

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sunday, Nov. 3

Standard Time: Turn clocks back one hour  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Milestones 2nd and 3rd graders, Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.  
United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.  
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.  
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.  
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.  
SEAS Fall Dinner, 5 p.m.

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

**Wishing Everyone  
A Wonderful Sunday!**

**Whatever you decide  
to do today, make sure  
it brings a Smile to your  
face and Joy to your  
heart.**



**Have a Safe,  
Happy and  
Peaceful  
Sunday!**

## Monday, Nov. 4

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, California blend, pineapple, breadstick  
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.  
School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center  
JH GBB at Warner, 6 p.m.

## Tuesday, Nov. 5

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin, tropical fruit, mixed vegetables, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Egg omelets.  
School Lunch: Chicken strips, waffle fries.  
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid, LWML, 1:30 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
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  
Region 1A Volleyball  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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## FROSTY CLUE

I/My.....

3. Went to four different schools from grades 1 through 12



**FOR RENT**

3 bedroom apartment for rent.  
Above laundromat in Downtown Groton.  
Call/Text Tina 605-397-7285  
Or Paul at 605-397-7460  
\$650/Month Includes utilities

**FOR RENT**

1 bedroom apartment for rent.  
Above laundromat in Downtown Groton.  
Call/Text Tina 605-397-7285  
Or Paul at 605-397-7460  
\$500/Month Includes utilities

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## NSU Football

### **Football Drops 10-Point Contest to No. 22 Minnesota State**

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University football team battled back on Saturday afternoon, but ultimately fell to the 22nd ranked Minnesota State Mavericks in their final home game of the season. The Wolves scored a pair of touchdowns in the second and fourth quarters, with the Mavericks notching 21 points in the second and three in the fourth.

#### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 14, MSU 24

Records: NSU 5-5 (5-4 NSIC), MSU 7-2 (6-2 NSIC)

Attendance: 4676

#### HOW IT HAPPENED

Down 14-0 as the second quarter ticked down, Wyatt Block broke through for the Wolves at the 2:38 mark with a 22-yard run; hurdling the MSU defender as he entered the endzone

Minnesota State answered back and closed out the half with their third touchdown of the game with just 30 seconds on the clock and entered the locker room up 21-7

After a scoreless third quarter, MSU extended their lead to 24-7 on a 30-yard field goal in the opening minutes of the fourth

Just under 2-minutes later at the 9:01 mark, Daniel Britt connected with Tanner Branson for a 10-yard touchdown and the Wolves were within ten

The Wolves got the ball back with 2:15 to play, however it wasn't enough time to rally from the deficit

The two teams were neck and neck in offense totals with Northern recording 135 yards rushing and 182 yards passing, and Minnesota State notching 148 yards rushing and 186 yards passing

The Mavericks converted on three of the six occasions they entered the red-zone, while the Wolves went 1-for-3

Northern suffered four offensive turnovers in the contest, two of which happened in opponent territory

Britt led the offense with 182 yards passing, completing 15-of-26 attempts with a touchdown and 48-yard long

Block led the rushers with 74 total yards, averaging 4.6 yards per carry with a touchdown and 22-yard long

Jake Adams returned to double figures on defense with 20 tackles, including 1.0 tackle for a loss, and forced a fumble

Trevor Johnson and Elijah Jopp followed with eight and seven tackles respectively, while Luke Gunderson, Cody Smidt, and Max Van Landingham each recorded 1.0 tackle for a loss

#### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Daniel Britt: 182 passing yds, 1 touchdown, 41 rushing yds

Wyatt Block: 74 rushing yds, 1 touchdown, 22-yd long

Jacob Van Landingham: 58 receiving yards, 48-yard long

Jake Adams: 20 tackles, 1.0 tackles for a loss, 1 forced fumble

#### UP NEXT

Northern State closes out their 2024 campaign next Saturday at Wayne State with a 12 p.m. kickoff against the Wildcats.

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## NSU Volleyball

### **No. 21 Wolves Make Efficient Work of Golden Eagles**

Crookston, Minn. – The No. 21 Northern State University volleyball team completed the weekend sweep on Saturday afternoon with a win over Minnesota Crookston. The Wolves defeated the Golden Eagles with set scores of 25-17, 25-14, and 25-21.

#### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 3, UMC 0

Records: NSU 17-5 (9-5 NSIC), UMC 7-15 (4-10 NSIC)

Attendance: 197

#### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern improved on their Friday night totals, hitting .364 in the win with 46 kills on 110 swings and just six hitting errors

The Wolves led the match with their 46 kills, as well as 44 assists, 56 digs, seven aces, and five blocks

Two Wolves hit in double figures, led by Morissen Samuels with 12 kills and a .435 attack percentage

Natalia Szybinska followed with ten kills and a .409 attack percentage, while both Samuels and Szybinska recorded four digs

Keri Walker paced the offense with 39 assists, averaging 13.00 per set, and added seven digs, two aces, one block, and one kill

Abby Meister was the lone Wolf in double figures defensively with 17 digs, averaging 5.67 per set

#### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Morissen Samuels: 12 kills, .4365 attack%, 4 digs

Natalia Szybinska: 10 kills, .409 attack%, 4 digs

Keri Walker: 39 assists, 7 digs, 2 aces

Abby Meister: 17 digs, 2 aces, 2 assists

#### UP NEXT

The Wolves will play their final road weekend of the regular season next Friday and Saturday at Sioux Falls and Wayne State. Start times are set for 6 p.m. on Friday against the Cougars and 4 p.m. on Saturday versus the Wildcats.

## NOTICE OF SALE

November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00 AM

State Nebraska Bank & Trust vs Brian Dolan & Kristen Dolan

(06CIV22-000424-01)

2012 Chevy Avalanche



An Execution of Judgement in the above referenced matter was received by the Brown County Sheriff's Office on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The amount of the Judgment is \$33,157.48, \$260.50 Cost, \$373.39 Pre-Judgement interest, plus continuing costs, and interest, as provided by law. This amount does not include Sheriff's Office fees and costs related to this matter. The property to be sold pursuant to the Execution is: 2012 Chevy Avalanche, VIN 3GNTKFE79CG124632. Odometer Reading: 206,206.

**THIS PROPERTY WILL BE AUCTIONED AND SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, WITH THE SALE BEING FINAL, SOLD AS IS WITH NO WARRANTIES EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED. CASH IS REQUIRED ON THE DAY OF SALE.**

The sale will be held at the Brown County Court House, 101 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SE, Aberdeen, SD 57401 on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

DAVE LUNZMAN, SHERIFF OF BROWN COUNTY.

By: Nate Smith, Deputy, 605-626-7100 ext. 509.

## 2025 DOG LICENSES DUE BY 12/31/2024



LICENSE YOUR DOG.



**Licenses due by December 31, 2024**

**Fines start January 1, 2025**

**Spayed/Neutered dogs are \$5 per dog,  
otherwise \$10 per dog**

**Proof of rabies shot information is REQUIRED!!**

Email proof to [city.kellie@nvc.net](mailto:city.kellie@nvc.net)

fax to (605) 397-4498 or bring a copy to City Hall!!

Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have a dog(s) that  
were previously licensed!

Questions call (605) 397-8422

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## Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

- ✓ Pro Police
- ✓ Pro Constitution
- ✓ Pro Family



Visit the Campaign Site  
[ManhartForHouse.com](https://ManhartForHouse.com)



Paid for by Manhart for State House

# MANHART

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

### DISTRICT 1

[facebook.com/ManhartLogan](https://facebook.com/ManhartLogan) | [ManhartForHouse.com](https://ManhartForHouse.com)

**General Election - Nov. 5**  
**Absentee Voting has begun**



## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

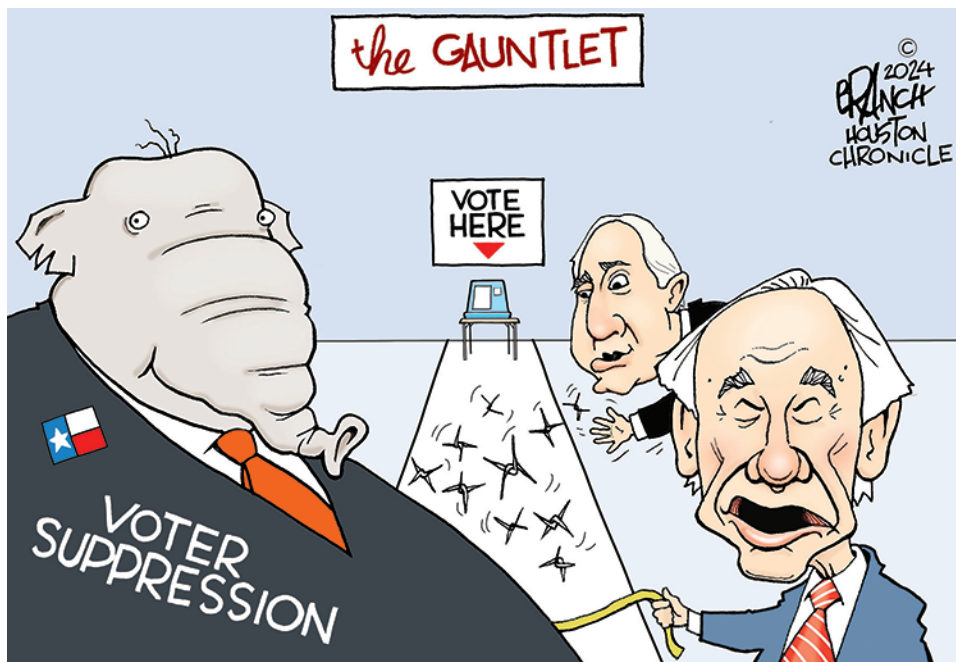
*“The bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

JOHN 6: 33-35



Detail from “Bread gets Delivered by an Angel” by Jean Honoré Fragonard (1752/1756)

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## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of 3 Chronicles (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Job and which other Old Testament book mention the constellation of Orion? *Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Amos*

3. Which prophet took a wife of whoredoms named Gomer? *Hosea, Jonah, Amos, Micah*

4. From Judges 14, what did Samson eat from the carcass of a lion? *Manna, Honey, Berries, Figs*

5. What sin against the Holy Spirit results in eternal guilt? *Blasphemy, Adultery, Murder, Non tithing*

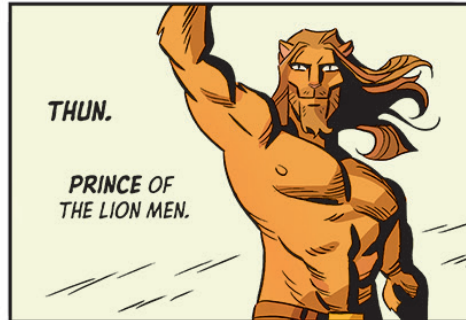
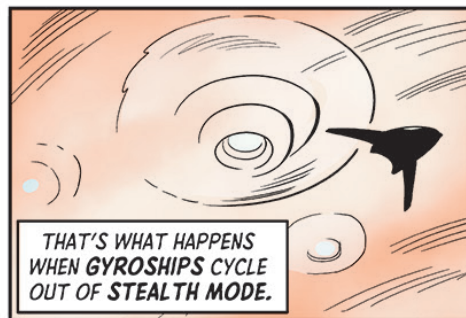
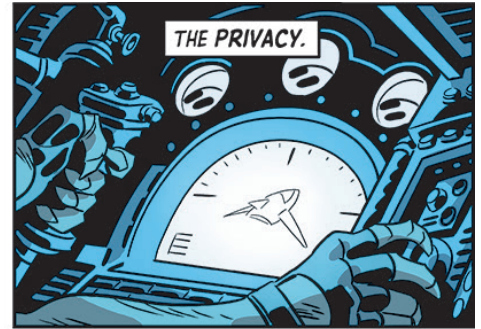
6. Who was the father of Joshua? *Abraham, Aaron, Nun, Moses*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Amos, 3) Hosea, 4) Honey, 5) Blasphemy, 6) Nun

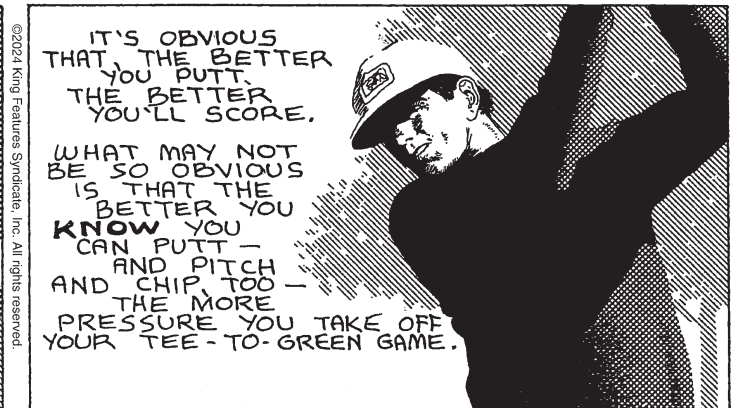
*Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.*

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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## How Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Affects Older Women

DEAR DR. ROACH: I had all the symptoms of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) when I was younger. I could go six months without having my period. I had all the other symptoms, too, like oily skin and facial hair. It's a terrible thing for a young teenage girl. I also had trouble getting pregnant; though, fortunately, Clomid worked well for me during both of my pregnancies.

My question is, how does PCOS affect older women? My doctor doesn't know. Is this why my hair is thinning so badly? What else can I expect now that I'm older? (I'm 66 now, and I had menopause at 51.) What can I do about it? I still have hot flashes and thinning hair. -- L.L.P.

ANSWER: I'm sorry that you aren't getting good advice. PCOS doesn't go away after menopause, but it's harder to diagnose. There aren't good data

to help guide treatment, so understanding what's happening at a biochemical level is important.

Although cysts in the ovaries are usually seen with PCOS, the most important parts of the diagnosis have more to do with androgen excess (male hormones) and abnormal ovulation. Insulin resistance is also an important part of PCOS, with or without obesity.

The androgen excess is responsible for oily skin and facial hair, and it's partially responsible for insulin resistance. As women age, most androgen levels tend to return to normal, but women still may have some residual symptoms. Although any woman can get female-pattern hair loss (overall thinning of the hair, often worst in the center part), women with PCOS are at a higher risk for developing this type.

However, women with PCOS may also occasionally develop male-pattern hair loss (a receding hairline and thinning on the crown) when the ovaries produce excess male hormones and fewer female hormones. Treatment with the antiandrogen medication finasteride seems particularly promising, and topical (or low-dose oral) minoxidil can be helpful. A dermatologist who specializes in hair loss should be the expert in the management of PCOS-associated female-pattern hair loss.

In addition, the excess male hormones may play a role in increasing a postmenopausal woman's risk for heart disease. HDL cholesterol levels tend to be lower in postmenopausal women with PCOS. The standard calculators to help a clinician decide when to start medication (such as a statin) to reduce the risk of heart disease are likely to underestimate the risk. Thus, diet and exercise are very important for women with PCOS.

Hot flashes do not seem to be worsened by PCOS. Although hormone replacement can be used in women with hot flashes and PCOS, it is especially risky in a woman of 66 due to the increased risk of heart disease. Nonhormonal treatment, such as venlafaxine or fezolinetant, is my recommendation.

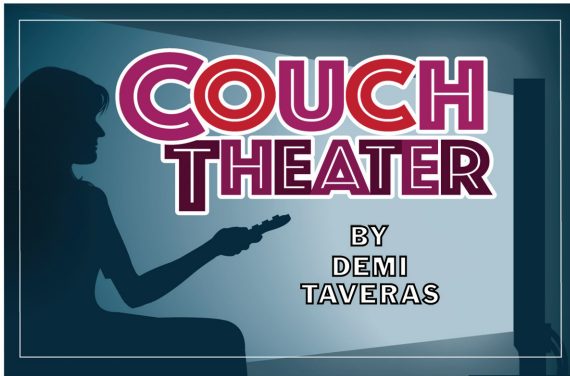
Finally, insulin resistance is present in over half of all women with PCOS, so regular evaluations of blood sugar levels and A1C levels are important to diagnose prediabetes or overt diabetes as quickly as possible. Again, diet, exercise and sometimes medication are even more important for women with PCOS, to help reduce the risk for developing diabetes.

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](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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**Jeremy Strong, left, and Sebastian Stan star in "The Apprentice."** (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Alien: Romulus" (R) -- This sci-fi horror film marks the ninth overall film in the "Alien" franchise, pulling in about \$350.8 million at the box office to add to the franchise's overall grosses. This film adds Cailee Spaeny ("Civil War"), Isabela Merced ("Madame Web"), and Archie Renaux ("Morbis") into the "Alien" mix. Set between the events of "Alien" (1979) and "Aliens" (1986), "Romulus" centers around six space colonists who embark on a quick, 30-minute expedition to gather equipment that can help them escape to the planet Yvaga. Once they arrive at the space station, however, they realize it's inhabited by deadly xenomorphs. So, pick your poison: a face-hugging alien or a chest-bursting one? (Amazon Prime Video)

"MaXXXine" (R) -- The third installment in the A24 slasher film series "X" directed by Ti West is out now, starring scream queen Mia Goth ("Emma"). Set in 1985 Los Angeles, Goth reprises her role as wild card Maxine Minx, who finally lands a role in a feature film after having starred in adult films her entire life. But while she's being lured into the glitz and glamor of the Hollywood Hills, the notorious Night Stalker is on the loose, murdering people left and right. Luckily, with the treacherous past Maxine has, the Night Stalker is the last person on her mind when fame is nipping at her fingertips. Elizabeth Debicki ("The Crown"), Lily Collins ("Emily in Paris"), Halsey ("Sing 2"), and Kevin Bacon ("Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F") co-star. (Max)

"The Apprentice" (R) -- It's a miracle that there haven't been more biopics about Donald Trump in development, given the amount of material the former president provides us with daily. Described to be his "origin story," this drama starring Sebastian Stan ("A Different Man") as Trump follows his career in New York as a real estate businessman during the 1970s and 1980s. Jeremy Strong ("Succession") plays Trump's close confidant, Roy Cohn, whose influence and transactional relationship with Trump is closely studied during the film. Trump himself described the film as "a cheap, defamatory, and politically disgusting hatchet job" and called everyone involved "human scum." Hmm, sounds like it could be worth a watch! Check it out for yourself now. (Apple TV+)

"The Substance" (R) -- Demi Moore has made a bit of a comeback with the success of this disturbing horror film, co-starring Margaret Qualley ("Kinds of Kindness") and Dennis Quaid ("Reagan"). On the eve of her 50th birthday, Elisabeth Sparkle (Moore) gets fired from her aerobics TV show due to her "advanced age." Subsequently, Elisabeth sees an ad for The Substance, a black-market serum that creates a "younger, more beautiful" version of the person who injects it. Thinking she found the answer to her problems, Elisabeth uses the younger version of herself, named Sue (Qualley), to garner fame, celebrity, and everything she desires. But what happens to dear Elisabeth when Sue starts to get a mind of her own? Find out now. (MUBI)

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1. Name the R&B group who had a hit with "Just to Be Close to You."
2. Which artist released "I'm Sorry"?
3. Name the duo that released "Yesterday Once More."
4. Which group released "Surf's Up," "Surf Jam" and "Surfin' Safari"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Stronger than any mountain cathedral, Truer than any tree ever grew, Deeper than any forest primeval, I am in love with you."

Answers

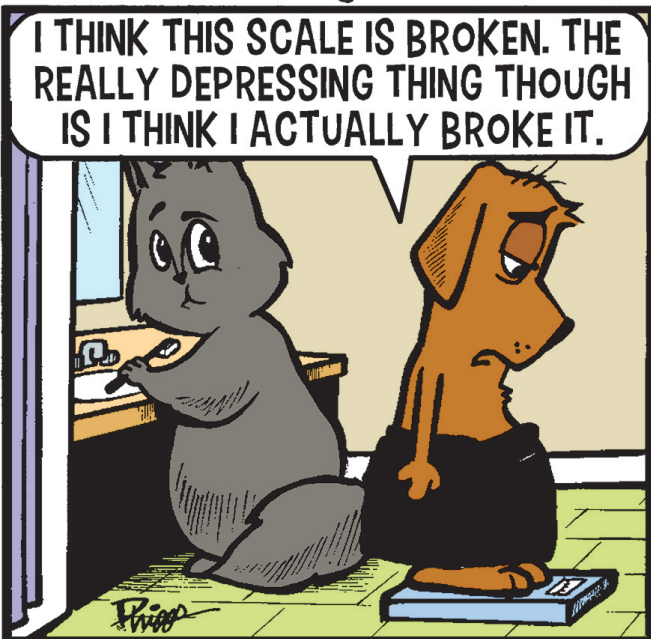
1. The Commodores, in 1976. Songwriter Lionel Richie was lead singer until he left the group in 1982. Over the years, Richie has won four Grammys.
  2. Brenda Lee, in 1960, at age 15. A singer from the age of 3 when she was known as "Little Miss Dynamite," Lee was often the sole financial support for her family while still a child.
  3. The Carpenters, in 1973. It was co-written by Richard Carpenter.
  4. The Beach Boys, a band formed in 1961. They were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1988.
  5. "Longer," by Dan Fogelberg, in 1979. The song was Fogelberg's highest charting song, reaching No. 1 on the Adult Contemporary and Cash Box charts, but only reaching No. 2 on the Hot 100.
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## GRIN and BEAR IT <sup>by Wagner</sup>



"Can you fast-forward it past the election?"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs <sup>by Dave T. Phipps</sup>

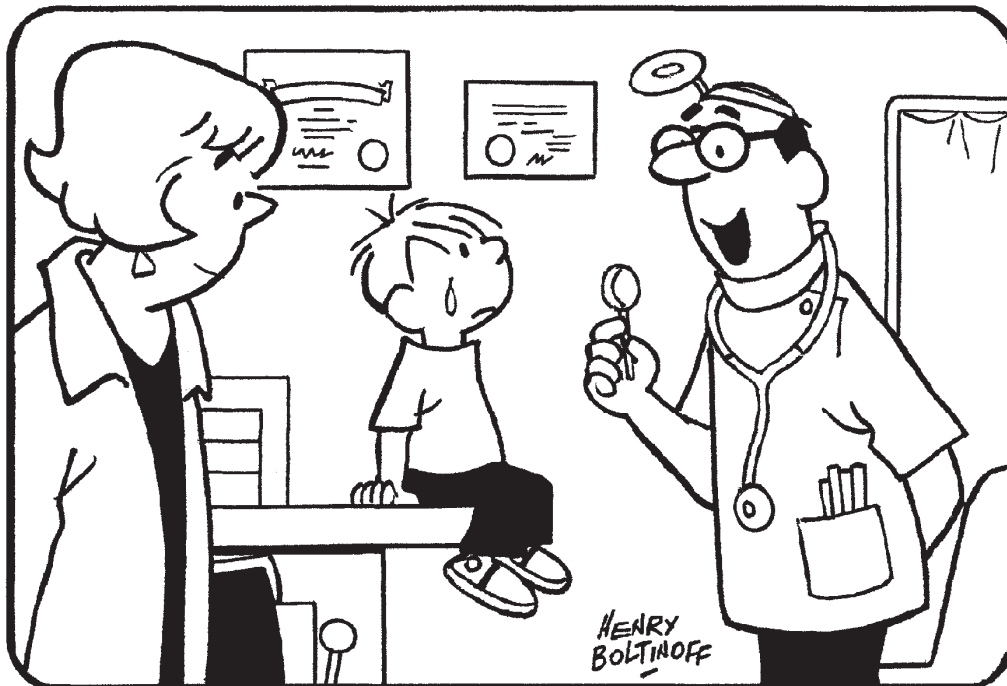


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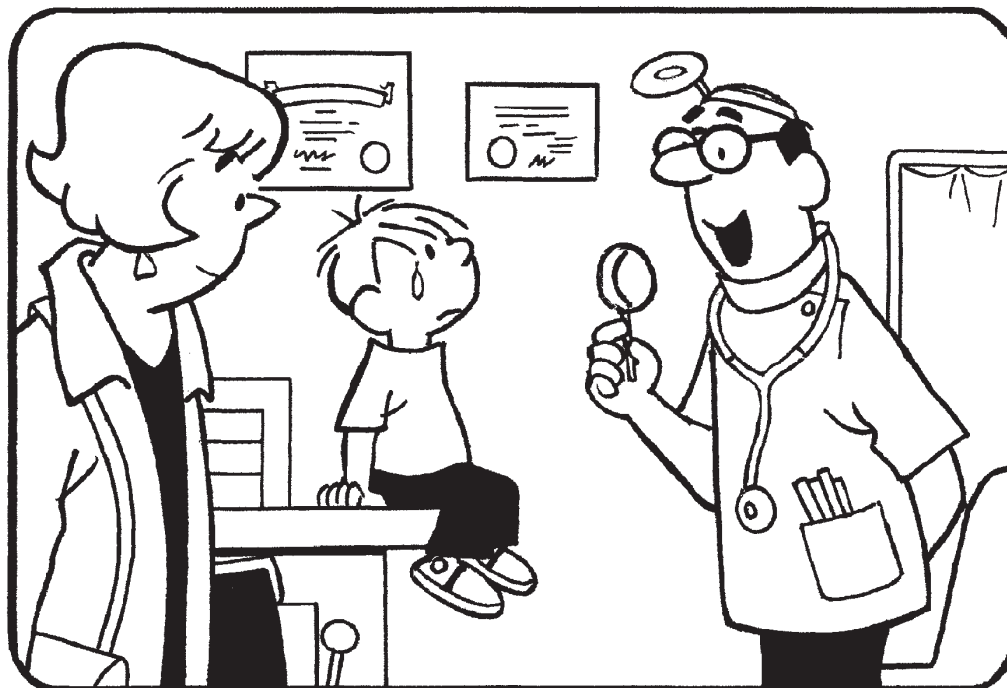
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Exam table is not as long. 2. Pocket is reversed. 3. Teardrop is higher. 4. Lollipop is larger. 5. Curtain is not as high. 6. Purse is added.

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\* "I have to wear my hair tied back for work. With all the ponytails, I get lots of little broken hairs that stick up all over my head when it's very dry or very humid, especially when I go from a wet, yucky outside to a dry, heated inside. I have tried lots of styling products that don't work very well. Then a co-worker suggested a fabric softener sheet. I can't believe it, but it works." -- P.G. in Michigan

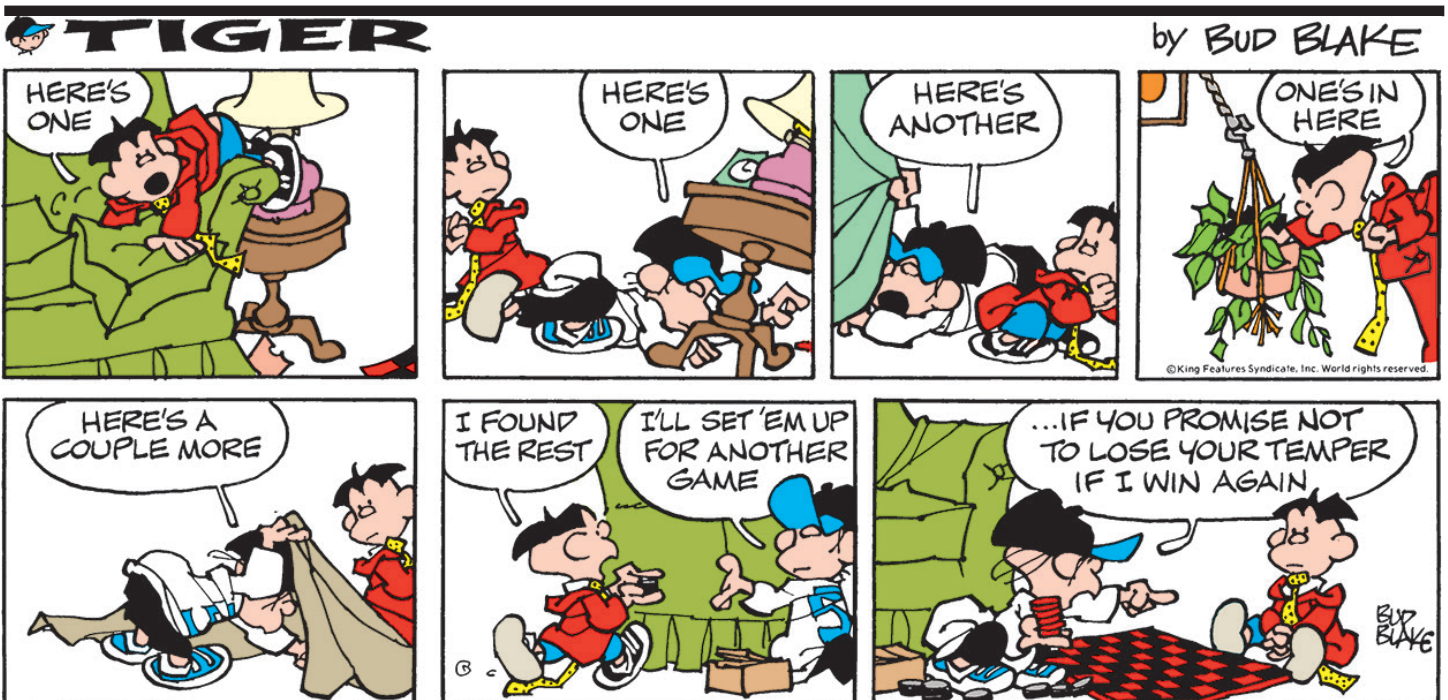
\* If you have an ink stain on fabric, try blotting it with hairspray. Saturate the ink spot with hairspray and blot using a clean white cloth or non-decorated paper towel. Repeat until all the ink is gone. Make sure you test on an inconspicuous area first.

\* For every degree you lower your thermostat during the heating season, you generally reduce your energy costs by 3% daily. Also, turn down the temperature setting on your hot water heater.

\* Here's a no-fail strategy for raking up leaves: Rake leaves into a single long line, preferably onto a sidewalk. Then turn a large garbage can on its side and sweep the leaf pile into the can, breaking to empty leaves into bags as needed. The raking goes much quicker when done in "stripes." And bagging is faster as well.

\* "I have one of those big wall calendars for work. When the year is over, the kids like to cut out the months into bingo cards. They use stickers to create both the bingo cards and the puller's cards (the individual days and the different kinds of stickers). It's a fun craft that uses their brain cells, plus recycles the paper calendar." -- Y.R. in Arizona

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

### ACROSS

- 1 Story lines
- 5 Entanglement
- 8 Victor's cry
- 12 Barking mammal
- 13 Artist Yoko
- 14 Scrapped mission
- 15 Hawaiian city
- 16 Tic-tac-toe win
- 17 Corrida bull
- 18 Surround
- 20 Edge
- 22 Standard
- 23 Fiddle stick
- 24 Umps
- 27 Revolt
- 32 — Baba
- 33 To and —
- 34 Modern, in Bonn

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

- 35 They can hold their heads high
- 38 Aussie greeting
- 39 Takeoff stat
- 40 Comic Philips
- 42 On the job
- 45 Destroys
- 49 Hoodlum
- 50 Privy
- 52 Small combo
- 53 Oklahoma tribe
- 54 GI entertainers
- 55 Full house, e.g.
- 56 Pantheon members
- 57 Club —
- 58 Early birds?
- 10 Folklore monster
- 11 Queen dowager of Jordan
- 19 "— Boheme"
- 21 Kimono closer
- 24 Tatter
- 25 Yalie
- 26 Kindling
- 28 Opposite of "post-"
- 29 Guitar-making material
- 30 PBS supporter
- 31 Chap
- 36 Makes amends
- 37 New Deal pres.
- 38 "Faust" dramatist
- 41 "— Deeds"
- 42 Awestruck
- 43 Dorothy's dog
- 44 Heidi of "Project Runway"
- 46 Rocky outcrop
- 47 Monarch
- 48 Freshens lawns
- 51 Sugar suffix

### DOWN

- 1 Tennis legend Arthur
- 2 Check
- 3 Young whale
- 4 Sailing vessels
- 5 PBS anchor Judy
- 6 Rock's Brian
- 7 Nitwit
- 8 Preambles
- 9 Oboe, for one



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## — King Crossword —

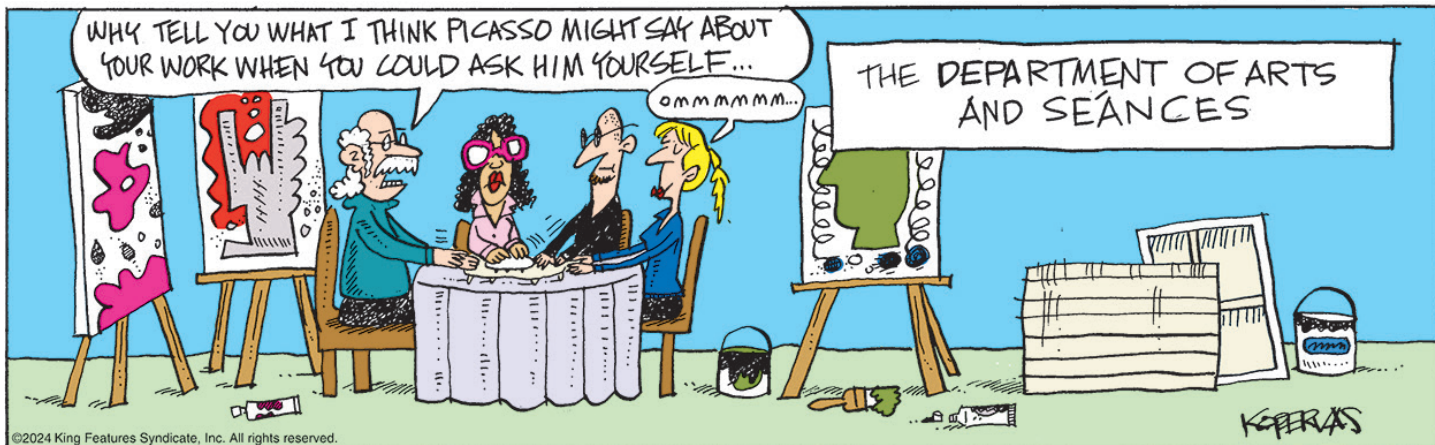
Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

A	R	C	S		W	E	B		I	W	O	N
S	E	A	L		O	N	O		N	O	G	O
H	I	L	O		O	O	O		T	O	R	O
E	N	F	O	L	D		B	O	R	D	E	R
			P	A	R			B	O	W		
R	E	F	S		U	P	R	I	S	I	N	G
A	L	I			F	R	O			N	E	U
G	I	R	A	F	F	E	S		G	D	A	Y
			E	T	D			E	M	O		
A	T	W	O	R	K		W	R	E	C	K	S
G	O	O	N		L	O	O		T	R	I	O
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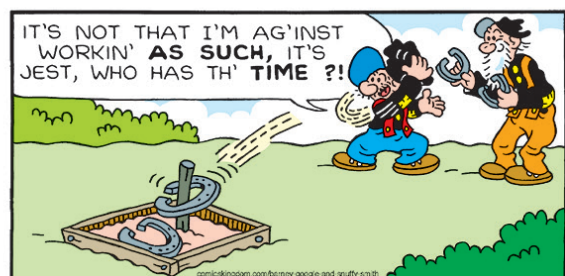
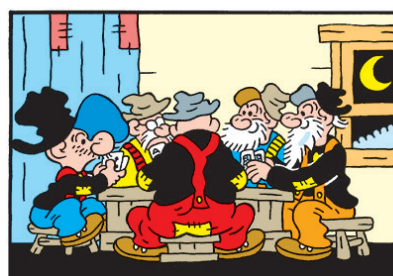
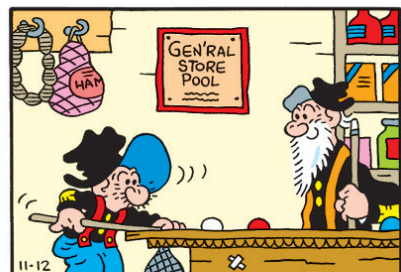
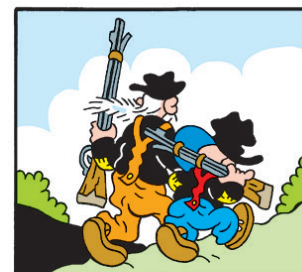
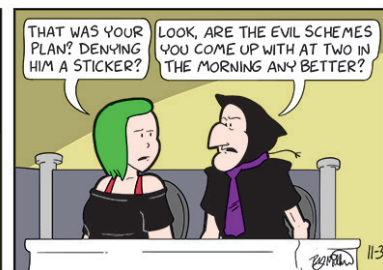
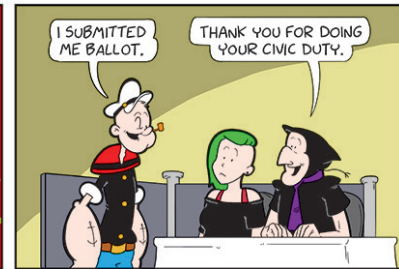
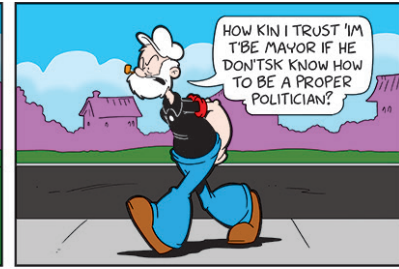
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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HAL FOSTER'S **Prince Valiant**<sup>®</sup>  
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

THE ISLAND QUEEN ROUNDS LAND'S END, BUT BEFORE SHE CAN TURN OUT TO SEA AND BRITTANY, A LOOKOUT SINGS ...



... "SHIP APPROACHING, OFF THE PORT BOW!" THE PASSENGERS CROWD THE RAILS, LOOSENING SWORDS, AS A SLEEK DRAGON SHIP CLOSES QUICKLY, THE WIND BEHIND HER.

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BUT GUNDAR IS UNCONCERNED, COMMANDING THE ISLAND QUEEN TO HEAVE TO. "BEHOLD MY LATEST DESIGN, THE SKJALDDIS!" HE EXCLAIMS PROUDLY. "CAPTAINED BY MY SON HARALDR! SHE WILL BE THE ESCORT YOU REQUESTED, PRINCE VALIANT, ALL THE WAY TO THE MISTY ISLES!"

NEXT: Haraldr the Handsome



3996 YEATES 9/8/13

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

I HEARD YOU ONCE SWALLOWED A DICTIONARY.



I SURE DID!!



...AND IT GAVE ME THESAURUS THROAT I EVER HAD.



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### What shall we do with the extra \$50?

Social Security payments are going up 2.5% starting in January, which comes to an average \$50 increase for the 72 million recipients. That's less than the increase for 2024, and the previous year, and the previous year.

Your 2025 statement detailing your specific amount should arrive in the mail in early December. Read it to be sure you don't spot any mistakes.

Medicare cost is getting a bump, from \$174 to \$185. (Keep an eye out for your annual booklet "Medicare & You" to come in the mail.) Remember: Upon reaching age 65, you still need to sign up for Medicare within 3 months of your birthday.

Social Security fraud is still a big problem. If you suspect someone has tried to scam you, call the Inspector General's Fraud Hotline at 800-269-0271 and report it.

If you're scrambling and watching your savings dwindle because of the rising cost of, well, everything and you know that the Social Security increase won't make a dent, give your finances a good hard look.

Some ideas: Put off buying a new winter coat for one more year. Buy food in bulk and split with a friend or neighbor. Look for community rabies/distemper shot events to lower the cost of vaccines for your pet. Put clear plastic on the windows to block chilly breezes. Ask for discounts everywhere you go and shop on seniors discount days. Apply for energy, phone and internet assistance money. Consider a part-time job one day per week. If you can pay for the whole year on your auto or homeowner insurance, you might get a significant discount. Review your subscriptions and cable TV extras and see if you can delete any of them. Try out cheaper store brands. Explore GoodRx and America's Pharmacy for reduced prescription costs.

In short, look for spare dollars anywhere you can find them, because that extra \$50 isn't going to go very far.

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1. In 1987, what Minnesota Twins third baseman became the first player in Major League Baseball history to hit home runs in his first two postseason plate appearances?

2. Former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo played college football for what team?

3. What two soccer teams played in the notorious 2006 FIFA World Cup knockout stage match dubbed the "Battle of Nuremberg" that had four red cards and 16 yellow cards issued?

4. What 1986 made-for-television movie starred Vanessa Redgrave as transgender tennis player and ophthalmologist Renee Richards?

5. Name the mixed martial arts fighter from Ohio who successfully defended his UFC heavyweight title three times from 2016-18.

6. In September 2003, Baseball Hall of Famer Rickey Henderson played his final Major League Baseball game as a member of what team?

7. What German racecar driver, winner of the 2015 24 Hours of Le Mans endurance race, holds the Formula 1 record for most career starts without a podium finish?



by Ryan A. Berenz

## Answers

1. Gary Gaetti.
2. The Eastern Illinois Panthers.
3. Portugal and the Netherlands.
4. "Second Serve."
5. Stipe Miocic.
6. The Los Angeles Dodgers.
7. Nico Hulkenberg.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## My neighbor won't stop feeding stray cats

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My next-door neighbor puts out food for all of the outdoor cats in the area. That includes a lot of strays who are now mingling with the cats who have homes. She even buys specialty cat food if she thinks they don't like what she's offering. I think this is a dangerous situation, because the cats may be exposed to diseases from the strays. What should I say to her to stop this? -- Concerned Next Door

DEAR NEXT DOOR: If you're on polite terms with the neighbor, go over and talk to her about the issue, calmly. Explain your concerns and let her know that some of those cats have homes and owners who may not be happy about their cats being fed somewhere else.

However, if you're not comfortable speaking directly with her -- or if the conversation accomplishes nothing -- you will need to consider other routes.

If you have a neighborhood HOA, bring up the issue in a community meeting. The cats' owners may not be aware of what's going on. If you don't have an HOA, try discussing the issue with the other owners directly. Explain that their cats are at risk of contracting diseases common among strays, like FIV (feline immunodeficiency virus) or could be injured in a territorial fight. The least painful solution is for cat owners to keep their outdoor cats inside and away from the neighbor.

Then contact your local animal control. Now, animal control doesn't always intervene in these situations, but if they feel that the strays are a danger to other pets, they may come out and try to trap and remove them to a shelter, or at least have a talk with your neighbor about putting food out.

How would you handle a similar situation? Tell us about it at [ask@pawscorner.com](mailto:ask@pawscorner.com).

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## Strange BUT TRUE

\* The term “lawn mullet” means having a neatly manicured front yard and an unmowed mess in the back.

\* Weird Al Yankovic wrote his parody song “The Saga Begins” before “Star Wars: Episode I” was released. Lucasfilm denied his request to see the film early, so he relied on internet spoilers for plot details.

\* The human stomach can dissolve razor blades.

\* In 1987, Steve Rothstein paid \$250,000 for a lifetime unlimited first class American Airlines ticket. He even hopped

on planes to get a sandwich or to go to a baseball game in other cities. It cost American Airlines around \$21 million, and they ended his contract in 2008.

\* In Italy, it’s considered bad luck to lay bread upside down -- either on a table or in a basket.

\* Thanksgiving Eve is the biggest drinking and pizza night of the year.

\* When the Italian writer Umberto Eco visited Paris for the first time, he only walked down streets surviving from the Middle Ages. He was studying medieval history at the University of Turin at the time and was obsessed with the era.

\* In an emergency, coconut water can be used for blood plasma, due to its high levels of sodium and low levels of potassium.

\* There are beaches in the Maldives that glow in the dark.

\* When pencils went into mass production in the 1890s, the finest available graphite to fill them came from China. Pencil manufacturers wanted everyone to know that they used only the best Chinese graphite, so they painted their pencils yellow, the traditional Chinese color of royalty.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: “Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.” -- Samuel Ullman  
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In autumn, stop fertilizing your clivia plant, and place it in a cool room for about 6-8 weeks; this is essential for the flower buds to form. Water very sparingly until flower buds appear. Just as winter enters its bleakest stage, you will be rewarded with a bouquet of lovely bright-colored flowers. These plants bloom better when slightly “potbound.” When the flowers fade, cut the stalk at its base to prevent seeding.

– Brenda Weaver

Sources: [chicagobotanic.org](http://chicagobotanic.org), [worldoffloweringplants.com](http://worldoffloweringplants.com), [gardeningknowhow.com](http://gardeningknowhow.com)

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by Freddy Groves

## Operation Gratitude still going strong

Since it began in 2003, Operation Gratitude has sent out in excess of 4 million care packages to deployed service members. Starting several years ago, OpGrat has expanded their range of giving to include first responders, wounded heroes, recruit graduates coming out of boot camp and veterans, saying thank you to those who serve.

The kids aren't left out either. Over 20,000 Battalion Buddy teddy bears have been send out to military children in one year alone.

The donated items in the boxes (ranging from expensive gadgets to snacks to games to necessities) come from corporations, small companies, community and civic groups, and individuals.

Requesting a care package to be sent to someone is easy. Packages can be sent to Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel deployed overseas and National Guard serving domestically.

Volunteers are at the heart of OpGrat. They write letters to be included in the packages and volunteer at the packing events. Local groups create handmade items, scout troops and companies hold fundraisers and schoolchildren collect loose change.

If you doubt the value of this ongoing effort, look at the videos on the website ([www.operationgratitude.com](http://www.operationgratitude.com)). And look for Carolyn Blashek, the woman who started OpGrat in her living room in 2003 after talking to an Iraq War soldier who doubted that anyone cared about whether he'd make it back. She decided to prove him wrong, and 4 million packages later, she has.

I first wrote about Operation Gratitude in 2008 and have been tracking them through the years. While other efforts have come and gone, OpGrat has only grown and expanded. One memorable highlight was the year founder Carolyn Blashek personally delivered a care package to a soldier in Iraq. That box contained the keys to a new vehicle, courtesy of the automaker.

Want to open your wallet and help? You can make a tax deductible donation on the website or send a check to Operation Gratitude, PO Box 260257, Encino, CA 91426-0257. For more information, call them at 818-960-7878.

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## Wishing Well®

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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: What was the name of the tournament in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What was the name of the train service that started in 1883 between Paris and Constantino-ple (Istanbul)?
3. LITERATURE: Who did the pigs represent in the allegorical novel "Animal Farm"?
4. ART: Which European city houses the Reina Sofia museum?
5. TELEVISION: What is the product that Don Draper makes an ad for in the final episode of "Mad Men"?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of unicorns called?
7. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which presidential retreat is officially named the "Naval Support Facility Thurmont"?
8. MUSIC: Which composer is featured in the film "Immortal Beloved"?
9. HISTORY: The Great Wall of China was mostly built by which dynasty?
10. FOOD & DRINK: What kind of fruit is also known as the Chinese gooseberry?

### Answers

1. The Triwizard Tournament.
2. The Orient Express.
3. The ruling class.
4. Madrid, Spain.
5. Coke.
6. A blessing.
7. Camp David, Maryland.
8. Ludwig van Beethoven.
9. Ming Dynasty.
10. Kiwi.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



**South Dakota:** *Under God, the People Rule*

## A Prayer for Our Nation

For those of you who read my weekly columns, you know that they can take on many forms. They're often focused on updating you on changing policies or issues that I am focused on. Sometimes they celebrate major events in our state, holidays, or the achievement of something that we've been working on for a while.

This week, I want to do something just a bit just a bit different. I want to say a prayer for our state and our nation. If you'll join me...

Dear God, we come to You in prayer. We thank You for the blessings that You have showered on the state of South Dakota and the United States of America. You have blessed us with greater Freedom and prosperity than any nation has ever known. You have made us one nation, under You, indivisible, built on the principles of liberty and justice for all. And You have helped make South Dakota a shining beacon of Freedom within that nation.

You helped form us as the United States, but this nation has not seemed as united in recent days, weeks, and months. We ask You to bring us together in the values and principles that You have used to make America special: that all men and women are created equal by You; that You endow us with rights including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that You give us free will to make our own decisions; that with that free will comes the personal responsibility to make the right choices for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

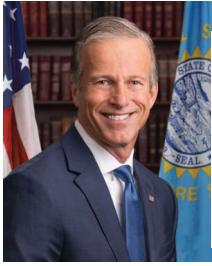
Lord, we ask You to strengthen families across our state and nation. Where there is pain, we ask You to bring healing and comfort. Where there are families struggling to make ends meet, we ask You to help them feed their families and keep a roof over their heads – and we ask that You help bring some economic relief to our people. Where there is conflict, whether within families or communities, we ask You to bring Your peace that surpasses all understanding. Where there is war around the globe, we ask You to bring that same peace – and we ask You to help America be the example that can help achieve that peace.

Lord, there is an election just a few days away that will shape our nation for the next several years and far beyond. We ask that Your guiding hand be present in this election and that You bless us with results that will set our state and nation up for success in the years and generations to come.

This great American Republic that You have blessed us with is possible because our people are actively involved in keeping it. Help us to maintain that focus so that we can hand Freedom down to our kids and grandkids.

Thank You again for the blessings you have given us – help us always to thank You and not to take them for-granted.

In Your name we pray – Amen.



**JOHN THUNE**  
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

## Lifelong Lessons From South Dakota Schools

One of the highlights of my travels across South Dakota is the opportunity to visit schools and meet young people. It's refreshing to see their engagement with the important issues facing our country and hear about their dreams for their own future and for our country's future.

In just the last few weeks I've spoken to high school students in McLaughlin, Winner, and Summit. I had the chance to share what I do as a senator and answer their questions about current events, my job, and issues that are important to them. I visited the University of South Dakota and made a trip to Northern State University for Gypsy Days. I even had the chance to talk to some inquisitive fourth graders in Burke and join them for a game of four square.

These visits always remind me of what I love about South Dakota. We're a state of small towns and big hearts, and I know I can count on a warm welcome and some tough questions from well-informed students who care about their community and country.

They also bring back memories of my own school years in Murdo. I feel very blessed to have attended a small school, where I got to try a lot of different things. I played football and basketball and ran track. I took piano lessons, sang in the swing choir, and I even played the sousaphone in the band. I may not be using these skills directly as a U.S. senator, but each of these experiences surely taught me lessons that I apply every day.

My high school years also introduced me to some formative people in my life, people like my English teacher Margie Peters, Coach Jerry Applebee, and Jim Abdnor. They were incredibly influential in shaping my life, solidifying my values and work ethic, and opening doors for me.

Mrs. Peters, Coach App, and Jim all showed me how to be a difference-maker by how they lived, and they certainly made a difference in my life. When I visit a classroom, I always tell young people, whatever you do, be a difference-maker; be willing to serve causes greater than yourselves because when everything else has faded away, your character and what you've done to make the world around you better is all that's left.

I'm proud that as a U.S. senator, I'm able to offer students opportunities to be difference-makers. High schoolers can strive to earn the Congressional Award, which recognizes students who achieve goals in volunteering, personal development, fitness, and exploration. Juniors in high school may also serve as pages in the U.S. Senate, assisting in the legislative process and getting a hands-on civics education for a semester. And, it's a privilege to be able to nominate South Dakotans to attend a military academy and serve our country in the Armed Forces.

Whenever I leave a school visit, I have a renewed optimism for the future of our country, and it's great to see the next generation embodying the South Dakota values that make our state such a great place to live. I hope they will carry these values wherever life takes them.

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## Back the Blue

### BIG Update

South Dakota's support for our men and women in blue was on full display this week when I joined more than 2,000 law enforcement officers and supporters at the annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner. In a highly divisive and sometimes violent time, these officers run into dangerous situations to save lives. I'm grateful for all they do to keep our communities safe.

### BIG Idea

Life Flight serves a 150-mile radius in the Black Hills and saves thousands of lives every year. This flying ICU and its EMTs are essential for South Dakota's long distances between many rural communities and the closest hospital. We discussed the need for more EMT training in South Dakota to ensure adequate staffing to save lives.

### BIG News

The border crisis has made communities less safe around the country. This week, an illegal immigrant in Chicago shot a Jewish man walking to a synagogue. The illegal immigrant is from Mauritania, a country in West Africa. Migrants from Mauritania are supposed to be subjected to additional screening protocol by the Department of Homeland Security when entering the U.S., due to security concerns and a unique travel pattern they follow that allows them into our country. Although these protocols exist, the gunman was released into the U.S. We must secure our southern border so attacks like this don't happen again.

While the shooter has been charged with 14 felony counts, unfortunately Chicago is a sanctuary city, which shields illegal immigrants from federal law enforcement like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Chicago may refuse to cooperate with ICE, should the agency request removal of the illegal immigrant. This is unsafe for Chicago and unsafe for America.

I voted for the No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act to ensure sanctuary cities like Chicago don't receive any federal funds that would benefit illegal immigrants. These cities should not be allowed to use federal dollars to provide food, shelter, healthcare, legal services, and transportation to illegal immigrants.

The border crisis doesn't only exist at the border. It has spread into communities across America. Every state and city must take their responsibility to protect Americans seriously.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

## I Thought She Said, "Doughnut"

As hard as I try, and believe me I try, I don't always hear correctly, especially regarding The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I don't always hear every word she says.

I know God gave me two ears and only one mouth, but I must confess I use my mouth a lot more than I use my ears, which has created problems.

I have worked on this problem for a very long time, and it just seems to be getting worse. Maybe I should quit working.

You would think that as long as I've been married, I would have somehow adjusted to this hearing situation.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage once set me up and said, "Did you hear what I just said?"

"Oh, yes, my dear, I heard you clearly."

Then she said, "Well then, what do you think I should do?"

At this point, I knew she was trying to set me up because she knew I wasn't listening, but I had to respond. Believe me, I was nervous.

"Oh, my dear, I think your idea is splendid. Go with it."

Then she got up, walked to the kitchen, and says, "Okay, then it's broccoli for supper."

Now I'm in a pickle, and I'm not quite sure what to do. Why didn't I hear the word "Broccoli"? I was very suspicious.

The other day, she asked if I would go to the grocery store and pick up a few items. She rarely asked me to go and get some groceries, so I wasn't quite sure what to do, but I said yes. What else could I say?

I went to the store, checked off every item on the list, and went to the checkout line when I remembered she told me something after giving me the list. I tried to think of what it was, and then it came to me. She mentioned something about doughnuts. I think she wants me to get her some doughnuts. That made me smile.

I pushed the cart to where the doughnuts were and looked at all those wonderfully delicious donuts. How can anyone pick just one? I spent an awful lot of time going through every donut, I couldn't find one I didn't like, and I didn't know what exactly to do.

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Finally, I picked one, went to the checkout counter, paid for the items, and then got in my truck to go home.

I was very happy as I drove home because I usually don't get things done exactly the way she likes them. I drove into the driveway, parked my truck, and went inside with the bag of groceries.

Walking through the door, I shouted, "Honey, I'm home." I placed the bag on the kitchen counter, and with a huge smile, and went to my easy chair, waiting to be congratulated by The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage for a job well done.

It wasn't long until she entered the kitchen, and I heard her say, "What is this?"

I had no idea what she was talking about, but as she walked over to me, she was holding the box of donuts. "What is this?"

Looking at her with a big smile, I said, "Oh, my dear, those are the donuts you asked me to get. Remember?"

She went back into the kitchen. I heard her going through the grocery bag. Then she came back and handed me the grocery list she had given me and said, "Where do you see donuts on this list I asked you to get?"

I was a little confused, so I said, "Don't you remember as I was leaving you told me to get doughnuts?"

"I said no such thing. What I said was, Do Not get anything that is not on this list."

Oh boy, was I in trouble? All I heard was the word "doughnut," which got me into trouble.

She stood there staring at me as I looked at the list, and I did not know what was next. Looking at her, I said, "Do you want me to return the donuts?"

I never saw her look so confused as at that moment. I'm not sure you can return donuts, but I could see she was processing the whole situation, and I was in a position where I couldn't help her solve this problem.

At that time, one of our daughters stopped to drop off something in The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and said, "Here, would you like a box of donuts to take home?"

The daughter laughingly said, "Of course I would. Thank you."

When she handed the box of donuts to our daughter, my wife glanced at me with one of her smiles. I wanted to smile back but couldn't find any muscles on my face that could create a smile.

That afternoon I was reading my Bible and came across a verse that encouraged me.

"To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it" (Jeremiah 6:10).

I believe it takes all of the Bible to make it the Word of God. I can't cherry-pick what I want to believe. If I only hear part of the Bible, I will get it wrong and bear the consequences. All heresy is built on fragments of the Bible.

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## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is there an environmental/climate impact of the huge growth in the live music and concert industry over the last couple of decades?

-- Julia E., Sacramento, CA

The live music industry has skyrocketed over the last few decades. In 2023, the multinational Live Nation Entertainment reported 145 million fans attending 50,000 live events worldwide. The average music festival attendee produces about five kilograms of carbon dioxide per day, contributing to an average of 500 tons of greenhouse gasses emitted per festival. In 2023, the industry contributed over 115 million pounds of waste and 400,000 tons of carbon pollution in the U.S. alone.

But wouldn't all these attendees be contributing this waste and pollution no matter where they were? Not really. A series of unique environmental costs is behind this carbon footprint, one of the most prominent being air travel. Artists bring their crew, gear and instruments to each performance, and may use private jets. More famous artists rack up larger event-wide emissions, as fans are more likely to fly or drive long distances to see them. Other major factors include lighting and sound, usually diesel-fueled, and food served with non-reusable and non-recyclable tableware, which tends to end up polluting the land as well.

Though unsustainable, the industry's popularity is not likely to be curtailed. But several festivals, concerts and venues have found ways to reduce their impacts. Coldplay has captured fans' kinetic energy to charge the show's batteries through stationary bikes and a dancing pad. Other artists including Billie Eilish have utilized 100 percent solar charged intelligent battery systems to make performances carbon neutral.

Recently, Outside Lands in San Francisco partnered with REVERB, a nonprofit trying to decarbonize the music industry, to divert 90 percent of their waste, amounting to 385,000 tons, from landfills. Techniques included mandating 100 percent compostable tableware and exclusively selling reusable bottles.

Working across venues and vendors can yield efficient results. The English band Massive Attack arranged for a local train network to offer five extra trains for fans traveling home, incentivizing individuals to ride the train with offers of free electric bus transfers and access to a special guest bar with separate restrooms.

MIT's Climate Machine Research Group is undertaking an analysis of the carbon footprint of live music, with a report due out in 2025. Until then, outfits like REVERB are making effective mitigation measures available to artists and venues. As these practices are adopted, the future of live music grows brighter.

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](mailto:question@earthtalk.org).



**While fans of live music are glad to spend the time and money to go see it performed, at what cost to the planet?** Credit: Roddy Scheer.

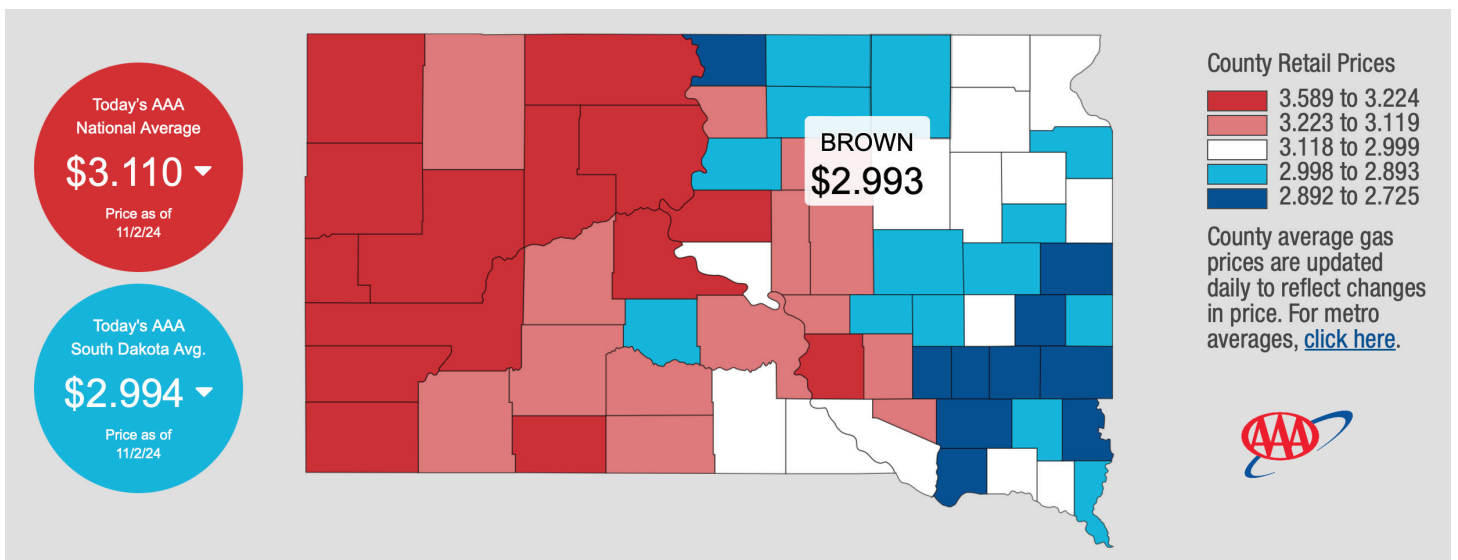
# Groton Daily Independent

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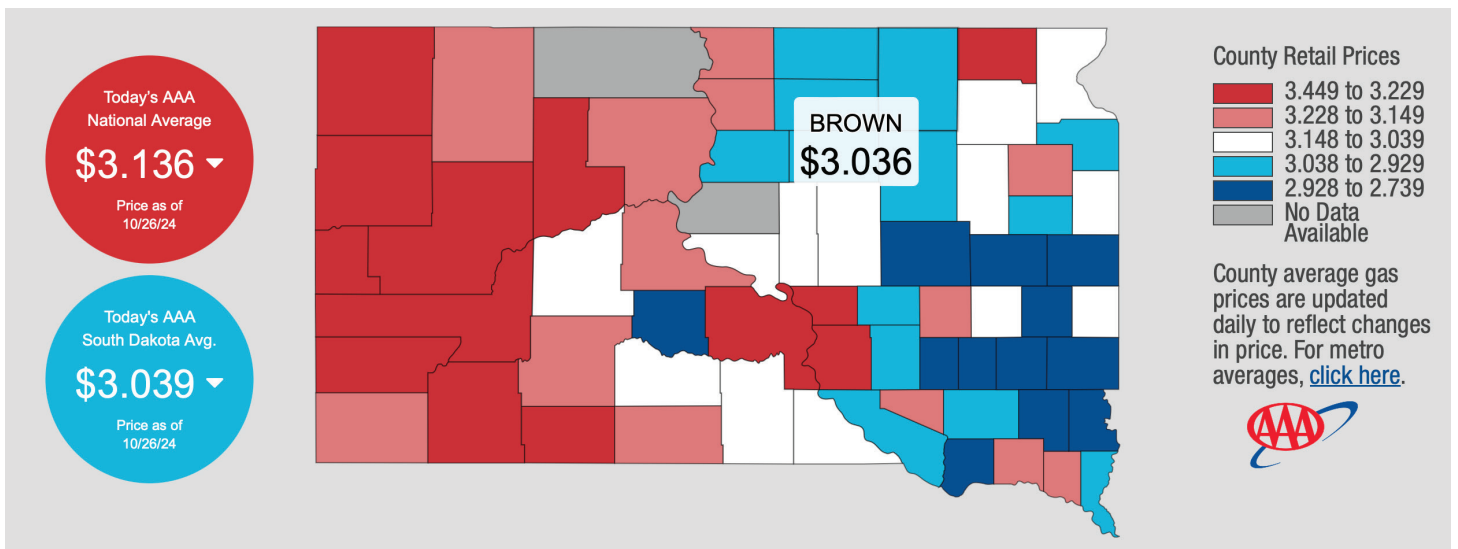
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.994	\$3.208	\$3.626	\$3.247
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.002	\$3.214	\$3.648	\$3.249
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.039	\$3.243	\$3.671	\$3.288
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.076	\$3.273	\$3.712	\$3.285
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.460	\$3.617	\$4.115	\$4.484

### This Week



### Last Week





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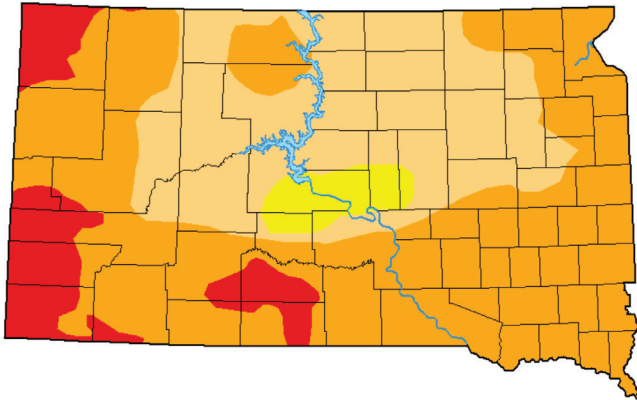
## Drought Classification

None  
D0 (Abnormally Dry)  
D1 (Moderate Drought)

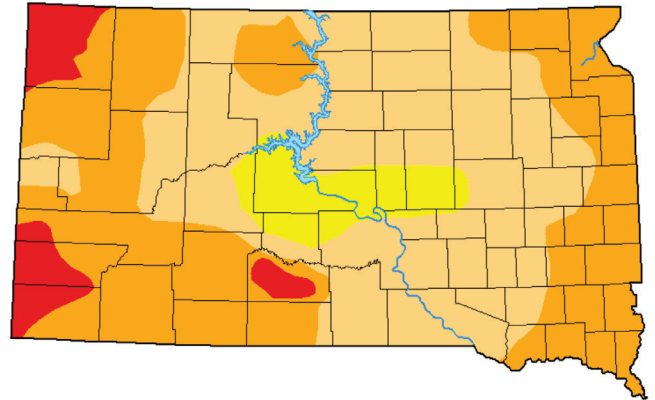
D2 (Severe Drought)  
D3 (Extreme Drought)

D4 (Exceptional Drought)  
No Data

## Drought Monitor



October 29



October 22

Dryness again dominated the region with only areas of far southeast Nebraska and northeast Kansas, northeast Wyoming and northwest South Dakota recording any significant precipitation. Coupled with the dryness, temperatures have been unseasonably warm for the region with most all areas 4-8 degrees above normal for the week. Drought expanded and intensified across the region this week with severe and extreme drought expanding over western North Dakota, and moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions expanding over the southeast. Severe and extreme drought expanded over much of western and southern South Dakota and also over western and northern Nebraska. Eastern Nebraska saw both moderate and severe drought expand. In Kansas, severe and extreme drought expanded over the southeast while severe drought expanded over the northeast and western portions of the state. Moderate drought also expanded in western Kansas. In northeast Colorado, moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions expanded, with both moderate and severe drought expanding in southeast Colorado. Southeast Wyoming saw expansion of moderate, severe, and extreme drought while eastern Montana had severe and extreme drought expand to the west.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Researchers test for 'forever chemicals' in Big Sioux River

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 2, 2024 6:49 AM

The murky brown Big Sioux River consistently receives poor marks for its water quality, but eastern South Dakota water systems near the river don't know if that pollution includes "forever chemicals."

To find out, researchers from South Dakota Mines are testing for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at the behest of the East Dakota Water Development District.

The study will cost the district at least \$100,000 to test 11 sites from northeast South Dakota to the Iowa border past Sioux Falls, including four more sample runs throughout 2025.

"Ideally, we'll find nothing, and we'll have spent a lot of money to do that," said Jay Gilbertson, district manager. "But right now, we don't know if there is PFAS in the river. It's hard to be proactive and plan if you don't have information."

A separate, federally funded project through the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources was announced earlier this year to assess and clean up contaminated sites in South Dakota. Falls Park, quarry lake and a former rubble site just south of the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds in Sioux Falls are being tested for PFAS and other contaminants that pose risks to the Big Sioux River. The project is in the planning phase, and testing has not started yet.

The chemicals have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s and don't break down easily in the environment or in the human body. Research indicates PFAS exposure may be linked to negative developmental and reproductive effects, and an increased risk of some cancers.

The federal government established new limits on some types of PFAS in drinking water earlier this year. Those limits apply specifically to treated drinking water. The limits do not apply to chemicals found in waterways.

Water treatment plants along the Big Sioux River can pull directly from the river or pull from underground wells near the river. Sioux Falls is the only water system that pulls water from the Big Sioux River, but the city rarely uses the river as a water source.

An ongoing study indicates that, under the right conditions, Big Sioux River water can infiltrate wells near the river.

Gilbertson saw water treatment plants in southeastern South Dakota along the Big Sioux River several years ago experience an influx of hard water in their systems. He said the culprit was Lake Poinsett, near Watertown, which began discharging water into the Big Sioux that seeped into underground wells used



**Jenny Kozak, a master's student at South Dakota Mines, pours Big Sioux River water into a collection bottle on Sept. 26 near Egan. The sample will be tested for PFAS compounds.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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by some treatment plants downstream.

That's why it's "better to go looking for it," Gilbertson said, so water treatment plants can prepare solutions before contamination becomes a crisis.

If PFAS is found in the Big Sioux River, the water district can inform public water suppliers, Gilbertson added.

"Maybe we tell them, if they can, not to use the well that's so close to the river; reactivate one a little farther away," Gilbertson said. "As a result, they might not technically have a problem and have to stop serving customers because they stopped using the water before it became a problem."

PFAS has been detected in wells near Ellsworth Air Force Base at Box Elder, as well as Sioux Falls Regional Airport and its co-located Air National Guard base, where the chemicals were used in firefighting foam. The forever chemical has also been detected in wells at National Guard facilities near Custer and in Rapid City, and in three private wells in South Dakota.

Sioux Falls suspended 21 of its wells suspected of PFAS contamination after the detection. Since then, all raw water samples — which can include the Big Sioux River at times — have been tested for PFAS compounds, said Sioux Falls Water Superintendent Chris Myers in an emailed statement. The city has not detected PFAS in those sources.

But even if Sioux Falls doesn't find PFAS in river tests, that doesn't mean there isn't PFAS in the river: It just means it's not immediately upstream, Gilbertson said.

"It doesn't necessarily preclude it from the upper basin or below the city," he added.

Most recently, a preliminary sample of Mount Rushmore National Memorial's drinking water had levels of PFAS more than two times higher than the new federal limit.

The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems is testing 40 rural water systems throughout the state for PFAS chemicals in cooperation with the EPA. Cities are also testing their water and submitting it to the EPA.

Lisa Kunza, associate professor in chemistry, biology and health sciences and director of the Center for Sustainable Solutions at South Dakota Mines in Rapid City, helped collect the initial Big Sioux River samples in September.

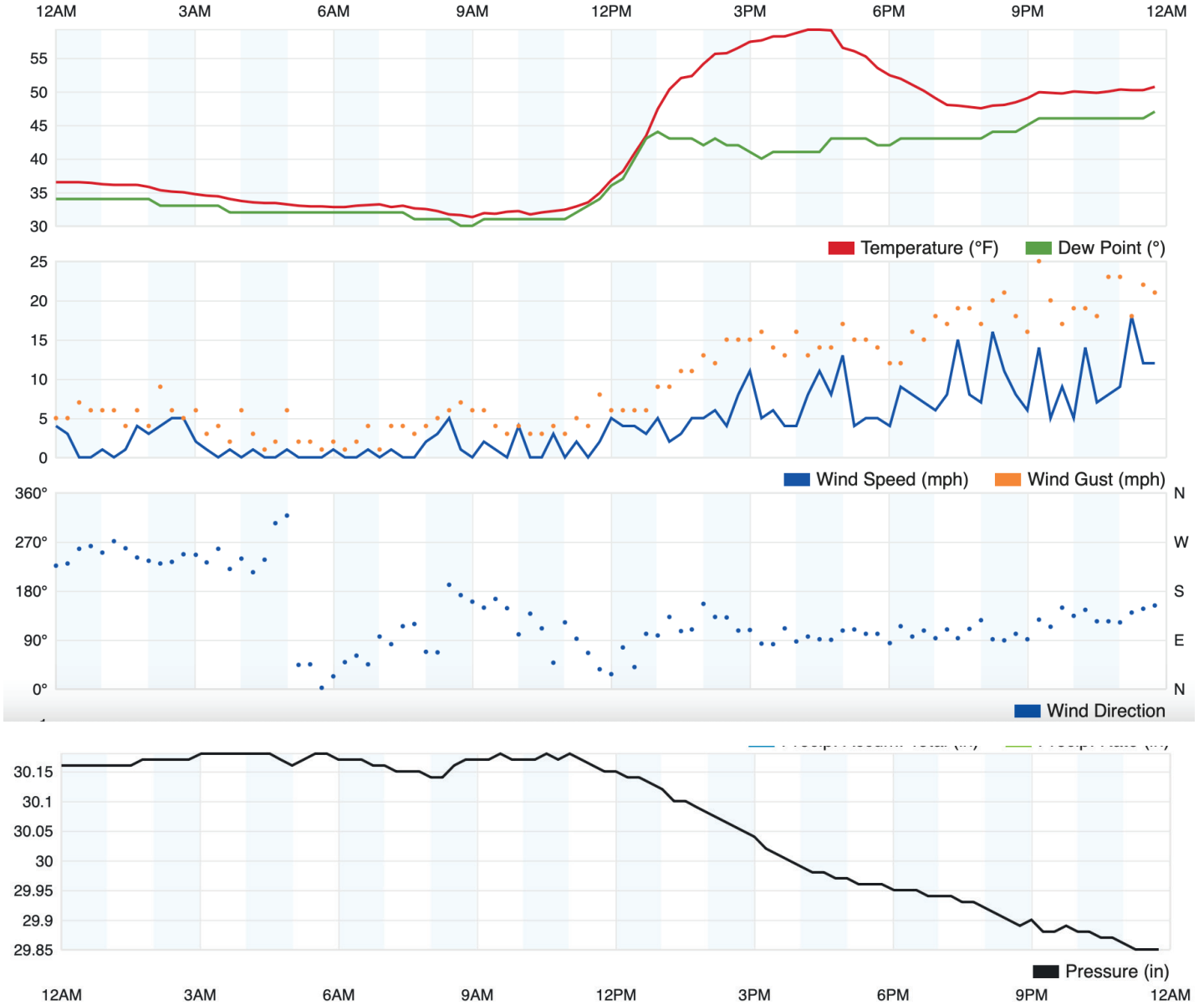
Kunza and her team research PFAS contamination impacts on water resources, agriculture and human health. They're looking for 40 PFAS compounds in the water. She said the initial test results could take a month to several months to get back from the lab.

*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

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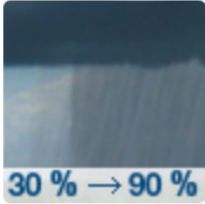
Sunday

Sunday Night

Monday

Monday Night

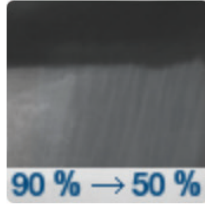
Tuesday



30 % → 90 %

High: 54 °F

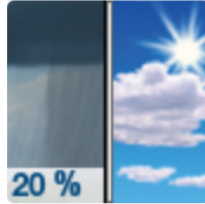
Chance  
Showers and  
Patchy Fog  
then Showers  
and Patchy  
Fog



90 % → 50 %

Low: 42 °F

Showers and  
Patchy Fog  
then Chance  
Showers and  
Patchy Fog



20 %

High: 50 °F

Slight Chance  
Showers then  
Mostly Sunny



Low: 23 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 50 °F

Sunny

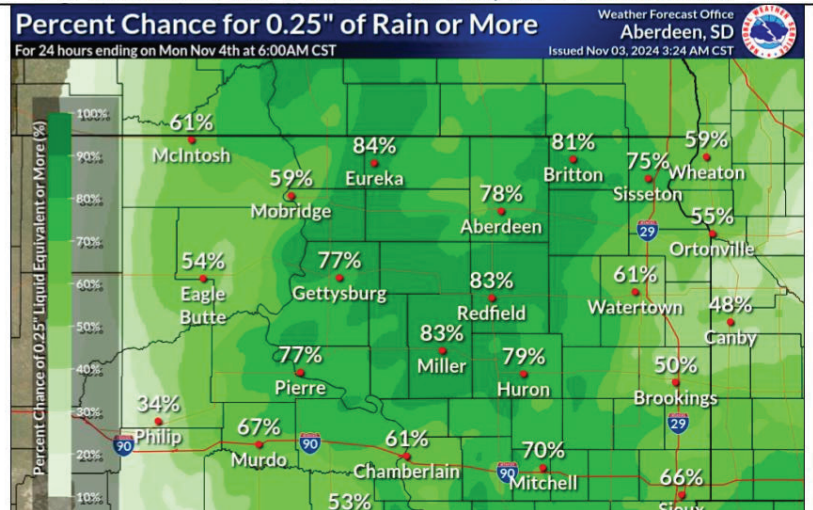


## Rain Showers Sunday Through Monday

November 3, 2024  
3:42 AM

	Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)													
	11/3 Sun							11/4 Mon						
	1am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	
Aberdeen	40	20	30	25	45	90	85	50	50	30	20	20	0	
Britton	50	40	40	25	25	85	85	55	40	35	30	30	5	
Brookings	35	35	20	20	20	35	50	55	45	50	30	25	5	
Chamberlain	20	20	20	35	55	60	65	60	35	15	10	5	0	
Clark	55	30	25	20	35	55	70	70	55	30	25	25	0	
Eagle Butte	5	15	45	60	60	45	25	5	5	0	5	5	0	
Ellendale	40	15	25	30	35	95	90	35	40	25	20	20	0	
Eureka	15	5	10	30	80	95	70	30	25	10	10	10	0	
Gettysburg	15	15	25	40	70	90	60	35	25	10	10	10	0	
Huron	30	30	20	25	30	50	65	65	45	20	25	10	0	
Kennebec	20	25	25	45	70	70	60	50	30	10	10	10	0	
McIntosh	5	15	25	70	70	45	25	5	5	0	0	0	0	
Milbank	55	55	40	20	30	55	60	60	50	45	35	35	5	
Miller	25	20	20	30	60	70	70	65	50	15	15	15	0	
Mobridge	15	15	20	50	85	90	45	15	10	5	5	5	0	
Murdo	10	25	35	55	60	55	35	30	10	5	5	5	0	
Pierre	10	20	25	55	70	70	50	35	20	5	5	5	0	
Redfield	35	20	25	25	50	65	70	65	60	20	20	20	0	
Sisseton	65	55	60	20	20	65	80	65	45	35	35	35	10	
Watertown	55	45	30	15	30	50	60	65	45	35	30	30	5	
Webster	55	35	40	10	30	70	75	65	45	35	30	30	5	
Wheaton	65	60	65	20	15	40	75	75	50	30	40	40	10	

- 15-70% chance for rain through Sunday morning, becoming widespread (40-90%) Sunday in the afternoon
- Thunderstorms are possible (15-30%)
- Lingering rain chances (20-40%) James River Valley and eastward Monday morning
- 55-80% chance of 0.25" or more of rainfall mainly east of the Missouri River



A system will bring a chance for rain (15-70%) to portions of central and eastern SD then becoming more widespread Sunday afternoon and diminishing early Monday morning. Rainfall amounts of 0.25" or more look to be highest east of the Missouri River Sunday through Monday morning (55-80% chance). There is also a chance for isolated thunderstorm development.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 59 °F at 4:18 PM

Low Temp: 31 °F at 8:59 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 9:13 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 03 minutes (lost 20 minutes since last Sunday)

## Today's Info

Record High: 76 in 2020

Record Low: 1 in 1991

Average High: 49

Average Low: 25

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.10

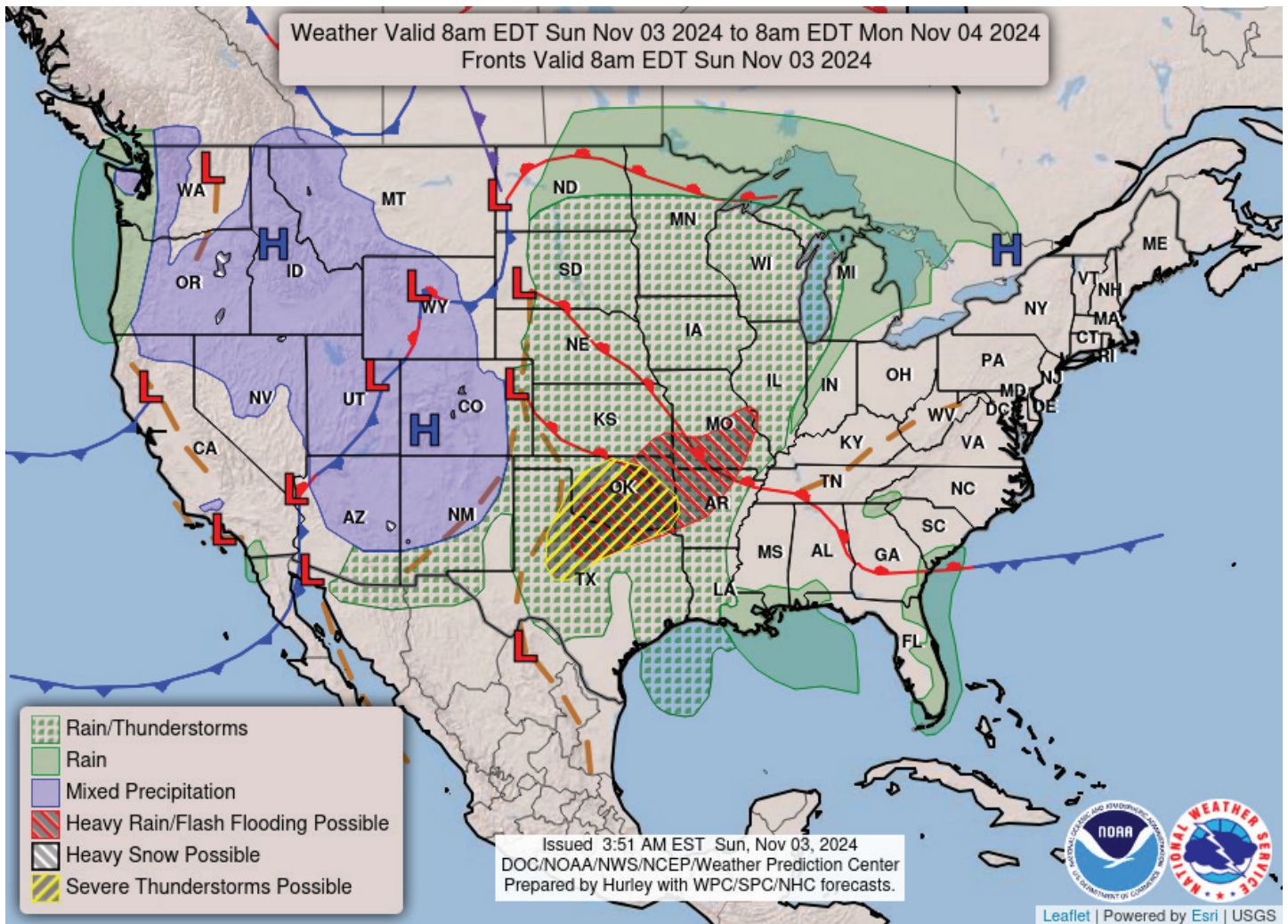
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.08

Average Precip to date: 20.57

Precip Year to Date: 19.96

Sunset Tonight: 5:17:47 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:15:30 am



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## Today in Weather History

November 3rd, 2003: Heavy snow fell across the area, including 6 to 9 inches across Big Stone County in Minnesota, with nine inches in Ortonville. Heavy snow of up to eight inches fell across Grant County in South Dakota. Six inches fell at Big Stone City, and 8 inches fell at Milbank. Heavy snow also fell from the early morning to around noon across parts of central South Dakota. Six inches of snow fell at Kennebec, Fort Thompson, Gann Valley, and Miller.

1927: Historic flooding occurred across Vermont from November 2nd through the 4th. The flood washed out 1285 bridges, miles of roads and railways, and several homes and buildings. Eighty-four people were killed from the flooding, including Lt. Governor S. Hollister Jackson.

1946 - A heavy wet snow began to cover the Southern Rockies. Up to three feet of snow blanketed the mountains of New Mexico, and a 31 inch snow at Denver CO caused roofs to collapse. (David Ludlum)

1961 - The temperature at Atlanta, GA, reached 84 degrees to establish a record for November. (The Weather Channel)

1966: An early season snowfall, which started on the 2nd, whitened the ground from Alabama to Michigan. Mobile, Alabama, had their earliest snowflakes on record. Louisville, Kentucky measured 13.1 inches, Nashville; Tennessee reported 7.2 inches, and Huntsville, Alabama, had 4 inches of snow.

1987 - A dozen cities, mostly in the Ohio Valley, reported record high temperatures for the date. Record highs included 83 degrees at Paducah KY and 84 degrees at Memphis TN. Temperatures reached 70 degrees as far north as southern Lower Michigan. Showers and thundershowers over southern Florida, associated with a tropical depression, produced 4.77 inches of rain at Tavernier, located in the Upper Florida Keys. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A very intense low pressure system brought heavy rain, snow, and high winds, to parts of the northeastern U.S. Portland ME established a record for November with 4.52 inches of rain in 24 hours, and winds along the coast of Maine gusted to 74 mph at Southwest Harbor. Heavy snow blanketed parts of northern Vermont and upstate New York, with 15 inches reported at Spruce Hill NY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Squalls in the Upper Great Lakes Region the first three days of the month buried Ironwood MI under 46 inches of snow, and produced 40 inches at Hurley WI. Arctic cold invaded the Southern Plains Region. Midland TX reported a record low of 22 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2001: Hurricane Michelle reached peak intensity on this day as a Category 4 storm. Michelle made landfall on November 4-5, between Playa Larga and Playa Giron, Cuba, as a Category 4 hurricane, the strongest to strike the country since 1952's Hurricane Fox. The storm caused an estimated \$2 billion US dollars in damage to Cuba.

2002: A Magnitude 7.9 earthquake struck central Alaska. The quake is the 9th largest to be recorded in the US.

2007: Dense fog in the early morning hours resulted in a 100 vehicle pile-up just north of Fowler, CA on I-99. Two people were killed, and 41 others were injured. The thick seasonal fog is known as "Tule fog" and typically occurs in Central California in late fall and winter.

2011: Floodwaters by Tropical Depression Keila's heavy rainfall were responsible for several deaths in Oman.

2013: The town of Arnhem in the Netherlands was hit with several tornadoes.



## A PICTURE OF CHRIST

It was the first day in art class and the professor wanted to challenge his students to do something creative. Standing before them he suggested that they draw a picture that had meaning and interest. Pausing for a moment he turned to one student and said, "And what, William, are you going to draw?"

"I believe that I will draw a picture of Christ," he replied.

"But," said the professor, "no one knows what He looks like."

"They will when I'm through," said William.

People may see a representation of Christ on canvas, paper or cloth, but God expects them to see Christ in us – in the way we live. Scripture clearly explains, time and time again, that the Christian is the one, not an artist, who is to provide a "picture of what Christ looks like."

Those around us who know we are Christians take their understanding and image of Christ by watching us. They "read" about Christ in how we act and react to the events that come into our lives. They "see" Christ in what we do for others because they know that we are responsible to show His love.

A Christian is to have a "mind" that thinks as Jesus thought, a "heart" that breaks when the ravages of sin are visible, a "hand" that reaches out to those in need, and a "voice" through which He speaks to share His message.

Prayer: Our Father, You have given us a tremendous responsibility to represent You to others. We admit we are unable to do this unless we allow You to live thru us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. 1 John 2:4-6

*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:  
11.01.24

11 22 42 46 51 4

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$303,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.02.24

7 9 23 32 42 10

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$13,630,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.02.24

21 25 30 34 35 9

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 11 Mins  
27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.02.24

9 14 22 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$86,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.02.24

4 20 37 48 58 24

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.02.24

10 45 48 58 61 2

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$63,000,000**

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  
12/14/2024 Santa Day at Professional Management Services, downtown Groton  
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  
09/20/2025 NSU Gypsy Day  
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **Angel Johnson and Amar Johnson combine for 3 touchdowns and South Dakota State routs Murray State**

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Angel Johnson had 132 yards on the ground and a touchdown, Amar Johnson added a rushing and receiving touchdown, and South Dakota State beat Murray State 52-6 on Saturday.

Murray State (1-8, 0-6 Missouri Valley Football Conference), which made its first trip to Brookings, was coming off a 59-6 loss to FCS top-ranked North Dakota State last Saturday.

South Dakota State (FCS No. 3, 7-2, 4-1) marched 75 yards on the opening drive of the game to take the lead on Mark Gronowski's 10-yard pass to Amar Johnson.

Two plays after James London made a 55-yard field goal for Murray State, Angel Johnson raced for a 67-yard touchdown to make it 14-3. Amar Johnson added a 44-yard scoring run midway through the second quarter for a 28-6 lead.

Hunter Dustman's 29-yard field goal with six seconds left before halftime extended it to 38-6.

Amar Johnson finished with six carries for 83 yards as South Dakota State piled up 343 yards and five touchdowns on the ground. Gronowski was 9 of 16 for 170 yards with one touchdown, and backup Chase Mason finished 10 of 16 for 82 yards with a touchdown. Mason also had a score on the ground.

The Racers are the newest member of the MVFC, joining the league in 2023.

### **Still wrecked from past Israeli raids, hospitals in northern Gaza come under attack again**

By ISABEL DEBRE, JULIA FRANKEL and LEE KEATH Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — They were built to be places of healing. But once again, three hospitals in northern Gaza are encircled by Israeli troops and under fire.

Bombardment is pounding around them as Israel wages a new offensive against Hamas fighters that it says have regrouped nearby. As staff scramble to treat waves of wounded, they remain haunted by a war that has seen hospitals targeted with an intensity and overtness rarely seen in modern warfare.

All three were besieged and raided by Israeli troops some 10 months ago. The Kamal Adwan, al-Awda and Indonesian hospitals still have not recovered from the damage, yet are the only hospitals even partially operational in the area.

Medical facilities often come under fire in wars, but combatants usually depict such incidents as accidental or exceptional, since hospitals enjoy special protection under international law. In its yearlong campaign in Gaza, Israel has stood out by carrying out an open campaign on hospitals, besieging and raiding at least 10 of them across the Gaza Strip, some several times, as well as hitting multiple others in strikes.

It has said this is a military necessity in its aim to destroy Hamas after the militants' Oct. 7, 2023 attacks. It claims Hamas uses hospitals as "command and control bases" to plan attacks, to shelter fighters and to hide hostages. It argues that nullifies the protections for hospitals.

"If we intend to take down the military infrastructure in the north, we have to take down the philosophy of (using) the hospitals," Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said of Hamas during an interview with The Associated Press in January after the first round of hospital raids.

Most prominently, Israel twice raided Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, the biggest medical facility in the strip, producing a video animation depicting it as a major Hamas base, though the evidence it presented remains disputed.

But the focus on Shifa has overshadowed raids on other facilities. The AP spent months gathering accounts of the raids on al-Awda, Indonesian and Kamal Adwan Hospitals, interviewing more than three dozen patients, witnesses and medical and humanitarian workers as well as Israeli officials.

It found that Israel has presented little or even no evidence of a significant Hamas presence in those

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cases. The AP presented a dossier listing the incidents reported by those it interviewed to the Israeli military spokesman's office. The office said it could not comment on specific events.

**Al-Awda Hospital: 'A death sentence'**

The Israeli military has never made any claims of a Hamas presence at al-Awda. When asked what intelligence led troops to besiege and raid the hospital last year, the military spokesman's office did not reply.

In recent weeks, the hospital has been paralyzed once again, with Israeli troops fighting in nearby Jabalia refugee camp and no food, water or medical supplies entering areas of northern Gaza. Its director Mohammed Salha said last month that the facility was surrounded by troops and was unable to evacuate six critical patients. Staff were down to eating one meal a day, usually just a flat bread or a bit of rice, he said.

As war-wounded poured in, exhausted surgeons were struggling to treat them. No vascular surgeons or neurosurgeons remain north of Gaza City, so the doctors often resort to amputating shrapnel-shattered limbs to save lives.

"We are reliving the nightmares of November and December of last year, but worse," Salha said. "We have fewer supplies, fewer doctors and less hope that anything will be done to stop this."

The military, which did not respond to a specific request for comment on al-Awda hospital, says it takes all possible precautions to prevent civilian casualties.

Last year, fighting was raging around al-Awda when, on Nov. 21, a shell exploded in the facility's operating room. Dr. Mahmoud Abu Nujaila, two other doctors and a patient's uncle died almost instantly, according to international charity Doctors Without Borders, which said it had informed the Israeli military of its coordinates.

Dr. Mohammed Obeid, Abu Nujaila's colleague, recalled dodging shellfire inside the hospital complex. Israeli sniper fire killed a nurse and two janitors and wounded a surgeon, hospital officials said.

By Dec. 5, al-Awda was surrounded. For 18 days, coming or going became "a death sentence," Obeid said.

Survivors and hospital administrators recounted at least four occasions when Israeli drones or snipers killed or badly wounded Palestinians trying to enter. Two women about to give birth were shot and bled to death in the street, staff said. Salha, the administrator, watched gunfire kill his cousin, Souma, and her 6-year-old son as she brought the boy for treatment of wounds.

Shaza al-Shuraim said labor pains left her no choice but to walk an hour to al-Awda to give birth. She, her mother-in-law and 16-year-old brother-in-law raised flags made of white blouses. "Civilians!" her mother-in-law, Khatam Sharir, kept shouting. Just outside the gate, a burst of gunfire answered, killing Sharir.

On Dec. 23, troops stormed the hospital, ordering men ages 15 to 65 to strip and undergo interrogation in the yard. Mazen Khalidi, whose infected right leg had been amputated, said nurses pleaded with soldiers to let him rest rather than join the blindfolded and handcuffed men outside. They refused, and he hobbled downstairs, his stump bleeding.

"The humiliation scared me more than death," Khalidi said.

The hospital's director, Ahmed Muhanna, was seized by Israeli troops; his whereabouts remain unknown. One of Gaza's leading doctors, orthopedist Adnan al-Bursh, was also detained during the raid and died in Israeli custody in May.

In the wreckage from the November shelling, staff found a message that Abu Nujaila had written on a whiteboard in the previous weeks.

"Whoever stays until the end will tell the story," it read in English. "We did what we could. Remember us."

**Indonesian Hospital: 'Patients dying before your eyes'**

Several blocks away, on Oct. 18, artillery hit the upper floors of Indonesian Hospital, staff said. People fled for their lives. They'd already been surrounded by Israeli troops, leaving doctors and patients inside without enough food, water and supplies.

"The bombing around us has increased. They've paralyzed us," said Edi Wahyudi, an Indonesian volunteer.

Two patients died because of a power outage and lack of supplies, said Muhammad Hadi, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Palestinian territories.

Tamer al-Kurd, a nurse at the hospital, said around 44 patients and only two doctors remain. He said he was so dehydrated he was starting to hallucinate. "People come to me to save them. ... I can't do that by

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myself, with two doctors," he said in a voice message, his voice weak. "I'm tired."

On Saturday, the Israeli military said it had facilitated the evacuation of 29 patients from Indonesian and al-Awda hospitals.

The Indonesian is Northern Gaza's largest hospital. Today its top floors are charred, its walls pockmarked by shrapnel, its gates strewn with piled-up rubble — all the legacy of Israel's siege in the autumn of 2023.

Before the assault, the Israeli army claimed an underground command-and-control center lay beneath the hospital. It released blurry satellite images of what it said was a tunnel entrance in the yard and a rocket launchpad nearby, outside the hospital compound.

The Indonesia-based group that funds the hospital denied any Hamas presence. "If there's a tunnel, we would know. We know this building because we built it brick by brick, layer by layer. It's ridiculous," Arief Rachman, a hospital manager from the Indonesia-based Medical Emergency Rescue Committee, told the AP last month.

After besieging and raiding the hospital, the military did not mention or show evidence of the underground facility or tunnels it had earlier claimed. When asked if any tunnels were found, the military spokesman's office did not reply.

It released images of two vehicles found in the compound — a pickup truck with military vests and a bloodstained car belonging to an abducted Israeli, suggesting he had been brought to the hospital on Oct. 7. Hamas has said it brought wounded hostages to hospitals for treatment.

During the siege, Israeli shelling crept closer and closer until, on Nov. 20, it hit the Indonesian's second floor, killing 12 people and wounding dozens, according to staff. Israel said troops responded to "enemy fire" from the hospital but denied using shells.

Gunfire over the next days hit walls and whizzed through intensive care. Explosions sparked fires outside the hospital courtyard where some 1,000 displaced Palestinians sheltered, according to staff. The Israeli military denied targeting the hospital, although it acknowledged nearby bombardment may have damaged it.

For three weeks, wounded poured in — up to 500 a day to a facility with capacity for 200. Supplies hadn't entered in weeks. Bloodstained linens piled up. Doctors, some working 24-hour shifts, ate a few dates a day. The discovery of moldy flour on Nov. 23 was almost thrilling.

Without medicines or ventilators, there was little doctors could do. Wounds became infected. Doctors said they performed dozens of amputations on infected limbs. Medics estimated a fifth of incoming patients died. At least 60 corpses lay in the courtyard. Others were buried beneath a nearby playground.

"To see patients dying before your eyes because you don't have the ability to help them, you have to ask yourself: 'Where is humanity?'" asked Dergham Abu Ibrahim, a volunteer.

Kamal Adwan: 'This makes no sense'

Kamal Adwan Hospital, once a linchpin of northern Gaza's health system, was burning on Thursday of last week.

Israeli shells crashed into the third floor, igniting a fire that destroyed medical supplies, according to the World Health Organization, which had delivered the equipment just days before. The artillery hit water tanks and damaged the dialysis unit, badly burning four medics who tried to extinguish the blaze, said the hospital's director, Hossam Abu Safiya.

In videos pleading for help over the past weeks, Abu Safiya had fought to maintain his composure as Israeli forces surrounded the hospital. But last weekend, there were tears in his eyes.

"Everything we have built, they have burned," he said, his voice cracking. "They burned our hearts. They killed my son."

On Oct. 25, Israeli troops stormed the hospital after what an Israeli military official described as an intense fight with militants nearby. During the battle, Israeli fire targeted the hospital's oxygen tanks because they "can be booby traps," the official said.

Israeli forces withdrew after three days, during which Palestinian health officials said nearly all of Kamal Adwan's medical workers were detained, an Israeli drone killed at least one doctor and two children in intensive care died when generators stopped working.

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Days later, a drone struck Abu Safiya's son in nearby Jabalia. The 21-year-old had been wounded by Israeli snipers during the first military raid on Kamal Adwan last December. Now he is buried in the yard of the hospital, where just Abu Safiya and one other doctor remain to treat the dozens of wounded pouring in each day from new strikes in Jabalia.

The Israeli military said troops detained 100 people, some who were "posing as medical staff." Soldiers stripped the men to check for weapons, the military said, before those deemed militants were sent to detention camps. The military claimed that the hospital was "fully operational, with all departments continuing to treat patients." It released footage of several guns and an RPG launcher with several rounds it said it found inside the hospital.

Kamal Adwan staff say more than 30 medical personnel remain detained, including the head of nursing, who is employed by MedGlobal, an American organization that sends medical teams to disaster regions, and Dr. Mohammed Obeid, the surgeon employed by Doctors without Borders who previously worked at al-Awda Hospital and had moved to Kamal Adwan.

The turmoil echoed Israel's nine-day siege of Kamal Adwan last December. On Dec. 12, soldiers entered and allowed police dogs to attack staff, patients and others, multiple witnesses said. Ahmed Atbail, a 36-year-old who had sought refuge at the hospital, said he saw a dog bite off one man's finger.

Witnesses said the troops ordered boys and men, ranging from their mid-teens to 60, to line up outside crouched in the cold, blindfolded and nearly naked for hours of interrogation. "Every time someone lifted their heads, they were beaten," said Mohammed al-Masri, a lawyer who was detained.

The military later published footage of men exiting the hospital. Al-Masri identified himself in the footage. He said soldiers staged the images, ordering men to lay down rifles belonging to the hospital guards as if they were militants surrendering. Israel said all photos released are authentic and that it apprehended dozens of suspected militants.

As they released some of the men after interrogation, soldiers fired on them as they tried to reenter the hospital, wounding five, three detainees said. Ahmed Abu Hajjaj recalled hearing bursts of gunfire as he made his way back in the dark. "I thought, this makes no sense — who would they be shooting at?"

Witnesses also said a bulldozer lumbered into the hospital compound, plowing into buildings. Abu Safiya, Abu Hajjaj and al-Masri described being held by soldiers inside the hospital as they heard people screaming outside.

After the soldiers withdrew, the men saw the bulldozer had crushed tents that previously sheltered some 2,500 people. Most of the displaced had evacuated, but Abu Safiya said he found bodies of four people crushed, with splints from recent treatment in the hospital still on their limbs.

Asked about the incident, the Israeli military spokesman's office said: "Lies were spread on social media" about troops' activities at the hospital. It said bodies were discovered that had been buried previously, unrelated to the military's activities.

Later, the military said Hamas used the hospital as a command center but produced no evidence. It said soldiers uncovered weapons, but it showed footage only of a single pistol.

The hospital's director, Dr. Ahmed al-Kahlout, remains in Israeli custody. The military released footage of him under interrogation saying he was a Hamas agent and that militants were based in the hospital. His colleagues said he spoke under duress.

The fallout

Hagari, the military spokesperson, said hospitals "provide a life of their own ... to the (Hamas) war system." He said hospitals were linked to tunnels allowing fighters movement. "And when you take it, they have no way to move. Not from the south to the north."

Despite often suggesting hospitals are linked to Hamas' underground networks, the military has shown only one tunnel shaft from all the hospitals it raided — one leading to Shifa's grounds.

In a report last month, a U.N. investigation commission determined that "Israel has implemented a concerted policy to destroy the health-care system of Gaza." It described Israeli actions at hospitals as "collective punishment against the Palestinians in Gaza."

Some patients now fear hospitals, refusing to go to them or leaving before treatment is complete. "They are places of death," Ahmed al-Qamar, a 35-year-old economist in Jabalia refugee camp, said of his fear of taking his children to the hospital. "You can feel it."

Zaher Sahloul, the president of MedGlobal who has also worked in Gaza during the war, said the sense of safety that should surround hospitals has been destroyed.

"This war has become a scar in the minds of every doctor and nurse."

## **US says Iranian-American held in Iran as tensions high following Israeli attack on country**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — An Iranian-American journalist who once worked for a U.S. government-funded broadcaster is believed to have been detained by Iran for months now, authorities said Sunday, further raising the stakes as Tehran threatens to retaliate over an Israeli attack on the country.

The imprisonment of Reza Valizadeh, acknowledged to The Associated Press by the U.S. State Department, came as Iran marked the 45th anniversary of the American Embassy takeover and hostage crisis on Sunday. It also followed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatening both Israel and the U.S. the day before with "a crushing response" as long-range B-52 bombers reached the Middle East in an attempt to deter Tehran.

Valizadeh had worked for Radio Farda, an outlet under Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that's overseen by the U.S. Agency for Global Media. In February, he wrote on the social platform X that his family members had been detained in an effort to see him return to Iran.

In August, Valizadeh apparently posted two messages suggesting he had returned to Iran despite Radio Farda being viewed by Iran's theocracy as a hostile outlet.

"I arrived in Tehran on March 6, 2024. Before that, I had unfinished negotiations with the (Revolutionary Guard's) intelligence department," the message read in part. "Eventually I came back to my country after 13 years without any security guarantee, even a verbal one."

Valizadeh added the name of a man who he claimed belonged to Iran's Intelligence Ministry. The AP could not verify if the person worked for the ministry.

Rumors have been circulating for weeks that Valizadeh had been detained. The Human Rights Activists News Agency, which monitors cases in Iran, said that he had been detained on arrival to the country earlier this year, but later released.

He was then rearrested and sent to Evin prison, where he now faces a case in Iran's Revolutionary Court, which routinely holds closed-door hearings in which defendants face secret evidence, the agency reported. Valizadeh had faced arrest in 2007 as well, it said.

The State Department told the AP that it was "aware of reports that this dual U.S.-Iranian citizen has been arrested in Iran" when asked about Valizadeh.

"We are working with our Swiss partners who serve as the protecting power for the United States in Iran to gather more information about this case," the State Department said. "Iran routinely imprisons U.S. citizens and other countries' citizens unjustly for political purposes. This practice is cruel and contrary to international law."

Iran has not acknowledged detaining Valizadeh. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Voice of America, another U.S. government-funded media outlet overseen by the Agency for Global Media, first reported the State Department was acknowledging Valizadeh's detention in Iran.

Since the 1979 U.S. Embassy crisis, which saw dozens of hostages released after 444 days in captivity, Iran has used prisoners with Western ties as bargaining chips in negotiations with the world. In September 2023, five Americans detained for years in Iran were freed in exchange for five Iranians in U.S. custody and for \$6 billion in frozen Iranian assets to be released by South Korea.



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Valizadeh is the first American known to be detained by Iran in the time since.

Meanwhile, Iranian state television aired footage Sunday of different cities across the country marking the anniversary of the embassy takeover.

Gen. Hossein Salami, the head of the Guard, also spoke in Tehran, where he repeated a pledge made the day before by Khamenei.

"The resistance front and Iran will equip itself with whatever necessary to confront and defeat the enemy," he said, referring to the militant groups like Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah backed by Tehran.

In Tehran, thousands at the gate of the former U.S. Embassy chanted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." Some burned flags of the countries and effigies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

They also carried images of killed top figures of Iran's allied militant groups including Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Palestinian Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. The crowd in the state-organized rallies chanted they were ready to defend the Palestinians.

## Moldovans to choose president in decisive runoff overshadowed by fraud and intimidation claims

BY STEPHEN McGRATH and VADIM GHIRDA Associated Press

CHISINAU, Moldova (AP) — Moldovans are casting votes in a decisive presidential runoff Sunday that pits pro-Western incumbent Maia Sandu against a Russia-friendly opponent, as ongoing claims of voter fraud and intimidation threaten democracy in the European Union candidate country.

In the first round held Oct. 20, Sandu obtained 42% of the ballot but failed to win an outright majority. She will face Alexandr Stoianoglo, a former prosecutor general, who outperformed polls in the first round with almost 26% of the vote.

Polling stations opened Sunday at 7 a.m. local time (0500 GMT) and will close at 9 p.m. (1900 GMT).

A poll released by research company iData indicates a tight race that leans toward a narrow Sandu victory, an outcome that might rely on Moldova's large diaspora. The presidential role carries significant powers in areas such as foreign policy and national security and has a four-year term.

Moldova's diaspora played a key role in a nationwide referendum also held on Oct. 20, when a narrow majority of 50.35% voted to secure Moldova's path toward EU membership. But the results of the ballots including Sunday's vote have been overshadowed by allegations of a major vote-buying scheme and voter intimidation.

Instead of winning the overwhelming support that Sandu had hoped, the results in both races exposed Moldova's judiciary as unable to adequately protect the democratic process.

On Friday, Moldova's Prime Minister Dorin Recean said that people throughout the country were receiving "anonymous death threats via phone calls" in what he called "an extreme attack" to scare voters in the former Soviet republic, which has a population of about 2.5 million people.

"These acts of intimidation have only one purpose: to create panic and fear," Recean said in a statement posted on social media. "I assure you that state institutions will ensure order and protect citizens."

Outside a polling station on Sunday in Romania's capital, Bucharest, 20-year-old medical student Silvana Zestrea said the runoff would be a "definitive step" toward Moldova's future.

"People need to understand that we have to choose a true candidate that will fulfill our expectations," she said. "Because I think even if we are a diaspora now, none of us actually wanted to leave."

In the wake of the two October votes, Moldovan law enforcement said that a vote-buying scheme was orchestrated by Ilan Shor, an exiled oligarch who lives in Russia and was convicted in absentia last year of fraud and money laundering. Shor denies any wrongdoing.

Prosecutors say \$39 million was paid to more than 130,000 recipients through an internationally sanctioned Russian bank to voters between September and October. Anticorruption authorities have conducted hundreds of searches and seized over \$2.7 million (2.5 million euros) in cash as they attempt to crack down.

In one case in Gagauzia, an autonomous part of Moldova where only 5% voted in favor of the EU, a physician was detained after allegedly coercing 25 residents of a home for older adults to vote for a can-

didate they did not choose. Police said they obtained “conclusive evidence,” including financial transfers from the same Russian bank.

On Saturday at a church in Comrat, the capital of Gagauzia, Father Vasiliu told the Associated Press that he’s urged people to go and vote because it’s a “civic obligation” and that they do not name any candidates. “We use the goods the country offers us — light, gas,” he said. “Whether we like what the government does or not, we must go and vote. ... The church always prays for peace.”

On Thursday, prosecutors also raided a political party headquarters and said 12 people were suspected of paying voters to select a candidate in the presidential race. A criminal case was also opened in which 40 state agency employees were suspected of taking electoral bribes.

Cristian Cantir, a Moldovan associate professor of international relations at Oakland University, told the AP that whatever the outcome of the second round, it “will not deflate” geopolitical tensions. “On the contrary, I expect geopolitical polarization to be amplified by the campaign for the 2025 legislative elections,” he said.

Moldovan law enforcement needs more resources and better-trained staff working at a faster pace to tackle voter fraud, he added, to “create an environment in which anyone tempted to either buy or sell votes knows there will be clear and fast consequences.”

Savlina Adasan, a 21-year-old economics student in Bucharest, says she voted for Sandu and cited concerns about corruption and voters uninformed about the two candidates.

“We want a European future for our country,” she said, adding that it offers “many opportunities, development for our country ... and I feel like if the other candidate wins, then it means that we are going ten steps back as a country.”

A pro-Western government has been in power in Moldova since 2021, and a parliamentary election will be held in 2025. Moldova watchers warn that next year’s vote could be Moscow’s main target.

In the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moldova applied to join the EU. It was granted candidate status in June of that year, and in summer 2024, Brussels agreed to start membership negotiations. The sharp Westward shift irked Moscow and significantly soured relations with Chisinau.

Since then, Moldovan authorities have repeatedly accused Russia of waging a vast “hybrid war,” from sprawling disinformation campaigns to protests by pro-Russia parties to vote-buying schemes that undermine countrywide elections. Russia has denied it is meddling.

## **Palestinians say Israel struck a Gaza clinic during a polio campaign. The army denies it**

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Palestinian officials say an Israeli drone strike on a clinic in northern Gaza where children were being vaccinated for polio wounded six people, including four children. The Israeli military denied responsibility.

The alleged strike occurred Saturday in northern Gaza, which has been encircled by Israeli forces and largely isolated for the past year. Israel has been carrying out another offensive there in recent weeks that has killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands.

It was not possible to resolve the conflicting accounts. Israeli forces have repeatedly raided hospitals in Gaza over the course of the war, saying Hamas uses them for militant purposes, allegations denied by Palestinian health officials.

Dr. Munir al-Boursh, director general of the Gaza Health Ministry, told The Associated Press that a quadcopter struck the Sheikh Radwan clinic in Gaza City early Saturday afternoon, just a few minutes after a United Nations delegation left the facility.

The World Health Organization and the U.N. children’s agency, known as UNICEF, which are jointly carrying out the polio vaccination campaign, expressed concern over the reported strike.

“The reports of this attack are even more disturbing as the Sheikh Radwan Clinic is one of the health points where parents can get their children vaccinated,” said Rosalia Bollen, a spokesperson for UNICEF.

“Today’s attack occurred while the humanitarian pause was still in effect, despite assurances given that

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the pause would be respected from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m.”

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said that “contrary to the claims, an initial review determined that the (Israeli military) did not strike in the area at the specified time.”

A scaled-down campaign to administer a second dose of the polio vaccine began Saturday in parts of northern Gaza. It had been postponed from Oct. 23 due to lack of access, Israeli bombings and mass evacuation orders, and the lack of assurances for humanitarian pauses, a U.N. statement said.

The administration of the first dose was carried out in September across the Gaza Strip, including areas of northern Gaza that are now completely sealed off. Health officials said the campaign’s first round, and the administration of the second dose across central and southern Gaza, were successful.

At least 100,000 people have been forced to evacuate from areas of north Gaza toward Gaza City in the past few weeks, but around 15,000 children under the age of 10 remain in northern towns, including Jabaliya, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, which are inaccessible, according to the U.N.

The final phase of the polio vaccination campaign had aimed to reach an estimated 119,000 children in the north with a second dose of oral polio vaccine, the agencies said, but “achieving this target is now unlikely due to access constraints.”

They say 90% of children in every community must be vaccinated to prevent the spread of the disease.

The campaign was launched after the first polio case was reported in Gaza in 25 years — a 10-month-old boy, now paralyzed in the leg. The World Health Organization said the presence of a paralysis case indicates there could be hundreds more who have been infected but aren’t showing symptoms.

The war began on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. Israel’s offensive has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, who do not say how many were combatants but say more than half were women and children.

## Harris appears on ‘Saturday Night Live’ as mirror image of Maya Rudolph with election looming

By AAMER MADHANI, COLLEEN LONG, ZEKE MILLER AND WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris made a surprise appearance on “Saturday Night Live” in the final days before the election, playing herself as the mirror-image double of Maya Rudolph’s version of her in the show’s cold open.

The first lines the candidate spoke as she sat across from Rudolph, their outfits identical, were drowned out by cheers from the audience.

“It is nice to see you Kamala,” Harris told Rudolph with a broad grin she kept throughout the sketch. “And I’m just here to remind you, you got this.”

In sync, the two said supporters need to “Keep Kamala and carry-on-ala,” declared that they share each other’s “belief in the promise of America,” and delivered the signature “Live from New York it’s Saturday night!”

Harris made the surprise trip to New York City with the election looming, briefly stepping away from the battleground states where she’s been furiously campaigning in favor of NBC’s iconic sketch comedy show, where she was hoping to generate buzz and appeal to a nationwide audience.

Harris came to New York on Air Force Two after an early evening campaign stop Saturday on in Charlotte, North Carolina. She was scheduled to head to Detroit, but once in the air, aides said she’d be making an unscheduled stop and the plane landed at LaGuardia Airport.

Harris arrived at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in Manhattan, where “SNL” tapes, shortly after 8 p.m., enough time for a quick rehearsal before the show airs live at 11:30 p.m. It is the final “SNL” episode before Election Day on Tuesday.

The visit wasn’t previously announced and an official familiar with Harris’ planning only officially confirmed it for reporters traveling with the vice president moments before the live airing began. The official insisted on anonymity to discuss plans before they were made public.

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Harris departed immediately after the opening segment. She told reporters, "It was fun!" as she boarded the plane to leave New York.

Host John Mulaney and musical guest Chappell Roan shifted the show away from politics. Neither addressed the election.

Mulaney, the standup comic and former "SNL" writer, hosted for the sixth time and talked about his kids with wife Olivia Munn, Catholicism, and his stint in rehab.

Some expected Roan, the 26-year-old singer who has become a major star in recent months, to make a political statement in her first appearance on the show. She has previously been harshly critical of the Democratic party and declined to endorse Harris, though Roan has said several times she plans to vote for her.

But she played it straight, or as straight as the wildly theatrical performer gets. She sang her hit "Pink Pony Club," on an all-pink set bathed in pink light.

Senator Tim Kaine also made a surprise appearance, in a game-show sketch where the gag was that no one remembered him despite his being Hillary Clinton's running mate in 2016.

"It's been less than eight years. What's my name?," he said, as the contestants stood silent and flummoxed.

Rudolph first played Harris on the show in 2019 and has reprised her role this season, doing a spot-on impression of the vice president, including calling herself "Momala" — a reference to the affectionate nickname her stepchildren gave her.

Her fellow former cast member Andy Samberg appeared again Saturday night as Harris' husband, second gentleman Doug Emhoff, standup comic Jim Gaffigan played running mate Tim Walz, and longtime alum Dana Carvey again played President Joe Biden.

Rudolph's performance has won critical and comedic acclaim — including from Harris herself.

"Maya Rudolph — I mean, she's so good," Harris said last month on ABC's "The View." "She had the whole thing, the suit, the jewelry, everything!"

Jason Miller, a senior adviser to former president and Republican nominee Donald Trump, expressed surprise that Harris would appear on "SNL" given what he characterized as her unflattering portrayal on the show. Asked if Trump had been invited to appear, he said: "I don't know. Probably not."

Politicians nonetheless have a long history on "SNL," including Trump, who hosted the show in 2015 — though appearing so close to Election Day is unusual.

Hillary Clinton was running in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary when she appeared next to Amy Poehler, who played her on the show and was known for launching into a trademark, exaggerated cackle. The real Clinton wondered during her appearance, "Do I really laugh like that?"

Harris repeated that line in response to Rudolph's portrayal of her laugh in Saturday's episode.

Clinton returned in 2016, while running against Trump in a race she ultimately lost.

The first sitting president to appear on "SNL" was Republican Gerald Ford, who did so less than a year after the show debuted. Ford appeared in April 1976 on an episode hosted by his press secretary, Ron Nessen, and declared the show's famous opening rejoinder, "Live from New York, it's Saturday Night."

Then-Illinois Sen. Barack Obama appeared alongside Poehler impersonating Clinton in 2007, and Republican Bob Dole was on the show in November 1996 -- a mere 11 days after losing that year's election to Bill Clinton. Dole consoled Norm Macdonald, who played the Kansas senator.

Then there was Tina Fey's 2008 impression of vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin — and in particular her joke that "I can see Russia from my house." It was so good that Fey eventually won an Emmy and Palin herself appeared on the show that October, in the weeks before the election.

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## True crime's popularity brings real change for defendants and society. It's not all good

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — In 1989, Americans were riveted by the shotgun murders of Jose and Kitty Menendez in their Beverly Hills mansion by their own children. Lyle and Erik Menendez were sentenced to life in prison and lost all subsequent appeals. But today, more than three decades later, they unexpectedly have a chance of getting out.

Not because of the workings of the legal system. Because of entertainment.

After two recent documentaries and a scripted drama on the pair brought new attention to the 35-year-old case, the Los Angeles district attorney has recommended they be resentenced.

The popularity and proliferation of true crime entertainment like Netflix's docudrama "Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story" is effecting real life changes for their subjects and in society more broadly. At their best, true crime podcasts, streaming series and social media content can help expose injustices and right wrongs.

But because many of these products prioritize entertainment and profit, they also can have serious negative consequences.

It may help the Menendez brothers

The use of true crime stories to sell a product has a long history in America, from the tabloid "penny press" papers of the mid-1800s to television movies like 1984's "The Burning Bed." These days it's podcasts, bingeable Netflix series and even true crime TikToks. The fascination with the genre may be considered morbid by some, but it can be partially explained by the human desire to make sense of the world through stories.

In the case of the Menendez brothers, Lyle, who was then 21, and Erik, then 18, have said they feared their parents were about to kill them to prevent the disclosure of the father's long-term sexual molestation of Erik. But at their trial, many of the sex abuse allegations were not allowed to be presented to the jury, and prosecutors contended they committed murder simply to get at their parents' money.

For years, that's the story that many people who watched the saga from a distance accepted and talked about.

The new dramas delve into the brothers' childhood, helping the public better understand the context of the crime and thus see the world as a less frightening place, says Adam Banner, a criminal defense attorney who writes a column on pop culture and the law for the American Bar Association's ABA Journal.

"Not only does that make us feel better intrinsically," Banner says, "but it also objectively gives us the ability to think, 'Well, now I can take this case and put it in a different bucket than another situation where I have no explanation and the only thing I can say is, 'This child just must be evil.'"

The rise of the antihero is at play

Much true crime of the past takes particularly shocking crimes and explores them in depth, generally with the assumption that those convicted of the crime were actually guilty and deserved to be punished.

The success of the podcast "Serial," which cast doubt on the murder conviction of Adnan Syed, has given birth to a newer genre that often assumes (and intends to prove) the opposite. The protagonists are innocent, or — as in the case of the Menendez brothers — guilty but sympathetic, and thus not deserving of their harsh sentences.

"There is an old tradition of journalists picking apart criminal cases and showing that people are potentially innocent," says Maurice Chammah, a staff writer at The Marshall Project and author of "Let the Lord Sort Them: The Rise and Fall of the Death Penalty."

"But I think that the curve kind of goes up exponentially in the wake of 'Serial,' which was 2014 and obviously changed the entire landscape economically and culturally of podcasts," Chammah says. "And then you have 'Making a Murderer' come along a few years later and become a kind of behemoth example of that in docuseries."

Roughly during the same time period, the innocence movement gained traction along with the Black

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Lives Matter movement and greater attention on police custody deaths. And in popular culture, both fiction and nonfiction, the trend is to mine a villainous character's backstory.

"All these superheroes, supervillains, the movie 'Joker' — you're just inundated with this idea that people's bad behavior is shaped by trauma when they were younger," Chammah said.

Banner often represents some of the least sympathetic defendants imaginable, including those accused of child sexual abuse. He says the effects of these cultural trends are real. Juries today are more likely to give his clients the benefit of the doubt and are more skeptical of police and prosecutors. But he also worries about the intense focus in current true crime on cases where things went wrong, which he says are the outliers.

While the puzzle aspect of "Did they get it right?" might feed our curiosity, he says, we run the risk of sowing distrust in the entire criminal justice system.

"You don't want to take away the positive ramifications that putting that spotlight on a case can bring. But you also don't want to give off the impression that this is how our justice system works. That if we can get enough cameras and microphones on a case, then that's how we're going to save somebody off of death row or that's how we're going to get a life sentence overturned."

Adds Chammah: "If you open up sentencing decisions and second looks and criminal justice policy to pop culture — in the sense of who gets a podcast made about them, who gets Kim Kardashian talking about them — the risk of extreme arbitrariness is really great. ... It feels like it's only a matter of time before the wealthy family of some defendant basically funds a podcast that tries to make a viral case for their innocence."

The audience is a factor, too

Whitney Phillips, who teaches a class on true crime and media ethics at the University of Oregon, says the popularity of the genre on social media adds another layer of complications, often encouraging active participation of viewer and listeners.

"Because these are not trained detectives or people who have any actual subject area expertise in forensics or even criminal law, then there's this really common outcome of the wrong people being implicated or floated as suspects," she says. "Also, the victims' families now are part of the discourse. They might be accused of this, that, or the other, or at the very least, you have your loved one's murder, violent death, being entertainment for millions of strangers."

This sensibility has been both chronicled and lampooned in the streaming comedy-drama series "Only Murders in the Building," which follows three unlikely collaborators who live in a New York apartment building where a murder has taken place. The trio decide to make a true crime podcast while simultaneously trying to solve the case.

Nothing about true crime is fundamentally unethical, Phillips says. "It's that the social media system — the attention economy — is not calibrated for ethics. It's calibrated for views, it's calibrated for engagement and it's calibrated for sensationalism."

Many influencers are now vying for the "murder audience," Phillips says, with social media and more traditional media feeding off each other. True crime is now creeping into lifestyle content and even makeup tutorials.

"It was sort of inevitable that you would see the collision of these two things and having these influencers literally just put on a face of makeup and then tell a very kind of — it's very informal, it's very dishy, it's often not particularly well researched," she says. "This is not investigative journalism."

## Family pleaded to have assault rifle seized before deadly school shooting. Officers had few options

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

Orlando Harris' family pleaded with Missouri police to confiscate the 19-year-old's bullet-proof vest, ammunition and AR-15-style rifle. They knew his mental health was fragile after more than one suicide attempt. But the best officers could do in a state with some of the most expansive gun rights is suggest Harris keep the weapon in a storage unit.

Nine days later, Harris entered his former St. Louis high school and declared, "All of you are going to die."

A new 456-page police report details the efforts Harris' family took to try to take his gun away in the days before he walked into Central Visual Arts and Performing Arts High School on Oct. 24, 2022, when he killed a student and a teacher and wounded seven others before he was fatally shot by police.

Missouri is not among the 21 states with a red-flag law. Also known as extreme risk protection orders, red-flag laws are intended to restrict the purchase of guns or temporarily remove them from people who may hurt themselves or someone else.

The case highlights how hard it is for law enforcement to restrict gun access, even when there are clues something is deeply amiss.

After an Army reservist killed 18 people in October 2023 in Lewiston, Maine, an investigation found missed opportunities to intervene in the shooter's psychiatric crisis. And before a 14-year-old was charged in a deadly shooting this fall at his Georgia high school, a deputy talked to him about an online threat and family warned of an "extreme emergency."

The investigation report in Harris' case shows the first time he attempted suicide was in the fall of 2021, just before he was scheduled to leave for college. Pandemic disruptions, the arrest of a friend in a homicide and a car wreck all may have contributed to his depression, his family and former boss told investigators.

The police report makes no mention of him attending college. Instead, he worked in the cafeteria at a senior facility, where he sometimes discussed guns with coworkers.

The following August he met with a Washington University psychiatry resident, telling her he thought about shooting people at his old school. He said those thoughts lasted for just one evening and went away, and that there was no planning and he didn't want to do it.

But soon after, Harris began a countdown to the shooting. His plans included detailed maps of the school and a plan to target teachers, students and the LGBTQ community. He also had plans to burn down his family's home with them inside.

The psychiatrist prescribed medications, but Harris didn't fill the prescriptions. The report says they developed an emergency plan.

Washington University did not immediately respond to messages from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Harris then stopped showing up for appointments.

On Oct. 8, he tried to buy a firearm from a licensed dealer in St. Charles, Missouri, but the transaction was blocked by an FBI background check. The report doesn't explain why, and police didn't respond to an email from the AP. The FBI merely provided a list of the 12 reasons for a denial with no other details.

Then on Oct. 10, Harris drove to a nearby suburb to pay a man \$580 in cash for the rifle used in the shooting.

Harris' family grew more concerned on Oct. 15, when two packages from gun and ammunition suppliers arrived. One of his sisters, Noneeka Harris, opened them, finding a body armor vest, magazine holsters and magazines. She then searched his bedroom and found the rifle inside an old TV box.

Harris' mother, Tanya Ward, called BJC Mental Health Services and staff there "deemed the situation as an immediate threat." They advised her to take the items to the police department and tell officers about her son's mental illness.

Police at the station told her they couldn't take the firearm because Harris was of legal age to possess it. They said she should head home and an officer would meet them there. By the time she returned, Harris

was home and insistent that he keep the gun.

His mother was adamant that the gun not be in the house, so the officers suggested a storage unit. The report said the officers also advised her on steps she needed to take to have her son deemed mentally unstable.

Federal law has banned some mentally ill people from buying guns since 1968, including those deemed a danger to themselves or others, who have been involuntarily committed, or judged not guilty by reason of insanity or incompetent to stand trial.

Ultimately, the firearm and other items were loaded into the trunk of Harris' sister's vehicle, including a box of ammunition that arrived the next day. She later drove her brother to a storage facility, which was about 5 miles (8 kilometers) from the high school.

She told police she "knew something was going to happen."

On Oct. 24, shots rang out as Harris entered his former high school.

It is unclear why Harris targeted the school. A security officer recalled him as somewhat popular and his grade school principal said he wasn't bullied, according to the investigative report. But as he fired at a dance class, one student told police she heard someone yell, "I hate this school. I hate everybody."

Fatally wounded, Alexandria Bell initially ran toward the entrance before slumping to the ground, a security officer reassuring the 10th grader that help was on the way. But then she went quiet.

One class jumped out a window to escape after their physical education teacher, 61-year-old Jean Kuczka, stood between them and Harris. Kuczka was killed.

Harris eventually made his way to the third floor, hiding in a computer lab. The first officer to charge into the lab had a daughter at the school.

"I had everything to lose," the officer, who was among those to open fire, recalled in the police report. He texted his daughter afterward, telling her, "I killed him."

Harris' sister told investigators that when she heard about the shooting, she started driving toward the school but then went home instead, waking up her mother who had worked overnight.

Harris' mother later checked her voicemail. There was a message from a hospital asking if she still needed help with her son.

## **Puerto Rico prepares for Election Day as a third-party candidate makes history**

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The two parties that have dominated Puerto Rican politics for decades are losing their grip as they face the stiffest competition yet from a younger generation fed up with the island's corruption, chronic power outages and mismanagement of public funds.

For the first time in the island's governor's race, a third-party candidate has a powerful second lead in the polls ahead of the U.S. territory's election Tuesday — and some experts say there's a possibility he could win.

"This election is already historic," said political analyst and university professor Jorge Schmidt Nieto. "It already marks a before and an after."

Juan Dalmau is running for Puerto Rico's Independence Party and the Citizen Victory Movement, established in 2019. A Gaither international poll this month shows Dalmau closing in on Jenniffer González, a member of the New Progressive Party and Puerto Rico's representative in Congress. She beat Gov. Pedro Pierluisi in their party's primary in June.

Gaither's poll shows Dalmau with 29% of support versus González's 31% as he nearly caught up with her since a different poll in July showed him with only 24% compared with González's 43%. Coming in third was Jesús Manuel Ortiz, of the Popular Democratic Party, followed by Javier Jiménez of Project Dignity, a conservative party created in 2019.

Under pressure



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Puerto Rican politics revolve around the island's status, and up until 2016, the New Progressive Party, which supports statehood, and the Popular Democratic Party, which supports the status quo, would split at least 90% of all votes during general elections, Schmidt said.

But that year, U.S. Congress created a federal control board to oversee Puerto Rico's finances after the government announced it was unable to pay a more than \$70 billion public debt load. In 2017, Puerto Rico filed for the biggest U.S. municipal bankruptcy in history.

The debt was accrued through decades of corruption, mismanagement and excessive borrowing, with Puerto Rico's Electric Power Authority still struggling to restructure its more than \$9 billion debt, the largest of any government agency.

Puerto Ricans have largely rejected and resented the board, created a year before Hurricane Maria slammed into the island as a powerful Category 4 storm, razing the electrical grid.

In 2020, Pierluisi won but received only 33% of votes. His opponent from the Popular Democratic Party received 32%. It marked the first time either party failed to reach 40% of votes.

The power outages that have persisted since the elections, coupled with the slow pace of hurricane reconstruction, have frustrated and angered voters. Under Pierluisi, the government signed contracts with two companies, Luma Energy and Genera PR, which together oversee the generation, transmission and distribution of power. Outages have persisted, with the companies blaming a grid that was already crumbling before the hurricane hit due to a lack of maintenance and investment.

"Disastrous things have occurred during this four-year term, especially with the electric energy," Schmidt said. "It has affected everyone, regardless of social class."

Voters, he said, are viewing Tuesday's elections "as a moment of revenge."

Dalmau said he would oust both companies in an "organized fashion" within six months if he becomes governor. Ortiz said he would cancel Luma's contract, while González has called for the creation of an "energy czar" that would review potential Luma contractual breaches while another operator is found.

However, no contract can be canceled without prior approval of the federal control board and Puerto Rico's Energy Bureau.

The candidates also are under pressure to create affordable housing, lower power bills and the general cost of living, reduce violent crimes, boost Puerto Rico's economy, with the island locked out of capital markets since 2015, and improve a crumbling health care system as thousands of doctors flock to the U.S. mainland.

Dalmau, who suspended his campaign for two weeks in mid-October after his wife had emergency brain surgery, also has said he would eliminate tax breaks for wealthy U.S. citizens from the mainland.

Apathy dominates

Despite their promises to turn Puerto Rico around, candidates face persistent voter apathy.

In 2008, 1.9 million out of 2.5 million registered voters participated in that year's election, compared with 1.3 million out of 2.3 million in 2020.

This year, nearly 99,000 new voters registered and more than 87,000 reactivated their status, according to Puerto Rico's State Elections Commission.

"A much higher number was expected," Schmidt said.

He noted that those middle age and older favor González and her pro-statehood party, while those younger than 45 "overwhelmingly" favor Dalmau, which means that if a majority of young voters participate on Tuesday and fewer older ones do so, he might have a chance of winning.

The Bad Bunny factor

The months leading up to the Nov. 5 elections have been contentious.

Reggaetón superstar Bad Bunny paid for dozens of billboard ads criticizing Puerto Rico's two main parties. In response, the governor's New Progressive Party financed a billboard ad suggesting an obscenity in reference to Bad Bunny.

On Friday, the singer published a page-long letter in a local newspaper deriding González's pro-statehood party.

While the artist has not endorsed any local officials, the sole person he recently began following on Instagram was Dalmau.

Meanwhile, a so-called "cemetery of corruption" was set up Thursday in the capital, San Juan, featuring large black-and-white pictures of nearly a dozen politicians from the island's two main parties who have been charged or sentenced by federal authorities in recent years. It was created by Eva Prados with the Citizen Victory Movement, who is running for Puerto Rico's House. By Friday, police reported that the pictures were destroyed or stolen.

As the race heats up, the number of formal complaints about alleged electoral crimes also has increased. These include people who say they received confirmations for early voting when they made no such request.

A persistent question

Voters on Tuesday also will be asked for a seventh time what Puerto Rico's political status should be.

The nonbinding referendum will feature three choices: statehood, independence and independence with free association, under which issues like foreign affairs, U.S. citizenship and use of the U.S. dollar would be negotiated.

Regardless of the outcome, a change in status requires approval from the U.S. Congress.

"For a lot of people, it's a demoralizing exercise to vote in a non-binding referendum," said Christina Ponsa-Kraus, a professor at Columbia Law School. "The reason Puerto Ricans have voted seven times is that every time they vote, Congress doesn't do anything."

The push for a change in status doesn't depend on whether Kamala Harris or Donald Trump win in the U.S. mainland.

"The stakes are more than just who becomes president, but who is in control of Congress," Ponsa-Kraus said as she called on Congress to offer Puerto Rico "non-colonial options."

She added that it's hard to say whether the gubernatorial run by Dalmau, who has long represented Puerto Rico's Independence Party, would affect the plebiscite vote.

"My sense is that ... people can distinguish between a candidate and a status option," she said. "I believe that Puerto Ricans have historically not supported independence because they do not want to lose their citizenship, and they do not want to lose the ability to move back and forth freely between the mainland United States and the island."

## Ethiopia bans imports of gas-powered private vehicles, but the switch to electric is a bumpy ride

By SAMUEL GETACHEW Associated Press

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (AP) — As the price of fuel soared in Ethiopia earlier this year, Awgachew Seleshi decided to buy an electric car. That aligned with the government's new efforts to phase out gas-powered vehicles. But months later, he's questioning whether it was the right decision.

He faces a range of issues, from the erratic supply of electricity in Addis Ababa, the capital, to the scarcity of spare parts.

"Charging my car has been a challenge," the civil servant said. "Spare parts that are imported from China are expensive, few mechanics are able to fix such cars and the resale value of such cars is poor."

Seleshi's troubles point to wider challenges for Ethiopia. In January, the East African country became the first in the world to ban the importation of non-electric private vehicles.

The decision eased pressure on authorities who spend scarce foreign currency to subsidize the cost of fuel, but it also reflected growing enthusiasm for electric vehicles as the world demands more green technologies to reduce climate-changing emissions.

Earlier this month, Ethiopia's government raised the price of fuel by up to 8% as part of a plan to gradually end all fuel subsidies in Africa's second-most populous country.

Authorities have claimed some success in enforcing the ban on non-electric vehicles entering Ethiopia, and more than 100,000 electric cars are now being imported into the country each month.

The official target is to increase the monthly import figure to 500,000 by 2030. By that time, a big new

dam Ethiopia has built on the Nile River is expected to be producing power at full capacity.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, in a televised address earlier this year, said the Grand Renaissance Dam will start generating more than 5,000 megawatts of electric power within a year. Authorities say such capacity would support the transition to electric vehicles.

For now, many in Addis Ababa, a city of more than 5 million people, are doubtful the country can achieve its ambitious goals for electric vehicles without further needed infrastructure and services.

The few garage owners who can fix broken electric cars say they are overwhelmed, while customers say they are being overcharged amid an apparent lack of competition.

"There are two or three garages that can fix new energy vehicles in Ethiopia and many consumers lack awareness on how to take care of such vehicles," said Yonas Tadelle, a mechanic in Addis Ababa. "As mechanics, we also lack the tools, the spare parts and the know-how to fix such cars."

Many EVs are now parked in garages and parking lots awaiting parts expected to come from China.

Ethiopia's minister in charge of transport, Bareo Hassen Bareo, has said he believes the country can be a model nation with a green economy legacy, with the prioritization of electric vehicles a key component.

The government will invest in public charging stations, he told The Associated Press, and there are plans to create a plant manufacturing EV batteries locally to reduce reliance on imports.

Private efforts have included a collaboration, which has since fizzled, between Olympian Haile Gebrelassie and South Korean carmaker Hyundai to make electric vehicles in Ethiopia. That effort is believed to have collapsed over the sourcing of materials.

Samson Berhane, an economist based in Addis Ababa, said the sudden flood of electric vehicles into the local market despite poor infrastructure is making it difficult for customers to adapt comfortably. Some EVs sell for about \$20,000.

"Very few people are willing to take the risk of buying electric cars due to the lack of infrastructure, shortage of mechanics specialized in EV maintenance and the flooding of the market with Chinese brands that have questionable details and long-term visibility," Berhane said.

But he said he believes that Ethiopia is more than able to provide electricity to the expected 500,000 EV's there within the next decade while fulfilling its industrial ambitions.

Some Ethiopians are already giving up on electric vehicles, and the secondhand trade in gasoline-powered vehicles continues. There are at least 1.2 million vehicles across Ethiopia, and only a small fraction are electric ones.

Businessman Yared Alemayehu bought a Chinese-made electric vehicle that he had hoped to use for a taxi service. He knew the car had a mechanical defect, but he believed it could be fixed. A mechanic disagreed.

In the end, he sold the car at a loss and bought a Toyota Corolla — a car made in 2007 that he felt was more reliable — for the equivalent of \$20,000, a sum that included the hefty taxes imposed on gasoline vehicles. Taxes can be higher than the cost of importing the vehicle.

"In addition to having to charge my old electric car, it frequently broke, and the garage was overcharging, and the lineup at the garage was overwhelming us," he said.

Taxi driver Dereje Hailu, who had high hopes for his Chinese-made E-Star electric vehicle when he purchased it earlier this year, said his expectations had been dashed.

"With such a car, I fear I might be stuck if I go far from Addis Ababa where there are no charging stations," he said.

## **Trial in 2017 killings of 2 teenage girls in Indiana reaches midway point as prosecution rests**

By RICK CALLAHAN Associated Press

DELPHI, Ind. (AP) — The trial of a man accused of killing two teenage girls in a small Indiana community has passed its midway point following more than two weeks of testimony about the 2017 killings.

Prosecutors rested their case Thursday against Richard Allen after jurors heard recorded phone calls in

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which he told his wife that he killed Abigail Williams, 13, and Liberty German, 14.

Allen's trial began Oct. 18 at the Carroll County Courthouse in Delphi, the girls' hometown. Jurors have been sequestered since the beginning of the trial, which is scheduled to run through Nov. 15.

The defense began calling its first witnesses Thursday. A psychologist for the Indiana Department of Correction told jurors Friday that Allen was seriously mentally ill when he began confessing to the killings while housed at the Westville Correctional Facility.

Allen, 52, faces up to 130 years in prison if he is convicted on two counts of murder and two additional counts of murder while committing or attempting to commit kidnapping.

Here are some key moments in the trial so far:

## Opening statements

Carroll County Prosecutor Nicholas McLeland opened the trial by telling jurors they would see and hear evidence, including incriminating statements Allen has made, that will convince them he forced the girls off a hiking trail into a secluded area while armed with a gun and cut their throats.

Allen was the person seen on cellphone video German recorded on the day the girls disappeared and an unspent bullet found between their bodies came from Allen's gun, McLeland said.

Defense attorney Andrew Baldwin told jurors Allen is innocent. Baldwin said the jury would hear witness statements and forensic evidence that would raise "reasonable doubt" that Allen is not the killer and said the state's timeline does not match the evidence in the case.

Someone else may have kidnapped the teens and returned them early the next day to the scene where they were found dead, Baldwin said.

## Jurors see photos and video from the murder scene

In the first full week of the trial, jurors were shown photographs of the area where the teens' bodies were found in a wooded area off the hiking trail. The girls, known as Abby and Libby, had crossed an abandoned railroad trestle called the Monon High Bridge during their hike.

Some jurors and others in the courtroom gasped or turned away when gruesome images of their bloody bodies were shown, and the girls' mothers wept.

Jurors also viewed cellphone video that German recorded just before the youths vanished showing a man wearing a blue jacket and jeans following Williams as she crosses the Monon High Bridge.

In an enhanced version of the video shown to jurors, one of the girls says, "There's no path so we have to go down here." Just before the video ends, prosecutors said, the man seen in the video tells the teens, "Down the hill."

## How Allen became a suspect

Investigators said in an affidavit released about a month after Allen's October 2022 arrest that he became a suspect after they went back and reviewed "prior tips" and found that he had been interviewed by an officer in 2017.

Trial testimony has revealed more details about how they zeroed in on the former pharmacy worker.

A retired state government worker who volunteered in March 2017 to help police with the investigation told jurors that in September 2022 she found paperwork that caught her eye.

Kathy Shank testified she found a "lead sheet" saying that two days after German and Williams' bodies were found, a man contacted authorities and said he had been on the trail the afternoon the girls went missing. His name was listed incorrectly as Richard Allen Whiteman and marked "cleared," Shank said.

She determined the man's name was actually Richard Allen and recalled that a young girl had been on the trail at the same location and time and had seen a man.

"I thought there could be a correlation," Shank testified, adding that she notified officers of her find.

## What Allen told investigators in 2017

The girls' bodies were found Feb. 14, 2017, the day after they went missing.

Two days later, Allen contacted authorities and told them he was on the hiking trail the afternoon of Feb. 13, during the time period when the girls disappeared, according to testimony.

Dan Dulin, an Indiana Department of Natural Resources captain, told the court he spoke to Allen, who

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said he was on the hiking trail between 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. and remembered seeing three girls.

What Allen told investigators in 2022

After Shank brought Allen to investigators' attention, they interviewed him in October 2022. Allen told investigators he arrived at the trail around noon and left no later than 2 p.m., not 3:30 p.m. as he told Dulin in 2017.

Steve Mullin, who was Delphi's police chief when the girls were killed and later became an investigator at the county prosecutor's office, said Allen told him and another officer that he was wearing a blue or black Carhartt jacket, jeans and a beanie on the day the teens vanished.

Mullin said he asked Allen if he was the similarly dressed person seen in German's cellphone video.

"His response was if the picture was taken with the girls' camera, there was no way it was him," Mullin testified.

Prosecutors also showed jurors police interviews with Allen videotaped before his arrest in which he repeatedly professed his innocence.

Allen's alleged confessions

On Thursday the jury heard several recorded phone calls of Allen speaking with his wife from prison in which he told her that he killed German and Williams. In one of the calls, he said, "I did it. I killed Abby and Libby."

The jury heard testimony earlier from the former warden of the Westville Correctional Facility, where Allen was previously held, who said Allen claimed to have killed the girls with a box cutter that he later discarded.

Dr. Monica Wala, Allen's prison psychologist during his time at Westville, testified Allen began confessing to killing the girls in early 2023 during his sessions with her. She said he provided details of the crime in some of the confessions, including telling her he slashed the girls' throats and put tree branches over their bodies.

A report written by Wala and presented to the jury as an exhibit states Allen also told her he had planned to rape the teens but did not do so after he saw a van traveling nearby.

A state trooper testified Thursday that Allen's remark corroborated a statement by a man whose driveway passes under the Monon High Bridge and who said he was driving home in his van around that time.

Allen's attorneys have said their client made the incriminating statements while under the pressure and mental stress of being locked up and watched 24 hours a day and being taunted by people incarcerated with him.

During cross-examination, Wala acknowledged she followed Allen's case with interest during her personal time even while she was treating him and that she was a fan of the true crime genre.

An unspent bullet and Allen's gun

Court documents released weeks after Allen's arrest state that testing determined an unspent bullet found between the girls' bodies "had been cycled through" a pistol Allen owned.

Melissa Oberg, an Indiana State Police firearms expert, told the jury her analysis tied the round to Allen's Sig Sauer, a .40-caliber handgun.

Allen's attorney tried to cast doubt on the accuracy of firearms testing during cross-examination. Oberg said she is not aware of making any identification mistakes in her more than 17 years of analyzing firearms.

## **Mpox cases in Congo may be stabilizing. Experts say more vaccines are needed to stamp out virus**

By MARIA CHENG and RUTH ALONGA Associated Press

GOMA, Congo (AP) — Some health officials say mpox cases in Congo appear to be "stabilizing" — a possible sign that the main epidemic for which the World Health Organization made a global emergency declaration in August might be on the decline.

In recent weeks, Congo has reported about 200 to 300 lab-confirmed mpox cases every week, according to WHO. That's down from nearly 400 cases a week in July. The decline is also apparent in Kamituga, the

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mining city in the eastern part of Congo where the new, more infectious variant of mpox first emerged. But the U.N. health agency acknowledged Friday that only 40% to 50% of suspected infections in Congo were being tested — and that the virus is continuing to spread in some parts of the country and elsewhere, including Uganda.

While doctors are encouraged by the drop in infections in some parts of Congo, it's still not clear what kinds of physical contact is driving the outbreak. Health experts are also frustrated by the low number of vaccine doses the central African nation has received — 265,000 — and say that delivering the vaccine to where it's needed in the sprawling country is proving difficult. WHO estimates 50,000 people have been immunized in Congo, which has a population of 110 million.

Scientists also say there needs to be an urgent, broader vaccination effort for the entire continent to halt mpox's spread and avoid further worrisome genetic mutations, like the one detected earlier this year in Congo after months of low-level circulation.

"If we miss this opportunity, the likelihood of another significant outbreak increases substantially," said Dr. Zakary Rhissa, who heads operations in Congo for the charity Alima.

So far this year, there have been roughly 43,000 suspected cases in Africa and more than 1,000 people have died, mostly in Congo.

"We've seen how past outbreaks, such as the one in Nigeria in 2017, can lead to larger global events if not effectively contained," he said. The 2017 epidemic ended up leading to the 2022 global outbreak of mpox that affected more than 100 countries.

Rhissa said the decline in cases in Kamituga — where mpox initially spread among sex workers and miners — is an opening to put more programs in place for vaccination, surveillance and education.

Georgette Hamuli, an 18-year-old sex worker, hadn't been aware of mpox until immunization teams arrived last week in the poor neighborhood where she works in Goma, the biggest city in eastern Congo.

"They told us we're highly exposed to the the risk of infection," she said. "We insist on condoms with our clients, but some refuse ... if they don't want to use a condom, they double the amount they pay."

Hamuli said she and other friends who are sex workers each received 2,000 Congolese francs (\$0.70) from a charity to get vaccinated against mpox — but it wasn't the money that swayed her.

"The vaccine is also necessary," she said. "I think we're now protected."

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated Congo needs at least 3 million mpox vaccines to stop the virus, and another 7 million for the rest of Africa. So far, WHO and partners have allocated 900,000 vaccines to nine African countries affected by mpox and expect 6 million vaccines to be available by the end of this year.

Mpox epidemics in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda had their origins in Congo, and a number of cases in travelers have also been identified in Sweden, Thailand, Germany, India and Britain.

Fewer than half of the people who are most at risk in Congo have been vaccinated, according to Heather Kerr, Congo director for the the International Rescue Committee.

"We only have a tiny amount of vaccines, and nothing for the kids," she said.

The vaccines for Congo are largely coming from donor countries like the U.S and through UNICEF, which mainly uses taxpayer money to buy the shots.

"We're getting a charitable approach where we only see very small donations of vaccines to Africa," said Dr. Chris Beyrer, director of the Global Health Institute at Duke University. "What we need is a public health approach where we immunize populations at scale."

Drugmaker Bavarian Nordic, which makes the most widely used mpox vaccine, said it would sell shots destined for Africa at the lowest price possible.

The advocacy group Public Citizen estimated UNICEF paid \$65 per dose of the Jynneos mpox vaccine made by Bavarian Nordic, far higher than nearly all other vaccines used in public health programs.

Dr. Salim Abdool Karim, an infectious diseases expert at South Africa's University of KwaZulu-Natal, said mpox outbreaks typically peak and disappear quickly because of how the virus spreads. This time, however, he said there are two complicating factors: the virus' transmission via sex and the continued spillover from infected animals.

"We're in new territory with mpox this time," he added. "But we're never going to solve this until we vaccinate most of our people."

## Harris and Trump focus on Sunbelt states during final weekend push for votes

By AAMER MADHANI, JILL COLVIN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump zeroed in on the Sun Belt on Saturday as they embarked on one last weekend quest to sway every undecided voter in the battleground states. They pitched rival agendas on the economy — and more — that each insisted is what Americans want.

"We have overcome every attack, every abuse and even two assassination attempts," Trump said at a rally in Gastonia, North Carolina, outside Charlotte. "And now it all comes down to this."

Later, Trump headed to Virginia, which isn't considered a battleground state, but offered a similar message, telling supporters that there is no way he can lose and is on the cusp of "the greatest political victory in the history of our country."

Trump predicted he would win not just the Electoral College count, but a majority of votes cast across the country, which he failed to do in two previous tries.

"We're going to win the popular vote," Trump told the crowd. "I think we have a really good chance to win the popular vote."

Harris, meanwhile, has been urging her supporters to vote early so she can be elected and provide the "new generation of leadership" that she argues she represents.

"I am ready to offer that leadership as the next president of the United States of America," she said during remarks in a rally at the Atlanta Civic Center parking lot. She had to pause a few times to allow medics to attend to people who had fainted after spending hours in the heat.

"It's hot out here, Atlanta," the vice president said.

It was unclear whether Harris herself had voted early. Campaign spokesperson Michael Tyler said Saturday that Harris plans to vote by mail, but he could not say whether she had returned her ballot to her home state of California. Trump confirmed Saturday that he'll vote in person on Tuesday in Florida, despite saying previously he'd vote early.

"Anybody here already voted?" she asked the Atlanta crowd, which cheered loudly in response. "Oh wow. Oh my goodness. Thank you, thank you."

It was part of a final, frenzied push by Harris, Trump, their running mates and their high-profile stand-ins to encourage people to vote early or in person on Tuesday, Election Day.

Harris' campaign hoped for a "high-impact" moment with a two-minute spot to air Sunday during NFL games on CBS and FOX, including the Green Bay Packers against the Detroit Lions, two swing state teams. It shows Harris interacting with people during the campaign and talking directly to viewers.

"Now I'm asking for your vote because as president I will get up every day and fight for the American people," she says at the end.

Harris Campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon projected confidence Saturday on a conference call with reporters as both sides embarked on that final sprint to get out the vote. "If you can hear the joy in my voice it is because we are in GOTV weekend," she said.

Trump, meanwhile, spoke wistfully, as he has at some of his recent rallies, about how after nearly a decade of campaigning, his final race is nearing its end.

"We're going to meet again many times I hope," the former president said in the first of two North Carolina rallies. "This has been the thrill of a lifetime for me and for you."

At the second rally, in Greensboro, he said he'll do two more days of rallies "and then we shut it down, never to happen again." He said he'll then have "a different form of rally — a rally for our country."

Later, he laughed along with a sexist joke about Harris. As Trump repeated his claim, without evidence,

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that Harris lied about working at McDonalds in her youth, someone in the crowd yelled, "she worked on the corner." Trump laughed, looked around and pointed toward a section of the crowd.

"This place is amazing," he said to cheers. "Just remember, it's other people saying it. It's not me."

Planes carrying Harris and Trump met on the tarmac in Charlotte, North Carolina, where the vice president ended her campaign day.

She was joined there by actress Kerry Washington and rocker Jon Bon Jovi, who played a newer song "The People's House" that he said he wrote shortly after the January 6, 2021, storming of the U.S. Capitol by pro-Trump insurrectionists.

"We still have work to do," Harris told her Atlanta rally, adding, "Make no mistake, we will win."

She also called her campaign and supporters "the promise of America."

President Joe Biden, who dropped out of the race this summer when it became clear he could not win, was doing his part for the Democrats by making what could be his final 2024 campaign stop. Biden, who turns 82 this month, struck a nostalgic tone as he tried to help get out the vote for Harris and running mate Tim Walz during an event at the carpenters' local in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

And, as he's done frequently lately, Biden also went off script to offer some especially blunt statements. After slamming Trump and his supporters on policy issues, the president added, "I know some of you guys are tempted to think he's this macho guy ... but, I'm serious, these are the kind of guys you'd like to smack in the ass."

Walz joined actress Eva Longoria at a get-out-the-vote event in Las Vegas before the Minnesota governor's events in Flagstaff and Tucson, Arizona. GOP vice presidential nominee JD Vance was also in Arizona and Nevada. First lady Jill Biden was campaigning in Georgia and Hillary Clinton was appearing for Harris in Tampa, Florida.

Walz visited a few homes in the Las Vegas suburbs. He and Democratic Rep. Dina Titus spoke with a couple who were excited to see both politicians — and were hopeful.

"We're gonna win," Walz said. "These last days matter and it will be on the margins."

Elsewhere, other voters sounded notes of cautious optimism about the election outcome.

Marzella and Darrell Pittman said they canceled weekend plans after learning that Harris would be in Atlanta and drove four hours from Alabama to attend.

Marzella thinks Harris will win, but Darrell is nervous because many of the young Black men in his life support Trump and are hesitant to vote for a woman for president.

"It's tight, and the other side, they got a lot of our people believing in that side, just like we believe in Kamala," he said.

Until the election, "we have nothing but voting on our mind and we're talking to everybody," Marzella Pittman said.

Trump supporters were equally passionate about their candidate.

"Mr. Trump came in a garbage truck. I came in a garbage bag," said Elmer Baber, who lives in Gastonia, North Carolina and attended Trump's rally. It was a reference to Trump riding in a garbage truck after Biden said Trump's supporters were "garbage." Biden later said he was talking about rhetoric from a speaker at Trump's recent event at Madison Square Garden.

## Trump will rally backers every day until the election in North Carolina, a swing state he won twice

By GARY ROBERTSON and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

GASTONIA, N.C. (AP) — Donald Trump will rally supporters in North Carolina every day until Tuesday's election, a flurry of late activity in the only swing state that he won in both his 2016 and 2020 campaigns.

Even as Trump looks to expand the electoral map and project strength with trips to New Mexico and Virginia, two Democratic states not widely viewed as competitive, he is putting considerable time into North Carolina, which last backed a Democrat for president in 2008.

The former president's path to the 270 electoral votes needed to capture the presidency gets significantly



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more complicated if he loses North Carolina. The fast-growing Southern state gave Trump his smallest margin of victory — 1.3 percentage points — over Democrat Joe Biden four years ago.

Trump campaigned in Gastonia, west of Charlotte, and Greensboro on Saturday, with a stop in Salem, Virginia, in between. He will be in the eastern city of Kinston on Sunday and in Raleigh on Monday. Those four rallies will bring his total events in North Carolina since Oct. 1 to nine. His running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, has been in the state six times during the same period, most recently on Friday.

Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump's Democratic rival, also was in North Carolina on Saturday for a concert and rally in Charlotte. Her campaign has not announced any other travel to the state before Election Day, though she's sending her husband, second gentleman Doug Emhoff, to Greenville on Monday.

The extensive damage from Hurricane Helene across western North Carolina has created a dose of uncertainty about the state of play here. Flooding destroyed homes and displaced residents in several counties, including the liberal city of Asheville and the conservative rural areas surrounding it.

Trump's team has said it is confident about his chances in North Carolina. Democrats see Trump's attention on the state as a signal of optimism for Harris.

"The repeat appearances may signal Trump's campaign is in trouble," said Democratic state Rep. Marcia Morey of Durham. "If Trump continues with his dangerous, violent rhetoric these last few days, it may backfire. A campaign of personal retribution does not win votes from people."

Trump adviser Jason Miller said Trump's late-campaign travels are not a signal of alarm.

"I'm not worried about anything," Miller told reporters Friday. "We have a smart strategy that's going to get President Trump across 270, maybe even a couple of states that surprise you, that slide in there. But we're going to follow our strategy. Our strategy comes from our data and our targeting."

As he does at most of his events in North Carolina, Trump said in Gastonia that his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, whom he installed as co-chair of the Republican National Committee, is from the state, and that Lara and Eric Trump named their daughter Carolina.

"It's an amazing place. You've been through a lot," Trump said, alluding to the hurricane before repeating a debunked claim that the Federal Emergency Management Agency prioritized people living in the country illegally over hurricane victims. "Your government has not helped you too much, I can tell you. Your government, FEMA, has let you down because they wanted to spend the money on illegal migrants instead."

Later in Greensboro, only about half of the seats were filled in a massive 22,000-seat arena when Trump started speaking after 9 p.m. Trump spoke at another arena that's part of the same complex just 11 days earlier, though Harris filled the larger venue when she spoke there recently.

Roughly half of North Carolina's 7.8 million registered voters had already voted as of Friday, buoyed by early in-person voting, which ended on Saturday afternoon.

North Carolina Republicans have been encouraged by early voter turnout among their supporters after national and state GOP leaders switched this year to a "bank your vote" strategy, rather than focusing on Election Day turnout.

Entering the final days of the campaign, over 50,000 more GOP registered voters than Democrats had voted early or by absentee ballot, even though there are over 100,000 more registered Democrats than Republicans statewide, according to state elections data. It is unclear whether the Republicans' early vote surge will result in a higher overall turnout for Trump supporters.

Independent voters now make up the largest group of registered voters in North Carolina. Trump lost ground with independents between 2016 and 2020.

Harris took the stage in Charlotte after rocker Jon Bon Jovi warmed up the crowd, sticking closely to the speech she's been delivering in her final tour of the battleground states.

Harris supporter Gwen Garnett, 66, said Trump barnstorming North Carolina is "just part of the process. It does not worry me at all." She gave Harris' candidacy a spiritual dimension.

"This is an anointed time for her to be in this role," Garnett said. "I just believe it's God's timing."

The state's voters have shown a propensity to split their ticket over the years. That's why while Republicans have controlled the state legislature since 2011, Democrats have held the governor's mansion for

all but four years since 1993.

The GOP's hopes to break that hold on Tuesday appeared to dwindle in recent weeks after the party's nominee for governor, Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, received unwanted publicity from a CNN report that alleged he made explicit racial and sexual posts on a pornography website's message board more than a decade ago.

While Robinson denied writing the messages and sued CNN for defamation last month, his campaign nearly imploded, raising fears that a large victory by Democrat Josh Stein, the state's attorney general, could harm GOP candidates in other races.

## **Iran's supreme leader threatens Israel and US with 'a crushing response' over Israeli attack**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's supreme leader on Saturday threatened Israel and the U.S. with "a crushing response" over attacks on Iran and its allies.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei spoke as Iranian officials are increasingly threatening to launch yet another strike against Israel after its Oct. 26 attack on the Islamic Republic that targeted military bases and other locations and killed at least five people.

Any further attacks from either side could engulf the wider Middle East, already teetering over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon, into a wider regional conflict just ahead of the U.S. presidential election this Tuesday.

"The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei said in video released by Iranian state media.

The supreme leader did not elaborate on the timing of the threatened attack, nor the scope. The U.S. military operates on bases throughout the Middle East, with some troops now manning a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, battery in Israel.

The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier likely is in the Arabian Sea, while Pentagon press secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said Friday that more destroyers, fighter squadrons, tankers and B-52 long-range bombers would be coming to the region to deter Iran and its militant allies. Early Sunday, the U.S. military's Central Command said B-52s from Minot Air Force Base's 5th Bomb Wing arrived in the Middle East, without elaborating.

The 85-year-old Khamenei had struck a more cautious approach in earlier remarks, saying officials would weigh Iran's response and that Israel's attack "should not be exaggerated nor downplayed." Iran has launched two major direct attacks on Israel, in April and October.

But efforts by Iran to downplay the Israeli attack faltered as satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press showed damage to military bases near Tehran linked to the country's ballistic missile program, as well as at a Revolutionary Guard base used in satellite launches.

Iran's allies, called the "Axis of Resistance" by Tehran, also have been severely hurt by ongoing Israeli attacks, particularly Lebanon's Hezbollah and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Iran long has used those groups as both an asymmetrical way to attack Israel and as a shield against a direct assault. Some analysts believe those groups want Iran to do more to back them militarily.

Iran, however, has been dealing with its own problems at home, as its economy struggles under the weight of international sanctions and it has faced years of widespread, multiple protests. After Khamenei's speech, the Iranian rial fell to 691,500 against the dollar, near an all-time low. It had been 32,000 rials to the dollar when Tehran reached its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Gen. Mohammad Ali Naini, a spokesman for Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard which controls the ballistic missiles needed to target Israel, gave an interview published by the semiofficial Fars news agency just before Khamenei's remarks were released. In it, he warned Iran's response "will be wise, powerful and beyond the enemy's comprehension."

"The leaders of the Zionist regime should look out from the windows of their bedrooms and protect their criminal pilots within their small territory," he warned. Israeli air force pilots appear to have used air-launched ballistic missiles in the Oct. 26 attack.

Khamenei on Saturday met with university students to mark Students Day, which commemorates a Nov. 4, 1978, incident in which Iranian soldiers opened fire on students protesting the rule of the shah at Tehran University. The shooting killed and wounded several students and further escalated the tensions consuming Iran at the time that eventually led to the shah fleeing the country and the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The crowd offered a raucous welcome to Khamenei, chanting: "The blood in our veins is a gift to our leader!" Some also made a hand gesture — similar to a "timeout" signal — given by the slain Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in 2020 in a speech in which he threatened that American troops who arrived in the Mideast standing up would "return in coffins" horizontally.

Iran will mark the 45th anniversary of the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis this Sunday, following the Persian calendar. The Nov. 4, 1979, storming of the embassy by Islamist students led to the 444-day crisis, which cemented the decades-long enmity between Tehran and Washington that persists today.

## Nearly 200 families separated by US-Mexico border reunite briefly in annual event

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — Nearly 200 families gathered Saturday along a stretch of the U.S.-Mexico border for heartfelt but brief reunions with loved ones they had not seen for years because they live in opposite countries.

Tears flowed and people embraced as Mexican families were allowed to reunite for a few minutes at the border with relatives who migrated to the U.S. Adults and children passed over the Rio Grande to meet with their loved ones.

This year, the annual event organized by an immigrant rights advocacy group happened three days before the U.S. presidential election, whose monthlong campaigns have focused heavily on immigration and border security. It also took place under increased security, according to the Network in Defense of the Rights of Migrants.

"We did not have barbed wire, we did not have so many soldiers deployed in our community," said Fernando García, the organization's director, highlighting the border security changes that the border has seen since the reunions began last decade. "The barbed wire had to be opened so that the families could have this event."

García said he expects migration into the U.S. to continue regardless of who wins Tuesday's election. Family reunions, he said, will continue, too.

"Deportation policy, border policy, immigration policy, is separating families in an extraordinary way and is deeply impacting these families," he told reporters ahead of the event.

## Abortion rights at forefront of Women's March rallies in runup to Election Day

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of women rallied Saturday in the nation's capital and elsewhere in support of abortion rights and other feminist causes ahead of Tuesday's election.

Demonstrators carried posters and signs through city streets, chanting slogans such as "We won't go back." Some men joined with them. Speakers urged people to vote in the election — not only for president but also on down-ballot issues such as abortion-rights amendments that are going before voters in various states.

At the Women's March in Washington, feminist activist Fanny Gomez-Lugo read off a list of states with abortion ballot measures before leading the crowd in a chant of "Abortion is freedom!"

In Kansas City, Missouri, rally organizers urged people to sign up to knock on doors in a get-out-the-vote push for an abortion-rights measure.

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Abortion rights has passed inflation as the top issue in the presidential election for women under age 30 since Vice President Kamala Harris replaced President Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee against Republican former President Donald Trump, according to a survey of female voters by KFF.

Ballot initiatives have surged in response to the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that ended the nationwide right to abortion and shifted the issue to states.

Nine states will consider constitutional amendments that would enshrine abortion rights — Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada and South Dakota. Most would guarantee a right to abortion until fetal viability and allow it later if necessary for the health of the pregnant woman.

A proposed amendment in New York doesn't specifically mention abortion but would prohibit discrimination based on "pregnancy outcomes" and "reproductive healthcare and autonomy."

Some of Saturday's rally participants also advocated for LGBTQ+ rights, higher wages, paid sick leave and greater efforts against gun violence.

## At U.N. summit, historic agreement to give Indigenous groups voice on nature conservation decisions

By STEVEN GRATTAN Associated Press

CALI, Colombia (AP) — After two weeks of negotiations, delegates on Saturday agreed at the United Nations conference on biodiversity to establish a subsidiary body that will include Indigenous peoples in future decisions on nature conservation, a development that builds on a growing movement to recognize the role of the descendants of some regions' original inhabitants in protecting land and combating climate change.

The delegates also agreed to oblige major corporations to share the financial benefits of research when using natural genetic resources.

Indigenous delegations erupted into cheers and tears after the historic decision to create the subsidiary body was announced. It recognizes and protects the traditional knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples and local communities for the benefit of global and national biodiversity management, said Sushil Raj, Executive Director of the Rights and Communities Global Program at the Wildlife Conservation Society.

"It strengthens representation, coordination, inclusive decision making, and creates a space for dialogue with parties to the COP," Raj told The Associated Press, referring to the formal name of the gathering, Conference of Parties.

Negotiators had struggled to find common ground on some key issues in the final week but came to a consensus after talks went late into Friday.

The COP16 summit, hosted in Cali, Colombia, followed the historic 2022 accord in Montreal, which included 23 measures to save Earth's plant and animal life, including putting 30% of the planet and 30% of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030.

A measure to recognize the importance of the role of people of African descent in the protection of nature was also adopted in Cali.

The Indigenous body will be formed by two co-chairs elected by COP: one nominated by U.N. parties of the regional group, and the other nominated by representatives of Indigenous peoples and local communities, according to the final document, which was reviewed by the AP.

At least one of the co-chairs will be selected from a developing country, taking into account gender balance, the document said.

"With this decision, the value of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities is recognized, and a 26-year-old historical debt in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is settled," Susana Muhamad, Colombia's environment minister and COP16 president, posted on social media platform X shortly after the announcement.

Who owns nature's DNA was one of the most contentious and fiercely negotiated topics at the summit as tensions spiked between poorer and developed countries over digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI).

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However, negotiators consented on Saturday morning to bind big companies to share benefits when using resources from animals, plants or microorganisms in biotechnologies.

"Many of the life-saving medicines we use today come from the rainforest. It is therefore right that a portion of the income companies generate from this information goes back to protect nature," said Toerris Jaeger, executive director of Rainforest Foundation Norway. "This is the absolute highlight from COP16."

Delegations agreed on a genetic information fee of 0.1% of companies' revenues from products derived from such information. That money will be directed into a new fund, with 50% reaching Indigenous communities.

"This will enable these communities, including women and youth to finally share in the profits," said Ginette Hemley, senior vice president for wildlife at the World Wildlife Fund.

Also adopted was an agreement to protect human health from Earth's increasing biodiversity issues. Ecosystem degradation and loss of ecological integrity directly threaten human and animal health, environmental groups say.

Many argued that the overall conference fell short, in particular when it came to financial commitments.

Pledges made by countries during the two weeks were far short of the billions needed to tackle plummeting global biodiversity. Just \$163 million in new pledges were made at COP16.

"The pledges made ... were way off where they need to be," said Nicola Sorsby, a researcher at the International Institute for Environment and Development. "This is only 0.5% of the target we need to reach within the next 6 years."

The modest pledges don't bode well for the next U.N. climate talks, COP29, to take place in Azerbaijan beginning later this month. The focus of COP29 is expected to focus on how to generate trillions of dollars needed for the world to transition to clean energies like solar, wind and geothermal. Raising that money will require major commitments by nations, companies and philanthropies.

"Unfortunately, too many countries and U.N. officials came to Cali without the urgency and level of ambition needed to secure outcomes at COP16 to address our species' most urgent existential issue," said Brian O'Donnell, director of Campaign for Nature.

In Montreal's biodiversity summit, wealthy nations pledged to raise \$20 billion in annual conservation financing for developing nations by 2025, with that number rising to \$30 billion annually by 2030.

Global wildlife populations have plunged on average by 73% in 50 years, according to the World Wildlife Fund and the Zoological Society of London biennial Living Planet report in October.

## 'It is all in ruins.' The shattered lives of Paiporta at the epicenter of Spain's floods

By JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

PAIPORTA, Spain (AP) — The pictures of the smiling toddlers on the wall somehow survived.

Most everything else in the daycare — the cradles, the highchairs, the toys — was ruined when a crushing wall of water swept through Paiporta, turning the Valencia municipality of 30,000 into the likely epicenter of Spain's deadliest natural disaster in living memory.

"We have lost everything," Xavi Pons told The Associated Press. He said the water level was above his head inside what had been the daycare run by his wife's family for half a century, and he pointed to the knee-high mark where the mud reached.

"I have lived here all my life. This had never happened and nobody could have imagined it would," Pons said. "All of Paiporta is like this, it is all in ruins."

Authorities say at least 62 people died in Paiporta, of the 213 confirmed deaths from flash floods in Spain on Tuesday and Wednesday. The majority of those deaths happened in the eastern region of Valencia, and local media have labeled Paiporta the "ground zero" of the floods.

Four days have passed since the tsunami-like floods swept through the southern outskirts of Valencia city, covering many communities with sticky, thick mud. The clean-up task ahead remains gargantuan, and the hunt for bodies continues.

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Many streets in Paiporta remain impassable to all vehicles but bulldozers, stacked as they are with piles of sodden furniture and household items and countless wrecked cars.

Every foot is caked with mud. Some people wield poles to steady their step as if walking these streets is a hike through a marsh.

A washing machine rests on its side among household junk in a church square. An enormous tree trunk rests inside a store that is missing a wall. An antique chests of drawers, paintings and a teddy bear, all still identifiable among the unrecognizable flotsam trapped in the all-consuming mire.

Lidia Giménez, a school teacher, watched from her second-story apartment as the usually dry canal that divides the town — “Barranco del Poyo” — went from completely empty to overflowing within 15 minutes. She called the aftermath of the flood “a battlefield without bombs.”

And it happened without a drop of rain falling on Paiporta.

The storm had unleashed a downpour upstream. That deluge then hurled toward Paiporta and other areas closer to the Mediterranean coast that were devastated by the flash floods.

Paiporta’s residents received no flood warnings from the regional government on their cellphones until two hours after the dangerous waters rushed through.

The onslaught of water widened the river bank, tearing away buildings and a pedestrian bridge, stripping the metallic handrails from another bridge and pulling vehicles into the canal. Eight wheels are the only parts that remain visible of an overturned truck sunk in Poyo’s muddy bottom.

The destruction could take weeks to clean.

Thousands of volunteers walked for more than an hour from Valencia city to help the people of Paiporta, carrying buckets, brooms and shovels as they waded into the grime.

Home owner Rafa Rosellón was waiting for heavy equipment to arrive to remove two cars — one half-resting on top of the other — that were washed away by the deluge and landed outside his home, blocking the front door. He had to unscrew a metal grating and slip through a window to get inside and witness the mess.

“I can’t do anything until those cars are moved,” Rosellón said. “The government forces that could do something, either from the regional government or the national government, have not done anything to help us. It’s us, the citizens and volunteers, who are doing all the work.”

Some 2,000 soldiers are involved in post-flood emergency work — searching for survivors, helping clean up and distribute essential goods — as well as 1,800 national police officers and almost 2,500 Civil Guard gendarmes. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Saturday that they have rescued about 4,800 people and “helped more than 30,000 people in homes, on roads and in flooded industrial estates.”

Only a small contingent of soldiers was pushing mud in Paiporta on Saturday, when Sánchez promised another 5,000 soldiers and 5,000 police were on their way to eastern Spain.

Just a few doors down from where Rosellón lived, a woman sweeping muddy water from her door burst into tears when asked what she had lost.

“I can’t find my husband, so all this doesn’t matter,” she said.

Another turn revealed a chilling scene; a street filled with half a dozen cars and criss-crossed with countless reeds that before the flood had been growing nearby. A man screams from inside a house: “There’s nothing more I can do! There’s nothing more I can do!”

## Warren Buffett is sitting on over \$325 billion cash as Berkshire Hathaway keeps selling Apple stock

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Warren Buffett is now sitting on more than \$325 billion cash after continuing to unload billions of dollars worth of Apple and Bank of America shares this year and continuing to collect a steady stream of profits from all of Berkshire Hathaway’s assorted businesses without finding any major acquisitions.

Berkshire said it sold off about 100 million more Apple shares in the third quarter after halving its mas-

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sive investment in the iPhone maker last quarter. The remaining stake of roughly 300 million shares was valued at \$69.9 billion at the end of September remains Berkshire's biggest single investment, but it has been cut drastically since the end of last year when it was worth \$174.3 billion.

Investors will also be disappointed to learn that Berkshire didn't repurchase any of its own shares in the quarter.

CFRA Research analyst Cathy Seifert said shareholders will wonder why Buffett is continuing to accumulate so much cash. "Are they more pessimistic about the future economic and market picture than perhaps others are?" she said.

Buffett said at the annual meeting in May that part of why he started selling some of his Apple shares is that he expects tax rates to go higher in the future. But Edward Jones analyst Jim Shanahan said he wonders if part of the reason Buffett started selling Apple is tied to last year's death of Vice Chairman Charlie Munger because the sales started shortly after Munger's death. Shanahan said Buffett has never been as comfortable with technology businesses as his longtime partner was.

"If Charlie Munger were still alive, perhaps he wouldn't have sold down the position quite as aggressively — maybe at all," Shanahan said.

Berkshire said Saturday that investment gains again drove its third quarter profits skyward to \$26.25 billion, or \$18,272 per Class A share. A year ago, unrealized paper investment losses dragged the Omaha, Nebraska-based conglomerate's earnings down to a loss of \$12.77 billion, or \$8,824 per Class A share.

Buffett has long recommended that investors pay more attention to Berkshire's operating earnings if they want to get a good sense of how the businesses it owns are doing because those numbers exclude investments. Berkshire's bottom-line profit figures can vary widely from quarter to quarter along with the value of its investments regardless of whether the company bought or sold anything.

By that measure, Berkshire said its operating earnings were only down about 6% at \$10.09 billion, or \$7,023.01 per Class A share. That compares to last year's \$10.8 billion, or \$7,437.15 per Class A share.

The four analysts surveyed by FactSet Research predicted that Berkshire would report operating earnings of \$7,335.11 per Class A share.

Berkshire's revenue didn't change much at \$92.995 billion. A year ago, it reported \$93.21 billion revenue. That number was ahead of the \$92.231 billion revenue that three analysts surveyed by FactSet predicted.

Berkshire owns an assortment of insurance businesses, including Geico, along with BNSF railroad, several major utilities and a varied collection of retail and manufacturing businesses, including brands like Dairy Queen and See's Candy.

One of Berkshire's insurers, Guard, reported some additional losses on previous years after managers reassessed its policies.

Berkshire did resolve one mystery from the quarter by spelling out how much it paid to acquire the rest of the shares in its utility business from the estate of former Berkshire board member Walter Scott.

Berkshire said it paid \$2.4 billion cash, issued \$600 million in debt and gave the Scott family Class B Berkshire shares worth a little over \$1 billion. So the total compensation was about \$4 billion. That means the Scott family didn't get nearly as good of a price for their 8% stake in the utilities as when Berkshire Vice Chairman Greg Abel sold his 1% stake in the utility business two years ago for \$870 million.

Abel is slated to succeed the 94-year-old Buffett as CEO in the event of his death.

## It's a fight to the finish in races that will determine control of Congress

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The final doors are being knocked, ads are blaring and candidates are making a last pitch to voters. Even with the high-energy final push, the races for control of Congress are at a stalemate, essentially a toss-up for the House and fight to the finish for the Senate.

The outcome of Tuesday's election will shape the country's future, determining whether the new White House has allies or skeptics on Capitol Hill — or faces a divided Congress like this past session, which has

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been among the most tumultuous and unproductive in modern times.

As voters assess their presidential options between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris, they also are sizing up who will represent them in Congress.

"This is why I'm an independent," said voter Gary Motta of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, who isn't happy with either choice for president, as he showed up at an early Sunday morning event for Republican Kevin Coughlin, who is trying to unseat Democratic Rep. Emilia Sykes.

The struggle for control of Congress has gone on for months. Candidates have tussled over the big issues — the economy, the border, reproductive health care and the future of democracy — but also over Congress itself, which had a chaotic session as the GOP-led House ousted its speaker and barely fended off government shutdowns.

This is the first presidential election since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, and many Republican lawmakers who voted against certifying Democrat Joe Biden's White House win over Trump are up for reelection.

Republican candidates, many backed by the former president, are finding themselves having to answer for him on several fronts. Among them is the decision by the Supreme Court, with three justices who were nominated by Trump, that ended the right to abortion access.

Democrats face tough questions over the Biden-Harris record on the U.S.-Mexico border and on inflation during their time at the White House.

Most of the closely contested House campaigns are being waged beyond the presidential swing states, including in New York and California, where Republican Kevin McCarthy, who was ousted as speaker and then left Congress, had made inroads in his home state. Democrats under New York's Hakeem Jeffries, the party's House leader, are now trying to win them back.

Starting Saturday, California Rep. Pete Aguilar, the Democratic caucus chairman, is making a nine-stop swing through the Golden State to win back seats.

"There's a lot of energy out there," said Washington Rep. Suzan DelBene, who leads the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, in an interview from Omaha, Nebraska, a surprising battleground, after a swing through New York. "We're just working hard to get out the vote."

She said there are "tons of volunteers on the ground, lots of energy, people very, very focused. They understand there's a lot at stake."

With the ever-escalating world of campaign fundraising, this election year stands apart: A whopping \$2.5 billion is being spent to win the Senate and almost \$1 billion on the House.

The Senate is the Republicans' to lose, a coda to the long stewardship of their party leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. He recruited wealthy Republican candidates, many backed by Trump, to face off against a half-dozen incumbent Democrats facing tough reelections.

In Montana, Democratic Sen. Jon Tester is in one of the most competitive races in the country that could flip control to Republicans. But a half-dozen more Senate races including in the "blue wall" of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, are as tight as the presidential race in those states.

But late-breaking shifts are injecting new uncertainty in other Senate races, putting Sen. Ted Cruz on defense in Republican-heavy Texas where Democratic Rep. Colin Allred has seen a surge of energy, including from Harris' star-studded rally in Houston with hometown hero Beyoncé. Nebraska independent Dan Osborne has caught Republicans off guard in Nebraska as he tries to unseat GOP Sen. Deb Fischer.

Other Republican Senate candidates have stumbled.

In Ohio, Republican Bernie Moreno, who is facing Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown, made comments critical of suburban women making abortion access a priority issue. Republican Tim Sheehy made derogatory remarks about Native Americans, a key voting bloc in his race against Tester in Montana.

As Republicans have outsourced their get-out-the-vote efforts to new groups, including Elon Musk's America PAC, the campaign committees have had to stand up their own to ensure that people vote.

Davide Cuigini, part of the Young Republicans working to turn out the vote for Moreno last weekend in Ohio, said, "Republicans are finally early voting, so that's gong to make a difference."



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Yet the energy on the Democratic side grew quickly once Harris replaced Biden on the Democratic ticket over the summer.

Democrat Angela Alsobrooks in Maryland, who could make history alongside Delaware's Lisa Blunt Rochester as Black women in the Senate, hosted former President Barack Obama last week. Alsobrooks is running against Larry Hogan, a popular former governor.

In the House, Democrats have seen several races shift their way, according to nonpartisan analysts. But others, in Alaska and an open seat in Michigan, tilt toward Republicans. Two of the House's longest serving lawmakers are in the fights of their political lives in Ohio and California.

Still, an internal DCCC memo showed 21 of 25 contested seats still close, one week from the election.

There are also unusual battlegrounds, including what Nebraskans call the "blue dot" around Omaha, where Republican Rep. Don Bacon faces a challenge from Democrat Tony Vargas.

The outcome of the races will be a test of House leadership under Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La. He said at a recent stop near Akron, Ohio, that with the GOP's "winsome warriors" as candidates, he knows they will win.

Jeffries, in line to become House speaker if Democrats take control, said he has decided to "remain calm," even if the possibility of unexpected events keeps him up at night.

If the two chambers do in fact flip party control, as is possible, it would be rare.

Records show that if Democrats take the House and Republicans take the Senate, it would be the first time that the chambers of Congress have both flipped to opposing political parties.

"This election is a very big deal," said Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, campaigning for a fellow Democrat in one of his state's House races.

## **Israeli forces capture senior Hezbollah operative in north Lebanon, Israeli military official says**

By LUJAIN JO and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BATROUN, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli naval forces captured a senior Hezbollah operative in north Lebanon, an Israeli military official said Saturday, as the conflict between the Iran-backed group and Israel showed few signs of easing.

Earlier on Saturday, Lebanese authorities said it was investigating whether Israel was behind the capture of a Lebanese sea captain who was taken away by a group of armed men who had landed on the coast near the northern town of Batroun on Friday.

"The operative has been transferred to Israeli territory and is currently being investigated," the military official said, without providing the name of the person in detention.

The operation marks the first time Israel has announced it deployed troops deep into northern Lebanon to take a senior Hezbollah operative captive since the conflict between the two sides escalated in late September. Since then, Israeli forces began a ground invasion of southern Lebanon and intensified its airstrikes across the country, including southern Beirut and the eastern Bekaa valley, killing most of Hezbollah's senior commanders.

Hezbollah issued a statement describing what happened as a "Zionist aggression in the Batroun area." The statement did not give details or confirm whether a Hezbollah member was captured by Israel.

Two Lebanese military officials confirmed to The Associated Press that a naval force landed in Batroun, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) north of Beirut, and abducted a Lebanese citizen. Neither gave the man's identity or said whether he was thought to have links to Lebanon's Hezbollah group. They did not confirm whether the armed men were an Israeli force.

Three Lebanese judicial officials told AP the operation took place at dawn Friday, adding that the captain might have links with Hezbollah. The officials said an investigation is looking into whether the man is linked to Hezbollah or working for an Israeli spy agency and an Israeli force came to rescue him.

Both the military and judicial officials spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were unauthorized to share details about the incident or the ongoing investigation.

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Soon after Israel went public about the operation, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati called on Lebanon's foreign minister to file a complaint against Israel at the U.N. Security Council.

Israel has carried out in the past commando operations deep inside Lebanon to kidnap or kill Hezbollah and Palestinian officials.

Recounting the event, Lebanese residents from the apartment building where the man was seized said the armed group introduced themselves as state security.

"We were terrified. They were breaking into the apartment next to ours," Hussein Delbani told The Associated Press near where the man was captured. "I thought a state agency was doing a security operation," said Delbani, who was displaced from south Lebanon a month ago when the Israel-Hezbollah war erupted.

He said he saw from his balcony people down on the coast and they screamed again for him to go inside.

Hamie told Al-Jadeed the man was a captain of civilian ships. He graduated in 2022 and in late September joined the Batroun's Maritime Sciences and Technology Institute for additional courses. Hamie said that the man lived some 300 meters (980 feet) from the institute.

Hamie's remarks came shortly after two Lebanese journalists posted a video on social media showing what appeared to be about 20 armed men taking away a man from in front a house, his face covered with his shirt.

Kandice Ardiel, a spokesperson for the U.N. peacekeeping force deployed in south Lebanon, denied allegations by some local journalists who said that the peacekeepers helped the landing force in the operation. The U.N. mission, known as UNIFIL, has a maritime force that monitors the coast.

"Disinformation and false rumors are irresponsible and put peacekeepers at risk," Ardiel said.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, drones and missiles from Lebanon into Israel in solidarity with Hamas immediately after the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which triggered the war in Gaza. The yearlong cross-border fighting boiled over to full-blown war on Oct. 1, when Israeli forces launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon for the first time since 2006.

## Attack on central Israel injures 11 as Iran's leader promises a punishing response

By ADAM SCHRECK and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — An attack on a central Israeli town early Saturday injured 11 people as Iran's supreme leader vowed a punishing response to Israel's attack last week and Israeli airstrikes continued in Gaza and Lebanon.

The predawn strike on Tira was one of several barrages fired from Lebanon. Many of the projectiles were intercepted by Israeli air defenses as air raid sirens rang out in parts of the country throughout the day, while others landed in unpopulated areas.

The Magen David Adom emergency service said 11 people were hurt by shrapnel and glass shards in a direct strike on a building in Tira, a predominantly Israeli Arab town. Footage showed significant damage to the roof and top floor of the three-story building and cars below.

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group said Saturday that it had used missiles and explosive drones to target military and intelligence facilities in northern and central Israel.

It claimed responsibility for firing missiles toward the Israeli military's Unit 8200 base in Gilot, on the edge of Tel Aviv, and for firing rockets toward military facilities in Zvulun. Hezbollah also said it had targeted central Israel's Palmachim Air Base with explosive drones, saying they "scored precise hits on targets."

Israel's military did not confirm whether any of the three Hezbollah targets had been hit and said it had no comment on the group's claims.

Hezbollah said the Saturday dawn missile attack directed at Gilot was in retaliation for the "massacres" that are being committed by Israel. Tira, is about 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) from Gilot.

Tamar Abdel Hai, a resident of Tira, said that the attack was frightening. "I call upon all the leaders in the Arab world and the leaders in Israel and to everyone who can help to end this war. It's enough," he said.

Hezbollah also said that its fighters fired salvos of rockets into northern Israeli towns including Dalton,

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Yesud HaMa'ala and Bar Yohai.

Israeli media showed images of damage reportedly caused by a drone that hit a factory north of Nahariya. The army said several drones crossed from Lebanon into Israel, one was intercepted but "fallen targets were identified in the area."

Meanwhile, an Israeli airstrike on a southern suburb of Beirut on Saturday afternoon killed one person and wounded 15 others, the Lebanese Health Ministry said. Israeli planes resumed strikes on the southern suburb of Dahiyeh overnight Friday, following a four-day lull in the capital.

In a separate incident, a Lebanese ship captain was seized by armed men who landed on the coast of Batroun, north of Beirut, Lebanese authorities said.

The Israeli military later confirmed it had captured the man, which it described as a senior Hezbollah operative in north Lebanon. It did not name the detainee and said he was being investigated on Israeli territory.

Iran threatens more attacks

The early Saturday attacks may be only a precursor to a more severe strike against Israel.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, on Saturday threatened Israel and the U.S. with a punishing response over attacks on Iran and its allies following Israel's Oct. 26 airstrikes that targeted Iran's military bases and other locations.

"The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei said in a video released by Iranian state media.

A further attack by Iran, which has already launched two direct attacks against Israel this year, could push the wider Middle East closer to a broader conflict. Israel is already battling the Iran-backed militant group Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The fight against Hezbollah has weakened the group but has also taken a heavy toll on southern Lebanon and other parts of the country.

On Friday, Israel launched dozens of intense airstrikes across Lebanon's northeastern farming villages, killing at least 52 people and wounding scores more, the Lebanese Health Ministry reported.

Since the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in 2023, more than 2,897 people have been killed and 13,150 wounded in Lebanon, according to a Health Ministry update early Friday. United Nations agencies estimate that Israel's ground invasion and bombardment of Lebanon has displaced 1.4 million people.

Residents of Israel's northern communities near Lebanon, roughly 60,000 people, have also been displaced for more than a year.

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill at least 42 people in 24 hours

In recent weeks, Israel has also stepped up its offensive against Hamas' remaining fighters in Gaza, raising concerns about humanitarian conditions for civilians still there.

A series of Israeli strikes on Nuseirat, a refugee camp in central Gaza, killed at least 42 people, more than half of them women and children, in 24 hours, Dr. Marwan Abu Naser, director of Al-Awda Hospital that received the casualties, told The Associated Press. A further 150 were wounded, he said.

Later on Saturday, an Israeli airstrike on a street in the nearby Bureij refugee camp killed at least six people, medical officials said. The dead were taken to al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in the nearby city of Deir al-Balah and counted by AP journalists there.

Separately, the Israeli military said that two of its soldiers were killed in southern Gaza.

Egypt's state-owned Al-Qahera News TV reported Saturday that Hamas has rejected a partial cease-fire deal in Gaza fearing that Israel will resume its operations in the enclave even after hostages are released. The TV channel has close ties to the Egyptian intelligence service and Egypt has been a key mediator throughout the yearlong conflict.

Hours later, senior Hamas official Izzat al-Rishq criticized the temporary cease-fire proposal describing it as "just a smoke screen." Hamas has continually called for a complete end to the conflict and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza as a condition for any cease-fire deal with Israel.

Meanwhile, The World Health Organization began a scaled-down polio vaccination campaign on Saturday, giving second doses to at-risk children only in Gaza City after providing first doses in multiple parts of northern Gaza, which has seen intense Israeli bombardment.

Israel's war in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians since Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas militants killed roughly 1,200 people in Israel and took some 250 hostages back to Gaza. Health officials inside Hamas-run Gaza do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of the dead in the enclave are women and children.

## Ukraine's Zelenskyy urges allies to act before North Korean troops reach the front

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged its allies to stop "watching" and take steps before North Korean troops deployed in Russia reach the battlefield, and the country's army chief warned that his troops are facing "one of the most powerful offensives" by Moscow since the all-out war started more than two years ago.

Zelenskyy raised the prospect of a preemptive Ukrainian strike on camps where the North Korean troops are being trained and said Kyiv knows their location. But he said Ukraine can't do it without permission from allies to use Western-made long-range weapons to hit targets deep inside Russia.

"But instead ... America is watching, Britain is watching, Germany is watching. Everyone is just waiting for the North Korean military to start attacking Ukrainians as well," Zelenskyy said in a post late Friday on the Telegram messaging app.

The Biden administration said Thursday that some 8,000 North Korean soldiers are now in Russia's Kursk region near Ukraine's border and are preparing to help the Kremlin fight against Ukrainian troops in the coming days.

On Saturday, Ukraine's military intelligence said that more than 7,000 North Koreans equipped with Russian gear and weapons had been transported to areas near Ukraine. The agency, known by its acronym GUR, said that North Korean troops were being trained at five locations in Russia's Far East. It did not specify its source of information.

Western leaders have described the North Korean troop deployment as a significant escalation that could also jolt relations in the Indo-Pacific region, and open the door to technology transfers from Moscow to Pyongyang that could advance the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile program.

North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui met with her Russian counterpart in Moscow on Friday.

Ukrainian leaders have repeatedly said they need permission to use Western weapons to strike arms depots, airfields and military bases far from the border to motivate Russia to seek peace. In response, U.S. defense officials have argued that the missiles are limited in number, and that Ukraine is already using its own long-range drones to hit targets farther into Russia.

Moscow has also consistently signaled that it would view any such strikes as a major escalation. President Vladimir Putin warned on Sept. 12 that Russia would be "at war" with the U.S. and NATO states if they approve them.

Ukraine facing "one of most powerful" Russian offensives since war began

Zelenskyy's call came shortly before Ukraine's top commander, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy, said on Saturday that his troops are struggling to stem "one of the most powerful offensives" by Russia since its all-out invasion of its southern neighbor in February 2022.

Writing on Telegram following a call with a top Czech military official, Syrskiy hinted that Ukrainian units are taking heavy losses in the fighting, which he said "require constant renewal of resources."

While Syrskiy did not specify where the heavy fighting took place, Russia has for months been conducting a ferocious campaign along the eastern front in Ukraine, gradually compelling Kyiv to surrender ground. But Moscow has struggled to push Ukrainian forces out of its Kursk border region following an incursion almost three months ago.

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Dozens injured in Russian strikes on Ukraine

Russian missiles hit Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv overnight into Saturday, killing a policeman and injuring dozens, local Gov. Oleh Syniehubov reported. According to Syniehubov and Ukraine's national police force, one missile slammed into a spot where a large group of police were gathered, killing a 40-year-old serviceman and injuring 36 more.

In Ukraine's southern Kherson province, Russian shelling on Saturday killed a 40-year-old woman and wounded three others, including two children, local Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin reported. Another Kherson resident was wounded in a drone attack later that day, according to local Ukrainian authorities.

Five more civilians, including two children, were injured after Russia struck Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region, Gov. Serhii Lysak said.

In Kyiv, air raid sirens wailed for over five hours early Saturday morning as Russian drones rained on the capital, sparking a fire in an office block downtown and injuring two people, according to the city's military administration.

Overall, Russian forces overnight attacked Ukraine with over 70 Iranian-made Shahed drones, the Ukrainian air force reported Saturday. It said most were shot down or sent off-course using GPS jamming. Falling debris damaged power networks and residential buildings in multiple provinces and injured an elderly woman near Kyiv, officials said.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry hinted that Russia's drone campaign was slowing down, saying Moscow launched just over half as many in October as the month before.

Meanwhile, Russia's defense ministry reported that its forces overnight shot down 24 Ukrainian drones over four Russian regions and occupied Crimea. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

In a separate development, four civilians were injured following a Ukrainian strike in Russia's southern Kursk region, its Gov. Aleksei Smirnov said, without specifying what weapon was used. Moscow is still trying to dislodge Ukrainian forces from the province, months after they staged a bold assault that rattled the Kremlin and constituted the largest attack on Russia since World War II.

## The man who took in orphaned Peanut the squirrel says it's 'surreal' officials euthanized his pet

By JULIE WALKER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man who took in an orphaned squirrel and made it a social media star vowed Saturday that New York state's decision to seize and euthanize the animal "won't go unheard."

"We will make a stance on how this government and New York state utilizes their resources," Mark Longo said in a phone interview.

He declined to specify his possible next steps but said officials would hear from him soon about what happened to Peanut the squirrel and Fred, a rescued raccoon that was also confiscated and put down.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation took the animals Wednesday from Longo's home and animal sanctuary in rural Pine City, near the Pennsylvania border. The agency said it had gotten complaints that wildlife was being kept illegally and potentially unsafely.

State law requires people to get a license if they wish to own a wild animal. Longo has said he was working to get Peanut — also known as P'Nut or PNUT — certified as an educational animal.

The DEC and the Chemung County Health Department said Friday that the squirrel and raccoon were euthanized so they could be tested for rabies after Peanut bit someone involved in the investigation.

Longo said Saturday that he didn't see Peanut bite anyone during what he described as an hourslong, heavy-handed search. The authorities haven't spoken with him since they left the property, he said.

"Honestly, this still kind of feels surreal, that the state that I live in actually targeted me and took two of the most beloved animals on this planet away, didn't even quarantine them. They took them from my house and just killed them," he said.

A request for comment was sent to the DEC on Saturday.

Longo said he started caring for Peanut after the animal's mother was hit by a car in New York City seven

years ago. Tens of thousands of users of Instagram, TikTok and other social media platforms glimpsed the animal sporting tiny hats, doing tricks and nibbling on waffles clutched in his little paws.

Longo said Fred the raccoon was dropped off on his doorstep a few months ago. After helping the animal recover from injuries, Longo said, he and his wife were planning to release the creature into the woods.

## Local sheriff asks FBI to investigate death of Black man found hanging in Alabama

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press/Report for America

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — The FBI is investigating the death of a Black man in Alabama, who was found hanging in an abandoned house, following a request from a local sheriff amid fears among community members who accuse local law enforcement of longstanding, unchecked misconduct.

Sheriff's deputies found Dennoniss Richardson, 39, in September in a rural part of Colbert County, miles away from his home in Sheffield, a city of approximately 10,000 people near the Tennessee River.

The Colbert County Sheriff's Office ruled Richardson's death a suicide. But Richardson's wife, Leigh Richardson, has said that is not true, explaining her husband did not leave a note and had no connection to the house where he was found.

Instead, the 40-year-old fears her husband's death was related to a lawsuit he filed against the local police department in February. Dennoniss Richardson, who coached kids in baseball and football, had alleged he was assaulted, denied medical attention, sprayed with tear gas and shocked with a Taser while in jail.

Leigh Richardson said she is not accusing a specific person but is adamant her husband didn't kill himself. She is not alone in her belief. Widespread skepticism about Richardson's death underscores deep-seated distrust of local law enforcement in Colbert County. In a region where hanging invokes a long history of state-sanctioned lynchings for Black people, residents in the county allege a pattern of excessive force among local law enforcement.

Sheriff Eric Balentine, who confirmed the FBI accepted his request to investigate, said his department "exhausted all resources" in its investigation.

"We feel confident in what our findings were, but we feel like by doing this we can give the family more peace of mind," Balentine said.

A spokesperson for the FBI's field office in Birmingham confirmed the FBI is aware of Dennoniss Richardson's death and is reviewing the allegations of criminal misconduct.

Tori Bailey, the president of the local NAACP chapter and the only Black member of the six-person county commission in Colbert County, said the community's reaction to Richardson's death was partially informed by the region's harrowing history with lynchings.

In Alabama, there were 359 reported lynchings between 1877 and 1943, according to the Equal Justice Initiative, a criminal justice reform nonprofit. In Colbert County alone, there were 11.

Bailey said, although there may be nothing to these accusations, it makes sense the community would have a "visceral" reaction to a Black man hanging and want a more thorough investigation. She said while some officers are trying to do the right thing, in her 12 years as NAACP president she has documented and investigated many cases of excessive force in the county.

"There has long been a kind of disconnect between communities of color and law enforcement. Unfortunately, many of us do not feel that law enforcement is actually there to serve and protect," Bailey said.

Marvin Long, a 57-year-old Black man and lifelong Colbert County resident, knew Dennoniss Richardson's family well growing up. He shares the skepticism about the suicide ruling and said Richardson's death has intensified his fear of retaliation.

"To this day I hate seeing a police car," Long said. "I'm still more afraid now than ever."

Long sued the Sheffield Police department last year. After he inquired about an unrelated arrest taking place just outside his property in 2021, body camera footage appears to show officers following Long to his house, dragging him down his porch steps and siccing the police K9 on him as he screams for help.

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Long was unarmed, according to the complaint.

Richardson and Long are among five Black and Latino men represented by civil rights attorney Roderick Van Daniel who have filed lawsuits against the department in recent years.

"Citizens are living in fear of retaliation," Van Daniel said.

In one case, an off-duty Sheffield police officer was caught on surveillance footage punching and pulling a gun on a Black man at a liquor store. The officer was later convicted of assault and menacing and reckless endangerment. He was fired from the department.

In a separate lawsuit, a 57-year-old chiropractor claims he was shocked with a Taser 18 times while in handcuffs after he asked an officer to help him find his wife's iPhone. Photos included in the suit show several large burn marks allegedly from the assault.

The Sheffield Police Department did not respond to numerous phone calls and emails seeking comment. Lawyers for the officers named in pending lawsuits did not respond to emails.

Balentine, the sheriff since 2023, declined to comment on specific cases. But he said that based on his almost 30 years as an officer in the area, he thought residents in Colbert County generally trusted law enforcement.

"If it's proven that it was excessive, then I'm sure that there will be accountability," he said.

Still, Balentine said he hoped the FBI investigation would help assuage concerns.

"Transparency is always a good way to mend some fences with the community," he said.

Leigh Richardson had known her husband since he was 17. She remembers Dennoniss, known affectionately as "Na-Na," as a warm father to their five children. But she also said his fear of the police was not new.

"He was scared at that young age," Richardson said.

Richardson said that after filing the lawsuit her husband was frequently stopped by police. In those months, he was "trying to stay out of the way," she said.

Sheffield Mayor Steve Stanley said Dennoniss Richardson had come to his office at least once to express concerns that he was being profiled. Stanley said he assured Richardson that any officers reported through official channels would be investigated.

The Sheffield Police Department did not confirm whether or how frequently the department pulled over Richardson.

Court records show Dennoniss Richardson had a long history of run-ins with local law enforcement, but the majority of the charges in federal and state courts did not stick.

Dennoniss Richardson pleaded guilty to drug possession in 2006 and was sentenced to five years in prison. In more than 15 years since then, court records show Richardson was arrested at least six additional times by the Sheffield Police Department, for charges ranging from disorderly conduct to robbery to assault.

None of those charges, except for a traffic violation for expired tags, resulted in a conviction, according to available court records.

In the same week that Richardson filed his lawsuit against the department, he was charged with trafficking meth. He had been arrested in a house where drugs allegedly were found. Richardson was out on bond when he died.

Stanley said he firmly supports holding officers accountable for misconduct but emphasized his overwhelming confidence in them.

"I have preached and believe that the majority of officers, at least, recognize that everybody deserves respect," Stanley said.

Still, amid the looming investigation, uncertainty in the community prevails.

In early October, Richardson's friends and family filled the pews of the small Trinity Memorial Funeral Home to commemorate his life. The singing and sermons were punctuated by calls for justice.

At the pulpit, Van Daniel, Richardson's attorney, said Richardson "believed in transparency and accountability. He stood up against police misconduct."

There was a steady chorus of "amens" from the crowd as Van Daniel spoke.

"His family and the Sheffield community deserve answers," he said. "We deserve answers."

## Listen to business owners and voters in Erie, Pennsylvania. They could help decide the White House.

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

ERIE, Pa. (AP) — It wasn't much when he bought it, but Michael Hooks has made the old garage his own haven. And the city of Erie knows it. Half a dozen cars honk as they pass by one October afternoon, the people hanging out of car windows to wave hello at him.

About a dozen cars await servicing in the shop as a dog Hooks adopted the day before barks in its new cage. Exercise equipment, motorcycles and power tools about the kitchen on the side of the renovated building where his wife cooks a meal. At 6 feet, 2 inches, and with a sturdy build, Hooks has a graying beard and a head of curls he says could be laced with snow flurries by this time of year.

"I've got to be one of the only Black businesses on this street," he says, noting that his repair shop stands on Peach Street, one of the city's main traffic arteries. He appreciates the greetings from passersby. But he says many people who know him from the neighborhoods where he grew up will never step foot in the shop. Almost all his customers are white.

Hooks, 58, is a member of a coveted demographic in this year's election — a Black man and a business owner in a swing state. Both presidential campaigns have targeted Black entrepreneurs with their messaging, offering a range of economic policies and legislation that each side says will boost the careers and lives of African Americans.

How Erie business owners and voters such as Hooks view each candidate's economic vision could determine control of the White House. Erie County has gone for the candidate who won Pennsylvania in every presidential election since 1992. Both Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris have visited the city of 94,000 in recent weeks.

"Erie is a pivot point," said Rhonda Matthews, co-founder of Erie Black Wall Street, a business group that supports local Black entrepreneurs. From population rates to business startups, the future of Erie's economy and politics have shown where the country may be heading. "I think if you want to know about what's happening economically writ large in the country, you can look and see what's happening in Erie."

Concerns about 'a lack of predictability'

Harris has rolled out a series of economic proposals meant to tackle affordability and boost small businesses. Trump has stressed his promise of sweeping tariffs, new corporate tax cuts and an unprecedented crackdown on illegal and legal immigration to the country.

Local leaders are weighing the impact of each agenda on their plans to renew the Rust Belt.

"A lack of predictability would be the worst possible thing," said Drew Whiting, CEO of the Erie Downtown Development Corporation, which is directing more than \$100 million in private investment to the downtown area.

Whiting praised federal policies such as Qualified Opportunity Zones, which are meant to spur economic development in low-income communities and were created as part of the Trump administration's 2017 tax overhaul, as well as the investments in Erie enabled by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law spearheaded by Democratic President Joe Biden.

But Whiting added that "broad brush" policies such as Trump's proposed 20% tariffs on all foreign goods threatened to be "an inflation bomb that would crush small businesses" like those he works with. Whiting viewed Harris' proposed investments for small businesses to be a potential boon. A no tax on tips policy, which both Harris and Trump favor, would be a welcome innovation for workers, he said.

The Harris campaign has zeroed in on affordability as a key concern of voters amid rising inflation. Her proposals to punish companies that gouge prices and her promises to expand support for health care and child care are issues where the campaign believes they can lower costs for working families. Trump, by contrast, would lower the corporate tax rate to 15%, extend his tax cuts and further cut other individual and family taxes, including by eliminating taxes on Social Security.

Most mainstream economists agree that Trump's proposals would worsen inflation.

Local business owners who spoke with The Associated Press expressed cautious optimism about Harris'



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proposals to support small businesses, though most were largely skeptical about the impact that federal policy could have on their lives.

"There's just so many factors, things to consider from right here and global factors," said Gus Paliouras, owner of New York Lunch, a local diner. Paliouras' family immigrated to the United States from Greece and bought the diner in 1970, when it was one of dozens of bustling businesses on top of a post office, school and church. Now Paliouras' diner is the only storefront left on the block.

"I try to keep it like Geneva in here," he said, referring to the city in famously neutral Switzerland. "In this town, we could have Trump, Kamala and Kennedy supporters sitting right next to each other at the bar." Independent Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was in the race until August, when he suspended his campaign and endorsed Trump.

One business owner sees his city's divisions

Hooks considers himself a survivor.

Born and raised in Erie, Hooks grew up in poverty and with few options, support or direction for his life. At 23, he was sentenced to 30 years for dealing marijuana. He served eight years in prison, an experience he described as "the best thing that ever happened to me."

Prison was the first place Hooks was exposed to scripture — the Bible and Quran — as well as stories about travel, business and history.

While he has transformed his circumstances and overcome "trials and tribulations that made me a better man," he finds the distinctions that some draw between poor, working and middle-class people to be meaningless.

"It's because we have people in this country that want to be better than someone else," he said in a recent interview. "You drive a Toyota Camry, I drive the Lexus. It's the same ... car. It's just a different name, but it's a higher status."

"For example, (Harris) says she wants to give us a \$50,000 tax break or whatever," he added, referring to the vice president's proposed tax credit for new small businesses. "But that could never come into fruition with people that think they better than somebody, but you live next door to me, and your sign says Trump."

In addition to his car care company, Hooks now runs a food catering business. On the weekends he goes back to the neighborhoods where he grew up to feed, clothe and cut hair for kids for free. His charity efforts are focused on making sure children never have the experiences he once faced.

Hooks is skeptical of the ability of politicians to change fundamental problems facing everyday Americans, but says he'll be voting for Harris.

"Trump had the opportunity to be great," Hooks said, but called Trump's first term a "disaster." Hooks said he preferred "going with someone who may at least try and help the little guy."

## Debate over abortion rights leads to expensive campaigns for high-stakes state Supreme Court seats

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Abortion and reproductive rights have been central to the races for president and governor in North Carolina, a battleground state that has more moderate abortion restrictions than elsewhere across the South.

That's been even truer in the fight for a seat on the state Supreme Court that abortion rights supporters say will play an important role in determining whether Republicans can enact even more restrictions. Registered Republicans currently hold five of seven seats and could expand that majority even further in Tuesday's election.

Justice Allison Riggs, a Democrat who is running for reelection, is focusing heavily on the issue and touts her support for reproductive rights. Her first television ad featured images of Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, the Republican nominee for governor, who prefers to restrict abortions earlier than the current 12 weeks. She says her GOP rival for the court could be a deciding vote on the bench for such restrictions.

"This is an issue that is landing in front of state Supreme Courts, and it is one that is very salient to

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voters now," Riggs said in an interview.

Her Republican opponent, Court of Appeals Judge Jefferson Griffin, said Riggs is saying too much about an issue that could come before the court.

"I think it's an inappropriate manner, a clear violation of our judicial standards, our code of conduct," he said.

The North Carolina race emphasizes how much abortion is fueling expensive campaigns for Supreme Courts in several states this year. Groups on the right and left are spending heavily to reshape courts that could play deciding roles in legal fights over abortion, reproductive rights, voting rights, redistricting and other hot-button issues for years to come.

Experts say the campaigns show how the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision overturning constitutional abortion protections that had been in place for half a century has transformed races for state high courts.

"What Dobbs did was made clear to both political stakeholders and the public that these state courts that hadn't got a lot of attention are actually going to be really important and they're going to be deciding some of the biggest cases that people might have expected to go to the U.S. Supreme Court," said Douglas Keith, senior counsel in the judiciary program at the Brennan Center, which has tracked spending on state court races.

Thirty-three states are holding elections for 82 Supreme Court seats this year. The 2024 election cycle follows record-breaking spending for judicial races in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania last year.

Groups on the left have ramped up their spending on state courts considerably this year. The American Civil Liberties Union has spent \$5.4 million on court races in Montana, Michigan, North Carolina and Ohio. Planned Parenthood and the National Democratic Redistricting Committee earlier this year announced they were collectively spending \$5 million, focusing on court races in Arizona, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas.

"We have never invested this heavily in state Supreme Courts before," said Katie Rodihan, spokesperson for Planned Parenthood Votes. "This is really a groundbreaking move for us, and I expect this will be the norm for us moving forward."

The targets include Ohio, where Republicans hold a 4-3 majority on the court. Democrats are defending two seats on the court, while a third is open, and Democratic victories in all three races are considered a longshot in the Republican-leaning state.

Control of the court could be key if the state appeals a judge's ruling that struck down the most far-reaching of the state's abortion restrictions. The ruling said the law banning most abortions once cardiac activity is detected — as early as six weeks into pregnancy and before many women know they're pregnant — violated a constitutional amendment approved by voters last year that protected reproductive rights.

Two seats are up for election on Michigan's court, where Democratic-backed justices hold a 4-3 majority. Court races are technically nonpartisan, but candidates are nominated at party conventions. Republicans would need to win both seats to flip the court in their favor.

Justice Kyra Harris Bolden is defending the seat she was appointed to two years ago by Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Bolden was the first Black woman to sit on Michigan's bench. She faces Republican-backed circuit court Judge Patrick O'Grady for the remaining four years of the eight-year term.

Republican state Rep. Andrew Fink is competing against University of Michigan law professor Kimberly Anne Thomas, who was nominated by Democrats, for the other open seat that is being vacated by a Republican-backed justice.

Michigan voters already have locked abortion rights in the state constitution, though groups backing Bolden and Thomas are framing the races as crucial to defending those rights, with one group's ad warning that "the Michigan state Supreme Court can still take abortion rights away."

The most heated races are for two seats on the Montana Supreme Court, which has come under fire from GOP lawmakers over rulings against laws that would have restricted abortion access or made it more difficult to vote.

Former U.S. Magistrate Judge Jerry Lynch is running against county attorney Cory Swanson for chief justice, while state judge Katherine Bidegaray is running against state judge Dan Wilson for another open

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seat on the court.

Progressive groups have been backing Lynch and Bidegaray. Both said in an ACLU questionnaire that they agreed with the reasoning and holding of a 1999 state Supreme Court ruling that the constitutional right to privacy includes the right to obtain a pre-viability abortion.

Groups on the right have been painting them both as too liberal and echoing national Republicans' rhetoric, with text messages invoking the debate over transgender athletes on women's sports teams.

The Republican State Leadership Committee, a longtime player in state court races, said its Judicial Fairness Initiative planned to spend seven figures in Arizona, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas.

The group's ads are focusing on issues other than abortion. In one touting three Republicans running for Ohio's court, the group shows images of President Donald Trump along with images related to immigration.

A super PAC backed by conservative donor and shipping executive Richard Uihlein also has given to groups involved in state Supreme Court races in Montana and Ohio.

Progressive groups are even focusing attention on longshot states such as Texas, where Republicans hold all the seats on the Supreme Court. They're trying to unseat three GOP justices who were part of unanimous rulings rejecting challenges to the state's abortion ban.

One group, Find Out PAC, has been running digital ads in San Antonio, Dallas and Houston criticizing justices Jimmy Blacklock, John Devine and Jane Bland. In its ad, the group accuses the three of "playing doctor from the bench."

In North Carolina, Riggs' campaigning on abortion rights has prompted complaints from Republicans who say she's stepping outside the bounds of judicial ethics. But Riggs said she's not saying how she would rule in any case and is merely sharing her values with voters.

"I'm going to keep talking about my values because, at the core, our democracy works best when people cast informed votes," she said.

## As Mexicans celebrate Day of the Dead, they grapple with what it means to hold on to tradition

By MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — It's midnight on the fringes of Mexico City, and the San Gregorio Pantheon is not just alive, it's booming.

The roar of mariachis echoes over families adorning the graves of lost loved ones with rows of candles, orange cempasúchil flowers and their favorite treats ranging from pan de muerto to bottles of Coca-Cola.

Every year this time Mexico erupts in celebrations during the Day of the Dead. Families gather at cemeteries across the country on Nov. 1 to reconnect with their dead just as their ancestors have done for centuries.

For many more in small communities like this, it's also about preserving the core of their traditions as celebrations in places in bigger hubs have increasingly been marked by mass tourism.

"We're conserving our tradition, part of our heritage that my mother instilled in me," said 58-year-old Antonio Meléndez. "We can't let it be lost."

Meléndez was among throngs of people gathered in the cemetery, tucked away in the maze of canals and brick buildings in Xochimilco, a borough in south of Mexico City that has long carried on traditions that have faded away in other parts of the country.

He gathered with his two daughters around the grave of his mother, marked by orange flower petals spread out in the shape of a cross and bouquets of pink flowers, his mother's favorite color.

Meléndez said she died last year, and the loss was still fresh, so he was trying to remember her by continuing with the same rituals he watched her carry out growing up, this time with his daughters. He has started preparing for the celebration four days before, making tamales from scratch and building a small altar for her in their home.

Day of the Dead dates back centuries to ancient Indigenous civilizations, which would organize parties

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when someone died to guide them on to the next life, and lay out food in altars to nourish them on their journeys, according to the Mexican government.

"In this celebration of the Day of the Dead, death does not represent an absence but a living presence; death is a symbol of life that materializes in the altar offered," it writes.

When Spanish colonizers arrived and began forcing Catholicism upon Indigenous communities, they would mix Indigenous traditions with Catholic holidays. Celebrations of the dead then synced up with All Saints Day, on Nov. 1, ending on Nov 2.

While celebrations begin ramping up at the end of October, Mexican tradition says that on that night their deceased are closest to the living world, and people hope to keep them company. Though each family celebrates in different ways.

In San Gregorio Pantheon, elderly women carry massive bundles of orange flowers, the iconic flower of death. Some families sob into each other's arms. Others sit alone next to loved one's graves in silence. Many more drink mezcal and tell stories of their family members.

Gathered with her daughter and granddaughter, 60-year-old Beatriz Chávez kneels at the graves of her son, nephew and father, quietly lighting candles.

"It's like being with them one more year, feeling like even if they don't see them, we feel like we're closer to them," Chávez said, noting that she planned to sleep in the graveyard, just like she did every year since her father died when she was 10.

Over the years, the tradition has been the focus of the Disney film *Coco*. A Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City was also featured in a James Bond film, despite such a parade not actually existing in real life. Annual celebrations later adopted the idea of the parade from the movie.

Now, people from all over the world have flocked to the Latin American nation, eager to experience the rich tradition for themselves.

But once quaint celebrations in hubs for the Day of the Dead like Mexico City, Oaxaca and Michoacan have started to brim with tourists, who snap photos of mourners. In recent years, many Mexicans have also begun to mix the celebration with Halloween and other new traditions like the James Bond parade have popped up.

Some like Meléndez have prickled at the shifts.

"Here, Halloween isn't ours, it's Day of the Dead," he said. "It's sad because it's getting distorted. We're losing the essence of who we are. This is a part of us, our roots."

For Meléndez, it adds an extra level of importance to the celebration in their small cemetery, which he and others say has stayed true to the centuries-old traditions.

It coincides with a larger conversation playing out across Mexico amid an influx of American "expats" and tourists. As more move to or travel to Mexico City, rents have gotten so high that many Mexicans have been pushed out of areas they've lived in for much of their lives, leaving frustration simmering in much of the city.

Those who wander the graves and sell flowers and food in the streets, see the changes less as a loss of tradition, and more as an evolution – a way for younger generations to continue passing on their heritage in their own ways, and share it with new audiences.

That was the case for mourner Chavez, who celebrated with her daughter and granddaughter. They were using the lights of their iPhones to help her grandmother lay out flowers.

"It's beautiful because we're talking about other places being interested in our culture. And I think showcasing all our love for our dead, and the celebration of death is important – important that they know of our roots, our traditions, generation to generation," said her daughter, 36-year-old Ana Laura Anell Chávez.

## How to choose the best personal trainer for your fitness goals — and budget

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

Irv Rubenstein holds a doctorate in exercise science and has run a personal fitness training studio for 35 years in Nashville, Tennessee. Obviously, he speaks positively about the benefits of using a personal trainer, and this goes for grizzled-gym goers as well as beginners.

"Most anybody can teach you how to do a bicep curl," Rubenstein said in an interview with The Associated Press. "But only a few people can tell you how to do it if your shoulder's hurting."

It can be a maze finding the trainer who is best for you, Rubenstein acknowledged.

How much should credentials and education matter, or are personality and motivational skills more important? What about the cost? And how frequently should you use a personal trainer? These are just a few of the questions anyone who is searching for a trainer should ask.

"How do you discern who is best?" Rubenstein asked. "That which works best for you is the best. But finding that is the challenge."

### Education and credentials

In the United States — and in many other countries — there is no national or local government body that licenses trainers. Certification is typically issued by private entities, some more respected than others and many are in the business of generating income more than credibility.

The American College of Sports Medicine is the best known in the United States. In Canada, it's the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine.

"You probably should ask if the person is certified," said Rubenstein, who runs STEPS Fitness. "I think that's valuable, but I don't think it's essential. And you should ask about academic training."

He also issued a caveat.

"If a person is getting all their information off the internet — to the extent you can discern that — I would avoid that person," he said of a potential trainer.

### Personality and motivation

Guy Andrews runs Exercise ETC. out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Like Rubenstein, he says trainers and clients have to jibe. Credentials are important, but a personality match is essential.

"Primarily, it's a service relationship," Andrews said. "So, first you have to bond with the trainer. You've got to like them. The personality of me is paramount. I don't care how well qualified someone is, how well educated they are. If you cannot enjoy working with them, the relationship is doomed to fail."

Asking friends or gym operators for referrals could be helpful in your search. A good benchmark for a successful relationship is how many years has the referrer spent with their trainer?

"If clients have been with a trainer for eight or 10 years, that's a good sign," Andrews said. "Looking good in a tank top is not enough."

Rubenstein injected another truth and laughed: "Most people who are working with a trainer for any length of time will tell you they are the best."

Another good sign when rating trainers is whether they offer a "non-contractual relationship." Meaning, you would not lose money if you discontinue the service.

"Then you have a trainer with integrity and confidence and probably the skills to help you," Rubenstein said.

There is also a trainer's style of motivation to consider. Rubenstein repeatedly said the quality of "compassion" was key in choosing the right person. But some may want a basic training drill sergeant to push them.

"The rah-rah military attitude might work for the young, the very fit," he said. "But for the average person that type of behavior might not be motivating or stimulating."

### What's the price?

Price is difficult to pin down. Costs vary by country and within countries by geographic region. In the United States you might pay \$100-150 per hour in larger cities, maybe \$50-75 in other areas. Rubenstein

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also said the cost compared favorably with manicures and similar personal-care services.

The cost can be prohibitive for some, Rubenstein said. It often eliminates the young and might favor older clients who have more spending power and need the service more.

"It weeds out the people who would like a trainer from those who need one," he said.

How often with a trainer?

Andrews and Rubenstein said that beginners should meet with a trainer two or three times per week for the first six weeks. After that, once a week might be enough, or even once or twice a month for maintenance and evaluation.

"In terms of motivation, for the average person I don't believe once a week is enough at the start," Andrews said.

Rubenstein elaborated: "If a person is not accustomed to being in a gym, not comfortable with it or not feeling safe, twice a week with a trainer is a basic routine that will give them benefits — muscular, cardiovascular, balance, etc. Once they learn it, a person can go once a week or once a month. But that means they have to be motivated."

Setting goals

So, you've found your trainer and are ready to get to work. Now what? Set some goals.

There are four main goals — depending on the client: weight management, overall fitness, special needs and overall health.

For each client, "the routines may intersect but the frequency, intensity and duration will vary," Rubenstein said.

Setting goals in the initial interview was critical, Andrews said.

"If both parties are not on the same page when it comes to what they want, they're doomed to failure," he said.

A good trainer will recognize unrealistic goals, Andrews said.

"It's often centered on how they want to look after hiring a personal trainer," he said. "In my experience, a client whose focus is on how they will look after training — instead of how they will feel — is setting themselves up for disappointment."

## Today in History:

### November 3, KKK and neo-Nazis kill five in Greensboro

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Nov. 3, the 308th day of 2024. There are 58 days left in the year. Daylight saving time ends today.

Today in history:

On Nov. 3, 1979, five Communist Workers Party members were killed in a clash with heavily armed Ku Klux Klansmen and neo-Nazis during an anti-Klan protest in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Also on this date:

In 1908, Republican William Howard Taft was elected president, outpolling Democrat William Jennings Bryan.

In 1911, the Chevrolet Motor Car Co. was founded in Detroit by Louis Chevrolet and William C. Durant.

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt easily won reelection, losing just two states to the Republican candidate, Kansas Gov. Alf Landon.

In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the spacecraft Sputnik 2, carrying the first animal into orbit, a dog named Laika.

In 1961, diplomat U Thant of Burma (now Myanmar) was elected secretary-general of the United Nations following the death of his predecessor, Dag Hammarskjold, in an airplane crash.

In 1992, Democrat Bill Clinton was elected the 42nd president of the United States, defeating President George H.W. Bush.

In 2012, the lights went back on in lower Manhattan to the relief of residents who had been plunged

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into darkness for nearly five days by Hurricane Sandy.

In 2014, 13 years after the 9/11 attack, a new 1,776-foot skyscraper at the World Trade Center site opened for business, marking an emotional milestone for both New Yorkers and the nation.

In 2020, Democrat Joe Biden won the presidency, though his victory would not be known for more than three days as counting continued in battleground states; Republican President Donald Trump would refuse to concede, falsely claiming that he was a victim of widespread voter fraud.

Today's Birthdays: Former Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis is 91. Economist and Nobel Prize laureate Amartya Sen is 91. Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, is 77. Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour is 75. Boxing Hall of Famer Larry Holmes is 75. Scientist David Ho is 72. Comedian-actor Roseanne Barr is 72. Actor Kate Capshaw is 71. Comedian Dennis Miller is 71. Singer Adam Ant is 70. Actor Dolph Lundgren is 67. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evgeni Plushenko is 42. Actor Antonia Thomas (TV: "The Good Doctor") is 38. Former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick is 37. TV personality-model Kendall Jenner is 29.