

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, Jan. 5

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

United Methodist: Communion Sunday: Conde worship, 8:15 a.m.; Groton worship, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Time, 10:30 a.m.; Britton worship, 11:15 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.;

Pancake Sunday: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Groton Community Center (proceeds benefit the Historical Society's jail restoration.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9:45 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; No Sunday School



Monday, Jan. 6

Senior Menu: Beef tips on rice, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy over mashed potatoes.

Boys JV/JH Wrestling at McCook Central/Montrose (Salem), 5 p.m.

Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

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

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GHS Boys Basketball

Groton Tigers Dominate in Lopsided Victory Over Redfield

GROTON, S.D. — The Groton Area Tigers put on a basketball clinic Friday night, dismantling the Redfield Pheasants with a decisive 86-11 victory in a game that showcased the Tigers' dominance on both ends of the court.

From the opening tip, Groton made their intentions clear, jumping out to a commanding 15-0 lead before Redfield could catch their breath. By the end of the first quarter, the Tigers had built a 23-5 advantage, fueled by their relentless defense and efficient shooting.

The game quickly spiraled out of control for Redfield in the second quarter. Groton's suffocating defense forced turnovers at an astonishing rate, leading to fast-break opportunities and easy buckets. The Mercy Rule was triggered with 3:32 remaining in the first half, as Groton extended their lead to a staggering 49-5 by halftime.

The Tigers' remarkable efficiency was a highlight of the night. They shot 62% from the field, including 33% from beyond the arc, and distributed the ball with precision, racking up 21 assists. Groton's ability to capitalize on Redfield's mistakes was pivotal, as they tallied 27 steals and forced 38 turnovers.

Redfield struggled to find any offensive rhythm, connecting on just 19% of their field goal attempts and committing 13 team fouls. The Pheasants' difficulties were compounded by Groton's disciplined play, as the Tigers committed only three fouls and eight turnovers over the course of the game.

By the end of the third quarter, the scoreboard read 72-11 in favor of the Tigers, with the game well out of reach. Groton continued to apply pressure and execute with precision, closing out the final quarter without allowing Redfield to score a single point.

The Tigers dominated the glass as well, pulling down 31 rebounds and controlling the pace throughout the game. Their cohesive team effort was evident, as every player contributed to the blowout victory.

This win is a testament to Groton's preparation, discipline, and tenacity. The Tigers will look to carry this momentum forward as they continue their season, while Redfield will aim to regroup and improve in the weeks ahead.

- Story composed by ChatGPT

Groton Area:

Keegen Tracy: 25 points, 5 assists, 4 steals.

Turner Thompson: 13 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 3 steals.

Ryder Johnson: 11 points, 4 rebounds, 3 assists, 4 steals, 2 fouls.

Ethan Kroll: 8 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist.

Blake Pauli: 6 points, 1 assist, 2 steals.

Karson Zak: 6 points, 1 assist, 3 steals.

Gage Sippel: 6 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists, 1 steal.

Becker Bosma: 5 points, 7 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 steals.

Jayden Schwan: 4 points, 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 6 steals.

Logan Warrington: 2 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 steal, 1 foul.

Ryder Schelle: 1 rebound, 1 steal.

Field Goals: 28-45 62%, 3-Pointers: 8-24 33%, Free Throws: 6-9 67 percent, 31 rebounds, 8 turnovers, 21 assists, 27 steals, 3 fouls.

Redfield: Ruben Alvarez 9 points, GradyHulscher 2 points.

Total Field Goals: 5-26 19%, 13 fouls and 38 turnovers.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Locke Electric, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms, The Meathouse in Andover. Paul Kosel and Jeslyn Kosel were on the scene.

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GHS Girls Basketball

Dominant Defense and Precision Propel Groton to Victory

GROTON, S.D. — The Groton girls' basketball team delivered a commanding performance on Friday night, overwhelming Redfield 51-9 in a lopsided matchup that showcased Groton's defensive intensity and offensive efficiency. From the opening tip to the final buzzer, Groton dominated every aspect of the game, setting the tone early and never looking back.

Groton opened the first quarter with relentless defensive pressure, forcing Redfield into turnovers and capitalizing on nearly every opportunity. Redfield struggled to find any rhythm, failing to score in the quarter. Meanwhile, Groton's offense ran smoothly, resulting in a 12-0 lead by the end of the first period.

The second quarter was much of the same, as Groton continued to suffocate Redfield's ball handlers. By halftime, Redfield had managed only two points, while Groton extended its lead to 28-2. The disparity in shot attempts underscored the Tigers' dominance; Groton had taken 33 field goals by halftime, converting at a solid 37%, while Redfield had managed just four attempts.

In the third quarter, Groton maintained its focus, adding eight more points to its total while holding Redfield to just three. By the end of the quarter, Groton held an insurmountable 36-5 advantage.

The final period saw Groton continue to control the game, finishing with a season-high 22 steals and 10 assists. Despite some foul trouble, with Groton committing 18 team fouls compared to Redfield's 10, the Tigers were never seriously challenged. The game concluded with Groton earning a dominant 51-9 victory.

Groton's discipline on both ends of the court was evident, with the team committing only nine turnovers compared to Redfield's staggering 36.

Individually, Groton players thrived under Redfield's defensive pressure, hitting 22 of 59 shots (37%) from the field. Redfield's offense struggled mightily, converting just 4 of their 15 attempts (27%).

- Story composed by ChatGPT

Groton Area:

Taryn Traphagen: 17 points, 2 rebounds, 2 assists, 4 steals.

Kennedy Hansen: 10 points, 1 rebound, 3 steals.

Faith Traphagen: 6 points, 1 rebound, 4 steals, 2 fouls.

Jerica Locke: 5 points, 1 rebound, 2 assists, 3 steals.

Rylee Dunker: 4 points, 4 rebounds, 2 steals, 2 fouls.

Chesney Weber: 3 points, 4 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 steal.

Jaedyn Penning: 2 points, 5 rebounds, 1 steal.

Mia Crank: 2 points, 3 rebounds.

McKenna Tietz: 2 points, 1 foul.

Brooklyn Hansen: 1 rebound, 1 assist, 1 steal.

Laila Roberts: 1 rebound, 2 assists, 2 steals, 2 fouls.

Talli Wright: 1 assist, 1 steal, 1 foul.

Field Goals: 19-50 38%, 3-Pointers: 3-10 30%, Free Throws: 4-6, 67%, 23 rebounds, 9 turnovers, 10 assists, 22 steals, 8 fouls.

Redfield:

Charli Jungwirth 3, Brynn Giblin 2, Hayden Gall 2, Kinley Smith 2.

Total Field Goals: 4-15, 27%, Free Throws: 1-2 50%, 36 turnovers, 10 fouls.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Locke Electric, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms, The Meathouse in Andover. Paul Kosel and Jeslyn Kosel were on the scene.

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Groton Area wins junior varsity games over Redfield

Groton Area boys basketball team led at the quarter breaks at 20-2, 28-5 and 44-9 en route to a 54-17 junior varsity win over Redfield. Jayden Schwan had 14 points, Anthony Tracy 13, Logan Warrington 6, Asher Johnson 6, Jace Johnson 5, Ryder Schelle 4, Ethan Kroll 4, Connor Kroll 2.

Redfield: Austin Snell 6, Keagan Hansen 4, Tate Neuharth 3, Jackson Rude and Grady Hulscher each with 2.

Groton Area girls basketball team led at the quarterbreaks at 21-0, 25-5 and 36-5 en route to a 46-10 junior varsity win over Redfield. Chesney Weber 14 points, Tali Wright 9, Mia Crank 7, McKenna Tietz 6, Kella Tracy 4, Sydney Locke 3, Ashlynn Warrington 2, Emerlee Jones 1.

Redfield: Karlie Brabant 6, Breanna Larson and Madysen Morrisette each with 2.

Both games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by the Groton Chiropractic Clinci.



The Groton Area Dance Team performed "Candy Cane Lane" at the basketball game Saturday in Groton. (Photos by Paul Kosel)

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GHS Wrestling

Eight grapplers place, Groton Area takes second at Webster

Groton Area placed eight wrestlers at the Webster Area Invitational Tournament held Saturday. Groton Area placed second as a team with Christian Ehresmann and Korbin Kucker taking second, Keegen Kucker, Charlie Frost and Karter Moody taking third, and placing fourth were Noah Scepaniak and Ben Hoeft.

Team Points: 1. Clark/Willow Lake 195.0; 2. Groton Area 147.5; 3. Miller 145.5; 4. Sisseton 144.0; 5. Deuel 131.5; 6. Britton/Hecla 100.0; 7. Garretson 99.0; 8. Sully Buttes 79.5; 9. Webster Area 59.5; 10. Sioux Valley 57.0; 11. Mobridge/Pollock 32.0; 12. Warner/Northwestern 24.0; 13. Hamlin 23.0; 14. Ipswich-Bowdle 12.0; 15. Baltic 10.0; 16. Ortonville 4.0; 17. Hanson County 0.0

157: Christian Ehresmann (8-2) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 8-2 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Ehresmann (Groton Area) 8-2 won by fall over Ty VanHolland (Garretson) 3-8 (Fall 0:48)

Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 8-2 won by fall over AJ Olivier (Sully Buttes) 7-9 (Fall 1:02)

1st Place Match - Holden Hawkins (Sisseton) 14-1 won by major decision over Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 8-2 (MD 11-3)

175: Korbin Kucker (11-1) placed 2nd and scored 21.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 11-1 won by fall over Canyon Ford (Mobridge/Pollock) 4-9 (Fall 1:27)

Quarterfinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 11-1 won by major decision over Wyatt Hardt (Sioux Valley) 10-10 (MD 11-3)

Semifinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 11-1 won by fall over Taylor Snaza (Sisseton) 12-8 (Fall 2:28)

1st Place Match - Colby Kolda (Miller) 12-0 won by decision over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 11-1 (Dec 1-0)

285: Gavin Englund (9-2) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 9-2 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 9-2 won by forfeit over Forfeit Forfeit (Baltic) 1-5 (For.)

Semifinal - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 9-2 won by fall over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 5-2 (Fall 0:13)

1st Place Match - Preston Cavalier (Warner/Northwestern) 10-1 won by decision over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 9-2 (Dec 6-1)

113: Keegen Kucker (10-5) placed 3rd and scored 17.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Keegen Kucker (Groton Area) 10-5 won by decision over Kooper Wookey (Clark/Willow Lake) 5-8 (Dec 4-2)

Quarterfinal - Keegen Kucker (Groton Area) 10-5 won by tech fall over Bentley Fokken (Deuel) 10-9 (TF-1.5 2:41 (18-3))

Semifinal - Kayden Tchida (Sisseton) 13-2 won by tech fall over Keegen Kucker (Groton Area) 10-5 (TF-1.5 2:38 (19-3))

Cons. Semi - Keegen Kucker (Groton Area) 10-5 won by fall over Kooper Wookey (Clark/Willow Lake) 5-8 (Fall 4:20)

3rd Place Match - Keegen Kucker (Groton Area) 10-5 won by tech fall over Bentley Fokken (Deuel) 10-9 (TF-1.5 1:38 (15-0))

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215: Charlie Frost (7-5) placed 3rd and scored 20.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Frost (Groton Area) 7-5 won by fall over Riley Popp (Clark/Willow Lake) 7-8 (Fall 2:33)
Quarterfinal - Frost (Groton Area) 7-5 won by fall over Andrew Gunderson (Sioux Valley) 6-5 (Fall 1:33)
Semifinal - Tucker Hardy (Britton/Hecla) 12-3 won by fall over Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 7-5 (Fall 0:38)
Cons. Semi - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 7-5 won by fall over Martin Welch (Garretson) 3-8 (Fall 3:38)
3rd Place Match - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 7-5 won by fall over Wyatt Zeigler (Mobridge/Pollock) 9-5 (Fall 4:01)

285: Karter Moody (5-2) placed 3rd.

Champ. Round 1 - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 5-2 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 5-2 won by fall over Wyatt Nelson (Sioux Valley) 8-5 (Fall 2:20)
Semifinal - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 9-2 won by fall over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 5-2 (Fall 0:13)
Cons. Semi - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 5-2 won by fall over Oliver Nedved (Baltic) 1-7 (Fall 0:49)
3rd Place Match - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 5-2 won by tech fall over Tanner Baatz (Garretson) 11-5 (TF-1.5 4:40 (19-2))

120: Noah Scepaniak (5-6) placed 4th and scored 13.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 5-6 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 5-6 won by fall over Justin Goens (Hamlin) 0-6 (Fall 3:09)
Semifinal - Cooper Pommer (Clark/Willow Lake) 13-0 won by fall over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 5-6 (Fall 2:31)
Cons. Semi - Scepaniak (Groton Area) 5-6 won by fall over Rennick Wagner (Sioux Valley) 5-7 (Fall 0:36)
3rd Place Match - Chase Costello (Garretson) 9-5 won by fall over Scepaniak (Groton Area) 5-6 (Fall 0:16)

165: Ben Hoeft (9-8) placed 4th and scored 15.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 9-8 won by forfeit over Forfeit Forfeit (Warner/Northwestern) 1-8 (For.)
Quarterfinal - Brock Bonte (Garretson) 12-4 won by fall over Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 9-8 (Fall 5:09)
Cons. Round 2 - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 9-8 won by fall over Jacoben Schmidt (Baltic) 2-8 (Fall 1:37)
Cons. Round 3 - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 9-8 won by fall over Gile Rud (Sioux Valley) 4-6 (Fall 3:00)
Cons. Semi - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 9-8 won by decision over Hayden Landmark (Deuel) 6-5 (Dec 7-2)
3rd Place Match - Justin Muehler (Sisseton) 9-5 won by fall over Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 9-8 (Fall 1:59)

106: Wyatt Hagen (8-4) scored 4.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 8-4 won by fall over Blake Benson (Garretson) 8-6 (Fall 1:02)
Quarterfinal - Gavin Mattson (Deuel) 10-4 won by decision over Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 8-4 (Dec 8-5)
Cons. Round 2 - Lincoln Kilker (Britton/Hecla) 4-9 won by medical forfeit over Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 8-4 (M. For.)

126: Lincoln Krause (9-8) scored 4.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 9-8 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Mason Severson (Clark/Willow Lake) 10-10 won by decision over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 9-8 (Dec 11-4)
Cons. Round 2 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 9-8 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 3 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 9-8 won by fall over Jade Tisher (Britton/Hecla) 0-10 (Fall 1:45)
Cons. Semi - Chase Arend (Garretson) 8-5 won by fall over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 9-8 (Fall 3:51)

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132: Greyson Flores (0-4) scored 0.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Luke Olson (Mobridge/Pollock) 9-7 won by tech fall over Greyson Flores (Groton Area) 0-4 (TF-1.5 3:32 (15-0))

Cons. Round 1 - Greyson Flores (Groton Area) 0-4 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 2 - Isaac Johnson (Clark/Willow Lake) 15-6 won by fall over Greyson Flores (Groton Area) 0-4 (Fall 2:23)

138: Kason Oswald (3-6) scored 5.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Kason Oswald (Groton Area) 3-6 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Ryker Gauger (Deuel) 13-8 won by tech fall over Kason Oswald (Groton Area) 3-6 (TF-1.5 2:13 (18-0))

Cons. Round 2 - Kason Oswald (Groton Area) 3-6 won by tech fall over Preston Roberts (Hamlin) 1-4 (TF-1.5 4:45 (22-6))

Cons. Round 3 - Oswald (Groton Area) 3-6 won by fall over Leyton Omundson (Ortonville) 6-9 (Fall 1:28)

Cons. Semi - Logan Foster (Clark/Willow Lake) 13-11 won by fall over Oswald (Groton Area) 3-6 (Fall 3:20)

144: Chris Schwab (6-7).

Champ. Round 1 - Chris Schwab (Groton Area) 6-7 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Lucas Yellow Hawk (Sully Buttes) 9-3 won by fall over Chris Schwab (Groton Area) 6-7 (Fall 2:32)

Cons. Round 2 - Brayden Wientjes (Mobridge/Pollock) 9-5 won by fall over Chris Schwab (Groton Area) 6-7 (Fall 1:35)

150: Walker Zoellner (8-4) scored 8.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 8-4 won by fall over Nathanael Roberts (Garretson) 1-8 (Fall 3:02)

Quarterfinal - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 8-4 won by fall over Cameron Rise (Ortonville) 0-7 (Fall 0:56)

Semifinal - Bryce Hawkinson (Britton/Hecla) 13-1 won by major decision over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 8-4 (MD 10-0)

Cons. Semi - Zane Miller (Deuel) 14-3 won by fall over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 8-4 (Fall 2:17)

190: Layne Johnson (1-8).

Champ. Round 1 - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 1-8 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Kady Westergren (Sully Buttes) 9-8 won by fall over Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 1-8 (Fall 4:42)

Cons. Round 2 - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 1-8 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - Sam Leen (Deuel) 5-7 won by fall over Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 1-8 (Fall 0:39)

Krueger places first at McCook Central/Montrose Tournament

107: Liza Krueger (22-2) placed 1st and scored 28.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 22-2 won by fall over Macee McGregor (Webster) 0-2 (Fall 2:54)

Quarterfinal - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 22-2 won by fall over Kadee Frankfurth (Clark/Willow Lake) 5-7 (Fall 3:55)

Semifinal - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 22-2 won by fall over Trinity Kurtenbach (Sioux Valley) 4-6 (Fall 2:21)

1st Place Match - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 22-2 won by decision over Brooke Warejcka (Canton) 13-4 (Dec 16-10)

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NSU Women's Basketball

Wolves Down No. 16 Golden Bears in NSIC Clash

Aberdeen, S.D. – An early lead by the Northern State University women's basketball team propelled them to a 66-60 victory over No. 16 Concordia-St. Paul. Four Wolves reached double figures, with Rianna Fillipi leading the charge, scoring 18 points and shooting 8-of-14 from the field.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 66, CSP 60

Records: NSU 9-5 (NSIC 6-2), CSP 13-2 (NSIC 7-2)

Attendance: 1212

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State scored 18 points in the first quarter, 15 in the second, 14 in the third, and 19 in the fourth. The Wolves shot 42.1% from the field, while the Golden Bears shot 36.1%.

Northern State grabbed 43 rebounds, scored 34 points in the paint, 18 points off the bench, 17 points off turnovers, and 14 points from the foul line.

Rianna Fillipi led the charge for the Wolves with 18 points, five rebounds, and a 57.1% field goal percentage.

Madelyn Bragg and Izzy Moore each scored 12 points, with Bragg adding nine rebounds and Moore contributing six.

Michaela Jewett was a key playmaker, recording ten rebounds and five assists.

NORTHERN STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Rianna Fillipi: 18 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists, 57.1 FG %

Madelyn Bragg: 12 points, 9 rebounds, 2 assists

Izzy Moore: 12 points, 6 rebounds, 3 steals, 50.0 FG %

Alayna Benike: 11 points, 6 rebounds, 57.1 FG %

Michaela Jewett: 7 points, 10 rebounds, 5 assists

UP NEXT

Northern State hits the road south to take on Wayne State and Augustana. Tip-offs are set for 5:30 p.m. on Friday, January 10 from Wayne, Nebraska against the Wildcats and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 11 from Sioux Fall, South Dakota against the Vikings.

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NSU Men's Basketball

Brooke and Mitchell Team up for Career Highs Against Concordia-St. Paul

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team dropped their Saturday contest to Concordia-St. Paul from Wachs Arena. Devon Brooke scored a new career high 19 points in the contest, while Kaleb Mitchell matched his career high of 18.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 75, CSP 78

Records: NSU 1-13 (0-8 NSIC), CSP 12-3 (7-2 NSIC)

Attendance: 1324

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves led 42-38 at the half, however the Golden Bears rallied back 40-33 in the second securing the win

Northern shot 45.5% from the floor, 33.3% from the 3-point line, and 53.3% from the foul line, while Concordia-St. Paul shot 40.9% from the floor, 42.9% from the 3-point line, 70.6% from the free throw line

They tallied 41 rebounds, a game leading 17 assists, 11 steals, and four blocks, as well as seven made 3-pointers

NSU scored 38 points in the paint, 15 points off turnovers, 15 points off the bench, and 12 second chance points

Brooke knocked down 7-of-14 from the floor with a career high 19 points, as well as five rebounds, three assists, and three steals

Mitchell recorded a double-double, leading the team with 13 rebounds and adding 18 rebounds; he shot 61.5% from the floor

James Glenn was the final Wolf in double figures with ten points and led the team with six assists and four steals

Braeden Vanbockern led the team off the bench with seven points

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Devon Brooke: 19 points, 50.0 field goal%, 5 rebounds, 3 steals, 3 assists

Kaleb Mitchell: 18 points, 61.5 field goal%, 13 rebounds, 2 assists

James Glenn: 10 points, 6 assists, 5 rebounds, 4 steals

UP NEXT

Northern hits the road for a 4-game road stand the next two weekends. The Wolves face Wayne State and Augustana next Friday and Saturday. Tip-off times are set for 7:30 p.m. on Friday and 5:30 p.m. on Saturday.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind, and I was feet to the lame.

🌀 JOB 29:13-15 🌀

Detail of "Bust of a Bearded Oriental Man in a Turban" by Jan Lievensz (1631)



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord" is found in ...? *Psalms, Proverbs, Numbers, Jeremiah*

3. What tree did Jesus tell a parable about? *Apple, Fig, Olive, Sycamore*

4. Who was John the Baptist's father? *Zechariah, Zacharias, Zephaniah, Zaccheus*

5. What did the oak tree symbolize in the Bible? *Growth, Strength, Weakness, Fruitfulness*

6. Which is not a book of the New Testament? *Revelation, Judges, Colossians, Jude*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Psalms 150:6, 3) Fig, 4) Zacharias, 5) Strength, 6) Judges

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

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FLASH GORDON

WE SHARKS ARE A HARD PEOPLE, YOU SEE. WE LOVE THE FEEL OF THE COLD IN OUR CARTILAGE AND THE SALT ON OUR SKIN.

WE'RE TAUGHT THAT THE SUN MAKES YOU WEAK. SOFT.

WHICH IS... ...TERRIBLE.

FOR SOME REASON.

I'M VELLE OF SHARK CITY, AND I DON'T MIND THAT MY CHIEF IS CRUEL.

WE'RE MEANT TO BE CRUEL.

IT'S THAT HE'S A CHEAT.

AND WE'RE MEANT TO BE BETTER THAN THAT.

I-I JUST STRUCK DOWN CHIEF KALA TO SAVE FLASH GORDON. THE WORDS SOUND INSANE.

WE SURFACE TO A STUNNED SILENCE.

THEN THE FIGHTING STARTS.

NOW I'M A TRAITOR TO THE SHARKS... ...AND NOT EVEN GORDON AND THUN CAN FIGHT A CITY.

WE NEED LEVERAGE.

SO WE BREAK INTO GENERAL TAHL'S ROOMS.

IT'S TIME WE LEARNED WHY HE'S HERE.

NEXT: THE CODEX

DAN SCHKADE 1-5-25

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

YOU'LL PLAY YOUR BEST GOLF BY BUILDING YOUR GAME UPON A LIMITED NUMBER OF LONG-PROVEN FUNDAMENTALS ... NO MORE THAN EIGHT OR TEN.

YOU'LL PLAY YOUR WORST GOLF BY GOING FROM FAD TO BAND-AID TO GIMMICK AND BACK AROUND AGAIN.

DON'T KNOW THE FUNDAMENTALS? LEARN THEM FROM A COMPETENT TEACHER THEN STICK WITH THEM AT ALL COST. THAT'LL TAKE PATIENCE INITIALLY, BUT WILL PAY LARGE DIVIDENDS OVER THE LONG RUN.

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MRI Reveals a Disease of the Blood Vessels in the Brain

DEAR DR. ROACH: A recent fall split the skin below my left eye. I went to the emergency room to see if it required stitches. Since I complained of a headache in the back of my head on the left side, they ordered an MRI, which showed "atherosclerotic vascular disease with mild small vessel ischemic disease." They also saw plaque within my internal carotid arteries.

The ER doctors said I should see a vascular specialist soon. Of course, I am scared. I am a 76-year-old woman on Bystolic, rosuvastatin, benazepril and thyroid replacement. I also take sulfasalazine for my inflammatory arthritis. I am thin, take many vitamins and supplements, and exercise four times a week.

Does the MRI mean I have dementia or Alzheimer's? What does it mean? -- R.M.

ANSWER: No, the MRI cannot make a diagnosis of dementia. Dementia is diagnosed presumptively by a clinical exam that notes impairments in cognitive functioning such as memory, language and attention. (A definitive diagnosis of Alzheimer's is made by a pathological evaluation of brain tissue, which is almost never obtained while a person is alive.)

What the MRI shows is a disease of the blood vessels of the brain caused by cholesterol plaque. High blood pressure, smoking, high blood cholesterol, a previous family history, and other factors put people at risk for this condition. Some, but not all, people with the kinds of blood vessel disease you have will develop dementia, which is caused by cumulative damage to the brain tissue from multiple small strokes. In your case, both the large vessels (carotids) and small vessels are affected, suggesting that your cholesterol and blood pressure haven't been ideal.

Your doctor has already taken some steps to slow or prevent the worsening of this condition. Careful control of your blood pressure (with Bystolic and benazepril) is essential. A statin drug (rosuvastatin) has been shown to reduce stroke risk and your overall dementia risk. I don't know whether these are the best medicines for you or whether they are at the right doses, since only your doctor knows you well enough, but it is clear that your doctor is taking steps to protect your heart and brain.

Inflammatory arthritis (especially rheumatoid arthritis and lupus) increases the risk of blood vessel damage in the brain and heart, so early treatment is more important with people who have these conditions. Unfortunately, not all primary care doctors know how important inflammatory arthritis is when it comes to heart attack and stroke risk.

I do not believe there are any supplements or vitamins that are both safe and effective at preventing stroke, but there are a handful of people who may benefit from them. For example, people with high homocysteine in their blood may benefit from vitamin B12, folic acid, or their methylated counterparts.

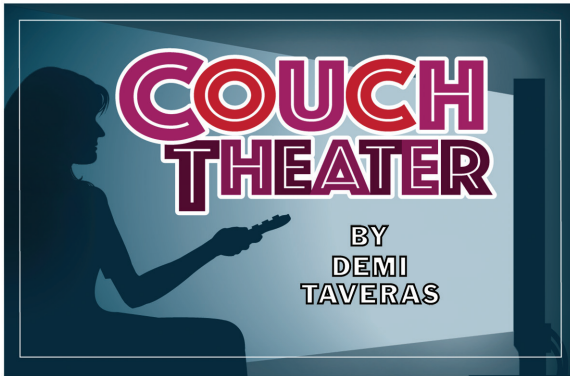
A careful review of your overall health condition and diet is critical. You may be referred to a specialist for cognitive testing if there is any evidence of change in your thinking ability. A few blood tests will help further stratify your risk and may show a need for additional treatment.

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

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Andrew Burnap, left, and Brandy Norwood star in "The Front Room." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Wicked" (PG) -- Universal Pictures' investment in adapting the Broadway musical "Wicked" paid off big time, with the first part of their two-part saga garnering \$586.3 million at the box office at the time of this writing. Director Jon M. Chu ("Crazy Rich Asians") assembled the perfect cast

to bring the musical to life, including Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba, Ariana Grande as Galinda/Glinda, and Jonathan Bailey as Fiyero. Now viewers at home can get whisked away to the magical Land of Oz through the film's beautiful visual effects and iconic songs like "The Wizard and I" and "Dancing Through Life." Keep a close eye out for Idina Menzel and Kristin Chenoweth, both of the actresses who originated the roles of Elphaba and Glinda in the original production. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl" (PG) -- Those of us who were kids during the 2000s remember the comical shenanigans of Wallace and his dog, Gromit, in the film "The Curse of the Were-Rabbit" (2005). Almost 20 years later, the stop-motion animation studio Aardman Animations decided to develop a second feature-length film about their much-beloved characters. In "Vengeance Most Fowl," Wallace is still hard at work with his inventions, much to Gromit's dismay, and creates a robotic gnome that can take care of gardens. However, the imprisoned penguin criminal Feathers McGraw, who was once captured by Wallace and Gromit, chooses this robotic gnome as his opportunity to exact revenge on his foes. Check it out now. (Netflix)

"The Front Room" (R) -- Singer/actress Brandy Norwood ("Descendants: The Rise of Red") is making her return to movies, and this psychological horror film directed by the Eggers Brothers was a solid attempt to get her feet wet again. Norwood plays pregnant anthropology professor Belinda, whose emotional baggage is only further weighed down by her and her husband Norman's (Andrew Burnap) financial woes. So, when Norman's estranged stepmother, Solange (Kathryn Hunter), offers them an inheritance in exchange for taking care of her during her final days, the couple jumps at the chance to get their lives back on track. But Solange has a deeply rooted history of religious abuse and racism that comes bubbling to the surface as Belinda gets closer to giving birth. Out now. (Max)

"The Golden Globe Awards" (TV-PG) -- Comedian Nikki Glaser hosts this year's Golden Globe Award ceremony, which is out now to stream after airing live on Jan. 5. The musical "Emilia Perez" starring Zoe Saldana leads the film nominations, followed by "The Brutalist" with Adrien Brody and "Conclave" with Ralph Fiennes. For the television nominations, the hit Hulu series "The Bear" continues to reign, followed by "Shogun" and "Only Murders in the Building." Viola Davis will be recognized with the Cecil B. DeMille Award, and Ted Danson will receive the Carol Burnett Award, although neither will be presented during the official ceremony. (Paramount+)

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1. Who had a hit with "Down Under"?
2. Which artist is known as the "Material Girl"?
3. Who wrote and released "Can't Fight This Feeling"?
4. Who came up with the term "rock and roll"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "A place where there's just loneliness, Where dim lights bring forgetfulness, Where broken dreams and memories meet."

Answers

1. Men At Work, in 1981. The song topped the charts around the globe, including in Italy, Ireland and Denmark. It's full of Australian slang usually only understood in Australia, such as

"kombi," which is a VW bus.

2. Madonna. The video of her 1985 song of that title copied the 1953 Marilyn Monroe performance of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" in the film "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes."

3. REO Speedwagon. The song was one of two the group performed at the Live Aid benefit concert in 1985. Hooked up by satellites, concerts were held around the globe and likely watched by nearly 2 billion people.

4. DJ Alan Freed in the 1950s. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.

5. "Lonely Street," by Carl Belew, in 1956. Andy Williams followed with the well-known cover in 1959. Since then, over a dozen artists have covered the song, including Patsy Cline, Bobby Vinton and the Everly Brothers.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



"Unlike me, he's becoming more and more unbearable!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



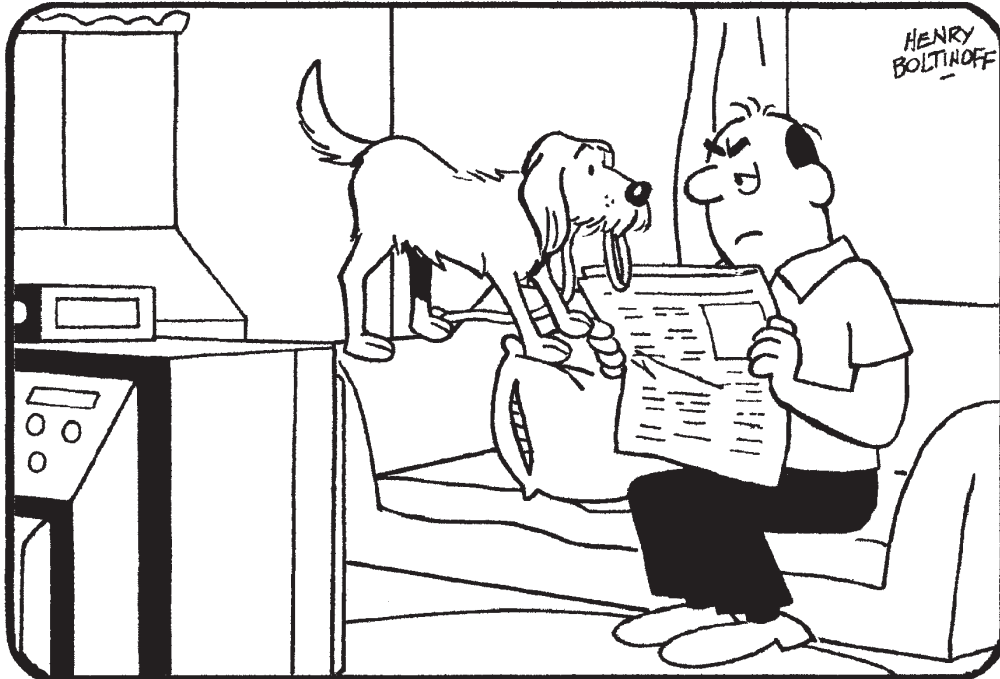
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Groton Daily Independent

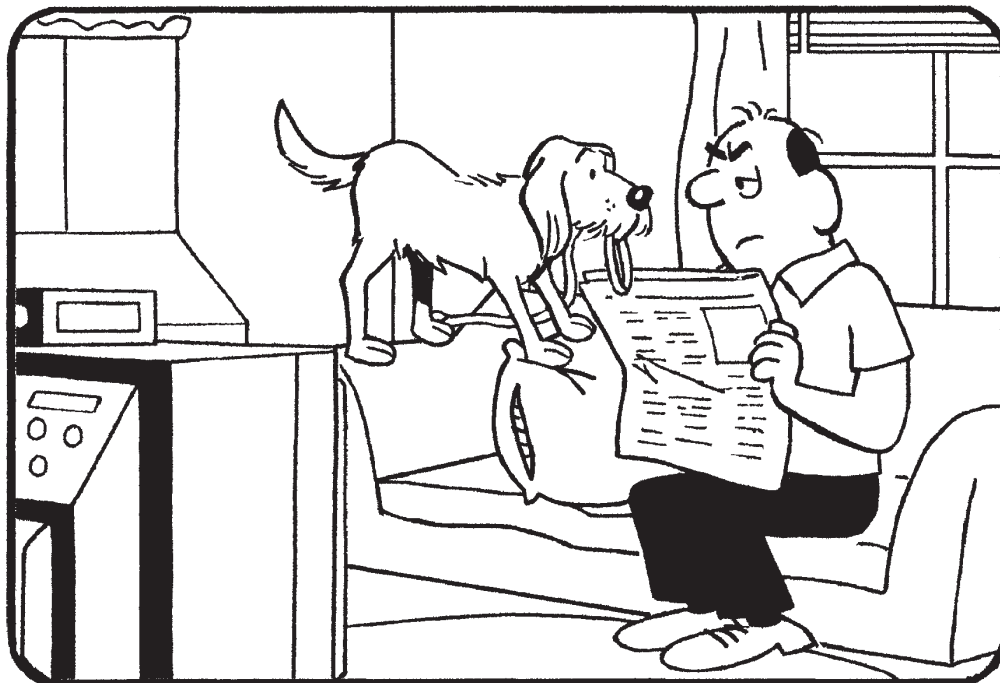
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Tail is moved. 2. Window is different. 3. Fingers are not showing. 4. Ear is larger. 5. Blinds are added. 6. Laces are added to shoe.

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* Many people have written in the tip to use two similarly sized bowls, one larger than the other, to serve cold salads at picnics. You add a few cups of crushed ice to the larger bowl, then nestle the smaller bowl into it, making it "chilled." In any case, remember: Don't leave food out longer than two hours.

* If you are doing food platters for your barbecue, consider making several smaller platters instead of one large dish. The large ones are harder to store when you prep beforehand, but a better reason is that the items will not go stale/too warm/too cold quite as fast, and it's easy to switch out plates throughout the party.

* "Using plastic cups for a crowd? Remember to put out a permanent marker, colorful rubber bands or some other way to

mark one's glass. It's sometimes hard to keep track when they all look the same." -- C.L. in Pennsylvania

* "Purchase a small cooler to use for large quantities of sides. I have a cooler advertised as fitting a six-pack of drinks. It's perfect for holding macaroni salad at our summer beach gatherings with family. I do not use it for anything else, and it retains its cold temperature despite the heat (when everyone remembers to keep the lid closed, of course)." -- R.R. in South Carolina

* "For serving utensils used during picnic lunch, I have two large zip-top plastic bags. I label them 'clean' and 'dirty.' Anything used to touch raw meat goes in the 'dirty' bag. And serving spoons that can be used again to serve are in the 'clean' bag." -- M.A. in Arizona

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

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Screen star Lamarr
- 5 Abrupt turn
- 8 Wild party
- 12 Half a sextet
- 13 Equi-
- 14 Tennis great Arthur
- 15 Crystal-tapping sound
- 16 Solicit
- 18 Funnel-shaped bloom
- 20 Herrings' cousins
- 21 Squealer
- 22 Chemical suffix
- 23 Montana city
- 26 Scare badly
- 30 Buckeyes' sch.
- 31 Tibetan bovine
- 32 "Ulalume" writer
- 33 Dress store section
- 36 Broadway duds
- 38 Cat doc
- 39 Life story
- 40 Madonna role
- 43 "Cutie," e.g.
- 47 Peevish
- 49 Actor Jannings

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

- 50 "No —!" ("Sure thing!")
- 51 Quibble
- 52 Sandwich option
- 53 "Auld Lang —"
- 54 Away from SSW
- 55 Ladies of Spain (Abbr.)
- DOWN**
- 1 URL opener
- 2 Toledo's lake
- 3 Force
- 4 Dairy case buy
- 5 "Hush!"
- 6 On the Aegean, say
- 7 Inherited
- 8 Tub user
- 9 China setting
- 10 Not barefoot
- 11 Coop group
- 17 "— It Romantic?"
- 19 Scot's refusal
- 22 "A spider!"
- 23 Jazzy style
- 24 Exploit
- 25 Boy king
- 26 Mas' mates
- 27 Wall St. debut
- 28 Dandy guy
- 29 "You bet!"
- 31 However
- 34 ICU hookup
- 35 Pond duck
- 36 In shape
- 37 Hermits
- 39 Davis of "Jezebel"
- 40 Actor Omar
- 41 Quite
- 42 Lay — the line
- 43 Nabokov novel
- 44 Love god
- 45 "— 18" (Uris novel)
- 46 Right angles
- 48 Raggedy doll

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

H	E	D	Y		Z	A	G		B	A	S	H	
T	R	I	O		I	S	O		A	S	H	E	
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				R	A	T		E	N	E			
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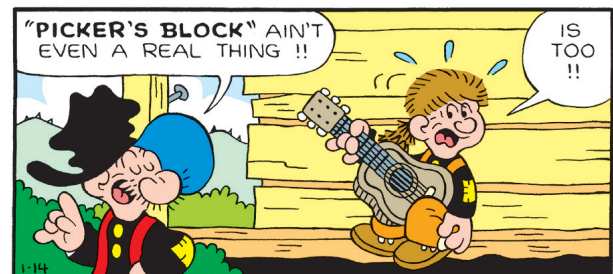
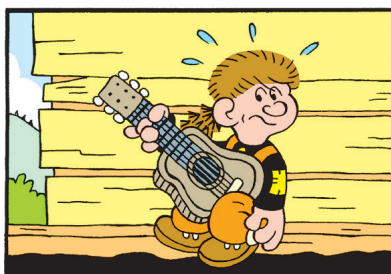
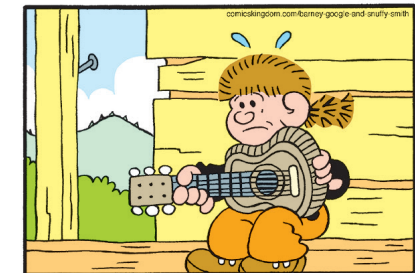
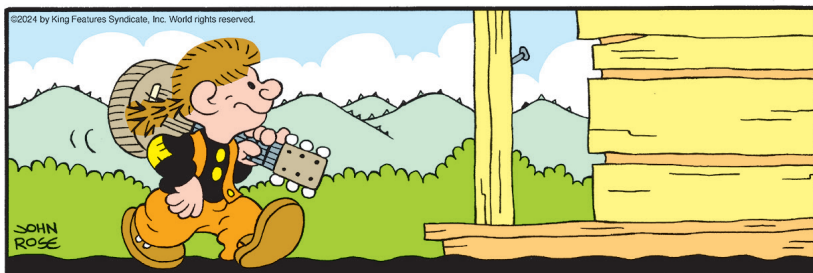
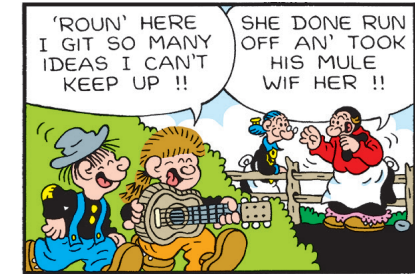
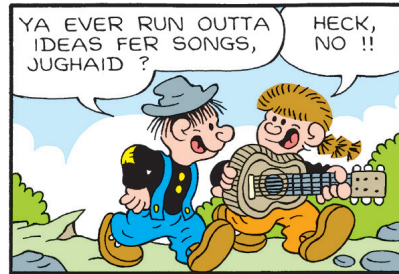
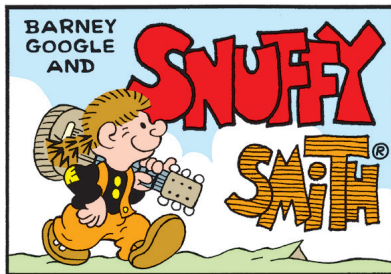
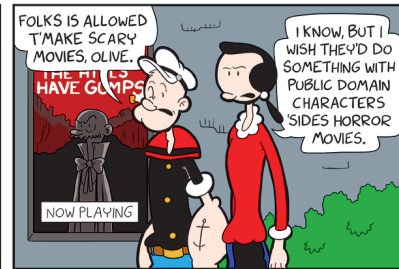
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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HAL FOSTER'S **Prince Valiant**
 BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

THINGS HAVE A WAY OF RESOLVING THEMSELVES: VALETA STARTED OUT HER VOYAGE TO THE MISTY ISLES AS A RUNAWAY WIFE, BUT IS NOW HONORABLY DIVORCED. VERY SAD, REFLECTS VAL, BUT MUCH MORE PROPER TO HAVE HER LEGALLY FREE.

MASTER GUNDAR HARL AND HIS BOLD NORSE CREW CHOOSE NOT TO HUG THE COAST OF GAUL, INSTEAD CUTTING STRAIGHT ABOVE TO THE CANTABRIAN SEA, TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF IBERIA...

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... AND THEN DOWN THE WESTERNMOST COAST OF EUROPE. FOR DAYS NOW, VAL HAS WORKED TO CONVINCENATHAN OF THE WORTH IN PRACTICING THE SKILLS OF PERSONAL COMBAT, BUT THE YOUNG ARTIST HAS REMAINED DISINTERESTED.

THEN VAL SEES KAREN, WITH HER WARRIOR'S MENTALITY, SPARRING WITH HER BROTHER AND CORRECTING WITH FAR MORE PATIENCE THAN COULD VAL. HIS DAUGHTER SUCCEEDS WHERE HE HAS FAILED!

4005

ROLES ARE CERTAINLY CHANGING IN THESE MODERN TIMES, HE SIGHS. OH WELL - QUEEN BOUDICCA WAS A PRETTY FAIR WARRIOR, TOO...

BUT THEN HE IS DISTRACTED BY THE SIGHT OF A GREAT MASS LOOMING AHEAD. THE PILLARS OF HERCULES - SO SOON?

NEXT:
The sea of myth

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

"I DIG, YOU DIG, HE DIGS, SHE DIGS, WE ALL DIG."

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IT'S NOT A VERY PRETTY POEM...

PRICKERS

...BUT IT SURE IS DEEP.

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Heavy metals in our dark chocolate

It appears that our beloved dark chocolate candy bars can contain dangerous amounts of lead and cadmium -- the dark chocolate we intentionally chose for its health benefits like lower blood pressure and antioxidants that protect cells from damage.

Consumer Reports did research to test the levels of lead and cadmium in dark chocolate candy bars. Of the 28 different dark chocolate bars they tested, all of them had lead and cadmium. Specifically, their tests were to look for mercury, lead, cadmium and arsenic, all heavy metals. The result: 23 of the dark chocolate candy bars had enough heavy metal in them that eating just one ounce of the candy would be harmful.

For those of us who've believed that a little daily dark chocolate would benefit our health, it turns out all that heavy metal could lead to immune system suppression, kidney damage and more.

Still, there were the five remaining bars that had levels low enough to be safer. Not completely safe, but safer. They later did tests on an additional 48 chocolate products in several categories: chocolate chips, cocoa powder, brownie mixes, cake mixes and hot chocolate mixes. Of the 48 products, 16 of them had concerning amounts of heavy metals. However, they did find safer options for each item.

How do we get the benefits of dark chocolate without putting our health at risk from the heavy metals? Don't eat it every day, they say. Pick something with lower levels of the lead and cadmium.

I've long been a fan of Consumer Reports and have subscribed for years, now reading each issue online. With a yearly subscription, I have access to all of their past reports and research. To me, the cost is worth it. If you want to take a look, see www.consumerreports.org.

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1. Rik Smits, known as "The Dunking Dutchman," spent his entire NBA career from 1988 to 2000 with what team?

2. Geoff Capes, World's Strongest Man champion in 1983 and 1985, competed for Great Britain at the 1976 and 1980 Olympic Games in what athletics event?

3. What Dominican infielder, whose career spanned 1982-2007, was the last active Major League Baseball player to have been born in the 1950s?

4. Golfer Peter Thomson, who won the Open Championship five times from 1954-1965, hailed from what country?

5. He played tight end for 11 NFL seasons, most notably for the New York Jets from 2000-2004. His son, Rocco, threw 23 touchdown passes for the 2023 Iowa State Cyclones. Who is he?

6. What American figure skater, 1995 U.S. women's singles champion, overcame drug addiction and later became a circus performer?

7. "Clean, Old-Fashioned Hate" is the name of the college athletics rivalry between what two teams?



Answers

1. The Indiana Pacers.

2. The shot put.

3. Julio Franco.

4. Australia.

5. Anthony Becht.

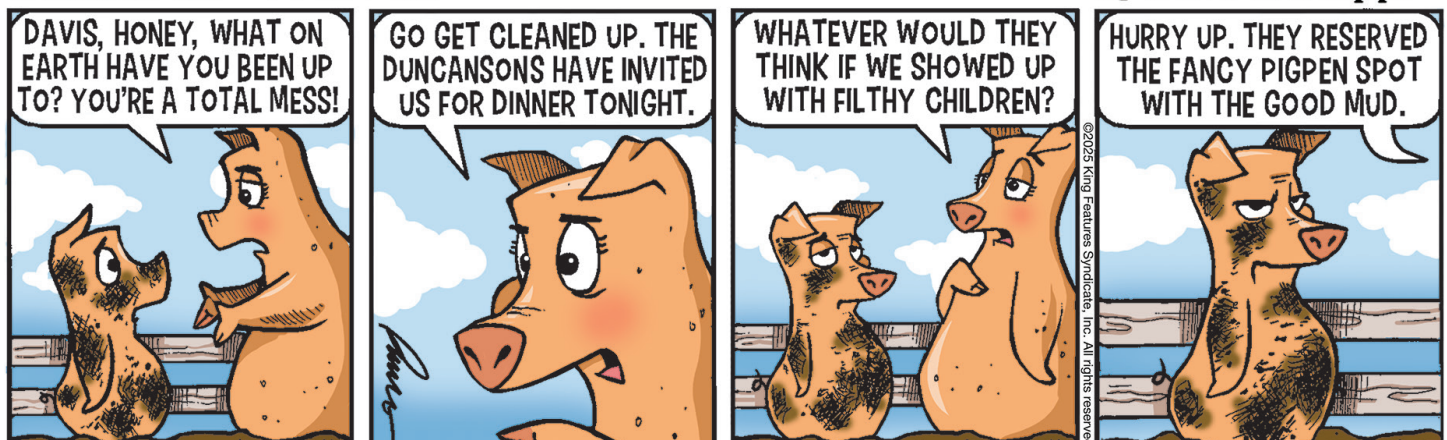
6. Nicole Bobek.

7. The University of Georgia Bulldogs and Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



The dog sitter's flea dilemma



DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I am a brand-new pet sitter with four clients. I'm able to take one pet at a time into my home to care for them when their owners are traveling for long stretches, and I do home visits for the others. Well, the toy poodle I have in my care for the next three weeks brought an unpleasant surprise: fleas! Normally I would ask the client to clear up the flea problem before pet-sitting services can continue, but I'm already caring for the dog, so I'm stuck. What should I do? -- Jane H. in Wellesley, Massachusetts

DEAR JANE: Immediately contact the client to inform them. Then ask for their permission to treat the dog. If they only want you to use a specific treatment, follow their instructions. Save your receipts for any flea treat-

ments purchased.

A flea infestation can spread to the other pets you care for, so follow these steps to reduce infestation:

- Isolate the dog from most areas of your home until he has completed treatment and you are brushing away only dead fleas.
- Mop and vacuum your entire home daily, especially the corners. (Hint: Put a brand-new flea collar inside the vacuum cleaner bag to kill the fleas that are sucked in.)
- Wash or steam clean area rugs and drapes, and the dog's bedding.
- Wash clothes that you have worn around the dog. (Hint: Set the clothes dryer to a medium or high heat setting, which will kill most eggs and fleas.)

This is a good time to review and update your pet-sitting contract. Add a clause requiring pets to be free of fleas, ticks and communicable diseases, as well as a clause that says owners must reimburse you for expenses incurred if their pet causes an infestation.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* Shonda Rhimes got the idea for the TV series “Grey’s Anatomy” after a doctor told her how hard it was to shave her legs in the tiny hospital shower.

* The first Hershey’s chocolate bars with almonds were produced in 1908 because they were cheap to make. The nuts took the place of some of the more expensive milk chocolate, which meant Hershey’s could keep the price of the candy at a nickel.

* A website called Myfridgefood.com lets you enter whatever ingredients you have in your fridge and tells you what you can make with them.

* One of the reasons your lungs feel refreshed when walking through a pine forest is because of an anti-inflammatory compound called a-Pinene, found in conifers. It is used as a bronchodilator in the treatment of asthma and is abundantly present in marijuana.

* An estimated 10% of Europeans are immune to HIV infection because they have an ancestor who survived bubonic plague, or “Black Death.”

* The Hardy Tree in London’s St. Pancras churchyard is named for Thomas Hardy. The Victorian author worked at the burial ground in the 1860s and rearranged tombstones around the base of an ash tree to make room for a railway expansion.

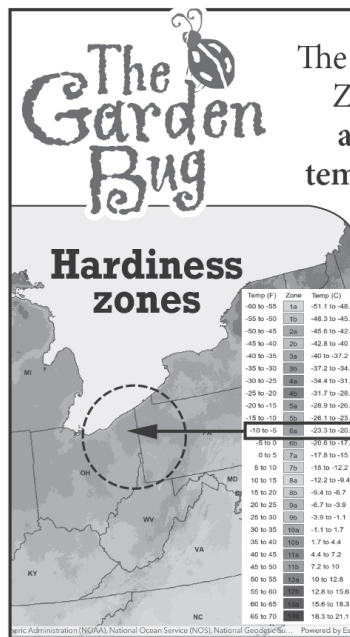
* If you’re a man and pee on a pregnancy test and it’s positive, you could have cancer.

* Because of the amount of granite in its construction, Grand Central Station produces more radiation than is allowable at a nuclear power plant.

* In India, a statue of Jesus had “holy” water mysteriously dripping from its toes, which worshipers would collect and sometimes drink. A man traced the fluid’s source to a clogged toilet behind the wall, condensing on the statue.

Thought for the Day: “A good example has twice the value of good advice.” -- Albert Schweitzer

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The U.S. government’s online Plant Hardiness Zone interactive map can help you find the average annual extreme minimum winter temperature in any area of the U.S. by typing in a zip code. The areas are displayed as 10-degree F zones and 5-degree F half-zones designated as “a” and “b”, and are keyed by color and number/letter combinations. Plants sold in catalogs and storefronts are often marked with which “zone” they tolerate, along with their needs such as required daily sun exposure, soil type, wind tolerance and best watering practices. – Brenda Weaver

Source: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>



by Freddy Groves

Life insurance premium discount

If you have life insurance through the Department of Veterans Affairs, you'll be pleased about what's coming in 2025: a discount in your premiums.

Whether you are insured with Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) or Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI), your premiums will be discounted in varying amounts.

For veterans covered under VGLI, your costs will go down somewhere between 2% and 17%, with most averaging around 11%, depending on your age.

Spouses who receive coverage via FSGLI will see discounts between 11% and 22%, depending on age.

Active duty and those covered under SGLI will see a cost reduction of one cent per every \$1,000 of coverage, bringing the cost of maximum coverage (\$500,000) down to \$25 per month.

And no, you don't have to ask for it. These discounts will be automatic.

There are others types of insurance through the VA as well. See www.va.gov/life-insurance for information on eligibility, and the other forms of insurance that are available, such as mortgage life insurance (if you have a service-connected disability and a specially-adapted home), whole life insurance (if you have a service-connected disability), group life insurance (after you're out of the service) and Traumatic Injury Protection (if that ever becomes necessary after an injury).

If you're already covered and want to check your policy, pay the premium, see the details of your insurance or change beneficiaries, you can do that online. However, accessing your policy online depends on the type of policy it is. See www.va.gov/life-insurance/manage-your-policy for the details about whether your access will be through the VA portal, through Prudential or via milConnect.

As of now, the VA's insurance covers over 5 million veterans, active duty and families, but there's always room for more. If you're not currently covered and you want to explore getting insurance coverage, see www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility for your options.

A heads up: You'll need to sign up for certain types of insurance in the first 120 days when you leave the service.

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Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. TELEVISION: Which popular spinoff series originated with the drama "Breaking Bad"?
2. HOLIDAYS: What is another name for Three Kings Day, celebrated on Jan. 6?
3. LANGUAGE: What does the Latin phrase "bona fide" mean?
4. MOVIES: In the movie "Babe," what kind of animal is the title character?
5. MEASUREMENTS: How many grams are in a kilogram?
6. GEOGRAPHY: Which strait separates Saudi Arabia from Africa?
7. SCIENCE: What are the three layers that make up the Earth?
8. FOOD & DRINK: Which breakfast food is associated with the retro series "Stranger Things"?
9. MEDICAL: What is the common name for muscae volitantes?
10. LITERATURE: Which poet wrote a six-volume biography of President Abraham Lincoln?

Answers

1. "Better Call Saul."
2. Epiphany.
3. "Good faith."
4. Pig.
5. 1,000.
6. Bab-el-Mandeb.
7. Crust, mantle and core.
8. Eggo waffles.
9. Eye floaters.
10. Carl Sandburg.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Working Together for Safer Communities

By: Secretary Robert Perry

January serves as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, an important time for reflection, awareness, and action. This month is a solemn reminder of the urgent need to protect the most vulnerable among us from one of the most insidious crimes in our society. Today, I want to speak directly to you about what this means for us and how we can all make a difference.

Before becoming the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), I dedicated over 30 years to various law enforcement roles, having the honor of working with many committed professionals. During this time, I witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of human trafficking on individuals, families, and entire communities. I have met survivors who carry the heavy burden of their experiences and collaborated with dedicated teams to bring traffickers to justice.

Human trafficking often occurs right in front of us, hidden in plain sight. It's not just something that occurs in big cities or faraway places. Trafficking can occur in any community, with no regard to class, race, or other social factors.

Traffickers use our interstate highways as inconspicuous routes to travel across the country, making it easier to carry out their illegal activities while evading detection. They exploit people's vulnerabilities, whether it be financial hardship, addiction, homelessness, or simply a lack of family support. They prey on the trusting nature of individuals and communities, turning lives upside down for their own profit.

Each trafficking victim is someone's child, sibling, or friend. They deserve a future free from fear, exploitation, and harm. And it is all of our responsibility to ensure that future.

The fight against human trafficking begins with awareness. Recognizing the signs can save lives. For example, if you notice someone who seems unusually fearful, withdrawn, or controlled by another person; if they have bruises, appear malnourished, or cannot speak freely; or if they are living or working in conditions that seem unsafe or unsanitary, these could all be indicators of trafficking. Trust your instincts and reach out to the authorities. Your vigilance could make all the difference.

It's equally important to educate our children and young people about the dangers of trafficking. Open conversations about online safety, healthy relationships, and recognizing manipulative behaviors are crucial in preventing exploitation. In today's digital age, traffickers often use social media to lure unsuspecting victims. Let's make sure our children know how to stay safe and seek help when they need it. There are many great online resources that can help guide you to creating a safer online experience for your family.

Our state has resources in place to combat this issue, but we cannot do it alone. I encourage you to partner with local organizations, churches, and community groups that are already doing incredible work to support survivors and raise awareness. Consider volunteering your time, donating to reputable anti-trafficking initiatives, or simply sharing information to spread the word.

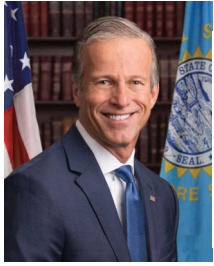
If you suspect human trafficking, please do not hesitate to report it. The National Human Trafficking Hotline is available 24/7 at 1-888-373-7888 or by texting 233733. All calls are confidential, and you can remain anonymous. Every report matters, and every call could save a life.

Together, as neighbors and as a community, we can create an environment where traffickers find no foothold and where every individual can thrive without fear. Let's stand united this January and beyond, committing to protect the vulnerable, support survivors, and bring traffickers to justice.

Robert Perry is the Cabinet Secretary for the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Let's Get to Work

On January 3, the new Republican majorities in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives were sworn in and I officially took over as Senate majority leader, and in a few weeks President Trump will take the oath of office. We have our work cut out for us to get this country back on the right track, and we are not wasting any time getting to work.

Much of the work we have to do is addressing the damage that the Biden administration has done over the last four years. We will need to secure the border, and that means providing the funding needed to execute the strong border policies we can expect from President Trump on day one. We will also need to lift some of the burdensome and expensive government regulations that have held our economy back.

Then of course we need to extend the tax relief Republicans delivered during the first Trump administration and pass an overdue farm bill with updated programs for farmers and ranchers that reflect current agricultural needs. And we will need to invest in military readiness, a task that has only grown more important as the world has grown less stable in recent years.

There's a lot of important work to get done, and the Republican Congress and the Trump administration will work hard to deliver. I'm humbled by the trust that my colleagues have put in me to lead this Senate Republican majority, and I will work every day to be worthy of that trust.

Of course, I find myself in this position first and foremost because of the trust that the people of South Dakota have placed in me. Without that trust, I would not have had the opportunity to serve at all, let alone serve as majority leader of the United States Senate. And my first priority will always be to serve South Dakota.

I'm proud to be a son of small-town South Dakota. Growing up in Murdo I learned the character of South Dakotans – the work ethic, the commitment to freedom coupled with a belief in personal responsibility, the sense of responsibility to the broader community. As a kid, I knew that if a roof collapsed under the weight of snow, or a windstorm came through and wiped out a barn, or we lost a friend or family member, the whole community would rally around to help. And that same attitude is reflected in towns across our state.

The South Dakota values I learned growing up helped shape my political philosophy: my belief that government should be limited, and that it is best when it's closest to the people; that freedom is a sacred gift and must be defended; that with freedom comes responsibility; and that while government is necessary, government is not where we should look for salvation.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve and for the South Dakota values that guide my service. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my family: to my parents Harold and Pat, to my wife Kimberley, and to my two daughters and their families. And I thank God, who has richly blessed me in every way. Now let's get to work.

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What I'm looking forward to this year

Over the past four years, Americans have been burdened by the results of the Biden Administration's policies, like an open border, high inflation, mandates that are increasingly difficult to meet for energy production, vehicle emissions, health care, firearms, and more.

When I travel around South Dakota, the one comment I hear from most people is they are struggling to make ends meet due to high prices. Since President Biden took office, I have voted against more than \$13 trillion in progressive spending. Unfortunately, those spending plans passed with Democrat support and handed the bill to American families who are now paying more than \$13,000 per year to buy the same goods, compared to four years ago. The President and Congress cannot spend beyond our means.

I'm optimistic for change. In a few short weeks, Congress and the Trump Administration will put conservative policies back in place. We'll secure the border, restore fiscal sanity, extend Trump's tax cuts, get tough on China, and make government more efficient.

Here are a few things I'm looking forward to in 2025:

Border security: More than ten million illegal immigrants have entered our country since January 2021. It's time to finish the border wall, increase Border Patrol, and reimplement Trump-era policies like Remain in Mexico to prevent more individuals from entering illegally.

Fiscal sanity: Congress and the White House must work together to cut unnecessary federal spending. I've worked with Members of Congress to pass a spending package that cut spending for the first time in over a decade. While it didn't bring the budget to where it needs to be, there is power in incrementalism, and I look forward to making more aggressive cuts to government spending.

China: It's clear the Chinese Communist Party is not backing down from targeting America. Just this week, Chinese government hackers breached the U.S. Treasury Department looking for information on which Chinese companies may be designated for sanctions. China's aggression cannot continue to go unchecked. We can't allow them to continue to bully America. As a member of the Select Committee on China, I'm in a unique position to work with President Trump to protect America from our adversary.

Making government more efficient: The Biden Administration's bloated approach to bureaucracy—from spending to government programs to regulations—is coming to an end. I'm excited for the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and my role as part of the DOGE Caucus in the House to cut spending, reform welfare, cut regulations, and streamline government programs.

I'm expectant for a conservative House, Senate, and White House, that are aligned on policies to improve our economy, boost domestic production, lower prices for families, and make America a safer place.

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ROUND[S] UP 2024: A YEAR IN REVIEW

Welcome to the 2024 Round[s] Up: A Year in Review! I hope you had a joyful Christmas season with friends and family, and that your 2025 is off to a great start. I was fortunate to spend the holidays with my loved ones at home in Fort Pierre enjoy-

ing our yearly traditions and taking time to reflect on 2024. My team and I are incredibly grateful for the trust and support from our constituents and we remain committed to working tirelessly on behalf of South Dakotans in 2025. Here is a recap of just a few things we kept busy with during 2024:

South Dakotans I met with: I held 135 meetings in DC with folks from our great state.

Visited with South Dakotans from: 119 different towns across the state—from Britton to Edgemont and everywhere in between.

Other meetings: I had 196 other meetings, ranging from Trump's cabinet nominees to the weekly Senate Bible study.

Votes taken: 308.

Hearings: I attended 62 hearings throughout 2024 for my committee assignments on Armed Services; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Indian Affairs; Veteran Affairs and the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Classified Briefings: I attended a total of 46 classified briefings. These mostly pertain to my work on the Senate Armed Service Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Legislation introduced: In 2024, I introduced 21 different pieces of legislation, ranging from an Act to fast-track combat veterans' access to health care benefits to a resolution to permanently address federal overregulation in America and a recent piece of legislation to return education to our states by eliminating the U.S. Department of Education. I also cosponsored 73 bills in 2024.

Results: Four standalone bills that I introduced this year were signed into law, either by themselves or part of a larger package. In addition, I authored 40 provisions that passed as part of the National Defense Authorization Act in 2024. You can view a full list of those here.

My staff in South Dakota made visits to nearby towns a total of 153 times.

Our office responded to 45,354 incoming messages from constituents in 2024, with the primary concerns being health care, foreign relations and agriculture.

Our office received 545 requests from South Dakotans for assistance with federal agencies, with the primary issues being veterans administration, U.S. citizenship and immigration services and the IRS.

Steps taken in 2024: 1,343,181 steps or 619 miles. That's about the same distance as walking across South Dakota from east to west AND north to south combined. Always on the move!

As we head into a new year, I am excited to continue working on your behalf in Washington. If you need assistance with any federal agency or simply want to leave a comment or concern, please don't hesitate to send me a message or call one of my offices in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls or Washington.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

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Aches, Pain and Another Year Older

It's hard to believe another year has already started. How many of these new years can a person have without going crazy?

That's my explanation to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage about why I am crazy. She believes I am crazy, but she doesn't accept my reason for thinking I'm crazy.

The past year was rather challenging. I had some health issues, not too serious, but aggravating all the same. I've seen my doctor more than my wife this past year. Believe me, I'm not too excited in seeing my doctor. He must be related to Dracula because he always wants my blood.

However, when I have a physical issue, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage makes sure I see my doctor. I tell her that I'm okay and don't need to see a doctor. She smiles at me and says, "I didn't hear what you said, but you're going to see the doctor."

I'm not complaining; I do have some health issues, but I sure don't have anything serious in the health department. I have some friends that are really sick and some that are in the hospital, and so I pray for them and thank God that I'm not that sick.

As this year begins, I've noticed that I am achy with pain in just about every area of my body. I can't remember ever having this kind of pain before but there it is.

I used to make fun of my father when he was complaining about some of his pain. I just wish he were alive so that he can see I'm going through the same kind of pain as he went through and then he could laugh at me.

I don't know who's laughing at me because my hearing isn't 100%. I have my suspicions.

Every once in a while, I have trouble with my right leg, and it seems to pass out or something. I have a hard time walking when my leg is like that. It is not really serious just aggravating.

I'm not to the point where I need a walking cane, let alone a wheelchair.

A relative of mine who is about one year older than me is in a wheelchair and cannot walk at all.

My doctor has prescribed a lot of medication for me, and The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage ensures I take my medicine daily. If I didn't know better I would think I was a drug addict.

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Keep this a little secret between you and me, but sometimes, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage forgets to give me my medicine. Being the crazy guy that I am, I never remind her of that. I just snicker on the inside and count it one victory for me.

In the many years of our marriage, I have discovered that what the wife doesn't know doesn't hurt the husband.

My wife's memory is 150%. But there are times when she forgets my medicine because of her busy schedule, and who am I to tell her about it?

I don't get away with very much, but when I do get away with something I'm thrilled.

Once in a while The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage will come into my office and see me smiling and then say, "Okay, what did I forget to do?"

Even when she forgets something, she remembers that she forgot something. There's no winning in this situation.

I was complaining about my body aching in various places, and I looked at my wife and said, "I think I'm going to go to a body shop and get some parts replaced. Do you have any recommendations?"

Without skipping a beat, she replied, "I know an antique store you could go to."

I pretended not to hear that, but she knew I heard it. It's interesting that there are a lot of things that I can't hear, but then there are things that I can hear, and it's aggravating.

One thing I have discovered is that when I walk with a cane people will hold the door open for me and let me go through. At first I was a little embarrassed by that. But then one day I was standing in line at McDonald's I happened to have my cane along for some reason I'm not sure why, and because I was walking with a cane they let me go to the front of the line.

I'm beginning to see some good aspects to getting old. This year, my New Year's resolution is to find all of these good aspects and cash in.

My father used to say, "When life gives you a lemon make some lemonade." At the time, I didn't quite understand what he was saying, but now that I have reached this age, I do understand what he meant. Next week I'll set up a lemonade stand.

It doesn't pay to complain; rather, it pays to find out how to look on the positive side of things.

In my devotions I read some scripture that was encouraging.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

My focus this year must not be on my pain, but on the One who gives me strength everyday to life for Him.

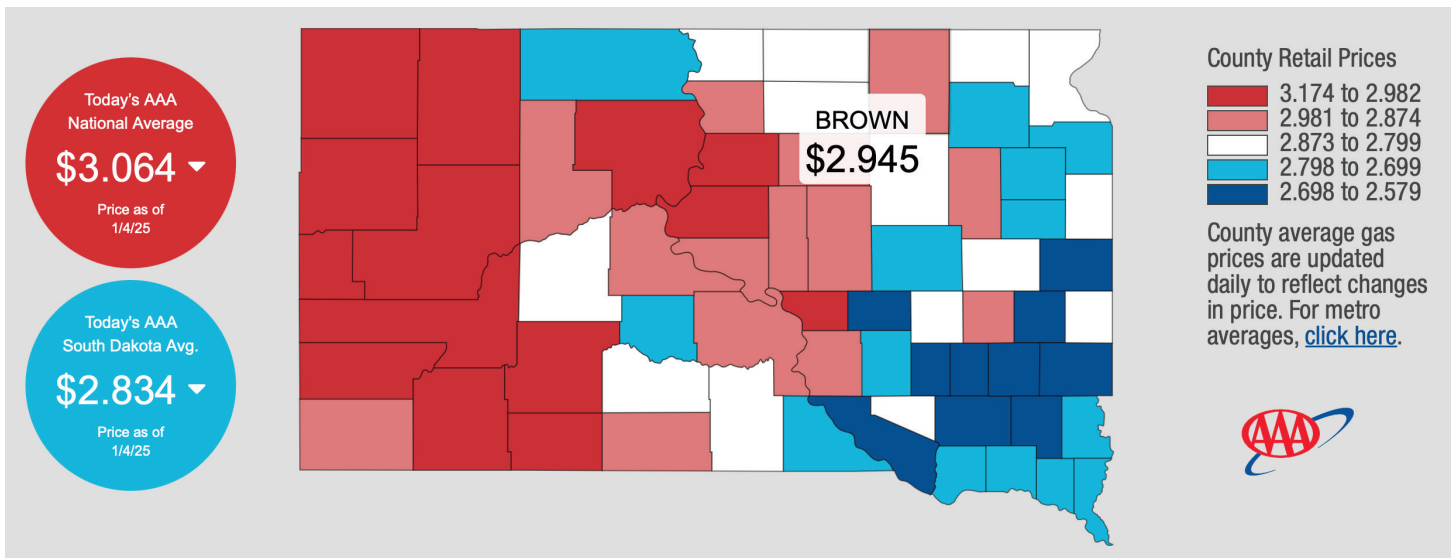
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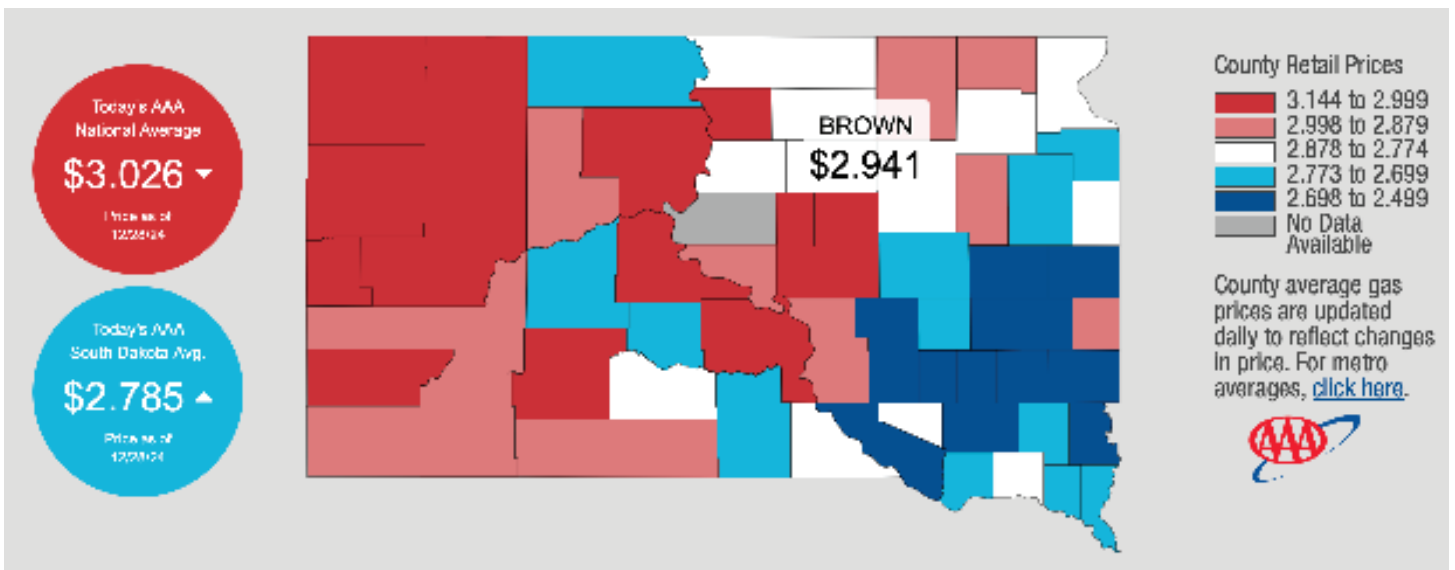
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.834	\$3.042	\$3.478	\$3.261
Yesterday Avg.	\$2.845	\$3.058	\$3.517	\$3.254
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.785	\$3.000	\$3.443	\$3.201
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.843	\$3.052	\$3.473	\$3.286
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.927	\$3.114	\$3.591	\$3.732

This Week



Last Week

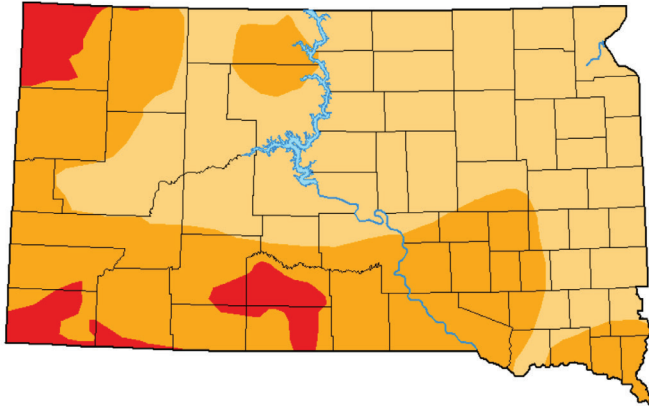


Area type: State Area: South Dakota Statistics type: Cumulative Percent

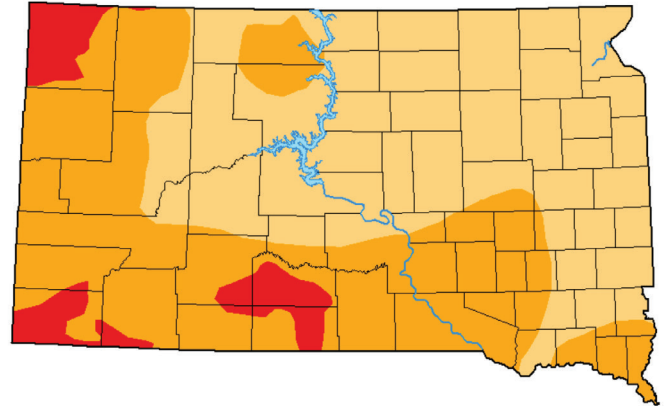
Drought Classification

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Drought Monitor



December 31



December 24

Warm temperature dominated the High Plains this week, with departures ranging up to 20 degrees F above normal, especially along the northern portions of the region. Precipitation fell across much of the region this week, but amounts were not large enough to justify large improvement across much of the High Plains. Extreme drought was expanded in northern Nebraska, while moderate drought was expanded in southeast Kansas. Abnormal dryness was expanded in southwest Colorado, where weekly rainfall totals are 5% to 20% or normal for the week. Small areas of the region did observe heavy rainfall, where rainfall totals were more than an inch above normal. This above-normal precipitation allowed for improvements to be made in South Dakota and along the Wyoming-Colorado border. Moderate to extreme drought were improved in northern Colorado and southern Wyoming, while severe drought was improved in western South Dakota. Abnormal dryness was also improved in areas along the Wyoming-Colorado border this week.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Noem's attempt to 'prioritize education' gets failing grade

Governor proposes \$4 million from tight budget for private and alternative instruction

by Dana Hess



Gov. Kristi Noem presents her annual budget address to lawmakers in the South Dakota State Capitol on Dec. 3, 2024. (Makenzie Huber/

South Dakota Searchlight)

Soon Gov. Kristi Noem could be installed as the next Secretary of Homeland Security. In one of her last official acts as governor, Noem managed to instill some uncertainty in South Dakota's public education system.

During her budget speech, Noem claimed she wanted to continue to "prioritize education." Notice that she didn't say "prioritize public education." In what was likely her final budget address to the Legislature, Noem proposed an ongoing \$4 million expenditure to help families pay for private school tuition and other forms of alternative instruction.

Her largesse toward families seeking to pay for a

private school education came during a budget address in which she:

Offered a paltry 1.25% funding increase for the "big three" of health care, public education and state employee salaries.

Unveiled \$71.9 million in budget reductions and discretionary changes.

Included in the budget cuts a \$2 million reduction for the Board of Regents and a \$3.6 million cut for South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Noem proposed that the state would pay about \$3,000 per student annually for private school tuition or alternative instruction. Private schools, homeschoolers and other forms of alternative instruction operate under a different set of rules. It's a veritable wild west of schools that can be unaccredited or accredited by someone other than the state. In other words, good luck figuring out how your tax dollars are being spent.

It's probably possible to figure out how much money the state of South Dakota has invested in public education since statehood. Instead of doing the math, let's just assume it totals in the billions of dollars. It seems at cross purposes for the state to make that kind of long-term investment in public education

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only to turn around and start funding its competitors.

Instead of tackling the bigger issues in public education, Noem has revved up the Legislature for a fight over an idea that's trendy in conservative circles. It's also an idea that the state can't afford. Any state budget that proposes tens of millions in cuts isn't likely to have a spare \$4 million. If there is \$4 million extra in the state budget, it should be funneled into teacher salaries.

Through neglect and short-sightedness lawmakers and the governor have let teachers's salaries sink back near the bottom of the barrel nationally. Noem's proposed 1.25% increase in education funding certainly isn't going to do much to get South Dakota's national teacher salary ranking out of the basement.

With its low teacher salary ranking, South Dakota's universities find themselves training the next generation of teachers for the surrounding states that make a greater attempt to pay teachers what they are worth. When qualified teachers become harder to attract because of South Dakota's low salaries, school districts will be forced to cut their offerings, hamstringing the very education that Noem says she has gone to such great lengths to "prioritize."

The last time South Dakota made any progress in this area was in 2016 when Gov. Dennis Daugaard led an effort to raise the state sales tax by half a percent with some of the funds dedicated to raising teachers' salaries. Since then, lawmakers have cut the state sales tax and mandated a \$45,000 minimum salary for public school teachers without offering any extra funding to help schools reach that goal.

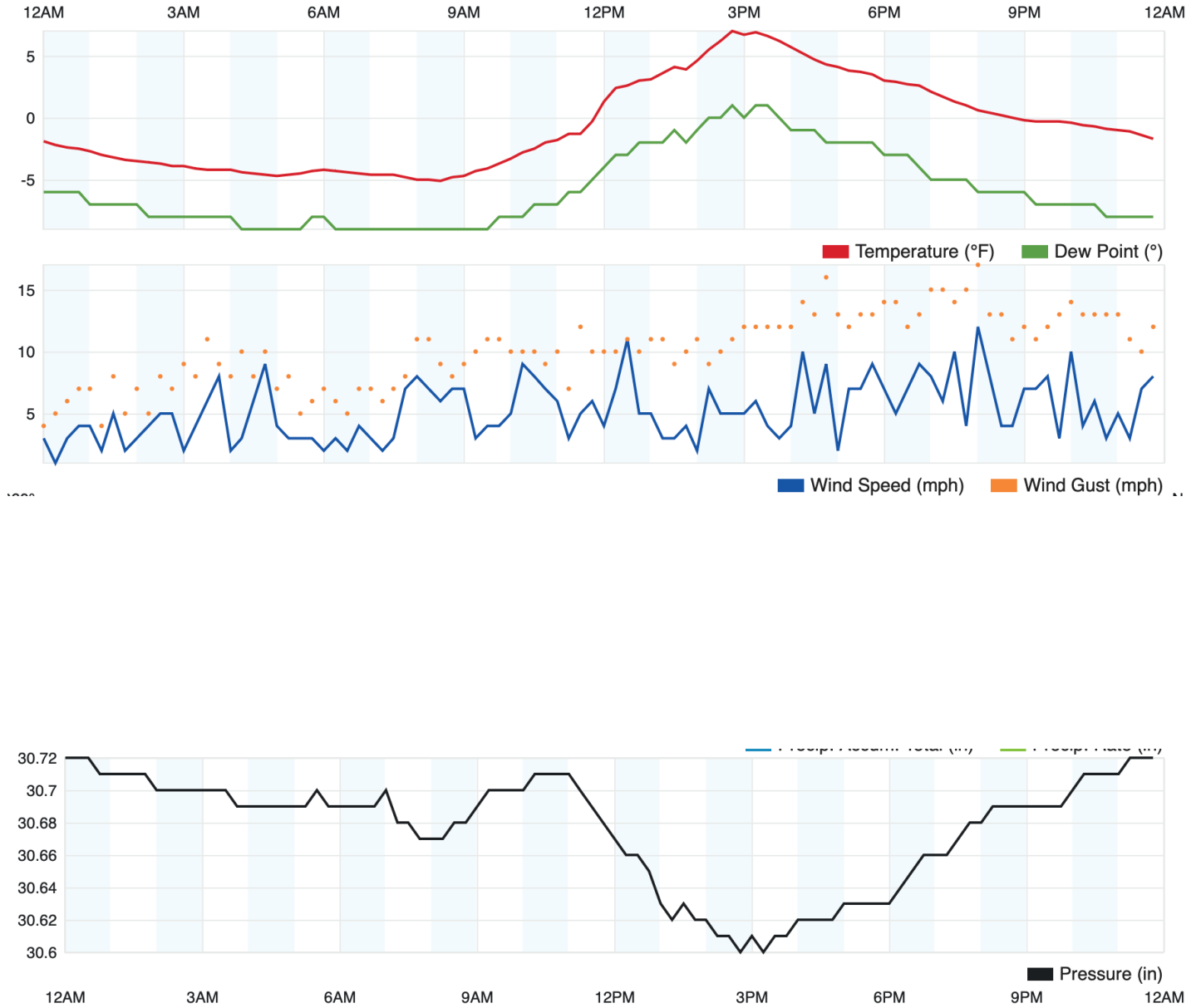
Given the state of the budget Noem proposed, lawmakers would do well to put their efforts into protecting public education and finding a funding source that could ensure that the state's teacher salaries are no longer a national embarrassment.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 8 °F

Cold

Tonight



Low: -7 °F

Mostly Cloudy

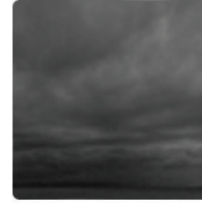
Monday



High: 14 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Monday Night



Low: 1 °F

Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 12 °F

Mostly Sunny

SUNDAY

MONDAY















TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

<p>5</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Forecast: 9° -5° 0 in</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>Cloudy Forecast: 17° 5° 0 in</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>Mostly Sunny Forecast: 13° 0° 0 in</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Forecast: 26° 16° 0 in</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>Cloudy Forecast: 37° 20° 0 in</p>	<p>10</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Forecast: 26° 15° 0 in</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Cloudy Forecast: 29° 18° 0 in</p>
<p>12</p>  <p>Mostly Cloudy Forecast: 28° 18° 0 in</p>	<p>13</p>  <p>Mostly Cloudy Forecast: 25° 11° 0 in</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>Mostly Cloudy Forecast: 25° 12° 0 in</p>	<p>15</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Forecast: 29° 17° 0 in</p>	<p>16</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Forecast: 30° 14° 0 in</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy Forecast: 27° 13° 0 in</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>Mostly Cloudy Forecast: 21° 5° 0 in</p>

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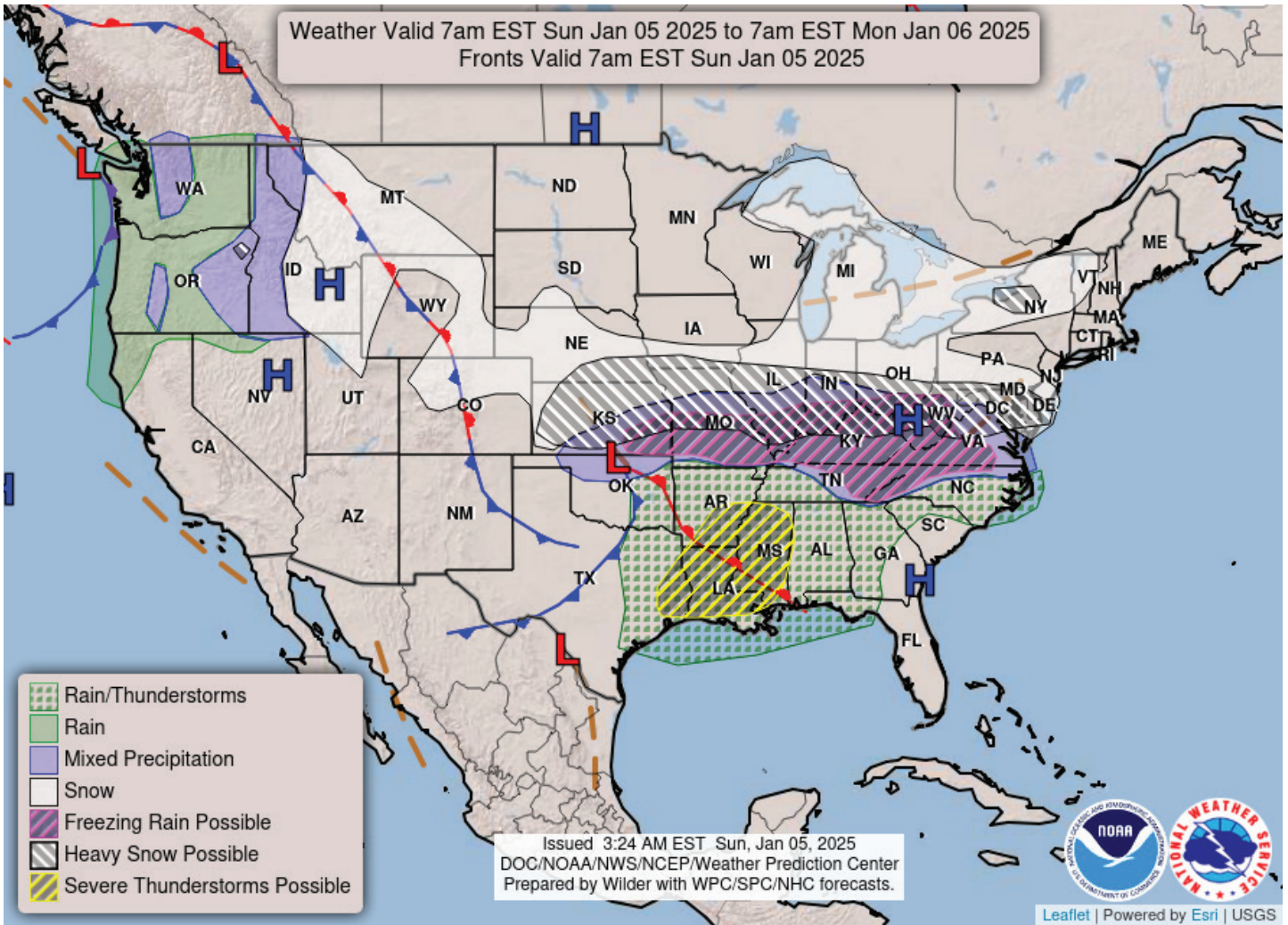
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 7 °F at 2:47 PM
Low Temp: -5 °F at 8:21 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 8:01 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 8 hours, 55 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 63 in 2012
Record Low: -32 in 1924
Average High: 24
Average Low: 3
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.10
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.10
Precip Year to Date: 21.71
Sunset Tonight: 5:05:53 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09:58 am



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Today in Weather History

January 5, 1994: A low-pressure system traveled from the Dakotas, across southern Minnesota, and to the Great Lakes Region, from the late morning of the 5th, through the early evening of the 7th. By the early evening hours on the 7th, up to three and one-half feet of snow had fallen along the higher terrain of Lake Superior. The storm also produced heavy snow across parts of central Minnesota. Six inches or more occurred across much of central Minnesota. In west-central Minnesota, Wheaton and Artichoke Lake received 5 inches, with 6 inches at Browns Valley.

January 5, 2012: Numerous record high temperatures were broken across central and northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota throughout the week. Some of the records were broken by as much as 12 to 17 degrees and held 80 to 90 years. Aberdeen surpassed their record high for January by 3 degrees with 63 degrees on Thursday, January 5th. Kennebec tied their all-time record high for January with 70 degrees on January 5th.

1835 - It was a record cold morning in the eastern U.S. The mercury at the Yale Campus in New Haven CT plunged to 23 degrees below zero, and reached 40 below in the Berkshire Hills of Connecticut. (David Ludlum)

1880: Snow began falling in Seattle, Washington, and would continue for much of the week. When it was over, more than 5 feet of snow was recorded.

1884: One of only two days in history during which the temperature at Louisville, Kentucky, never rose above zero. The low was 20 degrees below, with a high of 1 below zero.

1888: Snowfall amounts of 3.5 to 5 inches fell over Sacramento, California. The heaviest snow in recent history was two inches on February 4-5th in 1976. Click the link for a newspaper article from the Sacramento Daily Union, published on Jan 6th, 1888

1892: From the History of Fayetteville, Georgia, "Another traumatic event occurred in Fayetteville on the evening of January 5, 1892, about six o'clock in the evening. A terrible tornado or cyclone struck the town of Fayetteville just as many had sat down for dinner. The storm killed three people and injured many more as its raging force destroyed numerous residences, outbuildings, and structures, including the academy, as well as killing abundant livestock. The event was written about as far away as Savannah."

1904 - Bitterly cold air gripped the northeastern U.S. Morning lows of -42 degrees at Smethport PA and -34 at River Vale NJ established state records. (The Weather Channel)

1913 - The temperature at the east portal to Strawberry Tunnel reached 50 degrees below zero to tie the record established at Woodruff on February 6, 1899. (David Ludlum)

1962: Two tornadoes, about 100 yards apart and each making paths about 100 yards wide, followed parallel paths from southeast to northwest through the edge of the Crestview, Florida's residential area. These tornadoes killed one and injured 30 others.

1982 - A three day rainstorm in the San Francisco area finally came to an end. Marin County and Cruz County were drenched with up to 25 inches of rain, and the Sierra Nevada Range was buried under four to eight feet of snow. The storm claimed at least 36 lives, and caused more than 300 million dollars damage. (Storm Data)

1987 - A massive winter storm spread heavy snow from the southwestern U.S. into the Rockies. In Utah, the Alta ski resort reported a storm total of 42 inches of snow. Winds gusted to 64 mph at Albuquerque NM. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms helped produce heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Snow fell at the rate of four to five inches per hour, and snowfall totals ranged up to 69 inches at Highmarket NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A strong Pacific cold front produced heavy snow and high winds in Nevada. Winds gusted to 80 mph north of Reno, while up to two feet of snow blanketed the Lake Tahoe ski area. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Central Gulf Coast Region. New Orleans, LA, was drenched with 4.05 inches of rain in 24 hours. An overnight storm blanketed the mountains of northern Utah with up to eleven inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



BLURRED VISION

A famous physician who specialized in working with alcoholics and other addicts was lecturing a group of young medical students. During his lecture on addictive substances and intoxicants, one of them raised his hand and asked, "Is it true that alcohol enables people to do things better?"

After thinking for a moment, the insightful physician replied, "No, it does not. But it does make them less ashamed of doing things badly."

Actually, God's Word presents the results of drinking alcohol much clearer. A verse in Proverbs from The Living Bible states its dangers in these terms: "Wine gives false courage, hard liquor leads to brawls; what fools men are to let it master them."

Alcohol depresses people's convictions and removes the restraints that govern behavior. It "frees" individuals to behave in ways that are destructive and damaging to themselves and others. The commitment to do what is right and avoid what is harmful and destructive is blurred and distorted. Seeing the beauty of decency and purity vanishes. Care and concern for others is lost in the fog of forgetfulness and harm and injustice replaces what was once right and just.

Although there are many who would defend the use of alcohol, in the final analysis it is defenseless.

Prayer: Lord, You want us to have sensitive hearts, keen minds, helpful hands and purposeful lives. All of this vanishes when we consume substances that take from us the ability to discern what You want us to do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today Wine gives false courage, hard liquor leads to brawls; what fools men are to let it master them. Proverbs 20:1

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:
01.03.25

20 42 46 59 69 19

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$62,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.04.25

1 3 17 21 34 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,350,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.04.25

3 9 27 29 33 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 12 Mins
54 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.04.25

20 26 29 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.04.25

12 25 63 65 66 14

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.04.25

26 32 43 54 56 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$220,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 01/05/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/26/2025 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed at the Community Center 10am-1pm
- 01/26/2025 87th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 02/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 02/05/2025 FB Live Electronic Hwy 12 Sign Drawing City Hall 12pm
- 03/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
- 04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 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
- 06/07/2025 Day of Play
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 66, Yankton 39
Aberdeen Roncalli 61, Webster 22
Baltic 45, Luverne, Minn. 42
Bennett County 71, Colome 6
Canistota 57, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 37
Centerville 64, Hills-Beaver Creek, Minn. 58
Dickinson Trinity, N.D. 40, Rapid City Christian 29
Elk Point-Jefferson 38, Viborg-Hurley 35
Faulkton 62, Wolsey-Wessington 43
Groton 51, Redfield 9
Highmore-Harrold 60, Wessington Springs 50
Kadoka 66, Lead-Deadwood 14
Potter County 52, Leola-Frederick High School 44
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 54, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 51
Sioux Falls Christian 63, Winner 50
Spearfish 49, Hot Springs 10
St Thomas More 54, Campbell County, Wyo. 37
Sturgis Brown High School 51, Douglas 29
Sully Buttes 59, Aberdeen Christian 26
T F Riggs High School 70, Bismarck, N.D. 41
Timber Lake 49, Ipswich 46
Tri-State, N.D. 56, Britton-Hecla 51
Madison Classic=
Belle Fourche 46, Howard 33
Lower Brule 32, Platte-Geddes 28
Miller 60, Gregory 13
Mobridge-Pollock 57, Flandreau 36
Wynot, Neb. 56, Waubay/Summit 38
Midwest Miracles Classic=
Dell Rapids 57, Osmond, Neb. 19
Dell Rapids St Mary 61, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 49
Sacred Hoops Classic=
Burke 59, Crow Creek Tribal School 40
Jones County 53, Pine Ridge 40
St Francis, Kan. 47, Kimball-White Lake 26
West Central 49, Milbank 43
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Hettinger-Scranton, N.D. vs. Faith, ppd.
South Heart, N.D. vs Lemmon High School, ppd

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BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 57, Yankton 49
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 58, Centerville 56
Bennett County 74, Colome 15
Bismarck, N.D. 79, T F Riggs High School 64
Britton-Hecla 55, Tri-State, N.D. 45
Dakota Valley 63, Lakota Tech 32
Douglas 56, Sturgis Brown High School 45
Lead-Deadwood 71, Kadoka 62
Leola-Frederick High School 81, Potter County 51
Madison 64, Worthington, Minn. 59
Rapid City Christian 66, Dickinson Trinity, N.D. 38
Rapid City Stevens 48, Rapid City Central 26
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 56, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 41
Shiloh, N.D. 69, Mobridge-Pollock 64
Spearfish 75, Hot Springs 38
Timber Lake 51, Ipswich 37
Warner 50, Northwestern 41
Wessington Springs 62, Highmore-Harrold 42
Wolsey-Wessington 60, Faulkton 27
Madison Classic=
Custer 60, Tracy-Milroy-Balaton, Minn. 54
Ethan 61, Wilmot 43
Hill City 55, Waubay/Summit 41
Howard 48, Wynot, Neb. 40
Lower Brule 49, DeSmet 46
Luverne, Minn. 74, Baltic 53
Miller 60, Belle Fourche 47
Parker 32, Tiospaye Topa 22
Platte-Geddes 58, Milbank 51
Midwest Miracles Classic=
Dell Rapids 63, Freeman 51
Groton 86, Redfield 11
Vermillion 65, Pine Ridge 45
Viborg-Hurley 60, Elk Point-Jefferson 28
Sacred Hoops Classic=
Crow Creek Tribal School 64, Mitchell Christian 45
West Central 69, St Francis, Kan. 48
Winner 60, Mahpiya Lúta Red Cloud 40
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Hettinger-Scranton, N.D. vs. Faith, ppd.
South Heart, N.D. vs. Lemmon High School, ppd.

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

Touchdown Tommy! Montana State's Mellott wins Walter Payton Award as top FCS offensive player

FRISCO, Texas (AP) — Montana State quarterback Tommy Mellott won the Walter Payton Award as the Football Championship Subdivision offensive player of the year Saturday night, two days before the top-ranked Bobcats face North Dakota State in the title game.

Called Touchdown Tommy, the speedy Mellott edged North Dakota State quarterback Cam Miller and Southern Utah running back Targhee Lambson in voting announced at the FCS Awards Banquet.

The first Montana State winner of the award, Mellott had 147 points, receiving 16 first-place votes. Miller followed with 131 with 14 first-place votes and Lambson had 115 with five first-place votes.

"Very humbling moment," Mellott said. "I'm very, very honored."

Mellott has led Big Sky champion Montana State to a 15-0 record. The senior from Butte, Montana, topped The Associated Press FCS All-America team and was the Walter Camp FCS Player of the Year. He leads the division in passing efficiency and points responsible for.

"It's a surreal moment for sure," Mellott said. "Three years ago I was on the sideline after being injured in the national championship game, and I was talking on the mic to the quarterback coach at the time, Coach (Taylor) Housewright, and he said, 'If you don't become the Walter Payton Award winner, we failed you.' So, I think it's just a testament to what we've done as a program."

Montana State and North Dakota State are set to meet Monday night at Toyota Stadium. Bobcats coach Brent Vigen received the Eddie Robinson Award as the coach of the year.

Central Arkansas defensive end David Walker won the Buck Buchanan Award as the top defensive player.

Forte puts up 22, South Dakota knocks off Denver 91-84

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Chase Forte scored 22 points as South Dakota beat Denver 91-84 on Saturday night.

Forte added seven rebounds for the Coyotes (10-7, 1-1 Summit League). Isaac Bruns scored 21 points while going 5 of 9 and 11 of 14 from the free-throw line and added five rebounds. Cameron Fens shot 3 of 4 from the field and 4 of 10 from the free-throw line to finish with 10 points.

DeAndre Craig led the way for the Pioneers (6-11, 0-2) with 15 points. Nicholas Shogbonyo added 13 points and 12 rebounds for Denver. Sebastian Akins had 12 points and eight assists.

Heavy snow brings widespread disruption across the UK

LONDON (AP) — Heavy snow and freezing rain has brought widespread disruption across the U.K., with several major airports forced to suspend flights and many key roads in the north of England unnavigable.

With the weather set to stay inclement on Sunday, there are concerns that many rural communities could be cut off with up to 40 centimeters (15 inches) of snow on ground above 300 meters (985 feet).

The National Grid, which oversees the country's electricity network, said it had been working to restore power after outages across the country. The company's live map shows power cuts in Birmingham in central England, Bristol in the west and Cardiff in Wales.

Many sporting events have already been postponed, but the heavyweight Premier League fixture between Liverpool and Manchester United is still on, though there will be another inspection later.

Liverpool's John Lennon Airport and Manchester Airport had to close runways and divert flights, Birmingham Airport also suspended operations for several hours overnight but said it was on schedule for "business as usual" on Sunday.

The road network was heavily impacted too, on what would have been a very busy day with many families returning home from the Christmas and New Year break and students heading back to universities.

On the railways, many services were canceled with National Rail warning of disruption continuing into the working week.

Britain's main weather forecaster, the Met Office, has forecast the sleet and snow will continue to push north on Sunday and be heaviest in northern England and into southern Scotland. After experiencing freezing rain for a time, the south will turn milder.

Frost and icy patches will continue through the early part of the week, but Monday and Tuesday will become drier with sunny spells and scattered wintry showers.

Ukraine will ask allies to boost its air defenses at a meeting in Germany, Zelenskyy says

By VOLODYMR YURCHUK and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he will again call on allies to boost its air defenses at this week's meeting in Germany, as U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes over later this month with a vow to end the almost three-year war quickly.

Zelenskyy said that dozens of partner countries will participate in the meeting of the Ramstein group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany on Thursday, "including those who can help boost our capabilities not only to defend against missiles but also against guided bombs and Russian aviation."

"We will discuss this with them and continue to persuade them," Zelenskyy said in his nightly address on Saturday. "The task remains unchanged: strengthening our air defense."

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin will attend the meeting. Biden was originally scheduled to attend the October summit in Ramstein but it was postponed because of response to Hurricane Milton that battered the U.S.

In its last few weeks in office, the Biden administration was pressing to send as much military aid as possible to Ukraine before Trump is sworn in Jan. 20.

Trump claimed during his election campaign that he could end the war in one day and his comments have put a question mark over whether the United States will continue to be Ukraine's biggest — and most important — military backer.

Zelenskyy said last week that Trump is "strong and unpredictable," and those qualities can be a decisive factor in his policy approach to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia controls about one-fifth of Ukraine, and capitalized last year on weaknesses in Ukraine's defenses to slowly advance in eastern areas despite high losses of troops and equipment. The war's trajectory isn't in Ukraine's favor. The country is shorthanded on the front line and needs continued support from its Western partners.

Zelenskyy said Saturday that Russian and North Korean troops had suffered heavy losses in the fighting in Russia's Kursk region.

"In battles yesterday and today near just one village, Makhnovka, in the Kursk region, the Russian army lost up to a battalion of North Korean infantry soldiers and Russian paratroopers," Zelenskyy said. "This is significant."

Zelenskyy said last month that 3,000 North Korean troops had been killed and wounded in Kursk, where Ukrainian forces launched an incursion in August, dealing a blow to Russia's prestige and forcing it to deploy some of its troops from a slow-moving offensive in eastern Ukraine.

The incursion didn't significantly change the dynamic of the war, and military analysts say Ukraine has lost around 40% of the land it initially captured.

In other developments, nine people were wounded in a Russian guided bomb attack on the border town of Semenivka in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region on Saturday evening, local officials said.

Moscow sent 103 drones into Ukraine overnight into Sunday, Ukrainian officials said. According to Ukraine's air force, 61 drones were destroyed and 42 were lost likely due to electronic jamming.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that 61 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight into Sunday in five regions of western Russia. No casualties were reported but Rostov regional Gov. Yuri Slyusar said residential buildings and cars had been damaged by falling drone debris.

South Korean protesters brave cold to demand Yoon's ouster as detention deadline looms

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Hundreds of South Koreans, bundled up against freezing temperatures and snow, rallied overnight into Sunday near the residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, calling for his ouster and arrest, as authorities prepared to renew their efforts to detain him over his short-lived martial law decree.

Dozens of anti-corruption agency investigators and police attempted to execute a detention warrant against Yoon on Friday but retreated from his residence in Seoul after a tense standoff with the presidential security service that lasted more than five hours.

The one-week warrant for his detention is valid through Monday. There were no immediate indications that anti-corruption authorities were ready to send investigators back to the residence as of Sunday afternoon. Staff from the presidential security service were seen installing barbed wire near the gate and along the hills leading up to Yoon's residence over the weekend, possibly in preparation for another detention attempt.

Last Tuesday, a Seoul court issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence after the embattled president defied authorities by refusing to appear for questioning and obstructing searches of his office. But enforcing them is complicated as long as Yoon remains in his official residence.

Investigators from the country's anti-corruption agency are weighing charges of rebellion after the conservative president, apparently frustrated that his policies were blocked by a legislature dominated by the liberal opposition, declared martial law on Dec. 3 and dispatched troops to surround the National Assembly.

The Assembly overturned the declaration within hours in a unanimous vote and impeached Yoon on Dec. 14, accusing him of rebellion, while South Korean anti-corruption authorities and public prosecutors opened separate investigations into the events.

If the anti-corruption agency manages to detain Yoon, it will likely ask a court for permission to make a formal arrest. Otherwise, Yoon will be released after 48 hours.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which is leading a joint investigation with police and military investigators, says detaining Yoon would be "virtually impossible" as long as he is protected by the presidential security service. The agency has urged the country's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, to instruct the service to comply with their execution of the detention warrant, but Choi has yet to publicly comment on the issue.

In a video statement, Park Jong-joon, chief of the presidential security service, hit back against criticism that his organization has become Yoon's private army, saying it has legal obligations to protect the incumbent president. Park said he instructed his members not to use violence during their standoff with investigators and called for the anti-corruption agency and police to change their approach.

Park and the deputy chief of the presidential security service defied summonses on Saturday from police, who planned to question them over the suspected obstruction of official duty following Friday's events.

Yoon's legal team said it will file complaints against the anti-corruption agency's chief prosecutor, Oh Dong-woon, and approximately 150 investigators and police officers involved in Friday's detention attempt, which they claim was unlawful. The team said it will also file complaints with public prosecutors against the country's acting defense minister and police chief for ignoring the presidential security service's request to provide additional forces to block the detention attempt.

Yoon's lawyers had submitted an objection to the warrants against the president on Thursday, but the Seoul Western District Court dismissed the challenge on Sunday.

Park Chan-dae, floor leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, called for the anti-corruption agency to move quickly to detain Yoon, saying it was deeply disappointing to see the agency "hesitating and letting time slip away."

Hundreds of anti-Yoon protesters rallied for hours near the gates of the presidential residence from Saturday evening to Sunday, voicing frustration over the failed detention attempt and demanding stronger efforts to bring Yoon into custody. Separated by police barricades and buses, pro-Yoon protesters were

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gathering in nearby streets, denouncing his impeachment and vowing to block any efforts to detain him.

"With barely a day left before the execution deadline for Yoon Seok Yeol's detention warrant, the presidential security service continues to hide a criminal and the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials cannot be more relaxed," Kim Eun-jeong, an activist, said on a stage during the anti-Yoon rally.

"Angry citizens have already spent two freezing nights demanding his immediate detention. Are their voices not being heard?"

Yoon's lawyers have challenged the detention and search warrants against the president, saying they cannot be enforced at his residence due to a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge — which would be Yoon. They also argue the anti-corruption office lacks the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges and that police officers don't have the legal authority to assist in detaining Yoon.

While the presidential security act mandates protection for Yoon, it does not authorize the presidential security service to block court-ordered detentions. The service's attempts to block the execution of the warrant may amount to an obstruction of official duty, according to Park Sung-bae, an attorney specializing in criminal law. While the president mostly has immunity from prosecution while in office, the protection does not extend to allegations of rebellion or treason.

The agency said its outnumbered investigators had several scuffles with presidential security forces that threatened their safety and expressed "serious regret" that Yoon was not complying with the legal process.

After getting around a military unit guarding the residence's grounds, the agency's investigators and police were able to approach within 200 meters (about 218 yards) of Yoon's residential building but were stopped by a barricade comprising around 10 vehicles and approximately 200 members of the presidential security forces and troops. The agency said it wasn't able to visually confirm whether Yoon was inside the residence.

The Defense Ministry says the troops at Yoon's official residence are under the control of the presidential security service. Kim Seon-ho, the acting defense minister, conveyed his concern to the presidential security service, saying that deploying military personnel to block the execution of the detention warrant would be "inappropriate" and requesting that the troops aren't placed in a position where they might confront police, according to the ministry.

Yoon's defense minister, police chief and several top military commanders have already been arrested over their roles in the period of martial law.

Yoon's presidential powers have been suspended since the National Assembly voted to impeach him on Dec. 14. Yoon's fate now lies with the Constitutional Court, which has begun deliberations on whether to uphold the impeachment and formally remove Yoon from office or reinstate him.

The Golden Globes are Sunday night. Here are five things to look for and how to watch them

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

After a rocky few years and the disbanding of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the Golden Globes have seemingly stabilized. Now the question is: Can they still put on a good show?

The 82nd Golden Globes, beginning Sunday night at 8 p.m. EST, will hope to rekindle some of the frothy comic energy of the days when Ricky Gervais or Tina Fey and Amy Poehler hosted. Last year's comeback edition, hosted by Jo Koy, was widely panned, but it delivered where it counted: Ratings rebounded to about 10 million viewers, according to Nielsen. CBS signed up for five more years.

This time, comedian Nikki Glaser will be emceeding the ceremony from the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California. The Globes, now owned by Todd Boehly's Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions, will be broadcast live by CBS and available to stream live for subscribers to Paramount+ with Showtime beginning at 8 p.m. Eastern.

While Glaser doesn't have as widely seen contenders as last year, when "Oppenheimer" and "Barbie" were the headliners, the show does promise about as much star power as Hollywood can muster. Nominees

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including Zendaya, Timothée Chalamet, Angelina Jolie, Daniel Craig, Denzel Washington, Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo and Selena Gomez.

Jacques Audiard's Netflix musical "Emilia Pérez" comes in as the lead nominee, with 10 nods, followed by Brady Corbet's postwar epic "The Brutalist," with seven, and Edward Berger's papal thriller "Conclave," with six. Among the top-nominated series are "The Bear," "Shogun" and "Only Murders in the Building."

Here are a few things to look for heading into Sunday's Globes:

Will Timothée Chalamet win his first Globe?

The best actor in a drama category is a bruiser, with a field of Ralph Fiennes ("Conclave"), Adrien Brody ("The Brutalist"), Daniel Craig ("Queer"), Colman Domingo ("Sing Sing"), Sebastian Stan ("The Apprentice") and Chalamet, for the Bob Dylan film "A Complete Unknown." While Fiennes or Brody might take it, a win for Chalamet would be the first major award for the 29-year-old star — and surely would get the Oscar talk going.

How soon until someone mentions Hollywood's biggest feud?

Just days before the Globes, Blake Lively sued "It Ends With Us" director Justin Baldoni and several others tied to the romantic drama, alleging harassment and a coordinated campaign to attack her reputation for coming forward about her treatment on the set. Baldoni, who has denied it, joined in a suit accusing The New York Times for libel in its story on her allegations.

Whether or not any of this gets mentioned on the Beverly Hilton Ballroom stage, it will surely be on the minds of many attendees. Among the nominees for box-office achievement is "Deadpool & Wolverine," which star and was co-produced by Ryan Reynolds, Lively's husband. Glaser, whose sharply barbed jokes at a roast of Tom Brady helped catapult her to this moment, isn't known for biting her tongue.

How will 'Wicked' fare?

"Emilia Pérez" may have been favored over "Wicked" for the best comedy or musical award, but Jon M. Chu's theatrical hit is also in the mix for the Globes' nascent cinematic box office achievement award. Either, or both, of the leading ladies of "Wicked" could also win: Erivo in the leading actress category, and Grande in supporting.

Will politics play a starring role?

The Globes, taking place about two weeks before the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump, could get very political if presenters and winners are so inclined to continue what's been a mutually antagonistic relationship between Hollywood and Trump. That may be unlikely, though; so far in Hollywood's awards season, most nominees have tried to stay out of the fray.

That's with a major exception, though, in "The Apprentice," the young Trump drama starring Sebastian Stan and Jeremy Strong. Both were nominated by the Globes. Stan was also nominated a second time for his performance in "A Different Man."

Is there an Oscar frontrunner?

It's been an unusually uncertain awards season so far in many respects. No one movie has really stepped forward as the leading best picture contender, though several films — including "Conclave," "Anora," "Wicked," "Emilia Pérez" and "The Brutalist" — can all make a decent case. The Globes don't typically do much to sort out the field, but a strong showing from any of the above could add fuel to their Oscar campaign.

'Our country ignored Africa,' Jimmy Carter said. He didn't

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Jimmy Carter was the first U.S. president to make a state visit to sub-Saharan Africa. He once called helping with Zimbabwe's transition from white rule to independence "our greatest single success." And when he died at 100, his foundation's work in rural Africa had nearly fulfilled his quest to eliminate a disease that afflicted millions, for the first time since the eradication of smallpox.

The African continent, a booming region with a population rivaling China's that is set to double by 2050, is where Carter's legacy remains most evident. Until his presidency, U.S. leaders had shown little interest in Africa, even as independence movements swept the region in the 1960s and '70s.

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"I think the day of the so-called ugly American is over," Carter said during his warm 1978 reception in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country. He said the official state visit swept aside "past aloofness by the United States," and he joked that he and Nigerian President Olesgun Obasanjo would go into peanut farming together.

Cold War tensions drew Carter's attention to the continent as the U.S. and Soviet Union competed for influence. But Carter also drew on the missionary traditions of his Baptist faith and the racial injustice he witnessed in his homeland in the U.S. South.

"For too long our country ignored Africa," Carter told the Democratic National Committee in his first year as president.

African leaders soon received invitations to the White House, intrigued by the abrupt interest from the world's most powerful nation and what it could mean for them.

"There is an air of freshness which is invigorating," visiting Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda said.

Carter observed after his first Africa trip, "There is a common theme that runs through the advice to me of leaders of African nations: 'We want to manage our own affairs. We want to be friends with both of the great superpowers and also with the nations of Europe. We don't want to choose up sides.'"

The theme echoes today as China also jostles with Russia and the U.S. for influence, and access to Africa's raw materials. But neither superpower has had an emissary like Carter, who made human rights central to U.S. foreign policy and made 43 more trips to the continent after his presidency, promoting Carter Center projects that sought to empower Africans to determine their own futures.

As president, Carter focused on civil and political rights. He later broadened his efforts to include social and economic rights as the key to public health.

"They are the rights of the human by virtue of their humanity. And Carter is the single person in the world that has done the most for advancing this idea," said Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, a Sudanese legal scholar.

Even as a candidate, Carter mused about what he might accomplish, telling Playboy magazine, "it might be that now I should drop my campaign for president and start a crusade for black-majority rule in South Africa or Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). It might be that later on, we'll discover there were opportunities in our lives to do wonderful things and we didn't take advantage of them."

Carter welcomed Zimbabwe's independence just four years later, hosting new Prime Minister Robert Mugabe at the White House and quoting the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

"Carter told me that he spent more time on Rhodesia than he did on the entire Middle East. And when you go into the archives and look at the administration, there is indeed more on southern Africa than the Middle East," historian and author Nancy Mitchell said.

Relations with Mugabe's government soon soured amid deadly repression and by 1986 Carter led a walkout of diplomats in the capital. In 2008, Carter was barred from Zimbabwe, a first in his travels. He called the country "a basket case, an embarrassment to the region."

"Whatever the Zimbabwean leadership may think of him now, Zimbabweans, at least those who were around in the 1970s and '80s, will always regard him as an icon and a tenacious promoter of democracy," said Eldred Masunungure, a Harare-based political analyst.

Carter also criticized South Africa's government for its treatment of Black citizens under apartheid, at a time when South Africa was "trying to ingratiate itself with influential economies around the world," current President Cyril Ramaphosa said on X after Carter's death.

The think tank Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter founded in 1982 played a key role in monitoring African elections and brokering cease-fires between warring forces, but fighting disease was the third pillar of The Carter Center's work.

"The first time I came here to Cape Town, I almost got in a fight with the president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, because he was refusing to let AIDS be treated," Carter told a local newspaper. "That's the closest I've come to getting into a fist fight with a head of state."

Carter often said he was determined to outlive the last guinea worm infecting the human race. Once affecting millions of people, the parasitic disease has nearly been eliminated, with just 14 cases documented

in 2023 in a handful of African countries.

Carter's quest included arranging a four-month "guinea worm cease-fire" in Sudan in 1995 so that The Carter Center could reach almost 2,000 endemic villages.

"He taught us a lot about having faith," said Makoy Samuel Yibi, who leads the guinea worm eradication program for South Sudan's health ministry and grew up with people who believed the disease was simply their fate. "Even the poor people call these people poor, you see. To have the leader of the free world pay attention and try to uplift them is a touching virtue."

Such dedication impressed health officials in Africa over the years.

"President Carter worked for all humankind irrespective of race, religion, or status," Ethiopia's former health minister, Lia Tadesse, said in a statement shared with the AP. Ethiopia, the continent's second most populous country with over 110 million people, had zero guinea worm cases in 2023.

New Orleans mourns victims of truck attack with tearful vigil and celebration of life

By JIM MUSTIAN, JACK BROOK, STEPHEN SMITH and SARA CLINE Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — New Orleans mourned, wept and danced at a vigil Saturday evening along the famous thoroughfare where a man rammed a pickup truck into a crowd, killing and injuring revelers who were there to celebrate the new year.

A makeshift memorial of crosses and pictures of the 14 deceased victims amassed with candles, flowers and teddy bears. Victims' relatives held each other, some crying. But as a brass band began playing, the sorrow transformed into a celebration of life as the crowd snapped fingers, swayed and followed the music down Bourbon Street.

The coroner's office listed the cause of death for all 14 victims as "blunt force injuries." Beyond the deaths, authorities say about 30 other people suffered injuries in the attack early Wednesday by Shamsud-Din Jabbar, a former U.S. Army soldier who proclaimed his support for the Islamic State militant group in online videos posted hours before he struck.

Police fatally shot Jabbar, 42, during a firefight at the scene of the deadly crash on Bourbon Street, famous worldwide for its festive vibes in New Orleans' historic French Quarter.

University Medical Center New Orleans spokesperson Carolina Giepert said 13 people remained hospitalized, with eight people in intensive care.

Cathy Tenedorio, who lost her 25-year-old son Matthew, said she was moved by the flood of condolences and kindness at Saturday's vigil.

"This is the most overwhelming response of love, an outpouring of love. I'm floating through it all," she said.

New Orleans native Autrele Felix, 28, left a handwritten card beside a memorial for his friend Nicole Perez, a single mother who was killed.

"It means a lot, to see that our city comes together when there's a real tragedy," Felix said. "We all become one."

Others who crowded around the brass band said the best way to honor the victims was with a party.

"Because that's what they were down here to do, they were having a good time," life-long New Orleans resident Kari Mitten said.

President Joe Biden planned to travel to New Orleans with first lady Jill Biden on Monday to "grieve with the families and community members impacted by the tragic attack."

Federal authorities searching Jabbar's Houston home found a workbench in the garage and hazardous materials believed to have been used to make explosive devices, according to law enforcement officials familiar with the search.

Jabbar had suspected bomb-making materials at his home and reserved the vehicle used in the attack more than six weeks earlier, law enforcement officials told The Associated Press. The officials spoke on

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the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly about the inquiry.

Jabbar purchased a cooler in Vidor, Texas, hours before the attack and gun oil from a store in Sulphur, Louisiana. He also booked his truck rental on Nov. 14, suggesting he may have been plotting the attack for more than six weeks, authorities said.

Authorities found crude bombs that had been planted in the neighborhood in an apparent attempt to cause more carnage. Two improvised explosive devices left in coolers several blocks apart were rendered safe at the scene. Other devices were determined to be nonfunctional, officials said.

Investigators searching Jabbar's rental truck found a transmitter intended to trigger the two bombs, the FBI said in a statement Friday, adding that there were bomb-making materials at the New Orleans home Jabbar rented prior to the attack. Jabbar tried to burn down the house by setting a small fire in a hallway and placing accelerants to help spread it, the FBI said. The flames burned out before firefighters arrived.

Authorities on Friday were still investigating Jabbar's motives and how he carried out the attack. They say he exited the crashed truck wearing a ballistic vest and helmet and fired at police, wounding at least two officers before he was fatally shot by officers returning fire.

New Orleans police declined to say Friday how many shots were fired by Jabbar and police or whether any bystanders may have been hit, citing the active investigation.

Stella Cziment, who heads the city's civilian-run Office of the Independent Police Monitor, said investigators are working to account for "every single bullet that was fired" and whether any of them struck bystanders.

Police have used multiple vehicles and barricades to block traffic at Bourbon and Canal streets since the attack. Other law enforcement agencies helped city officers provide extra security, said Reese Harper, a New Orleans police spokesperson.

The first parade of the Carnival season leading up to Mardi Gras was scheduled to take place Monday. New Orleans also will host the Super Bowl on Feb. 9.

"This enhanced safety effort will continue daily, not just during large events," Harper said in a statement.

In a previous effort to protect the French Quarter, the city installed steel columns known as bollards to restrict vehicle access to Bourbon Street. The posts retracted to allow deliveries to bars and restaurants. They stopped working reliably after being gummed up by Mardi Gras beads, beer and other detritus.

When New Year's Eve arrived, the bollards were gone. They will be replaced ahead of the Super Bowl, officials said.

New Orleans City Council President Helena Moreno took steps toward launching an investigation into the attack. In a memo to another council member obtained by the AP, Moreno said she was initiating the creation of a local and state legislative committee "dedicated to reviewing the incident and its implications."

"This committee will play a crucial role in assessing our current policies, enhancing security measures, and ensuring that we are adequately prepared to respond to any future threats," Moreno wrote.

The FBI concluded Jabbar was not aided by anyone else in the attack, which killed an 18-year-old aspiring nurse, a single mother, a father of two and a former Princeton University football star, among others.

The New Orleans coroner's office has identified 13 of the 14 victims, with the youngest listed as 18 and the oldest 63. Most of the victims were in their 20s. One was a British citizen, 31-year-old Edward Pettifer of west London, according to London's Metropolitan Police.

British media reported Pettifer was the stepson of Tiggy Legge-Bourke, who was the nanny for Prince William and Prince Harry between 1993 and 1999, which included the time after the death of their mother, Princess Diana.

At the vigil on Saturday, family members identified Tasha Polk, a mother and nursing assistant in her 40s, as the final victim of the attack.

The Bourbon Street attack was the deadliest IS-inspired assault on U.S. soil in years, laying bare what federal officials have warned is a resurgent international terrorism threat.

Trump appears with Italian Prime Minister Meloni at his Florida club

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump made an appearance Saturday with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who was visiting his Mar-a-Lago club.

Meloni follows Argentina President Javier Milei, who became the first world leader to meet with Trump at Mar-a-Lago after his Election Day victory in November. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary also traveled to Florida to meet with the president-elect.

Trump appeared at a screening of a documentary detailing challenges some conservative lawyers report facing in the legal system. He entered the grand ballroom around 7 p.m. and then returned around two hours later after having dinner.

Trump told the crowd of Meloni: "This is very exciting."

"I'm here with a fantastic woman, the prime minister of Italy. She's really taken Europe by storm, and everyone else, and we're just having dinner tonight," Trump said.

The president-elect watched a screening of the documentary with Meloni and with his pick for the incoming administration's secretary of state, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, as well as Florida Rep. Mike Waltz, Trump's choice for national security adviser and his choice to head the Treasury Department, Scott Bessent.

Meloni's visit comes after Italian journalist Cecilia Sala was detained by Iranian police while reporting in Tehran late last month.

Sala's case has heightened tensions between Italy and Iran, which is demanding Italian authorities release an Iranian businessman who was arrested recently in Milan on a U.S. warrant in connection with a drone attack in Jordan last year that killed three American troops.

Meanwhile, President Joe Biden is set to travel to Rome to meet with Meloni, as well as Pope Francis, beginning Thursday. The White House says the Meloni meeting will "highlight the strength of the U.S.-Italy relationship" and feature Biden thanking the prime minister "for her strong leadership of the G7 over the past year."

Biden's decision to block Nippon Steel takeover creates uncertainty for U.S. Steel workers

By PAUL WISEMAN and MARC LEVY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — By blocking a Japanese company's takeover of U.S. Steel, President Joe Biden said he was protecting good jobs in the American heartland. He may be putting them at risk instead.

In making its nearly \$15 billion bid for the storied Pittsburgh-based steelmaker, Nippon Steel had promised to invest \$2.7 billion in U.S. Steel's aging blast furnace operations in Gary, Indiana, and Pennsylvania's Mon Valley. It also vowed not to reduce production capacity in the United States over the next decade without first getting U.S. government approval.

"They were going to invest in the Valley," said Jason Zugai, an operating technician and vice president of the United Steelworkers union local at a U.S. Steel plant in the Mon Valley. "They committed to 10 years of no layoffs. We won't have those commitments from anybody."

Zugai and some other Mon Valley steelworkers supported the Nippon deal in defiance of the union's national leadership, which pressured the Biden administration to kill it.

Losing the Nippon-U.S. Steel deal "will be a disaster for Pennsylvania," said Gordon Johnson, who follows U.S. Steel stock on Wall Street as founder of GLJ Research. "I really don't understand. This is not in the interest of the workers. It's not in the interest of the shareholders of U.S. Steel."

On Friday, Biden said he was stopping the Nippon takeover — after federal regulators deadlocked on whether to approve it — because "a strong domestically owned and operated steel industry represents an essential national security priority. ... Without domestic steel production and domestic steel workers, our nation is less strong and less secure."

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U.S. Steel stock dropped 6.5% on the news Friday.

The decision, announced less than three weeks before the president leaves the White House, reflects a growing bipartisan shift away from free trade and open investment.

President-elect Donald Trump had already come out against the Nippon takeover. "As President," he wrote last month on his Truth Social platform, "I will block this deal from happening. Buyer Beware!!!"

In a joint statement, Nippon and U.S. Steel called Biden's decision "a clear violation of due process and the law" and suggested they would sue to salvage their deal: "We are left with no choice but to take all appropriate action to protect our legal rights."

U.S. Steel was founded in 1901 in a merger that involved American business titans J.P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie and instantly created the largest company in the world. As the U.S. grew to world dominance in the 20th century, U.S. Steel grew with it. In 1943, at the height of the World War II manufacturing boom, U.S. Steel employed 340,000 people.

But foreign competition — from Japan in the 1970s and '80s and later from China — gradually eroded U.S. Steel's position and forced it to close plants and lay off workers. The company now employs fewer than 22,000 in an industry dominated by the Chinese.

The U.S. government has sought over the years to protect U.S. Steel and other American steelmakers by imposing taxes on imported steel. During his first term, Trump slapped 25% tariffs on foreign steel, and Biden kept them or converted them into import quotas. Either way, the trade barriers kept the price of American steel artificially high, giving U.S. Steel and others a financial boost.

U.S. Steel is profitable and is sitting on \$1.8 billion in cash, though that is down from \$2.9 billion at the end of 2023.

United Steelworkers President David McCall declared Friday that U.S. Steel had the financial resources to go it alone. "It can easily remain a strong and resilient company," he told reporters.

But U.S. Steel has said it needs the cash from Nippon Steel to keep investing in blast furnaces like the ones in Pennsylvania and Indiana.

"Without the Nippon Steel transaction, U. S. Steel will largely pivot away from its blast furnace facilities, putting thousands of good-paying union jobs at risk, negatively impacting numerous communities across the locations where its facilities exist," U.S. Steel warned in September. The company also threatened to move its headquarters out of Pittsburgh.

On its own, U.S. Steel seems poised to focus on newer electric arc furnaces, such as its Big River plant in Arkansas, which can make high-quality steel products more efficiently and at lower prices compared to blast furnaces, said Josh Spoores, the Pennsylvania-based head of steel Americas analysis for commodity researcher CRU.

"I don't know if they don't have the will, but they seem to have seen that it's a much better investment, a much better rate of return if they look to invest in an electric arc furnace rather than a blast furnace," Spoores said. He noted that no steelmaker has built a blast furnace in North America for decades.

One possibility is that another company will step in and make a bid for U.S. Steel.

In 2023, arch-rival Cleveland-Cliffs offered to buy U.S. Steel for \$7 billion. U.S. Steel turned the offer down and ended up accepting the nearly \$15 billion all-cash offer from Nippon Steel, which is the deal that Biden nixed Friday. Perhaps, analysts say, Cleveland-Cliffs will try again.

In a statement, Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro warned U.S. Steel management against "threatening the jobs and livelihoods of the Pennsylvanians who work at the Mon Valley Works and at U.S. Steel HQ and their families."

Shapiro also said companies that put in bids to buy U.S. Steel in the future must make the same commitments to "capital investment and protecting and growing Pennsylvania jobs that Nippon Steel placed on the table."

Drawn to New Orleans' iconic street of celebration, a night of partying becomes a nightmare

By ADAM GELLER AP National Writer

The night, like countless others Bourbon Street has welcomed over the decades, started out ripe for celebration. With temperatures hovering in the 50s (10-15 Celsius) hours after the arrival of the new year, the open-air party pulsing down New Orleans' famed nocturnal artery was still hot, drawing revelers from near and far.

After a 3 a.m. pizza, a Pennsylvania man whose family had driven more than 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) to check the city off their bucket list headed back into the music-filled street.

A pair of former Princeton University football teammates joined the crowd so one could show the other what the city's easygoing energy was all about.

With years of waiting tables in the city's restaurants behind him, a New Orleans native came down to watch Bourbon Street's nightly parade of humanity as he had done so many times before.

By the wee hours Wednesday, the crowd strolling beneath the historic street's wrought-iron balconies, many with go-cups of liquor in hand, was filled with carefree promise. Then an enraged Army veteran behind the wheel of a speeding pickup turned their night of joy into a nightmare.

"My brother just wanted to go show (his friend) the good spirits and the joy that New Orleans brings, especially on a day like New Year's, all the smiles and the fun," said Jack Bech, a younger sibling of one of the victims of the deadly truck attack, Tiger Bech. "Nobody thought it would ever end the way it did."

In the days since the rampage killed 14 and injured dozens more, families and friends have questioned the fates that conspired to put loved ones in the wrong place at a singularly horrific moment. The victims, though, were just following legions who have flocked to Bourbon Street over the years with nary a care.

Paralleling the Mississippi River and bisecting the original grid laid out by the city's French colonizers in 1722, the street originally known as Rue Bourbon has been a nightlife hub since shortly after the Civil War. At first mostly for men, the arrival of dinner clubs in the 1920s drew couples to Bourbon, too. Visitors returned home to recount its drinking, dining and dancing.

But in the decades leading up to last week's attack, the number of night-time businesses on Bourbon swelled substantially. And the street's prime attraction became the visitors themselves.

Since its bars and clubs flung open their doors and windows in the late 1960s and began selling drinks to crowds in the street, "the spectators have become the spectacle," said Richard Campanella, author of "Bourbon Street: A History" and a professor at the city's Tulane University.

"Everyone realized that what Bourbon Street meant was not so much the saloons and the clubs along the street, but the street itself and the pedestrian parade," he said.

To research his 2014 book, Campanella stood in the middle of Bourbon's busiest stretch, the very area where the New Year's attack unfolded, and counted late-night partiers. On ordinary weekend nights, over 100 thronged past him each minute. On the night before Mardi Gras, the number more than doubled. Quizzing visitors on four different nights, he found about 70% came from another state and another 10% from outside the U.S.

That rich street life is exactly what drew so many of those killed in the attack, and likely what made Bourbon a target.

"Bourbon is like a free party," said Monisha James, whose 63-year-old uncle, retired waiter and handyman Terrence Kennedy, was killed in the attack. She said he went to a favorite spot on the street frequently, often striking up conversations with strangers.

"That was what he was doing to enjoy his retirement," James said.

On New Year's Eve, Kennedy donned a pair of festive 2025 eyeglasses and set out for Bourbon Street on his bike, his sister Jacqueline Kennedy said. He joined thousands of others.

Before heading out, 25-year-old Matthew Tenedorio, who worked as an audiovisual technician at the New Orleans' Superdome, gathered with his mother and brother for New Year's Eve.

"We had dinner and we did fireworks outside, and just laughing and hugging each other and telling each

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other we loved each other," his mother Cathy told NBC News. She unsuccessfully tried to convince him not to go into the city.

"They don't think about the risk," she said. Tenedorio was killed in the attack.

Jeremi Sensky, 51, had driven with his wife, daughter, son-in-law and two friends from their home in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, to New Orleans, which they had long talked about visiting. Feeling a chill after stopping for pizza around 3 a.m., Sensky decided to turn back to their hotel, daughter Heaven Sensky-Kirsch said. That was when attacker Shamsud-Din Jabbar's rented truck roared down the street.

Others were able to jump out of the way. But Sensky, who used a wheelchair, was hit, sustaining injuries that included two broken legs. He was able to breathe without a ventilator Thursday after enduring 10 hours of surgery.

"We thought he was dead," Sensky-Kirsch said. "We can't believe he's alive."

Tiger Bech and former Princeton teammate Ryan Quigley also were in the crowd. Bech, a 27-year-old native of Lafayette, Louisiana, who found a job in New York after graduation, had come to New Orleans to show the city to Quigley, a first-time visitor from Pennsylvania. Bech was killed in the attack, and Quigley was seriously injured.

Rushed to a nearby hospital, Bech hung on long enough for his mother and father to reach his bedside and link other family members on a video call.

"His eyes were closed and he was on a machine, but I know he could hear us," Bech's brother said in an interview with Sky News. "God kept his heart beating for a reason, and I truly believe it was so me and my family could tell him goodbye."

Zion Parsons had arrived from Gulfport, Mississippi, to celebrate a first visit to Bourbon Street with friend Nikyra Dedaux when the truck plowed into them, killing Dedaux. The 18-year-old had been set to start college in pursuit of a nursing career.

"Bodies, bodies all up and down the street, everybody screaming and hollering," Parsons said. "It was just insane, like the closest thing to a war zone that I've ever seen."

As word of the attack spread, Belal Badawi, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, tried frantically to reach his two sons, who had driven down to New Orleans to celebrate the new year.

The older one, staying with friends at a hotel, picked up. But the father had no luck reaching 18-year-old Kareem Badawi, a freshman at the University of Alabama who was home for the holiday break. He checked the location of the teen's phone and saw it was in the heart of the French Quarter.

Racing to New Orleans, the Badawis waited for hours in a hospital before investigators confirmed what they most dreaded: their son was among the dead, on a street devoted to celebrating life.

Jimmy Carter's funeral begins by tracing 100 years from rural Georgia to the world stage

By BILL BARROW, JEFF AMY and KATE PAYNE Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Jimmy Carter's extended public farewell began Saturday in Georgia, with the 39th U.S. president's flag-draped casket tracing his long arc from the Depression-era South and family farming business to the pinnacle of American political power and decades as a global humanitarian.

Those chapters shone throughout the opening stanza of a six-day state funeral intended to blend personalized memorials with the ceremonial pomp afforded to former presidents. The longest-lived U.S. executive, Carter died on Dec. 29 at the age of 100.

"He was an amazing man. He was held up and propped up and soothed by an amazing woman," son James Earl "Chip" Carter III, told mourners at The Carter Center late Saturday afternoon, referring also to his mother, former first lady Rosalynn Carter, who died in 2023. "The two of them together changed the world. And it was an amazing thing to watch so close."

Grandson Jason Carter, who now chairs the center's governing board, said, "It's amazing what you can cram into a hundred years."

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Carter's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren accompanied their patriarch as his hearse rode first Saturday through his hometown of Plains, which at about 700 residents is not much bigger than when Carter was born there Oct. 1, 1924. The procession stopped at the farm where the future president toiled alongside the Black sharecroppers who worked for his father. The motorcade continued to Atlanta, stopping in front of the Georgia Capitol where Carter served as a state senator and reformist governor.

Finally, he arrived for his last visit to the Carter Presidential Center, which houses his presidential library and The Carter Center where he based his post-White House advocacy for public health, democracy and human rights, setting a new standard for what former presidents can accomplish after they yield power.

"His spirit fills this place," Jason Carter told the assembly that included some of the center's 3,000 employees worldwide. "You continue the vibrant living legacy of what is my grandfather's life work," he added.

Pallbearers on Saturday came from the Secret Service that protected the Carters for almost a half-century and a military honor guard that included Navy servicemembers for the only U.S. Naval Academy graduate to reach the Oval Office. A military band played "Hail to the Chief" and the hymn "Be Thou My Vision" for the commander in chief who also was a devout Baptist.

His longtime personal pastor, the Rev. Tony Lowden, remembered not a president but the frail man who spent the last 22 months in hospice care, "wrapped in a blanket" that included the words of Psalm 23.

Chip Carter recalled "the boss" he had to make an appointment to see in the Oval Office, but also the father who spent an entire Christmas break learning Latin and teaching his 8th-grade son who had failed a test. When he took that test again, the younger Carter said, he aced it: "I owed it to my father, who spent that kind of time with me."

Jimmy Carter will lie in repose at the Carter Presidential Center from 7 p.m. Saturday through 6 a.m. Tuesday, with the public able to pay respects around the clock.

Scott Lyle, an engineer who grew up in Georgia but now lives in New York, was among the first mourners to pay his respects. Lyle said he joined Carter to build homes with Habitat for Humanity for the first time in LaGrange, Georgia, in 2003. Since then, he has traveled around the world to build houses with the group.

"I got to see, what some people don't get to see, close. He was an amazing man, and he cared about others. He walked the walk," said Lyle, who was wearing Carter-themed Habitat gear. "And I can't think of anyone else that I would want to stand in line to pay my respects for."

National rites will continue in Washington and conclude Thursday with a funeral at Washington National Cathedral, followed by a return to Plains. There, the former president will be buried next to his wife of 77 years near the home they built before his first state Senate campaign in 1962.

The Carters lived nearly all their lives in Plains, with the exception of his Naval service, four years in the Governor's Mansion and four years in the White House. As his hearse rolled through the town, mourners lined the main street, some holding bouquets of flowers and wearing pins bearing images of the former president and his signature smile.

Willie Browner, 75, described Carter as hailing from a bygone era of American politics.

"This man, he thought of more than just himself," said Browner, who grew up in the town of Parrott, about 15 miles (24 kilometers) from Plains. Browner said it meant "a great deal" to have a president come from a small Southern town like his — something he worries isn't likely to happen again.

Indeed, Carter helped plan his own funeral to emphasize that his remarkable rise to the world stage was because of — not despite — his deep rural roots.

Over the course of a few blocks in Plains, the motorcade passed near where the Carters ran the family peanut warehouse, and the small home where his mother, a nurse, had delivered the future first lady in 1927. The hearse passed the old train depot that served as Carter's 1976 presidential campaign headquarters — a barebones effort that depended on public financing, dwarfed by the billion-dollar U.S. presidential campaigns of the 21st century.

At the Carter farm, a few dozen National Park Service rangers stood in formation in front of the home, which did not have running water or electricity when Carter was a boy. The old farm bell rang 39 times to honor Carter's place as the 39th president.

Beside the house, there remains the tennis court that Carter's father, James Earl Carter Sr., built for the

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family — a nod to the blend of privilege and hard rural life that defined the future president's upbringing. Carter worked the land throughout the Great Depression, but it was owned by the elder Carter, who employed the surrounding Black tenant farmers during the era of Jim Crow segregation.

Carter wrote and spoke extensively on those formative years and how the abject poverty and institutional racism he saw influenced his policies in government and human rights work.

Calvin Smyre, a former Georgia legislator, remembered that legacy Saturday at the state Capitol. Smyre, who is Black, said Carter's repudiation of racial segregation allowed Black people to wield power in Georgia.

"We stand on the shoulder of courageous people like Jimmy Carter," Smyre said. "What he did shocked and shook the political ground here in the state of Georgia. And we live better because of that."

Drivers skid and crash as wintry mix grips central US before moving east

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — Road conditions were deteriorating Saturday in the central U.S. as a winter storm brought a mix of snow, ice and plunging temperatures, with forecasts calling for the dreaded combo to spread eastward in the coming days.

"Winter returned," said Bob Oravec, lead forecaster at the National Weather Service in College Park, Maryland.

The polar vortex of ultra-cold air usually stays penned up around the North Pole, spinning like a top. But sometimes it escapes or stretches down to the U.S., Europe or Asia — and that's when large numbers of people experience intense doses of cold.

Studies show a fast-warming Arctic gets some of the blame for the increase in polar vortex stretching or wandering.

Snow and ice in the forecast

By Saturday evening, widespread heavy snow was likely between central Kansas and Indiana, especially along and north of Interstate 70. Part of the interstate was closed in central Kansas by the afternoon. Total snow and sleet accumulations for parts of Kansas and northern Missouri were predicted to be as high as 14 inches (35.6 centimeters).

The storm was forecast to move then into the Ohio Valley, with severe travel disruptions expected. It will reach the Mid-Atlantic states on Sunday into Monday, with a hard freeze even expected as far south as Florida.

Severe thunderstorms, with the possibility of tornadoes and hail, were also possible ahead of the storm system's cold front as it crosses the Lower Mississippi Valley, the National Weather Service warned.

Parts of upstate New York saw 3 feet (0.9 meters) or more of snow from a lake effect event expected to last until late Sunday afternoon.

Car wrecks start as storm hits

A fire truck, several tractor-trailers and passenger vehicles overturned west of Salina, Kansas. Rigs also jackknifed and went into ditches, state Highway Patrol Trooper Ben Gardner said.

He posted a video showing his boots sliding across the highway blacktop like an ice-skating rink.

"We are in it now," Gardner said as he drove to the scene of an accident. Online, he begged for prayers and warned that some roadways were nearly impassable.

Freezing rain in Wichita, Kansas, sent authorities to multiple crashes in the morning, and police urged drivers to stay home if possible and watch out for emergency vehicles.

Governors in neighboring Missouri and nearby Arkansas declared states of emergency. Whiteout conditions threatened to make driving dangerous to impossible, forecasters warned, and heighten the risk of becoming stranded.

"Please stay off the roads. Crews are seeing too many vehicles out and sliding off," Missouri's transportation department said on the social platform X.

Air travel also was snarled

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The Kansas City International Airport temporarily halted flight operations in the afternoon due to ice. Dozens of flights were delayed, including a charter jet transporting the Kansas City Chiefs, before the runways reopened.

"Work will continue overnight to keep the airfield clear," Mayor Quinton Lucas said in a message on X.

Getting ready to ride out the storm

Stores in Wichita were filled with shoppers stocking up on groceries in advance of the storm, and warming centers opened in churches and libraries.

Several businesses closed across the Kansas City area, and the school district in suburban Independence, Missouri, said it might need to cancel classes for one or more days.

"Get where you're going now & stay put. If you must travel, consider packing a bag & staying where you're headed," the Missouri Department of Transportation said in a message on X.

The agency warned Friday that a shortage of workers could hamper the ability to clear roads.

In Columbus, Ohio, crews treated major roadways with anti-icing liquids.

"It will be a major headache," said Tom Kines, a senior meteorologist with AccuWeather. "The storm not only has the snow threat to it but the ice threat."

Power outages could be significant particularly south of the Kansas City area, Kines said.

Temperatures dip, though no records break

Starting Monday the eastern two-thirds of the country will experience dangerous, bone-chilling cold and wind chills, forecasters said. Temperatures could be 12 to 25 degrees (7 to 14 degrees Celsius) below normal as the polar vortex stretches down from the high Arctic.

In Chicago on Saturday, temperatures hovered in the teens (minus 7-10 Celsius) and around zero in Minneapolis (minus 18 C), while dropping to 14 below (minus 25 C) in International Falls, Minnesota, on the Canadian border.

Disruptions extend southward

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin declared a state of emergency Friday evening ahead of the storm and encouraged residents to vote early on Saturday ahead of the state's special elections Tuesday in a statement on X.

Similar declarations were issued in Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland and multiple cities in central Illinois.

"This is the real deal," meteorologist John Gordon said at a press conference in Louisville, Kentucky. "Are the weather people blowing this out of proportion? No."

Officials in Annapolis asked residents to remove vehicles from emergency snow routes. The historic state capital near the Chesapeake Bay also announced plans to open several garages Sunday for free parking.

The National Weather Service predicted 8 to 12 inches (about 20 to 30 centimeters) of snow for the Annapolis area, with temperatures remaining below freezing throughout the weekend.

In Baltimore, an extreme weather alert was issued instructing agencies to provide shelter and assistance for those in need. City officials said wind chills were expected to dip to 13 degrees Fahrenheit (-10.56 degrees Celsius) overnight Saturday and remain in the teens through Tuesday.

In Louisiana, crews were racing to find a manatee that was spotted in Lake Pontchartrain before the cold temperatures hit. The manatee was first seen New Year's Eve in the Mandeville area.

While manatees are common in the area during the summer, winter sightings are a concern since they can begin to experience cold stress symptoms when the temperature falls below 68 degrees (20 Celsius).

"We are doing everything we can to get our hands on this animal," said Gabriella Harlamert, stranding and rehab coordinator for Audubon Aquarium Rescue in New Orleans.

Jimmy Carter's state funeral has started. Here's what to know

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Six days of funeral observances for former President Jimmy Carter began Saturday in Georgia, where he died on Dec. 29 at the age of 100.

The first events reflected Carter's climb up the political ladder, from the tiny town of Plains, Georgia, to

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decades on the global stage as a humanitarian and advocate for democracy.

Here is what to know about the initial ceremonies and what happens next:

The start honors Carter's deep roots in rural south Georgia

The proceedings, streamed on apnews.com and the Associated Press YouTube channel, began at 10:15 a.m. EST Saturday with the Carter family arriving at Phoebe Sumter Medical Center in Americus.

Former Secret Service agents who protected Carter served as pallbearers, walking alongside the hearse as it exited the campus on its way to Plains.

James Earl Carter Jr. lived more than 80 of his 100 years in and around the town, which still has fewer than 700 people, not much more than when he was born on Oct. 1, 1924. Some other modern presidents — Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton — also grew up in small-town settings, but Carter stands out for returning and remaining in his birthplace for his long post-presidency.

The motorcade moved through downtown Plains, which spans just a few blocks, passing near the girlhood home of first lady Rosalynn Smith Carter, who died in November 2023 at the age of 96, and near where the couple operated the family peanut warehouses. The route also included the old train depot that served as Jimmy Carter's 1976 presidential campaign headquarters and the gas station once run by Carter's younger brother Billy.

The motorcade passed by the Methodist church where the Carters married in 1946, and the home where they lived and died. The former president will be buried there alongside Rosalynn.

The Carters built the one-story house, now surrounded by Secret Service fencing, before his first state Senate campaign in 1962 and lived out their lives there with the exception of four years in the Governor's Mansion and four more in the White House.

A stop at Carter's boyhood home — a blend of privilege, hard work

After going through Plains, the procession stopped in front of Carter's family farm and boyhood home in Archery, just outside the town, after passing the cemetery where the former president's parents, James Earl Carter Sr. and Lillian Carter, are buried.

The farm now is part of the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park. The National Park Service rang the old farm bell 39 times to honor the 39th president.

Carter was the first president born in a hospital. But the home had no electricity or running water when he was born, and he worked his father's land during the Great Depression. Still, the Carters had relative privilege and status. Earl employed Black tenant farming families. The elder Carter also owned a store in Plains and was a local civic and political leader. Lillian was a nurse and she delivered Rosalynn. The property still includes a tennis court Earl had built for the family.

It was Earl's death in 1953 that set Jimmy on course toward the Oval Office. The younger Carters had left Plains after he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy. But Jimmy abandoned a promising career as a submarine officer and early participant in the Pentagon's nuclear program to take over the family's peanut business after his father's death. Within a decade, he was elected to the Georgia state Senate.

Lying in repose in Atlanta, where Carter was a politician and global figure

From Archery, the motorcade headed north to Atlanta. The military-run motorcade stopped outside the Georgia Capitol, where Carter served as a state senator from 1963 to 1967 and governor from 1971 to 1975. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp and Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens led a moment of silence. While former governors are honored with state-run funerals, presidents — even if they served as governors — are memorialized with national rites run by the federal government.

The motorcade then proceeded to the Carter Presidential Center, which includes Carter's presidential library and The Carter Center, established by the former president and first lady in 1982. Carter's son, James Earl "Chip" Carter III, and his grandson, Jason Carter, spoke to an assembly that included many Carter Center employees whose work concentrating on international diplomacy and mediation, election monitoring, and fighting disease in the developing world continues to set a standard for what former presidents can accomplish.

Jimmy Carter, who delivered the center's annual reports until 2019, won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize in part for this post-presidential work.

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Carter was scheduled to lie in repose from 7 p.m. Saturday to 6 a.m. Tuesday, with the public able to pay respects around the clock.

What's next: A return to Washington

Carter's remains will travel next to Washington, where he will lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda until his funeral at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Washington National Cathedral. All the living presidents have been invited, and Joe Biden, a Carter ally, will deliver a eulogy. Biden also signed a bill to name a U.S. Postal Service facility in Plains after Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter.

The Carter family then will return to bury its patriarch in Plains after a private hometown funeral at 3:45 p.m. at Maranatha Baptist Church, where Carter, a devout evangelical, taught Sunday School for decades.

Carter will be buried afterward in a private graveside service, in a plot visible from the front porch of his home.

Washington Post cartoonist quits after paper rejects sketch of Bezos bowing to Trump

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

A cartoonist has decided to quit her job at the Washington Post after an editor rejected her sketch of the newspaper's owner and other media executives bowing before President-elect Donald Trump.

Ann Telnaes posted a message Friday on the online platform Substack saying that she drew a cartoon showing a group of media executives bowing before Trump while offering him bags of money, including Post owner and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

Telnaes wrote that the cartoon was intended to criticize "billionaire tech and media chief executives who have been doing their best to curry favor with incoming President-elect Trump." Several executives, Bezos among them, have been spotted at Trump's Florida club Mar-a-Lago. She accused them of having lucrative government contracts and working to eliminate regulations.

Telnaes said that she's never before had a cartoon rejected because of its inherent messaging and that such a move is dangerous for a free press.

"As an editorial cartoonist, my job is to hold powerful people and institutions accountable," Telnaes wrote. "For the first time, my editor prevented me from doing that critical job. So I have decided to leave the Post. I doubt my decision will cause much of a stir and that it will be dismissed because I'm just a cartoonist. But I will not stop holding truth to power through my cartooning, because as they say 'Democracy dies in darkness.'"

The Association of American Editorial Cartoonists issued a statement Saturday accusing the Post of "political cowardice" and asking other cartoonists to post Telnaes' sketch with the hashtag #StandWithAnn in a show of solidarity.

"Tyranny ends at pen point," the association said. "It thrives in the dark, and the Washington Post simply closed its eyes and gave in like a punch-drunk boxer."

The Post's communications director, Liza Pluto, provided The Associated Press on Saturday with a statement from David Shipley, the newspaper's editorial page editor. Shipley said in the statement that he disagrees with Telnaes' "interpretation of events."

He said he decided to nix the cartoon because the paper had just published a column on the same topic as the cartoon and was set to publish another.

"Not every editorial judgement is a reflection of a malign force. ... The only bias was against repetition," Shipley said.

Hillary Clinton, George Soros and Denzel Washington received the highest US civilian honor

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the East Room of the White House on a particularly frigid Saturday afternoon, President Joe Biden bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom to 19 of the most famous names in politics, sports, entertainment, civil rights, LGBTQ+ advocacy and science.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton aroused a standing ovation from the crowd as she received her medal. Clinton was accompanied to the event by her husband former President Bill Clinton, daughter Chelsea Clinton and grandchildren. Democratic philanthropist George Soros and actor-director Denzel Washington were also awarded the nation's highest civilian honor in a White House ceremony.

"For the final time as president I have the honor bestowing the Medal of Freedom, our nation's highest civilian honor, on a group of extraordinary, truly extraordinary people, who gave their sacred effort, their sacred effort, to shape the culture and the cause of America," Biden said in his opening remarks.

"Let me just say to each of you, thank you, thank you, thank you for all you've done to help this country," Biden said Saturday.

Four medals were awarded posthumously. They went to George W. Romney, who served as both a Michigan governor and secretary of housing and urban development; former Attorney General and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy; Ash Carter, a former secretary of defense; and Fannie Lou Hamer, who founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and laid the groundwork for the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Kennedy is father to Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for health and human services secretary. Biden said, "Bobby is one of my true political heroes. I love and I miss him dearly."

Romney is the father of former Utah Republican Sen. Mitt Romney, one of Trump's strongest conservative critics.

Biden has days left in the Presidential office and has spent the last few days issuing awards and medals to valiant military veterans, courageous law enforcement officials and exceptional Americans.

The White House said the Medal of Freedom recipients have made "exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private endeavors."

Major philanthropists receiving the award include Spanish American chef José Andrés, whose World Central Kitchen charity has become one of the world's most recognized food relief organizations, and Bono, the front man for rock band U2 and a social justice activist.

Soros' son Alex Soros accepted the medal on his father's behalf. In an emailed statement, Soros said: "As an immigrant who found freedom and prosperity in America, I am deeply moved by this honor."

Sports and entertainment stars recognized include professional soccer player Lionel Messi, who did not attend the event; retired Los Angeles Lakers basketball legend and businessman Earvin "Magic" Johnson; actor Michael J. Fox, who is an outspoken advocate for Parkinson's disease research and development; and William Sanford Nye, known to generations of students as "Bill Nye the Science Guy."

Other awardees include conservationist Jane Goodall; longtime Vogue Magazine editor-in-chief Anna Wintour; American fashion designer Ralph Lauren; American Film Institute founder George Stevens Jr.; entrepreneur and LGBTQ+ activist Tim Gill; and David Rubenstein, co-founder of The Carlyle Group global investment firm.

Lauren is the first fashion designer to receive the honor.

Last year, Biden bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom on 19 people, including the late Medgar Evers, House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, Rep. James Clyburn of South Carolina and actor Michelle Yeoh.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom was awarded 654 times between 1963 and 2024, according to the Congressional Research Service. Notable Medal of Freedom recipients from the past include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Maya Angelou and Mother Teresa.

Israeli airstrikes in Gaza kill at least 21, hospital workers say, as talks underway

By WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli airstrikes killed at least 21 people, including at least two children, on Saturday in Gaza, hospital staff said, while a new effort at ceasefire talks was underway in Qatar after nearly 15 months of war.

Thousands rallied again in Israel to press for a ceasefire deal, hours after Hamas released a video showing one of the hostages still held in Gaza. Such videos, like an uptick in airstrikes, have been seen as attempts to assert pressure during talks.

A small boy cried over his father in southern Gaza's Khan Younis, and a woman draped herself over one of the bodies wrapped in white plastic. Three airstrikes in the city hit a car, a house and people on the street, according to staff at Nasser Hospital.

The Civil Defense, first responders affiliated with the Hamas-run government, said an airstrike destroyed a residential area behind the Saraya complex in Gaza City, killing at least five people.

And Israeli strikes on Saturday evening killed three people in Bureij and three others in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where the bodies were taken. One child was among the dead. A young man leaned against a hospital wall and wept.

Israel's military said it targeted Hamas militants with a strike near Salah al-Din in southern Gaza overnight and with a strike on a vehicle in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. It also said Hamas fired a projectile that hit near the Erez crossing into Gaza.

Gaza's Health Ministry said at least 59 people had been killed and more than 270 others were wounded by strikes in the past 24 hours.

There were no immediate statements on the indirect negotiations toward a ceasefire. The talks have repeatedly stalled as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vows to press on in Gaza until Hamas is destroyed. Fighters with Hamas, which wants Israeli forces out of Gaza completely, continue to regroup in areas where Israeli forces withdraw.

The talks are mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States, which plans a \$8 billion weapons sale to Israel, U.S. officials say.

A new video of a hostage

The war is by far the deadliest round of fighting between Israel and Hamas. It began when Hamas and other militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Around 100 hostages are still in Gaza, at least a third believed to be dead.

Families of hostages and others have rallied weekly to press Netanyahu to reach a ceasefire deal that would bring loved ones home, saying time is running out. At Saturday night's rally in Tel Aviv, police carried away some protesters who staged a sit-in on a street.

In a video released by Hamas before the latest rally, Israeli soldier and hostage Liri Albag, speaking under duress, expressed anguish over her situation and mentioned being held 450 days.

"Today is the beginning of a new year; the whole world is celebrating. Only we are entering a dark year, a year of loneliness," she said. She also said a fellow captive had been wounded by the fighting in Gaza, adding, "We are living in an extremely terrifying nightmare." She didn't name the injured person.

Netanyahu's office said he spoke with Albag's parents and told them that "efforts are ongoing, including at this very moment" to bring hostages home. Albag's family in a statement said that "It's time to make decisions as if your own children were there!"

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 45,717 Palestinians in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which says women and children make up more than half the dead. The ministry doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its tally. It says uncounted bodies remain beneath rubble or in areas where emergency responders can't reach.

Israel's military says it only targets militants and blames Hamas for civilian deaths, because its fighters operate in dense residential areas. The army says it has killed 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The war has caused widespread destruction and displaced about 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, many of them multiple times. Winter has now arrived, and hundreds of thousands are sheltering in tents near the sea. A small number of children have died from exposure to the cold.

Gaza's Health Ministry said in a statement that Indonesian Hospital was no longer operational after Israeli operations in the area, and said all public hospitals in the north, largely isolated by a monthslong Israeli offensive, were now out of service. Access to the north is heavily restricted and claims can be difficult to verify.

Tensions elsewhere

Meanwhile, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, relatives mourned an 18-year-old Palestinian who the Palestinian Health Ministry said was killed Friday during clashes with Israel's army in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus. The ministry said that nine other people were wounded.

Palestinian health officials have said Israeli raids throughout the West Bank since Oct. 7, 2023, have killed more than 800 Palestinians. Israel says most of these are militants, but youths throwing stones and people not involved in confrontations have also been killed.

A fragile ceasefire between Israel and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has held up for more than a month, although its terms seem unlikely to be met by the agreed-upon 60-day deadline. Israel and Hezbollah had exchanged fire almost daily since the war in Gaza began.

Austrian Chancellor Nehammer says he will resign after talks on forming a new government fail

By STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer said Saturday he will resign in the coming days after talks on forming a new government failed a second time.

The announcement came after the People's Party and the Social Democrats on Saturday continued coalition talks a day after the liberal Neos party's surprise withdrawal from discussions.

"Unfortunately I have to tell you today that the negotiations have ended and will not be continued by the People's Party," said Nehammer, the conservative party's leader, in a statement on social media.

He said that "destructive forces" in the Social Democratic Party have "gained the upper hand" and that the People's Party will not sign on to a program that it considers to be against economic competitiveness.

Social democratic leader Andreas Babler said he regretted the People's Party decision to end the talks. "This is not a good decision for our country," he said.

Babler said that one of the main stumbling blocks had to do with how to repair the "record deficit" left by the previous government.

"I have offered to Karl Nehammer and the People's Party to continue negotiating and called on them not to give up," he told reporters Saturday evening.

The next government in Austria faces the challenge of having to save between 18 to 24 billion euros, according to the EU Commission. In addition, Austria has been in a recession for the past two years, is experiencing rising unemployment, and its budget deficit is currently at 3.7% of Gross Domestic Product — above the EU's limit of 3%.

Babler blamed the collapse of the negotiations on "forces within the People's Party" that were against a coalition with the Social Democrats, while praising Nehammer for his readiness to compromise.

A coalition between the People's Party and the Social Democrats was considered shaky from the beginning since the two parties together only have a razor-thin one-seat majority in the Austrian parliament.

It was not immediately clear what would happen next.

The People's Party will have to search for a replacement for Nehammer, who has always ruled out the possibility of a coalition with far-right leader Herbert Kickl. But Nehammer's expected resignation could now prompt the party to rethink its options under new leadership.

People's Party officials planned to meet Sunday to discuss choosing a new leader.

The People's Party and the far-right Freedom Party are close on economic policies as well as other issues

such as migration and are already working together in five coalitions on the local level.

An early election would be another option. But given Austrian election laws, such an election would unlikely take place before May.

Coalition talks had dragged on after Austria's president tasked the conservative chancellor in October with putting together a new government. The request came after all other parties refused to work with the leader of the far-right Freedom Party, which in September won a national election for the first time with 29.2% of the vote.

According to the latest opinion polls published in December, the Freedom Party increased its support to between 35% and 37%.

Party leader Herbert Kickl criticized Nehammer, Babler and Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen in a written statement on Saturday evening for having created "chaos instead of stability" and said the ball is now in Van der Bellen's court.

Van der Bellen is expected to make a statement tomorrow, Austrian's public broadcaster ORF reports.

How Congress will certify Trump's Electoral College victory on Jan. 6

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The congressional joint session to count electoral votes on Monday is expected to be much less eventful than the certification four years ago that was interrupted by a violent mob of supporters of then-President Donald Trump who tried to stop the count and overturn the results of an election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

This time, Trump is returning to office after winning the 2024 election that began with Biden as his party's nominee and ended with Vice President Kamala Harris atop the ticket. She will preside over the certification of her own loss, fulfilling the constitutional role in the same way that Trump's vice president, Mike Pence, did after the violence subsided on Jan. 6, 2021.

Usually a routine affair, the congressional joint session on Jan. 6 every four years is the final step in reaffirming a presidential election after the Electoral College officially elects the winner in December. The meeting is required by the Constitution and includes several distinct steps.

A look at the joint session:

What happens when Congress meets?

Under federal law, Congress must meet Jan. 6 to open sealed certificates from each state that contain a record of their electoral votes. The votes are brought into the chamber in special mahogany boxes that are used for the occasion.

Bipartisan representatives of both chambers read the results out loud and do an official count. The vice president, as president of the Senate, presides over the session and declares the winner.

The Constitution requires Congress to meet and count the electoral votes. If there is a tie, then the House decides the presidency, with each congressional delegation having one vote. That hasn't happened since the 1800s, and won't happen this time because Trump's electoral win over Harris was decisive, 312-226.

How has it changed since the last time?

Congress tightened the rules for the certification after the violence of 2021 and Trump's attempts to usurp the process.

In particular, the revised Electoral Count Act passed in 2022 more explicitly defines the role of the vice president after Trump aggressively pushed Pence to try and object to the Republican's defeat — an action that would have gone far beyond Pence's ceremonial role. Pence rebuffed Trump and ultimately gaveled down his own defeat. Harris will do the same.

The updated law clarifies that the vice president does not have the power to determine the results on Jan. 6.

Harris and Pence were not the first vice presidents to be put in the uncomfortable position of presiding over their own defeats. In 2001, Vice President Al Gore presided over the counting of the 2000 presiden-

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tial election that he narrowly lost to Republican George W. Bush. Gore had to gavel several Democrats' objections out of order.

In 2017, Biden as vice president presided over the count that declared Trump the winner. Biden also shot down objections from House Democrats that did not have any Senate support.

How does the session unfold?

The presiding officer opens and presents the certificates of the electoral votes in alphabetical order of the states.

The appointed "tellers" from the House and Senate, members of both parties, then read each certificate out loud and record and count the votes. At the end, the presiding officer announces who has won the majority votes for both president and vice president.

What if there's an objection?

After a teller reads the certificate from any state, a lawmaker can stand up and object to that state's vote on any grounds. But the presiding officer will not hear the objection unless it is in writing and signed by one-fifth of each chamber.

That threshold is significantly higher than what came before. Previously, a successful objection only required support from one member of the Senate and one member of the House. Lawmakers raised the threshold in the 2022 law to make objections more difficult.

If any objection reaches the threshold — something not expected this time — the joint session suspends and the House and Senate go into separate sessions to consider it. For the objection to be sustained, both chambers must uphold it by a simple majority vote. If they do not agree, the original electoral votes are counted with no changes.

In 2021, both the House and Senate rejected challenges to the electoral votes in Arizona and Pennsylvania.

Before 2021, the last time that such an objection was considered had been 2005, when Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones of Ohio and Sen. Barbara Boxer of California, both Democrats, objected to Ohio's electoral votes, claiming there were voting irregularities. Both the House and Senate debated the objection and easily rejected it. It was only the second time such a vote had occurred.

Once Congress counts the votes, what's next?

After Congress certifies the vote, the president is inaugurated on the west front of the Capitol on Jan. 20.

The joint session is the last official chance for objections, beyond any challenges in court. Harris has conceded and never disputed Trump's win.

Reminders of Jan. 6 attack fade in the Capitol as Trump retakes power

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inside the Capitol, reminders of the violence are increasingly hard to find.

Scars on the walls have been repaired. Windows and doors broken by the rioters have been replaced. And there is no plaque, display or remembrance of any kind.

Lawmakers rarely mention the attack, and many Republicans try to downplay it, echoing President-elect Donald Trump's claims that the carnage of that day is overblown and that the rioters are victims.

In some ways, it's like the insurrection of Jan. 6, 2021, that shook the foundations of American democracy, never happened.

"It's been erased," said Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt. "Winners write history and Trump won. And his version is that it was a peaceful gathering. Obviously completely untrue."

If Trump pardons rioters, as he has said he will do after taking office Jan. 20, that would be "putting an exclamation point on his version of what happened," Welch said.

Some of the 1,250 defendants convicted of crimes after Jan. 6 called for the deaths of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Mike Pence, who was Trump's vice president, as the mob violently overran police and breached the building. Some carried weapons, zip ties, chemical irritants, Confederate flags as they ransacked the Capitol and hunted for lawmakers. They sought to stop the certification of Democrat

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Joe Biden's win over Trump, echoing the Republican incumbent's false claims that the election was stolen. But the disruption was only temporary. Congress resumed work that evening and completed its constitutional role.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, one of seven Senate Republicans who voted to convict Trump on impeachment charges after Jan. 6, said "it was a very, very dark time." Some lawmakers, she said, "do want to really put that behind us."

There are different reasons for that, however.

Former Republican Sen. Mike Braun, a frequent Trump ally who left Congress this year and was elected Indiana's governor, said many in the party think the Justice Department "was weaponized disproportionately against" some rioters. He said many lawmakers who were in the Capitol on Jan. 6 want as much distance as possible between then and now.

"I think all of us remember it," Braun said. But, he added, "If you're starting to put plaques up, it looks like it even further emphasizes the divide on the issue. And maybe the biggest remedy is just to keep moving forward."

The plaque that never happened

Congress passed a law in March 2022 to require "an honorific plaque listing the names of all of the officers of the United States Capitol Police, the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, and other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies and protective entities who responded to the violence that occurred at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021."

The Architect of the Capitol was ordered to obtain the plaque within a year and permanently place it on the Capitol's western front, where the worst of the fighting took place.

But almost three years later, there is no plaque. It's unclear why or who is responsible for it. A spokeswoman for the Architect of the Capitol referred questions to the House Sergeant at Arms, who did not respond to requests for information.

Democratic Senate leader Chuck Schumer of New York and then-Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky signed off on the plaque, according to a Senate leadership aide who was familiar with the process but was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York has also been supportive. A spokesman for House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., did not respond to requests for comment.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., who led the House Administration Committee when the law was enacted, wrote Johnson in May to ask why the plaque hadn't been installed. "If there is a reason for the delay, I look forward to any information you can share to that end and what is being done to address it," Lofgren said.

She never heard back.

"It's not just the plaque, although it does mean something to the officers who were there, but the fact that no one cares about them enough to comply with the law and acknowledge the sacrifice that they made for us and for our country," Lofgren said. "That service to their country, it's been disrespected."

New York Rep. Joe Morelle, now the top Democrat on the House Administration Committee, said refusing to display the plaque is part of an effort to "deny Jan. 6 happened and the harm it caused to the U.S. Capitol Police force."

The officers who were there

Metropolitan Police Officer Daniel Hodges, who fought the rioters and was captured on video screaming as they crushed him in a doorway that led to the inauguration stage, said it's "incredibly offensive" that the plaque hasn't been installed.

"It's an incredibly simple thing, but it can mean a lot to so many who fought that day to defend democracy, defend Congress, the vice president and staffers," he said. He said Jan. 6 has become a political issue. "It shouldn't be," he said.

Hodges said he expects to be working on Inauguration Day, one of thousands of police officers who will be protecting the president and the city on Jan. 20.

Former Capitol Police Sgt. Aquilino Gonell, who retired because of his injuries from fighting rioters near

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the west front tunnel, said he lost "my career, my health" and even some friends and family in the aftermath of the attack. He and Hodges have been among the few in law enforcement to speak out publicly about their experience.

"Looking back, it's like it was all for nothing," said Gonell. "It's a betrayal."

He said he wishes the plaque was up on the west front so Trump could see it before he steps on to the inauguration stage in a few weeks.

Trump "could read the names of the officers right before he walks out," Gonell said. "So he could know that his actions had consequences."

Shifting Republican narrative

In the days after the siege of the Capitol, Republican condemnation was near-universal.

"Count me out," Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, one of Trump's top allies, said the night of Jan. 6. Then-House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy of California said a week later that Trump "bears responsibility" for the attack.

But McCarthy soon made amends, traveling within weeks to Florida to meet Trump. It was a fateful decision, kicking off Trump's slow return to power. When Trump returned to Capitol Hill last year during his campaign, Republican lawmakers not only met with him, but they also gave him standing ovations.

Over that time, Republican attitudes toward the Jan. 6 attack have shifted. GOP lawmakers have condemned the work of the Democratic-led committee that investigated the riot and fiercely contested its findings. Some Republicans have echoed Trump's words that the imprisoned rioters are "hostages" who may be worthy of pardons.

Still, the issue may end up being a tricky one for Trump, who has promised pardons on "Day 1." It's unclear how many people he intends to pardon or if the most violent offenders would be included.

"If they physically attacked police officers, I don't think they deserve to be pardoned," Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla., one of Trump's closest allies, said in a CNN interview. "I think they should serve their time."

'Confidence in history'

Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., said there are legacies of the attack, even without a plaque hanging on a wall — such as increased security at this year's certification and Biden's invitation to Trump to come to the Oval Office after the election, a return to the peaceful transition of power.

"You don't think people were thinking in the back of their minds, that was different than Jan. 6?" she said. "So it does play out, it is important."

Congress has updated the Electoral Count Act, the arcane law that governs the certification of a presidential election, to make it harder for members of Congress to object to the results.

Still, with Trump in power again and many Republicans backing his version of events, Democrats said they worry that a false narrative of Jan. 6 will gain even more strength.

"If you don't want to remember the history, then the chances of it repeating itself are that much greater," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass. "There should be some a moment of silence, or some commemoration. Certainly, there should be a plaque."

In the days after the insurrection, Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., said he believed that they should preserve a broken window as a reminder. But the windows were replaced, reinforced and cleaned up. Little evidence remains of the widespread damage, in the millions of dollars, that the rioters inflicted on the building.

It is "painful" to see attempts to rewrite what happened, Himes said, but he doesn't think Jan. 6, 2021, will be forgotten.

"I have confidence in history," Himes said.

Congress is notified by the Biden administration of a planned \$8 billion weapons sale to Israel

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department has informed Congress of a planned \$8 billion weapons sale to Israel, U.S. officials say, as the American ally presses forward with its war against Hamas in Gaza.

Some of the arms in the package could be sent through current U.S. stocks but the majority would take a year or several years to deliver, according to two U.S. officials Saturday who spoke on condition of anonymity because the notification to Congress hasn't been formally sent.

The sale includes medium-range air-to-air missiles to help Israel defend against airborne threats, 155 mm projectile artillery shells for long-range targeting, Hellfire AGM-114 missiles, 500-pound bombs and more.

The weapons package would add to a record of at least \$17.9 billion in military aid that the U.S. has provided Israel since the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, 2023, launched the war.

The Biden administration has faced criticism over mounting deaths of Palestinian civilians. There have been demonstrations on college campuses and unsuccessful efforts in Congress by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and some Democrats to block sales of offensive weapons to Israel.

The United States paused a shipment of 2,000-pound bombs to Israel in May over concerns about civilian casualties if the bombs were to be used during an assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah. The Biden administration has demanded that Israel increase humanitarian aid into the enclave. But in November, citing some limited progress, it declined to limit arms transfers as it threatened to do if the situation did not improve.

In recent days, Israel has been conducting airstrikes in Gaza that have killed dozens of people, adding to the tens of thousands of deaths since the war began more than a year ago.

The Israeli army said Friday that it had struck dozens of Hamas gathering points and command centers throughout Gaza. Israel's military says it only targets militants and blames Hamas for civilian deaths because its fighters operate in dense residential areas.

The war has caused widespread destruction and displaced about 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, many of them multiple times. Winter has now arrived, and hundreds of thousands are sheltering in tents near the sea.

The informal notice to Congress isn't the final notification before a sale. Now the leaders of the House Foreign Affairs Committee or the Senate Foreign Relations Committee can review the package.

News of the weapons sale was first reported by Axios.

Tesla data helped police after Las Vegas truck explosion, but experts have wider privacy concerns

By BERNARD CONDON AP Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Your car is spying on you.

That is one takeaway from the fast, detailed data that Tesla collected on the driver of one of its Cybertrucks that exploded in Las Vegas earlier this week. Privacy data experts say the deep dive by Elon Musk's company was impressive, but also shines a spotlight on a difficult question as vehicles become less like cars and more like computers on wheels.

Is your car company violating your privacy rights?

"You might want law enforcement to have the data to crack down on criminals, but can anyone have access to it?" said Jodi Daniels, CEO of privacy consulting firm Red Clover Advisors. "Where is the line?"

Many of the latest cars not only know where you've been and where you are going, but also often have access to your contacts, your call logs, your texts and other sensitive information thanks to cell phone syncing.

The data collected by Musk's electric car company after the Cybertruck packed with fireworks burst into flames in front of the Trump International Hotel Wednesday proved valuable to police in helping track the driver's movements.

Within hours of the New Year's Day explosion that burned the driver beyond recognition and injured seven, Tesla was able to track Matthew Livelsberger's movements in detail from Denver to Las Vegas, and also confirm that the problem was explosives in the truck, not the truck itself. Tesla used data collected from charging stations and from onboard software -- and to great acclaim.

"I have to thank Elon Musk, specifically," said Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Sheriff Kevin

McMahill to reporters. "He gave us quite a bit of additional information."

Some privacy experts were less enthusiastic.

"It reveals the kind of sweeping surveillance going on," said David Choffnes, executive director of the Cybersecurity and Privacy Institute at Northeastern University in Boston. "When something bad happens, it's helpful, but it's a double edged sword. Companies that collect this data can abuse it."

General Motors, for instance, was sued in August by the Texas attorney general for allegedly selling data from 1.8 million drivers to insurance companies without their consent.

Cars equipped with cameras to enable self-driving features have added a new security risk. Tesla itself came under fire after Reuters reported how employees from 2019 through 2022 shared drivers' sensitive videos and recordings with each other, including videos of road rage incidents and, in one case, nudity.

Tesla did not respond to emailed questions about its privacy policy. On its website, Tesla says it follows strict rules for keeping names and information private.

"No one but you would have knowledge of your activities, location, or a history of where you've been," according to a statement. "Your information is kept private and secure."

Auto analyst Sam Abuelsamid at Telemetry Insight, said he doesn't think Tesla is "especially worse" than other auto companies in handling customer data, but he is still concerned.

"This is one of the biggest ethical issues we have around modern vehicles. They're connected," he said. "Consumers need to have control over their data."

Tensions were high when the Cybertruck parked at the front doors of Trump's hotel began smoking, then burst into flames. Just hours earlier a driver in another vehicle using the same peer-to-peer car rental service, Turo, had killed 15 people after slamming into a crowd in New Orleans in what law enforcement is calling a terrorist attack.

Shortly before 1 p.m., the Las Vegas police announced they were investigating a second incident.

"The fire is out," the police announced on the social media platform X, one of Musk's other companies. "Please avoid the area."

Tesla shortly thereafter swung into action.

"The whole Tesla senior team is investigating this matter right now," Musk wrote on X. "Will post more information as soon as we learn anything."

Over the next few hours, Tesla was able to piece together Livelsberger's journey over five days and four states by tracking, among other things, his recharging stops in various locations, including Monument, Colorado, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Flagstaff, Arizona.

There are no federal laws regulating car data similar to those that restrict information collection and sharing by banks and health care providers. And state laws are a grab-bag of various rules, mostly focused on data privacy in general.

Daniels, the privacy consultant, thinks that new national laws are needed because rules have not kept up with technology.

"I think law enforcement should have access to data that can help them solve things quickly," she said. "But we have a right to privacy."

House Speaker Mike Johnson held onto his job, but there are signs of trouble ahead

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — This time was supposed to be different.

But while House Speaker Mike Johnson on Friday avoided the dayslong ordeal that his predecessor, Kevin McCarthy, endured to become speaker, his relatively swift victory was hardly a unifying moment. The tumult of the day laid bare that Johnson retains only tenuous support from hard-line conservatives who gave him their votes for now, but stand ready to dispatch him just as they did McCarthy if their demands aren't met.

"Is he going to fight?" said Rep. Ralph Norman, a South Carolina Republican who initially opposed John-

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son but ultimately changed his vote.

Republicans are relishing the moment as they take unified control of Washington and rally around President-elect Donald Trump. Yet the elements that made for a turbulent House the past two years remain stubbornly in place, except that the stakes are far higher now as Republicans try to deliver on Trump's agenda.

The scale of the conflict to come was apparent as Congress began its new session Friday. House Republicans took shots at each other on TV and argued on the House floor, the freshly elected speaker looked worried, and even after Johnson's victory, some GOP lawmakers openly discussed what might trigger his removal.

For a time, it seemed things might get even worse.

The House chamber seemed to snap back to a familiar scene from the speakership vote two years ago as archconservatives refused to back Johnson, gesticulating while they openly negotiated on the floor. But after an hour of uncertainty and tense negotiations — as well as Trump calling in from a golf course to make clear he supported Johnson — two of the three Republicans who at first denied Johnson the speakership changed their votes to give him the majority he needed.

Norman said it was not so much Trump who changed his mind, but the fact that Johnson, as he huddled with the holdouts in the back of the House chamber, vowed that he would indeed "fight for everything going forward."

Easier said than done.

Johnson has the difficult task of leading a Republican majority that will be even slimmer than it was in the last Congress — potentially down to a single vote, once a handful of members join Trump's administration.

Last year, the thin majority, as well as near-constant defiance from his right flank, forced Johnson to rely on Democratic support to pass practically any significant legislation.

Johnson tried to turn the page in his first speech after winning the speaker's gavel, arguing that Republicans are now empowered by a "groundswell of Americans" who want an end to the status quo in Washington.

"Speaker Johnson contends that in an environment where we have the White House and the Republican Senate, that he's going to be able to go get the job done," said Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, who has been outspoken in his criticism of Johnson. "So we'll give him a chance to see. But we need to deliver. There's no room for any excuses now."

Making matters more difficult, even if Johnson manages to unite his conference in the House, most legislation will still need at least some Democratic support in the Senate, where the chamber's filibuster rules prevent most bills from advancing unless they have support from at least 60 senators. Republicans will have a 53-47 majority in the Senate.

"He's got a really, really tough job," Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said in an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press."

Republican leadership did ease one threat to Johnson by making it more difficult to oust the speaker through a so-called motion to vacate. Any motion will now need at least nine members from the majority party rather than being triggered by a single lawmaker. Democrats protested that Republicans are shielding the speaker from bipartisan accountability.

Still, within minutes of Johnson gaining the support he needed to take the speakership, the House Freedom Caucus released a letter signed by 11 members demanding that Johnson deliver ambitious policy goals, including enacting permanent border security changes, making aggressive federal spending cuts and banning members of Congress from stock trading.

Caucus members said Johnson now "must prove he will not fail to enact President Trump's bold agenda."

At the same time, conservatives are also agitating for guarantees to reduce the federal deficit as well as move power from the speaker's office by allowing rank-and-file members greater control over what's included in legislation. While such promises could prove hard to keep, Johnson committed to working closely with Freedom Caucus members in crafting legislation.

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"Speakers typically don't last very long," said Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., a caucus member. "I would say this about Speaker Johnson: As long as this is a member-driven process, I think his speakership will be successful. If it's not, that's going to be tough."

Nine conservatives initially withheld support for Johnson during the speakership vote by either staying silent while their names were called or voting for someone else. It was taken by many as a not-so-subtle message that the motion to vacate is still at hand, even with the rules change.

The warning was even raised to Johnson during a huddle over the speaker vote, Norman said.

Norman said Johnson responded: "Look, if I don't perform like I say I'm going to perform and push the things that you're saying, put me out. I never thought I would have this job anyway."

Today in History: January 5 Construction begins on Golden Gate Bridge

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Jan. 5, the fifth day of 2025. There are 360 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 5, 1933, construction began on the Golden Gate Bridge; the bridge was completed in May 1937.

Also on this date:

In 1896, an Austrian newspaper reported the discovery by German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen (RENT'-gun) of a new type of radiation that came to be called "X-rays."

In 1925, Democrat Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming took office as America's first female governor.

In 1953, Samuel Beckett's two-act tragicomedy "Waiting for Godot," considered a classic of the Theater of the Absurd, premiered in Paris.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed assistance to countries to help them resist Communist aggression in what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.

In 1980, "Rapper's Delight," by The Sugarhill Gang, became the first hip-hop song to reach the Billboard Top 40.

In 2022, Australia denied entry to tennis star Novak Djokovic, who was seeking to play for a 10th Australian Open title later in the month; authorities canceled his visa upon his arrival in Melbourne because he failed to meet the requirements for an exemption to COVID-19 vaccination rules.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Robert Duvall is 94. Filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki is 84. Actor Diane Keaton is 79. Actor Vinnie Jones is 60. TV personality Carrie Ann Inaba is 57. Rock singer Marilyn Manson is 56. Actor-filmmaker Bradley Cooper is 50. Actor January Jones is 47. Actor Mike Faist is 33. Actor Walker Scobell is 16.