newsom's office sent a letter last month to Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Bryan Newland urging him not to move forward with the Shiloh casino project and another proposed casino in the Bay Area, saying the governor is concerned the department is not considering other sites for the casinos and approving them would "stretch the limits of the 'restored lands' exception."

The department is weighing three other land trust applications under the "restored lands" exception, including one by the Scotts Valley Tribe that wants to build a casino in Solano County. In Oregon, the Coquille Indian Tribe wants to open a casino in Medford, about 170 miles (273 kilometers) south of its tribal headquarters and closer to the California border.

Casino-owning tribes are pushing back on both. The Guidiville Rancheria tribe in Northern California has applied but has not yet identified land for their project, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Haaland will consider several factors in making her decision, including opposition to the casinos, said Steve Light, an expert on tribal gaming policy at the UNLV International Center for Gaming Regulation.

But the secretary also will take into account whether the casino will help with "tribal self-determination, tribal self-governance, and tribal economic development, job creation and resources for the tribe," he said.

Of the 574 federally recognized tribes, 110 are in California. According to the American Gaming Association, there are 87 tribal casinos in the state, making California the largest tribal gaming market in the country.

"With 40 million people in California, this is presumably still an untapped market, but one that is increasingly competitive," Light said.

Hospital clowns bring joy to young Ukrainian cancer patients who survived Russian missile attack

By ILLIA NOVIKOV and ANTON SHTUKA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Their costumes are put on with surgical precision: Floppy hats, foam noses, bright clothes, and a ukulele with multicolored nylon strings.

Moments later, in a beige hospital ward normally filled with the beeping sounds of medical machinery, there are bursts of giggles and silly singing.

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As Ukraine's medical facilities come under pressure from intensifying attacks in the war against Russia's full-scale invasion, volunteer hospital clowns are duck-footing their way in to provide some badly needed moments of joy for hospitalized children.

The "Bureau of Smiles and Support" (BUP) is a hospital clowning initiative established in 2023 by Olha Bulkina, 35, and Maryna Berdar, 39, who already had more than five years of hospital clowning experience between them. "Our mission is to let childhood continue regardless of the circumstances," Bulkina, told The Associated Press.

BUP took on new significance following a Russian missile strike on Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv in July. The attack on Ukraine's largest pediatric facility forced the evacuation of dozens of young patients, including those with cancer, to other hospitals in the capital – and the clowns did not stand aside.

Together with first responders, Berdar and Bulkina helped with clearing the rubble after the attack and attended to the children who were relocated to other medical facilities. But even for them, the real heroes there were young patients.

"When the children were evacuated from Okhmatdyt after the missile attack, many of them were in extremely difficult medical conditions, but even in this situation they tried to support the adults," said Berdar, recalling the events after the strike.

The hospital clowns, who use traditional clown noses and bright costumes, are now visiting multiple hospitals in the Ukrainian capital region, including the National Cancer Institute, where patient numbers have surged after the Okhmatdyt attack.

Tetiana Nosova, 22, and Vladyslava Kulinich, 22, are volunteer hospital clowns who go by Zhuzha and Lala and joined BUP more than a year ago. For them, hospital clowning is as challenging as it is rewarding.

"I volunteer so that children don't think about their illness, even for a short moment, so that laughter replaces tears, and joy replaces fear, especially during medical procedures," Kulinich said. In her practice, she stays together with children, sharing all their feelings, whether they are fear, pain, or joy.

For Nosova, the process itself is what made her start clowning. "I am motivated by joy. I simply enjoy it. All my life I studied to be an actress, all my life I enjoyed making people laugh. That's enough motivation for me," she said.

In a city grappling with nightly air raid alerts and power outages, overworked doctors say the presence of the volunteers brings a much-needed distraction, often helping children who had been undergoing painful medical treatment to feel happy again.

"Clowns play a very important role in the treatment of children. They help distract the children, they help them forget about the pain, they help them not pay attention to the nurses or doctors who come to treat them," Valentyna Mariash, a senior nurse on the Okhmatdyt cancer ward, told AP.

The July attack complicated treatment plans for many families. Daria Vertetska, 34, was in Okhmatdyt with her 7-year-old daughter, Kira, when the missile exploded just outside their ward. Kira, who was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma of the nasopharynx, was asleep, medicated with morphine.

"It saved her that she was covered with a blanket during the strike, but still, her head, legs, and arms were cut with small glass shards," said Vertetska. She and Kira returned to Okhmatdyt in less than a week after the attack.

Not all the children returned to the hospital. Some stayed in the medical facilities where they had been evacuated, while others were moved to apartments paid for by charity organizations and located in the hospital's vicinity.

Despite hospital clown initiatives like BUP across Ukraine, the need for their work grows exponentially. "When I see how our work is needed in the large children's hospitals located in Kyiv, I can only imagine what a great need there is in regional and district hospitals, where such (clown) activity, as for example in Okhmatdyt, to be honest, simply does not exist," Berdar said.

The World Health Organization, earlier this month, warned that the country faces a deepening public health crisis, largely due to devastating missile and drone strikes on the country's electricity system as well as hospital infrastructure.

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Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, WHO has recorded nearly 2,000 attacks on Ukraine's health care facilities and says they are having a severe impact.

Children are among the most vulnerable, but a mental health crisis affects the whole country. It means the clowns' work has won broad support from medical professionals.

Parents are simply happy to see a smile return to their children's faces.

"With clowns, children learn to joke, they play with soap bubbles, their mood lifts. Today, Kira saw clowns playing the ukulele, now she wants one, too," said her mother, Daria.

At least 64 dead and millions without power after Helene's deadly march across the Southeast

By STEPHEN SMITH, KATE PAYNE and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

PERRY, Fla. (AP) — Massive rains from powerful Hurricane Helene left people stranded, without shelter and awaiting rescue Saturday, as the cleanup began from a tempest that killed at least 64 people, caused widespread destruction across the U.S. Southeast and left millions without power.

"I've never seen so many people homeless as what I have right now," said Janalea England, of Steinhatchee, Florida, a small river town along the state's rural Big Bend, as she turned her commercial fish market into a storm donation site for friends and neighbors, many of whom couldn't get insurance on their homes.

Helene blew ashore in Florida's Big Bend region as a Category 4 hurricane late Thursday with winds of 140 mph (225 kph).

From there, it quickly moved through Georgia, where Gov. Brian Kemp said Saturday that it "looks like a bomb went off" after viewing splintered homes and debris-covered highways from the air. Weakened, Helene then soaked the Carolinas and Tennessee with torrential rains, sending creeks and rivers over their banks and straining dams.

Western North Carolina was isolated because of landslides and flooding that forced the closure of Interstate 40 and other roads. All those closures delayed the start of the East Tennessee State University football game against The Citadel because the Buccaneers' drive to Charleston, South Carolina, took 16 hours.

There have been hundreds of water rescues, none more dramatic than in rural Unicoi County in East Tennessee, where dozens of patients and staff were plucked by helicopter from a hospital rooftop Friday. And the rescues continued into the following day in Buncombe County, North Carolina, where part of Asheville was under water.

"To say this caught us off guard would be an understatement," said Quentin Miller, the county sheriff.

Asheville resident Mario Moraga said it's "heartbreaking" to see the damage in the Biltmore Village neighborhood and neighbors have been going house to house to check on each other and offer support.

"There's no cell service here. There's no electricity," he said.

While there have been deaths in the county, Emergency Services Director Van Taylor Jones said he wasn't ready to report specifics, partially because downed cell towers hindered efforts to contact next of kin.

Relatives put out desperate pleas for help on Facebook. Among those waiting for news was Francine Cavanaugh, whose sister told her she was going to check on guests at a vacation cabin as the storm began hitting Asheville. Cavanaugh, who lives in Atlanta, hasn't been able to reach her since then.

"I think that people are just completely stuck," she said.

The storm, now a post-tropical cyclone, was expected to hover over the Tennessee Valley on Saturday and Sunday, the National Hurricane Center said.

'Catastrophic' flooding

It unleashed the worst flooding in a century in North Carolina, where Gov. Roy Cooper described it as "catastrophic" as search and rescue teams from 19 states and the federal government came to help. One community, Spruce Pine, was doused with over 2 feet (0.6 meters) of rain from Tuesday through Saturday.

And in Atlanta, 11.12 inches (28.24 centimeters) of rain fell over 48 hours, the most the city has seen over two days since record keeping began in 1878.

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President Joe Biden said Saturday that Helene's devastation has been "overwhelming" and pledged to send help. He also approved a disaster declaration for North Carolina, making federal funding available for affected individuals.

With at least 25 killed in South Carolina, Helene is the deadliest tropical cyclone for the state since Hurricane Hugo killed 35 people when it came ashore just north of Charleston in 1989. Deaths also have been reported in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

Moody's Analytics said it expects \$15 billion to \$26 billion in property damage. AccuWeather's preliminary estimate of the total damage and economic loss from Helene in the U.S. is between \$95 billion and \$110 billion.

Climate change has exacerbated conditions that allow such storms to thrive, rapidly intensifying in warming waters and turning into powerful cyclones sometimes in a matter of hours.

Evacuations and overtopped dams

Evacuations began before the storm hit and continued as lakes overtopped dams, including one in North Carolina that forms a lake featured in the movie "Dirty Dancing." Helicopters were used to rescue some people from flooded homes.

And in Newport, Tennessee, Jonah Wark waited so long to evacuate that a boat had to come to the rescue. "Definitely a scary moment," Wark said.

After touring the damage by helicopter, a stunned U.S. Rep. Diana Harshbarger said, "Who would have thought a hurricane would do this much damage in East Tennessee?"

Among the 11 confirmed deaths in Florida were nine people who drowned in their homes in a mandatory evacuation area on the Gulf Coast in Pinellas County, where St. Petersburg is located, Sheriff Bob Gaultieri said.

None of the victims were from Taylor County, which is where the storm made landfall. It came ashore near the mouth of the Aucilla River, about 20 miles (30 kilometers) northwest of where Hurricane Idalia hit last year at nearly the same ferocity.

"If you had told me there was going to be 15 feet to 18 feet of storm surge, even with the best efforts, I would have assumed we would have had multiple fatalities," Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Saturday.

Taylor County is in Florida's Big Bend, went years without taking a direct hit from a hurricane. But after Idalia and two other storms in a little over a year, the area is beginning to feel like a hurricane superhighway.

"It's bringing everybody to reality about what this is now with disasters," said John Berg, 76, a resident of Steinhatchee, a small fishing town and weekend getaway.

Timmy Futch of Horseshoe Beach stayed put for the hurricane before driving to high ground when the water reached his house. Many homes in the town, which his grandfather helped found, were reduced to piles of lumber.

"We watched our town get tore to pieces," Futch said.

The aftermath

About 60 miles (100 kilometers) to the north, cars lined up before sunrise Saturday at a free food distribution site in Perry, Florida, amid widespread power outages.

"We're making it one day at a time," said Sierra Land, who lost everything in her fridge, as she arrived at the site with her 5- and 10-year-old sons and her grandmother.

Thousands of utility crew workers descended upon Florida in advance of the hurricane, and by Saturday power was restored to more than 1.9 million homes and businesses. But hundreds of thousands remain without electricity there and in Georgia.

Chris Stallings, director of the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, said crews were focused on opening routes to hospitals and making sure supplies can be delivered to damaged communities.

Helene was the eighth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which began June 1. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above-average season this year because of record-warm ocean temperatures.

In Alabama, Trump goes from the dark rhetoric of his campaign to adulation of college football fans

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP) — As Donald Trump railed against immigrants Saturday afternoon in the Rust Belt, his supporters in the Deep South had turned his earlier broadsides into a rallying cry over a college football game as they prepared for the former president's visit later in the evening.

"You gotta get these people back where they came from," Trump said in Wisconsin, as the Republican presidential nominee again focused on Springfield, Ohio, which has been roiled by false claims he amplified that Haitian immigrants are stealing and "eating the dogs ... eating the cats" from neighbors' homes.

"You have no choice," Trump continued. "You're going to lose your culture. You're going to lose your country."

Many University of Alabama fans, anticipating Trump's visit to their campus for a showdown between the No. 4 Crimson Tide and No. 2 Georgia Bulldogs, sported stickers and buttons that read: "They're eating the Dawgs!" They broke out in random chants of "Trump! Trump! Trump!" throughout the day, a preview of the rousing welcome he received early in the second quarter as he sat in a 40-yard-line suite hosted by a wealthy member of his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

Trump's brand of populist nationalism leans heavily on his dark rendering of America as a failing nation abused by elites and overrun by Black and brown immigrants. But his supporters, especially white cultural conservatives, hear in that rhetoric an optimistic patriotism encapsulated by the slogan on his movement's ubiquitous red hats: "Make America Great Again."

That was the assessment by Shane Walsh, a 52-year-old businessman from Austin, Texas. Walsh and his family decorated their tent on the university quadrangle with a Trump 2024 flag and professionally made sign depicting the newly popular message forecasting the Alabama football team "eating the Dawgs."

For Walsh, the sign was not about immigration or the particulars of Trump's showmanship, exaggerations and falsehoods.

"I don't necessarily like him as a person," Walsh said. "But I think Washington is broken, and it's both parties' faults — and Trump is the kind of guy who will stand up. He's a lot of things, but weak isn't one of them. He's an optimistic guy — he just makes you believe that if he's in charge, we're going to be all right."

The idea for the sign, he said, grew out of a meme he showed his wife. "I thought it was funny," he said.

Katie Yates, a 47-year-old from Hoover, Alabama, had the same experience with her life-sized cutout of the former president. She was stopped repeatedly on her way to her family's usual tent. Trump's likeness was set to join Elvis, "who is always an Alabama fan at our tailgate," Yates said.

"I'm such a Trump fan," she said, adding that she could not understand how every American was not.

Yates offered nothing disparaging about Trump's opponent, Democratic nominee and Vice President Kamala Harris, instead simply lamenting that she could not stay for the game and see Trump be recognized by the stadium public address system and shown pumping his fist on large video screens in the four corners of Bryant-Denny Stadium.

That moment came with 12:24 left in the second quarter, shortly after Alabama quarterback Jalen Milroe ran up the right sideline, on Trump's side of the field, to give the Crimson Tide an eye-popping 28-0 lead over the Vegas-favored Bulldogs.

Trump did not react to Milroe's scamper, perhaps recognizing that Georgia, not reliably Republican Alabama, is a key battleground in his contest against Harris. But when "the 45th president of the United States, Donald J. Trump" was introduced to the capacity crowd of more than 100,000 fans — all but a few thousand wearing crimson — Trump smiled broadly and pumped his fist, like he had done on stage in July after the bullet of a would-be assassin grazed his ear and bloodied his face.

The crowd roared its approval, raising cell phone cameras and their crimson-and-white pompoms toward Trump's suite, where he stood behind the ballistic glass that has become a feature after two assassination attempts. A smattering of boos and a few extended middle fingers broke Trumpian decorum, but they yielded to more chants of: "USA! USA! USA!"

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Indeed, not everyone on campus was thrilled.

"There is, I think, a silent majority among the students that are not with Trump," argued Braden Vick, president of Alabama's College Democrats chapter. Vick pointed to recent elections when Democratic candidates, including President Joe Biden in 2020, vastly outperformed their statewide totals in precincts around the campus.

"We have this great atmosphere for a top-five game between these two teams, with playoff and championship implications," Vick said, "and it's just a shame that Donald Trump has to try to ruin it with his selfishness."

Trump came as the guest of Alabama businessman Ric Mayers Jr., a member of Mar-a-Lago. Mayers said in an interview before the game that he invited Trump so that he could enjoy a warm welcome. And, as Mayers noted, Trump is a longtime sports fan. He tried to buy an NFL team in the 1980s and helped launch a competing league instead. And he attended several college games as president, including an Alabama-Georgia national championship game.

Mayers also invited Alabama Sens. Katie Britt and Tommy Tuberville. Britt, a former student government president at Alabama, delivered the GOP response to Biden's last State of the Union address, drawing rebukes after using a disproven story of human trafficking to echo Trump's warnings about migrants. Tuberville, a former head football coach at Auburn University, Alabama's archrival, is a staunch Trump supporter.

Joining the politicians in the suite were musicians Kid Rock and Hank Williams Jr. Herschel Walker, a Georgia football icon and failed Senate nominee in 2022, traveled in Trump's motorcade to the game.

Fencing surrounded parts of the stadium, with scores of metal detectors and tents forming a security perimeter beyond the usual footprint. Sisters of the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority showed their security wristbands before being allowed to their sorority house directly adjacent to the stadium. Bomb-sniffing dogs stopped catering trucks carrying food. Hundreds of TSA agents spread out to do a potentially unpopular job: imposing airport-level screening for each ticket-holder.

But what seemed to matter most was a friendly home crowd's opportunity to cheer for Trump the same way they cheered the Crimson Tide, unburdened by anything he said in Wisconsin or anywhere else as he makes an increasingly dark closing argument.

"College football fans can get emotional and kooky about their team," Shane Walsh said. "And so can Trump supporters."

They didn't even mind that Trump's tie was not crimson. It was Georgia red.

Asheville has been isolated after Helene wrecked roads and knocked out power and cell service

By ERIK VERDUZCO, TRAVIS LOLLER and GEORGE WALKER IV Associated Press

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Floodwaters pushed by the remnants of Hurricane Helene left North Carolina's largest mountain city isolated Saturday by damaged roads and a lack of power and cellphone service, part of a swath of destruction across southern Appalachia that left an unknown number dead and countless worried relatives unable to reach loved ones.

The storm spread misery across western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, where on Friday authorities used a helicopter to rescue dozens of people from the rooftop of a flooded hospital. In North Carolina alone, more than 400 roads remained closed on Saturday as floodwaters began to recede and reveal the extent of damage.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said supplies were being airlifted to that part of the state. Buncombe County officials said Interstate 26 between Asheville and South Carolina had reopened, but most other routes into the city were impassible.

Among those rescued from rising waters was nurse Janetta Barfield, whose car was swamped on Friday morning as she left an overnight shift at Asheville's Mission Hospital. She said she watched a car in front of her drive through standing water and thought it was safe to proceed. But her car stalled, and within

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minutes water had filled her front seat up to her chest. A nearby police officer helped her to safety.

"It was unbelievable how fast that creek got just in like five minutes," Barfield said.

Early Saturday morning, many gas stations were closed because they didn't have electricity, and the few that were open had hourlong lines wrapped around the block. Where traffic lights were dark, drivers treated the intersections as four-way stops. The hub of tourism and arts, home to about 94,000 people, was unusually still after floodwaters swamped neighborhoods known for drawing visitors including Biltmore Village and the River Arts District, which is home to numerous galleries, shops and breweries.

More than 700,000 customers were without power across North Carolina, including about 100,000 in Buncombe County.

In Asheville, there was no cellular service and no timeline for restoration. Residents were also directed to boil their water. Local officials said they were working on setting up hubs to distribute food and water.

"We have had some loss of life," County Emergency Services Director Van Taylor Jones told reporters. However, he said they were not ready to report specifics as they were hindered in contacting next of kin by the communications outages. Police Chief Michael Lamb said his department had a list of about 60 people whose relatives had not been able to reach and were seeking welfare checks.

As of Saturday night, the governor's office confirmed 10 storm deaths statewide but did not provide a breakdown of where they occurred.

Officials said they tried to prepare for the storm but its magnitude was beyond what they could have imagined.

"It's not that we (were) not prepared, but this is going to another level," Sheriff Quentin Miller said. "To say this caught us off guard would be an understatement."

Atlanta resident Francine Cavanaugh said she has been unable to reach her sister, son or friends in the Asheville area.

"My sister checked in with me yesterday morning to find out how I was in Atlanta," she said on Saturday. "The storm was just hitting her in Asheville, and she said it sounded really scary outside."

Cavanaugh said her sister told her she was going to head out to check on guests at a vacation cabin, "and that's the last I heard of her. I've been texting everyone that I know with no response. All phone calls go directly to voicemail."

About 30 miles (48 kilometers) southeast of Asheville in the town of Edneyville, Genevieve Preece was grateful that her family's home was largely spared and still had water, power and Wi-Fi. Many neighbors were less fortunate.

Preece, who owns a utility contracting firm, opened her home as a place of refuge for people who needed to fill up water jugs or get in contact with worried family members. Her husband spent hours cutting trees to clear roads with neighbors.

"We need help badly, but we are all doing what we can," Preece said. "It will be months or years to put us back together again."

In Tennessee, Gov. Bill Lee and other officials toured the northeastern part of the state by helicopter Saturday. He called the scene "heartbreaking."

"There's a great deal of damage, a great deal of heartache, a great deal of work to be done," Lee said.

U.S. Rep. Diana Harshbarger expressed disbelief at the extent of the damage.

"It's something like we've never seen in this part of the state. Who would have thought a hurricane would do this much damage in East Tennessee?"

In Greene County, Tennessee, the threat from a stressed dam had passed by Saturday afternoon. The Tennessee Valley Authority, which had warned residents overnight that the Nolichucky Dam could breach, said a thorough review determined it was "stable and secure." It was one of several being closely monitored.

Along the Pigeon River, the small Tennessee city of Newport suffered heavy flooding.

Kendale Ball, who opened his Simpl Cafe in June after relocating from Knoxville, said the water reached nearly thigh-high.

"We never anticipated it to be this devastating," he said of the storm.

They tried to move some equipment ahead of the flooding but left town when an emergency evacuation was ordered.

"I know we lost our walk-in cooler, all the refrigeration. We'll have to assess some of the other stuff."

In Unicoi County, where the people were rescued from the hospital, Elin Fisher and her husband had to move their camper three times to stay ahead of rising waters. They also helped to move eight other campers.

"We would move things and go, 'Oh, we're 30 feet above the waterline,' go help somebody else move their thing to that level, and go, 'Oh. We've got to move. Again.' And it was just really, really rapid," said Fisher, who along with her husband teaches whitewater standup paddleboarding on the Nolichucky River. In the middle of the final move, officials closed the road.

"All of our belongings and our home is on the other side of the river, and we can't get to it," she said.

Trump lists his grievances in a Wisconsin speech intended to link Harris to illegal immigration

By TODD RICHMOND and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, Wis. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump meandered Saturday through a list of grievances against Vice President Kamala Harris and other issues during an event intended to link his Democratic opponent to illegal border crossings.

A day after Harris discussed immigration at the U.S.-Mexico border, Trump spoke to a crowd in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, about immigration. He blamed Harris for migrants committing crimes after entering the U.S. illegally, alleging she was responsible for "erasing our border."

"I will liberate Wisconsin from the mass migrant invasion," he said. "We're going to liberate the country."

Trump hopes frustration over illegal immigration will translate to votes in Wisconsin and other crucial swing states. The Republican nominee has denounced people who cross the U.S.-Mexico border as "poisoning the blood of the country" and vowed to stage the largest deportation operation in American history if elected. And polls show Americans believe Trump would do a better job than Harris on handling immigration.

Trump shifted from topic to topic so quickly that it was hard to keep track of what he meant at times. He talked about the two assassination attempts against him and blamed the U.S. Secret Service for not being able to hold a large outdoor rally instead of an event in a smaller indoor space. But he also offered asides about climate change, Harris' father, how his beach body was better than President Joe Biden's, and a fly that was buzzing near him.

"I wonder where the fly came from," he said. "Two years ago, I wouldn't have had a fly up here. You're changing rapidly. But we can't take it any longer. We can't take it any longer."

Trump repeatedly brought up Harris' Friday event in Douglas, Arizona, where she announced a push to further restrict asylum claims beyond Biden's executive order announced earlier this year. Harris denounced Trump's handling of the border while president and his opposing a bipartisan border package earlier this year, saying Trump "prefers to run on a problem instead of fixing a problem."

"I had to sit there and listen" to Harris last night Trump said, eliciting cheers. "And who puts it on? Fox News. They should not be allowed to put it on. It's all lies. Everything she says is lies."

The Republican nominee also intensified his personal attacks against Harris, insulting her as "mentally impaired" and a "disaster."

Trump professed not to understand what Harris meant when she said he was responsible for taking children from their parents. Under his administration, border agents separated children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border in a policy that was condemned globally as inhumane and one that Trump himself ended under pressure from his own party.

Harris, at a rally in San Francisco, told supporters there were "two very different visions for our nation" and voters see it "every day on the campaign trail."

"Donald Trump is the same old tired show," she said. "The same tired playbook we have heard for years."

She said Trump was "a very unserious man." "However the consequences of putting him back in the

White House are extremely serious.”

At Trump’s event, on either side of the stage were poster-sized mug shots of men in the U.S. illegally accused of a crime, including Alejandro Jose Coronel Zarate, a case Trump cited in his speech.

Wisconsin Republicans in recent days have cited the story of Coronel Zarate’s arrest in Prairie du Chien as more evidence that people in the country illegally are committing crimes across the United States, not just in southern border states. Prosecutors charged Coronel Zarate on Sept. 18 with sexual assault, child abuse, strangulation and domestic abuse. His lawyers declined to comment.

Police Chief Kyle Teynor posted statements on Facebook saying that Coronel Zarate is not a U.S. citizen and that he had two fake immigration documents, including a fake Social Security card. The chief added that Coronel Zarate’s tattoos indicate he’s affiliated with the Tren de Aragua gang, which started in Venezuelan prisons and is posing a growing threat in the U.S.

Speaking to the crowd Saturday, Teynor stressed to the crowd that Coronel Zarate is the only Venezuelan gang member his agency has encountered, but the violence his two alleged victims suffered at his hands earlier this month was very real.

Republicans including U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden, who is from Prairie du Chien, have criticized authorities in both Minneapolis and Madison for letting Coronel Zarate go, saying they essentially allowed him to attack the woman in Prairie du Chien. They have accused both jurisdictions of being sanctuaries for people in the country illegally.

Van Orden told the crowd Trump was the only one who could restore order.

“You’re going to see the one man who has enough strength and courage of conviction to stand up to anyone up to and including being shot in the head for us,” he said.

Hezbollah confirms its leader Hassan Nasrallah was killed in an Israeli airstrike

By BASSEM MROUE and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon’s Hezbollah group confirmed on Saturday that its leader and one of its founding members, Hassan Nasrallah, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in a southern suburb of Beirut.

The killing of the powerful militant group’s longtime leader sent shockwaves throughout Lebanon and the Middle East, where he has been a dominant political and military figure for more than three decades.

Nasrallah, linked by Israel to numerous deadly attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets, has been on Israel’s kill list for decades. His assassination is by far the biggest and most consequential of Israel’s targeted killings in years, and significantly escalates the war in the Middle East. Hezbollah is backed by Iran, Israel’s chief regional rival.

The Israeli military said it carried out a precise airstrike on Friday while Hezbollah leaders were meeting at their headquarters in Dahiyeh, south of Beirut.

Immediately after the confirmation from Hezbollah, people started firing in the air in Beirut and across Lebanon to mourn Nasrallah’s death.

“Wish it was our kids, not you, Sayyid!” said one woman, using an honorific title for Nasrallah, as she clutched her baby in the western city of Baabda.

“We don’t believe he is killed,” a woman draped in black tearfully told al-Manar TV in Bekaa, western Lebanon. “We don’t. We left our homes and came here for him and for the resistance.”

In his first public remarks since the killing, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel’s targeting of Nasrallah was “an essential condition to achieving the goals we set.”

“He wasn’t another terrorist. He was the terrorist,” Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu said Nasrallah’s killing would help bring displaced Israelis back to their homes in the north and would pressure Hamas to free Israeli hostages held in Gaza. But with the threat of retaliation high, he warned the coming days would bring “significant challenges” and warned Iran against trying to strike.

“There is no place in Iran or in the Middle East that Israel’s long arm cannot reach. And today you know how much that is true,” he said.

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The Lebanese Health Ministry said six people were killed and 91 injured in the strikes Friday that leveled six apartment buildings. Ali Karki, the commander of Hezbollah's Southern Front, and other commanders were also killed, the Israeli military said.

A statement from Hezbollah said Nasrallah — who led the group for more than three decades — “has joined his fellow martyrs.” The group vowed to “continue the holy war against the enemy and in support of Palestine.”

Cross-border aggression

Hezbollah started firing rockets on Israel in support of Gaza on Oct. 8, a day after Hamas militants launched an unprecedented attack on Israel, killing some 1,200 people and abducting another 250. Since then, the two sides have been engaged in escalating cross-border strikes.

Israel has vowed to step up pressure on Hezbollah until it halts its attacks that have displaced tens of thousands of Israelis from communities near the Lebanese border. The recent fighting has also displaced more than 200,000 Lebanese in the past week, according to the United Nations.

Earlier this month, thousands of explosives hidden in pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah detonated, killing dozens of people and maiming thousands, including many civilians. Israel is widely believed to be behind the attack. Israel has killed several other top Hezbollah commanders in Beirut, especially in the past two weeks, in addition to the attack that killed Nasrallah.

In Beirut's southern suburbs, smoke rose and the streets were empty Saturday after the area was pummeled overnight by heavy Israeli airstrikes. Shelters were overflowing with displaced people. Many families slept in public squares, on beaches or in their cars. On the roads leading to the mountains above the capital, hundreds of people could be seen fleeing on foot, holding infants and whatever belongings they could carry.

Hezbollah's allies mourn

The Palestinian militant group Hamas sent condolences to its ally, Hezbollah, and said “assassinations will only increase the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine in determination and resolve.”

Iran's supreme leader announced five days of public mourning and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Nasrallah “the flag-bearer of resistance” in the region.

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets of Tehran, waving Hezbollah flags and chanting “Death to Israel” and “Death to Netanyahu the murderer.”

Iran's U.N. Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani wrote a letter to the heads of the United Nations and the Security Council on Saturday calling for an emergency council meeting over the attack that killed Nasrallah.

“Using U.S.-supplied thousand-pound bunker busters,” he wrote, Israel killed Nasrallah and Iranian Gen. Abbas Nilforushan, among others.

He warned Israel not to attack any of its diplomatic or consular premises, or its representatives. “Iran will not hesitate to exercise its inherent rights under international law to take every measure in defense of its vital national and security interests,” Iravani wrote.

Thomas Juneau, a professor at the University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, said Iran will be under significant pressure to respond to Nasrallah's killing without escalating violence in the region.

“Iran understands that its military options are limited, given the conventional military superiority of Israel and the U.S.” Juneau told The Associated Press.

Israel vows to keep up attacks on Hezbollah

Israel's Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, said Saturday that the killing of Nasrallah was “not the end of our toolbox,” indicating that more strikes were planned. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant called it “the most important targeted strike since the founding of the State of Israel.” Late Saturday, Gallant's office said he was meeting with top army commanders to discuss the expansion of military activities along Israel's northern front.

The military said Saturday it was mobilizing three more battalions of reserve soldiers to serve across the country. It already sent two brigades to northern Israel to prepare for a possible ground invasion.

Israeli military spokesman Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani said Israel has inflicted heavy damage on Hezbollah's

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capabilities over the past week by targeting immediate threats and strategic weapons, such as larger, guided missiles. But he said much of Hezbollah's arsenal remains intact and that Israel would continue to target the group.

Air raid sirens sounded across central Israel on Saturday afternoon, including at the Tel Aviv international airport, shortly after Netanyahu returned from a trip to the U.S.

The Israeli military said it intercepted a missile launched from Yemen. Houthi rebels based in Yemen later said they were behind the attack targeting Ben Gurion Airport.

The Israeli military updated guidelines for Israeli citizens, canceling gatherings of more than 1,000 people due to the threat.

Approximately 60,000 Israelis have been evacuated from their homes along the Lebanese border for almost a year. This month, Israel's government said halting Hezbollah's attacks in the country's north to allow residents to return to their homes is an official goal.

Continuing strikes on both sides of the border

On Saturday morning, the Israeli military carried out more than 140 airstrikes in southern Beirut and eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, including targeting a storage facility for anti-ship missiles in Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh. Israel said the missiles were stored beneath civilian apartment buildings. Hezbollah launched dozens of projectiles across northern and central Israel and deep into the Israel-occupied West Bank, damaging some buildings in the northern town of Safed.

The Israeli army again warned Lebanese residents to stay away from Hezbollah combat equipment and facilities, including in the southern suburbs of Beirut and southern Lebanon. The U.S. State Department issued an alert urging American citizens to leave the country.

A total of 1,030 people — including 156 women and 87 children — have been killed in Israeli strikes in Lebanon in less than two weeks, the country's health minister said Saturday.

Biden and Harris call the Israeli strike killing Hezbollah's Nasrallah a 'measure of justice'

By AAMER MADHANI and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

REHOBOTH BEACH, Del. (AP) — The Israeli strike that killed Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah was a "measure of justice" for victims of a four-decade "reign of terror," President Joe Biden said Saturday.

The comments came after Lebanon's Hezbollah group confirmed earlier Saturday that Nasrallah, one of the group's founders, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut the previous day.

Biden noted that the operation to take out Nasrallah took place in the broader context of the conflict that began with Hamas' massacre of Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023.

"Nasrallah, the next day, made the fateful decision to join hands with Hamas and open what he called a 'northern front' against Israel," Biden said in a statement.

He also noted that Hezbollah under Nasrallah's watch has been responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans, Israelis and Lebanese.

Hezbollah attacks against U.S. interests include the truck bombing of the U.S. Embassy and multinational force barracks in Beirut in 1983 and the kidnapping of the Central Intelligence Agency chief of station in Beirut, who died while held captive. The U.S. said Hezbollah leaders armed and trained militias that carried out attacks on American forces during the war in Iraq.

The White House sees the death of Nasrallah as a huge blow to the group. At the same time, the administration has sought to tread carefully as it has tried to contain Israel's war with Hamas, which, like Hezbollah, is backed by Iran, from exploding into an all-out regional conflict.

The White House and Pentagon were quick on Friday, shortly after the strike, to say publicly that Israel offered it no forewarning of the operation.

"President Biden and I do not want to see conflict in the Middle East escalate into a broader regional war," Vice President Kamala Harris said in a statement Saturday that echoed Biden's description of a "measure of justice." She added, "Diplomacy remains the best path forward to protect civilians and achieve lasting

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stability in the region.”

The confirmation of Nasrallah’s death comes during a week that began with Biden’s top national security aides working on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly to build support for a 21-day Israel-Hezbollah cease-fire that they hoped might also breathe new life into stalled efforts to secure a truce in Gaza.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a defiant speech Friday to the United Nations, vowing to keep up operations against Hezbollah until tens of thousands of Israeli citizens displaced by rocket attacks can return home. Shortly after, Israel carried out the strike killing Nasrallah.

Biden reiterated on Saturday that he wants to see cease-fires both in Gaza and between Israel and Hezbollah.

“It is time for these deals to close, for the threats to Israel to be removed, and for the broader Middle East region to gain greater stability,” Biden said.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian accused the United States of supporting the killing that took out Nasrallah and dozens of others.

“The world community will not forget that the order of the terrorist strike was issued from New York and the Americans cannot absolve themselves from complicity with the Zionists,” Pezeshkian was quoted as saying in a statement read on Iranian state television.

The State Department on Saturday ordered the departure of the families of U.S. diplomats who are not employed by the embassy in Beirut and authorized the departure of those who are, as well as nonessential employees because of “the volatile and unpredictable security situation” in Lebanon’s capital.

The U.S. embassy in Beirut also posted a link to an online form that Americans in Lebanon can complete if they are interested in possible assistance leaving the country.

The embassy stressed that it was not organizing evacuations and that there are still commercial means to leave, but the request for information appeared to suggest that such plans may be in the works.

The State Department has previously advised American citizens to consider leaving Lebanon and reiterated its warning against all travel to the country.

“Due to the increased volatility following airstrikes within Beirut and the volatile and unpredictable security situation throughout Lebanon, the U.S. Embassy urges U.S. citizens to depart Lebanon while commercial options still remain available,” the department said in a statement Saturday.

The State Department routinely orders or authorizes the departure of nonessential embassy staffers and the families of diplomats when security conditions deteriorate in the country where they are posted.

An ordered departure is not technically an evacuation but does require those affected to leave. An authorized departure allows those affected to leave the country voluntarily at government expense.

Biden, who was spending the weekend at his vacation home in Delaware, and Harris, who was campaigning in California, held a call with national security aides on Saturday to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

In a brief exchange with reporters as he left church on Saturday, Biden did not directly respond to questions about the conflict potentially escalating further.

“It’s time for a cease-fire,” he said.

The president on Friday directed the Pentagon to assess and adjust as necessary the U.S. force posture in the region to enhance deterrence, ensure force protection and support the full range of U.S. objectives.

He called for the assessment after the Pentagon earlier in the week announced it was sending an unspecified number of additional U.S. troops to the region because of rising tensions.

A rare condor hatched and raised by foster parents in captivity now gets to live wild

By SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

By all accounts, Milagra the “miracle” California condor shouldn’t be alive today.

But now at nearly 17 months old, she is one of three of the giant endangered birds who got to stretch their wings in the wild as part of a release this weekend near the Grand Canyon.

Even after the door was opened Saturday, the birds didn’t immediately leave their pen. After 20 minutes,

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one condor left the pen, followed 20 minutes later by another condor.

Then, after sitting in the pen for an hour and 20 minutes, Milagra exited the enclosure and took flight. When a livestream of the wildlife release ended, a fourth condor remained in the pen, not ready to leave. For Milagra, there is no more appropriate name for a young bird that has managed to survive against all odds. Her mother died from the worst outbreak of avian flu in U.S. history soon after she laid her egg, and her father nearly succumbed to the same fate while struggling to incubate the egg alone.

Milagra, which means miracle in Spanish, was rescued from her nest and hatched in captivity thanks to the care of her foster condor parents.

The emergency operation was part of a program established about 40 years ago to help bring the birds back from the brink of extinction when their numbers had plummeted to fewer than two dozen.

The Peregrine Fund and the Bureau of Land Management streamed the release of Milagra and the others online Saturday from Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the Grand Canyon's North Rim.

Condors have been released there since 1996. But the annual practice was put on hold last year due to what is known as the "bird flu." Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza killed 21 condors in the Utah-Arizona flock.

"This year's condor release will be especially impactful given the losses we experienced in 2023 from HPAI and lead poisoning," said Tim Hauck, The Peregrine Fund's California Condor program director.

Today, as many as 360 of the birds are estimated to be living in the wild, with some in the Baja of Mexico and most in California, where similar releases continue. More than 200 others live in captivity.

The largest land bird in North America with a wing-span of 9.5 feet (2.9 meters), condors have been protected in the U.S. as an endangered species since 1967. Many conservationists consider it a miracle any still exist at all.

Robert Bate, manager of the Vermilion Cliffs monument, said the release was being shared online in real time "so that the scope and reach of this incredible and successful collaborative recovery effort can continue to inspire people worldwide."

California condors mate for life with a lifespan up to 60 years and can travel up to 200 miles (322 kilometers) a day, which they have been known to do as they move back and forth between the Grand Canyon and Zion national parks.

The Peregrine Fund started breeding condors in cooperation with federal wildlife managers in 1993. The first was released into the wild in 1995, and it would be another eight years before the first chick was hatched out of captivity.

The fund's biologists typically don't name the birds they help raise in captivity, identifying them instead with numbers to avoid giving them human characteristics out of respect for the species.

They made an exception in the case of #1221, aka Milagra. They saw her journey as emblematic of the captive breeding program coming full circle.

Milagra's foster father, #27, was hatched in the wild in California in 1983. He was one of the first brought into the program as a nestling when fewer than two dozen were known to still exist worldwide.

Convinced it was the species' only hope for survival, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made an unprecedented, risky decision back then to capture the remaining 22 known to exist to launch the breeding program. Over time, it has grown with assistance from the Oregon Zoo, Los Angeles Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

"Once they realized California condors were great parents in captivity, they started allowing them to raise their own species," said Leah Esquivel, propagation manager at the fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho.

Like all California condors in the wild today, Milagra's biological parents were products of the program.

Milagra's mother, #316, laid her softball-sized egg in a cave on the edge of an Arizona cliff in April 2023 — one of her last acts before she succumbed to avian flu. Sick himself, her biological father, #680, did his best to tend to the egg, but prospects for survival dwindled. So, when he made a rare departure from the nest, biologists who had been monitoring sick condors swooped in and snatched the lone egg.

"(He) was so focused on incubating the egg that he was not leaving to find food and water for himself, risking his own life," Peregrine Fund spokesperson Jessica Schlarbaum said.

They stashed the fragile egg in a field incubator and raced 300 miles (480 kilometers) back to Phoenix, not unlike a human transplant team carrying a heart in an ice chest.

To the amazement of all, the egg hatched.

Milagra tested negative for the avian flu and spent about a week at the Liberty Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Mesa, Arizona, before she was taken to fund's breeding facility in Idaho, where the foster parents took her under their wings.

Esquivel, the propagation manager, said Milagra's foster mother, #59, has raised eight nestlings in her lifetime.

Esquivel described #59 as unique. While the bird never mates, she goes through all the other breeding motions each year and lays an egg.

"Her eggs are obviously infertile, but since she is a great mother, we use her and her mate to raise young," Esquivel said. "We just swap the infertile egg out with a dummy egg, then place a hatching egg in the nest when we have one available for her."

Milagra's foster dad has sired about 30 young and helped raise nestlings in captivity for years.

After spending about seven months with foster parents, the youngsters head off to "condor school" in California to learn the basics: eating communally, strengthening muscles for flight and learning to get along with fellow condors.

For the biologists, recovery partners, volunteers and others who have persevered over the last year, Hauck summed up Saturday's release of the birds from this year's graduating class as "a moment of triumph."

SpaceX launches rescue mission for 2 NASA astronauts who are stuck in space until next year

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — SpaceX launched a rescue mission for the two stuck astronauts at the International Space Station on Saturday, sending up a downsized crew to bring them home but not until next year.

The capsule rocketed into orbit to fetch the test pilots whose Boeing spacecraft returned to Earth empty earlier this month because of safety concerns. The switch in rides left it to NASA's Nick Hague and Russia's Alexander Gorbunov to retrieve Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams.

Because NASA rotates space station crews approximately every six months, this newly launched flight with two empty seats reserved for Wilmore and Williams won't return until late February. Officials said there wasn't a way to bring them back earlier on SpaceX without interrupting other scheduled missions.

By the time they return, the pair will have logged more than eight months in space. They expected to be gone just a week when they signed up for Boeing's first astronaut flight that launched in June.

NASA ultimately decided that Boeing's Starliner was too risky after a cascade of thruster troubles and helium leaks marred its trip to the orbiting complex. The space agency cut two astronauts from this SpaceX launch to make room on the Dragon capsule's return leg for Wilmore and Williams.

Wilmore and Williams watched the liftoff via a live link sent to the space station, prompting a cheer of "Go Dragon!" from Williams, NASA deputy program manager Dina Contella said.

Williams has been promoted to commander of the space station, which will soon be back to its normal population of seven. Once Hague and Gorbunov arrive on Sunday, four astronauts living there since March can leave in their own SpaceX capsule. Their homecoming was delayed a month by Starliner's turmoil.

Hague noted before the flight that change is the one constant in human spaceflight.

"There's always something that is changing. Maybe this time it's been a little more visible to the public," he said.

Hague was thrust into the commander's job for the rescue mission based on his experience and handling

of a launch emergency six years ago. The Russian rocket failed shortly after liftoff, and the capsule carrying him and a cosmonaut catapulted off the top to safety.

Rookie NASA astronaut Zena Cardman and veteran space flier Stephanie Wilson were pulled from this flight after NASA opted to go with SpaceX to bring the stuck astronauts home. Promised a future space mission, both were at NASA's Kennedy Space Center, taking part in the launch livestream. Gorbunov remained on the flight under an exchange agreement between NASA and the Russian Space Agency.

"Every crewed launch that I have ever watched has really brought me a lot of emotion. This one today was especially unique," a teary-eyed Cardman said following the early afternoon liftoff. "It was hard not to watch that rocket lift off without thinking, 'That's my rocket and that's my crew.'"

Moments before liftoff, Hague paid tribute to his two colleagues left behind: "Unbreakable. We did it together." Once in orbit, he called it a "sweet ride" and thanked everyone who made it possible.

Earlier, Hague acknowledged the challenges of launching with half a crew and returning with two astronauts trained on another spacecraft.

"We've got a dynamic challenge ahead of us," Hague said after arriving from Houston last weekend. "We know each other and we're professionals and we step up and do what's asked of us."

SpaceX has long been the leader in NASA's commercial crew program, established as the space shuttles were retiring more than a decade ago. SpaceX beat Boeing in delivering astronauts to the space station in 2020, and it is now up to 10 crew flights for NASA.

Boeing has struggled with a variety of issues over the years, repeating a Starliner test flight with no one on board after the first one veered off course. The Starliner that left Wilmore and Williams in space landed without any issues in the New Mexico desert on Sept. 6, and has since returned to Kennedy Space Center. A week ago, Boeing's defense and space chief was replaced.

Delayed by Hurricane Helene pounding Florida, the latest SpaceX liftoff marked the first for astronauts from Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. SpaceX took over the old Titan rocket pad nearly two decades ago and used it for satellite and station cargo launches, while flying crews from Kennedy's former Apollo and shuttle pad next door. The company wanted more flexibility as more Falcon rockets soared.

Hundreds of fleeing families sleep on beaches and streets after Israel's strikes shake Beirut

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Smoke was still rising from Beirut's southern suburbs Saturday morning, visible to many of the families who had fled their homes there the night before to escape Israel's massive bombardment.

It had been a harrowing night — getting out amid earthshaking explosions, looking in vain for space in one of the overflowing schools-turned-shelters. By the morning, hundreds of families were sleeping in public squares, on beaches or in cars around Beirut.

Lines of people trudged up to the mountains above the Lebanese capital, holding infants and a few belongings.

Overnight, Israel unleashed a series of strikes on various parts of Dahiyeh, the predominantly Shiite collection of suburbs on Beirut's southern edge where tens of thousands of residents live. The biggest blasts to hit Beirut in nearly a year of conflict killed the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, Friday.

The assault was part of a rapid escalation of Israeli strikes the past week that has killed more than 700 people in Lebanon. Israel has vowed to cripple Hezbollah and put an end to 11 months of its fire onto Israeli territory in what Nasrallah described as a "support front" for his ally Hamas in Gaza.

The newly displaced swell the numbers Beirut is absorbing

The people escaping Friday night's mayhem joined tens of thousands who have fled to Beirut and other areas of southern Lebanon the past week to escape Israel's bombardment.

For many residents of Dahiyeh, the forced evacuation was disconcertingly familiar.

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Some were Lebanese who had lived through the bruising monthlong war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, when Israel leveled large parts of the Beirut suburbs. Others were Syrians who had taken refuge from the long civil war in their own country.

Fatima Chahine, a Syrian refugee, slept on the Ramlet al-Bayda public beach in Beirut with her family and hundreds of strangers. The night before she, her husband and their two children had piled onto a motorcycle and raced out of Dahiyeh, with "bombing below us and strikes above us."

"Thank God, no one was wounded," she said.

The government has opened up schools in Beirut to take in the displaced. But Syrians have reported that some sites turn them away to reserve the few spaces for Lebanese. Chahine said her family came directly to the beach.

"We only want a place where our children won't be afraid," she said. "We fled from the war in Syria in 2011 because of the children and we came here, and now the same thing is happening again."

Since Monday, some 22,331 Syrians in Lebanon have crossed back into Syria, along with 22,117 Lebanese, according to Lebanese authorities.

Chahine said returning is not an option for her family; she is from an opposition area and so could face reprisals from the Syrian government.

At the beach, the displaced were spread out over the sidewalk or in cars parked by the curb. Others were camped out in beach pagodas or on blankets in the sand.

"We spent more than three hours going in circles between schools and shelters and we didn't find one with room," said Talal Ahmad Jassaf, a Lebanese man who slept on the beach with his family. He said he is considering going to the relative safety of Syria. But he worries about airstrikes on the road between Beirut and Damascus.

Some people are left without aid

The U.N. Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, said this week's escalation had more than doubled the number of people displaced by the conflict in Lebanon. There are now over 211,000 people displaced, including some of the humanitarian workers who should be responding to the crisis, it said. Around 85,000 of them are sleeping in shelters, it said.

"Humanitarian capacities to respond have been severely overstretched," it added.

Displaced people sleeping outside in Beirut largely told The Associated Press that they had not received assistance from any humanitarian organization.

A stadium in the seaside neighborhood of Manara owned by the Nejme soccer club opened its doors to the displaced, who spent the night sleeping on bleachers.

Among them was Mariam Darwish, her husband and five children. She fled her home in Dahiyeh earlier in the week when the first Israeli strikes hit there.

Darwish said they had received water from the soccer club but that no organization had brought food, blankets or other supplies.

"People are helping each other out, family and friends are getting things for each other," she said.

She and her husband had fled during the 2006 war, when their oldest son was a baby, and returned to their home when the war ended. They hope their house will still be standing to return to this time, she said.

"We're worried about our children and the schools, that they'll lose out on their future," she said. "What can we do? We can only say thank God."

She added, "May the resistance be victorious." At the time of the interview, Hezbollah had not yet confirmed Nasrallah's death.

Despite their battered-down circumstances, others also struck a defiant tone.

Jamal Hussein fled Dahiyeh at 3 a.m. with his extended family amid ongoing bombing and spent the night sleeping on the seaside promenade in Beirut's upscale Ain Mreisseh district.

"Of course we aren't afraid for ourselves, but we have children," he said. "We are steadfast and ready to sacrifice more than this."

17 people have been killed in 2 mass shootings in the same street in South Africa

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME and GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Seventeen people, including 15 women, were killed in two mass shootings that took place at two homes on the same street in a rural town in South Africa, police said Saturday.

A search was underway for the suspects, national police spokesperson Brig. Athlenda Mathe said in a statement. The victims were 15 women and two men, she said. One other person was in critical condition in the hospital.

That person was among four women, a man and a 2-month-old baby who survived one of the shootings. Authorities didn't immediately give any details on the age or gender of the person in critical condition or the medical conditions of the other survivors.

The shootings took place Friday night in the town of Lusikisiki in Eastern Cape province in southeastern South Africa.

Three women and a man were killed in the first shootings at a home, where there were no survivors, police said. Twelve women and a man were killed at a separate home a short time later. The survivors were present at those second shootings. The shootings occurred late Friday night or in the early hours of Saturday, police said.

Video released by police from the scene showed a collection of rural homesteads along a dirt road on the outskirts of the town. Residents sat on the edge of the road as police and forensic investigators blocked off areas with yellow and black crime scene tape and began their investigations.

National police commissioner Gen. Fannie Masemola said he had ordered a specialist team of detectives be deployed from the administrative capital, Pretoria, to help with the investigation.

"A manhunt has been launched to apprehend those behind these heinous killings," police spokesperson Mathe said.

Local media reported that the people were attending a family gathering at the time of the shooting, but police gave no indication of any possible motive, nor how many shooters there were and what type of guns were used. Police were treating the shootings as connected, however.

Police minister Senzo Mchunu said at a press conference later Saturday that it was an "intolerably huge number" of people killed and those responsible "can't escape justice."

"We have full faith and confidence in the team that has been deployed to crack this case and find these criminals. Either they hand themselves over or we will fetch them ourselves," Mchunu said.

South Africa, a country of 62 million, has one of the highest homicide rates in the world. It recorded 12,734 homicides in the first six months of this year, according to official crime statistics from the police. That's an average of more than 70 a day. Firearms were by far the biggest cause of deaths in those cases.

Mass shootings have become increasingly common in recent years, sometimes targeting people in their homes. Ten members of the same family, including seven women and a 13-year-old boy, were killed in a mass shooting at their home in the neighboring KwaZulu-Natal province in April 2023.

Sixteen people were fatally shot in a bar in the Johannesburg township of Soweto in 2022, the worst mass shooting in South Africa in decades before the latest killings in Lusikisiki.

Firearm laws are reasonably strict in South Africa, but authorities have often pointed to the large number of illegal, unregistered guns in circulation as a major problem. Authorities sometimes hold what they call firearm amnesties, where people can hand over illegal guns to police without being prosecuted.

After a chaotic Congress, lawmakers head home to ask voters: How about another term?

By LISA MASCARO and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress is off for the campaign season, as lawmakers from one of the most chaotic and unproductive legislative sessions in modern times try to persuade voters to keep them on the job.

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The House Republicans led the tumult — painstakingly electing their speaker in a bitter public feud then swiftly booting him from office, something never before seen. But the deeply divided Senate was not immune from the inaction, lumbering through a modest agenda.

Taken together, the lack of big-ticket accomplishments is underscoring a volatile November election season with control of Congress a toss-up.

"The good thing is Congress didn't allow much to go through law," said Rep. Ryan Zinke, a former Trump administration Cabinet secretary who is now running for re-election to his House seat in Montana. "But what it didn't do, either, is it didn't reach its potential."

House Republicans blocked not only the Biden-Harris priorities of the Democrats, he said, but "in many ways, we blocked our own agenda."

The situation the lawmakers find themselves in, particularly the House Republicans trying to preserve their slim majority control, is not academic. The House Republicans now have to face the voters who sent them to Washington on their "Commitment to America" two years ago having come up well short.

New House Speaker Mike Johnson remains upbeat that Republicans will not only stay in control but win more seats to bolster their ranks, but it's been an uphill slog for him during a tight election year.

"It's almost impossible," said Newt Gingrich, the former House speaker, adding he would have little patience for hearing out the "idiots" he said Johnson has to contend with in leading a slim four-seat majority.

"You had a group grow up in the House Republican Party who think that voting no and getting nothing done is a victory," Gingrich said Friday at the Capitol. "You've got to find a way to break up this idea that being a nihilist and getting nothing done is a success. It's not."

Congress has passed fewer substantive bills than is normal, putting this two-year session on track to be among the least productive sessions ever. The representatives and senators returned to Washington for a brief three-week September work period and essentially punted one of their most important tasks, funding the federal government, for a few more months, to December.

While Congress succeeded in avoiding a federal shutdown — which Johnson said would have been "malpractice" so close to the November election — it left town mid-week, several days earlier than scheduled, as a hurricane bore down on the Southern Gulf states. It won't return until mid-November.

"Can anyone in America name a single thing that House Republicans have done on their own to make life better for the American people?" asked Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries, who is in line to become House speaker if his party wins majority control. "The answer is no."

Many lawmakers bristled at being lumped together with what transpired in their House GOP majority. There was the weeklong fight in January 2023 to elect Kevin McCarthy as House speaker. And the nearly month-long spectacle when a small number of far-right Republicans booted him from the speaker's office. And failed bills that never got off the House floor.

Those seeking re-election in some of the most hard-fought House districts offered a preview of the conversations they will have with voters.

Rep. Aaron Bean, R-Fla., said he would emphasize his work on constituent services and his voting record. "I don't know if you're going to judge an individual member on how the body does collectively," said Bean, a freshman. "I don't think that's a fair comparison. That is apples to apricots."

Rep. Mike Garcia, R-Calif., said the House has been a "firewall" against spending.

"What we've been able to stop is very significant," he said.

"We haven't necessarily gotten everything passed," he added. "But what we have done is set a template for what needs to be done to fix these problems, whether it's the border, the economy, national security, investing in our military, cutting taxes, reducing spending."

Republican Rep. Mike Lawler, who is in a competitive race in New York, pointed to work he has done to secure needed infrastructure money for his district as well as his own various bills. One that passed the House and Senate this past week directs the U.S. Secret Service to protect Donald Trump and other major party presidential nominees by the same standards it does the president.

"So I have a record to run on that I'm certainly proud of," he said.

Besides, Lawler asked, what about the Senate?

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"I mean there's always a focus on the House," he said. "But if anybody looked down the hallway, Chuck Schumer and Senate Democrats have done what? What exactly are they running on?"

The Senate, historically a slower-moving body designed that way by the founders, plodded along at an even more leisurely pace this year, staying away from Washington many Mondays and almost all Fridays.

Narrowly led by Democrats under Majority Leader Schumer, the Senate has succeeded in confirming a number of Biden's judicial nominees, particularly women and people of color, to create a judiciary more representative of the nation. But senators have not been able to land many other big priorities.

In fact, one of the most talked about pieces of legislation in the campaign — the Senate's bipartisan effort to secure the U.S.-Mexico border and update some immigration laws — collapsed when Trump declined to support it.

"This has been a very, very unproductive Congress," said Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, mentioning the appropriations bills and a farm bill reauthorization that are stalled. There's "plenty of blame to go around."

Oddly, as the Capitol emptied out, it briefly refilled Friday for the 30th anniversary of another Republican milestone — the 1994 Contract with America, the campaign promises that brought Gingrich and his party to power after four decades in the minority.

Two years ago, McCarthy, who was in line to become speaker, gathered House Republicans at a manufacturing plant along the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania to unveil their own "Commitment to America" agenda that gave a nod to the Gingrich era. Rising stars of the GOP, including firebrand Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, were in the front row.

McCarthy, Johnson and many others from today's House GOP were not around for Friday's ceremony, with its reception in the Capitol basement.

Rep. Tim Burchett of Tennessee, who was among the eight Republicans who led the vote to oust McCarthy last year, said this was the House GOP majority's biggest accomplishment: "Not wrecking the country any further. We don't need any more laws."

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah transformed the militant group into a potent regional force

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, who transformed the Lebanese militant group into a potent paramilitary and political force in the Middle East, was killed in an Israeli airstrike, the group said. He was 64.

Nasrallah, who spearheaded Hezbollah's war against Israel in 2006 and got the group heavily involved in neighboring Syria's brutal conflict, was killed in a massive Israeli airstrike on the Beirut southern suburb of Haret Hreik Friday evening that knocked down several multistory apartment buildings.

"His eminence Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's secretary-general, had joined his fellow great martyrs whom he had led for 30 years from one victory to another," Hezbollah said in a statement. It added that Nasrallah "fell as a martyr on the road to Jerusalem."

Fears of a regional war

Nasrallah's death comes amid a dizzying escalation in the nearly yearlong conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, since the war in Gaza started, and more than three decades after he took leadership of the Iranian-backed militant group following the killing of his predecessor by an Israeli missile in 1992. Five years later, the United States designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

Hezbollah has been firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza and Hamas, an allied Iran-backed militant group. Israel has responded with increasingly heavy airstrikes and the targeted killing of Hezbollah commanders while threatening a wider operation.

This week has been the deadliest in Lebanon since the bruising 2006 monthlong war between Israel and Hezbollah.

First, thousands of pagers and walkie-talkies used mainly by Hezbollah members exploded in different

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parts of Lebanon, killing 39 people and wounding nearly 3,000, many of them civilians. Lebanon blamed Israel, but Israel did not confirm or deny responsibility. Nasrallah had promised to retaliate.

Then, Israeli strikes on Lebanon killed more than 700 people in five days, including at least 150 women and children, according to Lebanese authorities.

Nasrallah had said the barrages would continue — and Israelis wouldn't be able to return to their homes in the north — until Israel's campaign in Gaza ended.

Seen by his supporters as a charismatic and shrewd strategist, Nasrallah had reshaped Hezbollah into an archenemy of Israel, cementing alliances with the ayatollahs in Tehran and Palestinian militant groups such as Hamas.

Idolized by his Lebanese Shiite followers and respected by millions of others across the Arab and Islamic world, Nasrallah held the title of sayyid, an honorific meant to signify the Shiite cleric's lineage dating back to the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam.

Nasrallah's image appears on billboards in the group's strongholds across Lebanon — especially in southern Beirut, Hezbollah's headquarters — and on trinkets in souvenir shops not only in Lebanon but also in countries such as Syria and Iraq.

Despite the power he wielded, Nasrallah lived largely in hiding in the last years of his life for fear of an Israeli assassination, giving speeches to followers via a satellite link.

A fiery orator viewed as an extremist in the U.S. and much of the West, as well as in some oil-rich Gulf Arab countries, he was also considered a pragmatist compared with the firebrand militants who dominated Hezbollah after its founding in 1982, during Lebanon's civil war.

War after war in the Middle East

Under Nasrallah, Hezbollah fought Israel to a stalemate during the 34-day war in 2006 and was credited with leading the war of attrition that led to the withdrawal of Israeli troops from south Lebanon in 2000, after an 18-year occupation. Nasrallah's eldest son, Hadi, was killed in 1997, while fighting against Israeli forces.

When Syria's civil war erupted in 2011, Hezbollah fighters rushed in, siding with Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces — even though Hezbollah's popularity took a dive as the Arab world ostracized Assad.

Along with Damascus' key allies Russia and Iran, Hezbollah played a major role in helping Assad stay in power and eventually retake territory lost in the early years of the conflict.

Hezbollah saw its popularity among Arabs surge again when it came to the defense of Hamas, opening a front with Israeli forces along the Israel-Lebanese border barely a day after the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

The Hamas-led attack killed around 1,200 people in Israel and took about 250 hostage, triggering one of the most destructive military campaigns in modern history. Israel's subsequent aerial bombardment and ground invasion of the Gaza Strip killed tens of thousands of Palestinians.

In June 2024, Nasrallah warned Israel that Hezbollah had new weapons and capabilities. Nasrallah also claimed that Hezbollah now has a far higher number of fighters than the 100,000 figure he gave three years earlier.

The early years

Nasrallah, the eldest of nine siblings, was born into a poor family in Beirut's impoverished northern suburb of Sharshabouk. In 1975, the Lebanese civil war forced the family to flee south, to their ancestral home in Bazzouriyeh, a village near the ancient Phoenician port city of Tyre.

There, Nasrallah joined the Amal movement, a political and paramilitary organization representing the once-marginalized Shiites in Lebanon, and soon began his rise as a revolutionary.

At the age of 16, he went to Iraq's holy Shiite city of Najaf where the leader of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, lived in exile at the time and taught theology. Later, Nasrallah studied in the city of Qom, the seat of Iran's religious hierarchy.

Nasrallah was among Hezbollah's founders when the party was formed by Iranian Revolutionary Guard members who came to Lebanon in the summer of 1982 to fight invading Israeli forces.

He built a power base as Hezbollah over time became part of a cluster of Iranian-backed factions and

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governments known as the Axis of Resistance. It was also the first group that Iran backed and used as a way to export its brand of political Islam.

Two days after its leader, 39-year-old Sayyed Abbas Musawi, was killed in an Israeli helicopter gunship raid in south Lebanon, Hezbollah chose Nasrallah as its secretary-general in February 1992.

Like Musawi, Nasrallah was committed to the struggle against Israel and Khomeini's anti-Western teachings, and famously declared: "America will remain the dreadful enemy and Israel a cancerous growth that should be uprooted."

A black-turbaned cleric or a militant leader?

Wearing spectacles and sporting a bushy gray beard like many religious Shiite men, Nasrallah's image was far from that of a militant who commanded thousands of heavily armed, well-trained and battle-hardened followers.

He often paused in his speeches to make jokes or break into local dialect and once, responding to a reporter asking about his monthly salary during a television interview, Nasrallah said it was about \$1,300.

Following the end of Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, Nasrallah gradually turned the organization into a "state within a state," with an elaborate social welfare network that provided schools, clinics, and housing in the impoverished and predominantly Shiite parts of Lebanon.

After Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, Nasrallah rose to iconic status both within Lebanon and throughout the Arab world. His messages were beamed on Hezbollah's own radio and satellite TV station.

In a famous speech marking the Israeli withdrawal, he said: "It (Israel) has a nuclear weapon and the strongest air force in the region, but in truth, it is weaker than a spider's web."

As Israel, and later Syria, pulled their armies out of Lebanon, Nasrallah began to steer Hezbollah increasingly into the realm of politics. In the 2005 parliamentary elections, the first after Syria ended its 29-year military presence in Lebanon, Hezbollah made substantial gains and joined the Cabinet for the first time, holding two seats.

Politics and war

In July 2006, after Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border attack, Israel launched a monthlong massive air, sea and ground campaign against Lebanon. Nasrallah's home and offices and much of the group's infrastructure were destroyed, as well as much of south Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburbs.

Hezbollah fired around 4,000 rockets into Israel and after 34 days of fighting, a truce took effect and Nasrallah declared a "divine victory" over Israel.

While he was cheered for standing up to the Israeli army, Nasrallah was criticized by many for providing the spark for that war during which more than 1,200 people died in Lebanon — most of them civilians — and 159 in Israel.

Nasrallah later expressed regret — an unprecedented move for him — and said during a televised interview that Hezbollah had not expected "even one percent" that the capture of the Israeli soldiers "would lead to a war of this magnitude."

"You ask me, if I had known ... that the operation would lead to such a war, would I do it? I say no, absolutely not," he said.

In May 2008, Hezbollah's reputation suffered a setback when its fighters briefly seized much of west Beirut, turning their guns on local Lebanese foes after the government took measures against the group's private telecommunications network.

In the years that followed, a U.N.-backed tribunal in the Netherlands sentenced three Hezbollah members in absentia to five concurrent life sentences over the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Hezbollah ignored the tribunal and repeatedly denied its members were involved in the massive suicide bombing along the Beirut corniche that killed Hariri and 21 others, an attack that deeply divided Lebanon.

During the Arab Spring uprisings against autocratic governments, Hezbollah's close alliance with Syria and Iran opened the group to accusations that it was merely a well-armed tool of Damascus and Tehran.

Hezbollah was also pulled into the regional rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia and in 2016, the Saudi-led, six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council branded Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

But Hezbollah's anti-Israel campaign remained at its forefront as the group continued to build up its arsenal of tens of thousands of missiles, including precision-guided missiles, as well as drones.

After 2006, the Lebanon-Israel border remained mostly calm until Hamas' October 2023 deadly incursion into Israel. The next day, Hezbollah began attacking Israeli military posts and drawing Israeli fire in what became near-daily exchanges. Nasrallah said the aim was to ease the tension from the Gaza Strip.

Nasrallah is survived by his wife, Fatima Yassin. He also has three sons Jawad, Mohammed-Mahdi and Mohammed Ali, and a daughter Zeinab, as well as several grandchildren.

Urban communities that lack shade sizzle when it's hot. Trees are a climate change solution

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT and ALEXA ST. JOHN Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Along a busy road in west Detroit, there's little respite from the sun for residents stopping for gasoline, attending places of worship or bringing children to daycare. But a budding canopy of trees planted this year will change the look and feel of this corridor.

Detroit and other cities are adding trees and green spaces as one way to blunt the impact of warmer average temperatures and heat waves that are longer and hotter due to climate change.

The United Nations is urging governments, institutions and investors to prioritize sustainable cooling solutions that don't further warm the planet, including planting trees for shade and using reflective building materials. The U.N. Environment Programme and the International Finance Corporation issued a report Wednesday on financing these solutions for the developing world during U.N. General Assembly meetings.

It's the latest U.N. effort to help countries and cities cool buildings without adding air conditioners, raise energy efficiency standards for cooling equipment and phase down highly-polluting refrigerants. The goal is to get to near-zero emissions from cooling by 2050.

"We're faced with record-breaking temperatures. We need to save people from extreme heat," said Lily Riahi, global coordinator for the UNEP-led Cool Coalition. "But we have to find a way to cool the planet in a way that doesn't create more heat."

Globally, 20% of electricity is used for cooling. If nothing changes, the demand for equipment, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, is projected to triple by 2050, doubling electricity consumption and driving up emissions from fossil fuels, according to UNEP.

At last year's U.N. climate talks, a Global Cooling Pledge was launched to reduce emissions from cooling. And Riahi says the United States, one of 71 countries to endorse it, is a leader in using nature for cooling to tackle extreme heat.

A historic investment in urban trees is currently underway. The U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program received \$1.5 billion through the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022. Grant applications flooded in as heat records were shattered in 2023. Nearly 400 projects were picked for funding.

Typically, the program gets about \$40 million annually.

The cost of planting and maintenance is the major obstacle for most greening projects, said Daniel Metzger, a fellow at the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. Where a project is transforming previously paved space, removing asphalt or concrete is generally the biggest expense, he said.

Urban areas often bear the brunt of harmful health and environmental effects from heat waves. It's hotter in urban areas than surrounding suburbs — the "urban heat island" effect — because of abundant heat-absorbing surfaces. Trees and vegetation provide shade while lowering surface and air temperatures.

Increasing a city's tree canopy by 10% lowers the temperature by 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius), according to the Smart Surfaces Coalition. The coalition helps cities integrate cool roofs, green roofs, solar, porous pavement and urban trees.

"We can't air condition our way out of this problem," said coalition founder Greg Kats. "The way to solve it is citywide cooling."

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As Detroit grew, the city built tall, concrete buildings, industrial areas, commercial corridors and roadways. What was once called a "city of trees" lost thousands. Some were cut down; others died from disease and pests.

Detroit was awarded \$3 million through the urban forestry program to increase tree canopy in neighborhoods with few trees.

Eric Jones, a resident of the Woodbridge neighborhood, said some homeowners don't want trees because they think squirrels and falling leaves are nuisances. For Jones, 47, cooling in the summer outweighs that when he walks with his wife and daughter or goes running. Trees also improve air and water quality, help prevent stormwater runoff, sequester carbon dioxide, and can increase property values.

"On a day like today where it's in the 80s or in the 90s and it's sunny, I mean, it's just amazing the difference that we feel in our neighborhood versus when we get outside and there isn't near as much trees," Jones said.

Crystal Perkins, Detroit's general services director, said it will take time to feel citywide impacts because immature trees need to grow. Detroit plans to plant 75,000 young trees over five years.

"We know we'll reap the benefits for generations to come once we make these changes," Perkins added.

Meadows can help cool an area, too. Grasses and native plants can be a complementary approach to urban cooling because they reflect sunlight and absorb less heat than concrete or asphalt, said Lin Meng, an assistant professor of Earth and environmental sciences at Vanderbilt University.

A meadow planted in Detroit's Palmer Park in 2020 has grown 6 feet (1.8 meters) tall, with flowering purple asters, yellow goldenrods and Black-eyed Susans.

The Forestry Program prioritized communities that have been historically "marginalized, underserved and overburdened by pollution," in choosing projects to receive grants. Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Homer Wilkes said extreme heat disproportionately affects minority and low-income communities with little tree cover.

Researchers have found less tree canopy on average in communities mostly inhabited by racial and ethnic minorities in the 1930s, when financial services were withheld due to the discriminatory housing policy known as redlining. A 2021 study in NPJ Urban Sustainability of 37 U.S. cities found nearly twice as much tree canopy in predominantly white communities in the 1930s.

The ranking system used to assess loan risk mirrors tree cover today, lead author Dexter Locke said in an interview.

"The lethality of urban heat may increase with a changing climate," Locke said. "The people who are least able to cope with it can't afford air conditioning. So there's a real double environmental injustice there."

In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, nonprofits are planting citrus trees around public housing. Supported by a \$6 million U.S. Forest Service grant, two community groups are starting an apprenticeship program to teach dozens of youths to plant and care for trees to expand urban canopies, combat food insecurity and increase environmental awareness.

"That's landscape changing on a grand scale for a zip code," said Sage Roberts Foley, executive director of Baton Rouge Green.

Baton Roots mobile farm manager Jacquell Curry, 29, appreciates the citrus trees planted in his neighborhood because they offer shade, cooling that can lower electricity bills and fresh fruit once they mature.

"The whole goal is to reverse the bad domino effects due to the lack of trees," Curry said. "We're trying to get it to go back in the other direction."

Medicare Advantage shopping season arrives with a dose of confusion and some political implications

By TOM MURPHY and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

Thinner benefits and coverage changes await many older Americans shopping for health insurance this fall. That's if their plan is even still available in 2025.

More than a million people will probably have to find new coverage as major insurers cut costs and pull

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back from markets for Medicare Advantage plans, the privately run version of the federal government's coverage program mostly for people ages 65 and older.

Industry experts also predict some price increases for Medicare prescription drug plans as required coverage improvements kick in.

Voters will learn about the insurance changes just weeks before they pick the next president and as Democrat Kamala Harris campaigns on promises to lower health care costs. Early voting has already started in some states.

"This could be bad news for Vice President Harris. If that premium is going up, that's a very obvious sign that you're paying more," said Massey Whorley, an analyst for health care consulting company Avalere. "That has significant implications for how they're viewing the performance of the current administration."

Insurance agents say the distraction of the election adds another complication to an already challenging annual enrollment window that starts next month.

Insurers are pulling back from Medicare Advantage

Medicare Advantage plans will cover more than 35 million people next year, or around half of all people enrolled in Medicare, according to the federal government. Insurance agents say they expect more people than usual will have to find new coverage for 2025 because their insurer has either ended a plan or left their market.

The health insurer Humana expects more than half a million customers — about 10% of its total — to be affected as it pulls Medicare Advantage plans from places around the country. Many customers will be able to transfer to other Humana plans, but company leaders still anticipate losing a few hundred thousand customers.

CVS Health's Aetna projects a similar loss, and other big insurers have said they are leaving several states.

Insurers say rising costs and care use, along with reimbursement cuts from the government, are forcing them to pull back.

Some people can expect a tough search

When insurers leave Medicare Advantage markets, they tend to stop selling plans that have lower quality ratings and those with a higher proportion of Black buyers, said Dr. Amal Trivedi, a Brown University public health researcher.

He noted that market exits can be particularly hard on people with several doctors and on patients with cognitive trouble like dementia.

Most markets will still have dozens of plan choices. But finding a new option involves understanding out-of-pocket costs for each choice, plus figuring out how physicians and regular prescriptions are covered.

"People don't like change when it comes to health insurance because you don't know what's on the other side of the fence," said Tricia Neuman, a Medicare expert at KFF, a nonprofit that researches health care.

Plans that don't leave markets may raise deductibles and trim perks like cards used to pay for utilities or food.

Those proved popular in recent years as inflation rose, said Danielle Roberts, co-founder of the Fort Worth, Texas, insurance agency Boomer Benefits.

"It's really difficult for a person on a fixed income to choose a health plan for the right reasons ... when \$900 on a flex card in free groceries sounds pretty good," she said.

Don't "sleep" on picking a Medicare plan

Prices also could rise for some so-called standalone Part D prescription drug plans, which people pair with traditional Medicare coverage. KFF says that population includes more than 13 million people.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said Friday that premiums for these plans will decrease about 4% on average to \$40 next year.

But brokers and agents say premiums can vary widely, and they still expect some increases. They also expect fewer plan choices and changes to formularies, or lists of covered drugs. Roberts said she has already seen premium hikes of \$30 or more from some plans for next year.

Any price shift will hit a customer base known to switch plans for premium changes as small as \$1, said Fran Soistman, CEO of the online insurance marketplace eHealth.

The changes come as a congressional-approved coverage overhaul takes hold. Most notably, out-of-pocket drug costs will be capped at \$2,000 for those on Medicare, an effort championed by Democrats and President Joe Biden in 2022.

In the long run, these changes will lead to a “much richer benefit,” Whorley said.

KFF’s Neuman noted that the cap on drug costs will be especially helpful to cancer patients and others with expensive prescriptions. She estimates about 1.5 million people will benefit.

To ward off big premium spikes because of the changes, the Biden administration will pull billions of dollars from the Medicare trust fund to pay insurers to keep premium prices down, a move some Republicans have criticized. Insurers will not be allowed to raise premium prices beyond \$35 next year.

People will be able to sign up for 2025 coverage between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7. Experts say all the potential changes make it important for shoppers to study closely any new choices or coverage they expect to renew.

“This is not a year to sleep on it, just re-enroll in the status quo,” said Whorley, the health care analyst.

The new top youth official at the UN talks about what’s in it for young people

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Dr. Felipe Paullier is quick to say he doesn’t speak for the world’s roughly 2 billion tweens, teens and young adults. But as the United Nations’ first assistant secretary-general for youth affairs, he’s tasked with advocating for young people and their concerns to be incorporated into the organization’s work — a goal shared by young activists who don’t always feel heard by the international community. Paullier, a pediatrician and former director general of Uruguay’s National Youth Institute, started in the job in December. He sat down with The Associated Press on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly this week to talk about his role, the U.N.’s new “Pact for the Future,” what it means for young people — and whether their elders really mean it about including them.

Here are excerpts from the interview, edited for length and clarity.

AP: Given the subject, let’s start with this: How old are you?

PAULLIER: I’m 33. When I started, I was 32. I’m getting old.

AP: Your role is very new.

PAULLIER: You know, the U.N. has been an organization championing the youth agenda for many, many decades. But in terms of really putting this at the global level and as a priority, I think this is a bit more recent. ...My role is not about representing the youth voices — because young people are too diverse to be represented by one person. But at the same time, I think the office is a testament to the recognition of youth at the global level. I think that’s our role.

AP: What did the recent U.N. Summit of the Future and “Pact for the Future” add to the picture?

PAULLIER: I think there are two concrete commitment outcomes of this summit. Now, it’s always about these commitments being put into actions. But one is about governments committing to implement, at the national level, youth engagement mechanisms. And I think that’s a very important and very crucial point. And the second one is, at the global level, this idea of having a process to have common principles about meaningful youth participation. Because this is a relatively new concept. Ten or 15 years ago, you know, young people were just seen as beneficiaries of policies. And now I think the summit, the establishment of the office, there are many things changing that are showing institutions, decision-makers, are saying, “OK, we need to engage with them as partners.”

AP: At a leadup event for the summit, one young activist was quite frank about saying that it’s not just a matter of being invited to attend or speak at events — it’s a matter of actually being heard and seeing something come out of it. How do you encourage young people to take the U.N. at its word that it wants to include them in a way that’s meaningful?

PAULLIER: You know, I think this is a challenge of every traditional institution. And I’m saying “traditionally” because our institutions were established in a different world. It’s true that in the last 10 or 15 years, the

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world has changed dramatically. Technology has brought to people a lot of power, and this is transforming the accountability systems, the way that people can organize themselves, express themselves, mobilize. That's something very positive. But at the same time, institutions need to align to these transformations.... So I think that the summit is essentially the recognition that this needs to be transformed.

As an office, our role is that we push for changes for happen. And let's not see this only in the negative way of thinking. I tend to believe that these commitments from governments are a testament that they have willingness to really advance in this direction.

AP: Do you feel like the goals of young people who want this change are realistic?

PAULLIER: Completely.

Today in History: September 29, Willie Mays makes "The Catch"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Sept. 29, the 273rd day of 2024. There are 93 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 29, 1954, Willie Mays of the New York Giants made a running, over-the-shoulder catch of a ball hit by Vic Wertz of the Cleveland Indians in Game 1 of the 1954 World Series; "The Catch" would become one of the most famous plays in baseball history.

Also on this date:

In 1789, Congress officially established a regular army under the U.S. Constitution.

In 1938, British, French, German and Italian leaders concluded the Munich Agreement, which was aimed at appeasing Adolf Hitler by allowing Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed an act creating the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 1982, Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules laced with deadly cyanide claimed the first of seven victims in the Chicago area; the case, which led to legislation and packaging improvements to deter product tampering, remains unsolved.

In 1990, the construction of Washington National Cathedral concluded, 83 years to the day after its foundation stone was laid in a ceremony attended by President Theodore Roosevelt.

In 2005, John G. Roberts Jr. was sworn in as the nation's 17th chief justice after winning Senate confirmation.

In 2017, Tom Price resigned as President Donald Trump's secretary of Health and Human Services amid investigations into his use of costly charter flights for official travel at taxpayer expense.

In 2018, Tesla and its CEO, Elon Musk, agreed to pay a total of \$40 million to settle a government lawsuit alleging that Musk had duped investors with misleading statements about a proposed buyout of the company.

In 2021, a judge in Los Angeles suspended Britney Spears' father from the conservatorship that had controlled her life and money for 13 years, saying the arrangement reflected a "toxic environment."

In 2022, rescue crews piloted boats and waded through flooded streets to save thousands of Floridians trapped after Hurricane Ian destroyed homes and businesses and left millions in the dark.

Today's Birthdays: Writer-director Robert Benton is 92. NASA administrator and former Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., is 82. Actor Ian McShane is 82. Jazz musician Jean-Luc Ponty is 82. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Lech Walesa (lehk vah-WEN'-sah) is 81. TV journalist and sportscaster Bryant Gumbel is 76. Olympic gold medal runner Sebastian Coe is 68. Rock musician Les Claypool is 61. Actor Zachary Levi is 44. Actor Chrissy Metz (TV: "This Is Us") is 44. Actor Kelly McCreary (TV: "Grey's Anatomy") is 43. Football Hall of Famer Calvin Johnson is 39. NBA All-Star Kevin Durant is 36. Pop singer Halsey is 30.