

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, Feb. 2

GROUNDHOG DAY

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

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

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

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

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



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

Open Gym, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Pancake Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

Monday, Feb. 3

Senior Menu: Sloppy joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, winter blend, ice cream, fruit.

Girls Basketball at Florence: C game at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow

Junior High Boys Basketball at Sisseton: 7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.

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

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

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

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Tina's Baskets! Text/Call at 605-397-7285 to reserve your basket now. They are going fast! Cash, check or Venmo.



2. White vase with sour suckers. \$7.50



3. Kit Kat Cake with Valentine suckers on top. \$35



4. Hersheys Cake, two tier with strawberry hard candy. \$40



7. Valentine container with fake roses and white bears. \$5



8. Reeses candy bars with Valentine suckers. \$50



9. Heart basket with as-sorted candy. \$15



10. Vase filled with strawberry drops and chocolate rose candy. \$9



12. Valentine's love balloon with fake flowers, MMs, skittles. \$15



14. Mini chip ahoy's cookies, be mine valentines book , a bear with a love heart on it and some hot wheels in it . \$12



15. Bet-sie Voucher book, puppy, mini chocolate hearts. Behind the dog a bag of heart bear gummies and a small box of mix chocolates. \$12

NEC wins annual clash of the conferences

Usually the Northeast Conference can pull off one, maybe two wins at the annual NEC-DAK XII Conference clash, but this year, the Northeast Conference pulled off five wins and only four losses. In addition, this is the first year, boys and girls, the Groton Area Tigers pulled off a win in the annual clash with a 67-41 win over Dell Rapids.

Groton Area Coach Brian Dolan said he was very pleased with the Tigers in the interview on GDILIVE.COM after the game. He said the team is all back together and that it was an exceptional week of practice. Back in action are Teylor Diegel, who had his first varsity playing time of the year. Also back are Easton Weber and Logan Warrington after recovering from their injuries.

Scores from the games were as follows:

Redfield 46, Canton 41

Lennox 57, Aberdeen Roncalli 47

Sisseton 50, Tri-Valley 44

Vermillion 67, Sturgis 47

Milbank 50, Elk Point/Jefferson 30

Dakota Valley 63, Deuel 57

Madison 80, Webster 40

Hamlin 53, West Central 48 2OT's

Groton Area 67, Dell Rapids 41

Sioux Falls Christian 71, Clark/Willow Lake 44

Groton Area Tigers Roar to Victory in Annual Clash

Madison, SD - The Groton Area Tigers made history Friday night, securing their first-ever win at the annual Clash of the NEC DAC-12 Conference Clash with a commanding 67-41 victory over the Dell Rapids Quarriers. The Tigers' relentless energy and stifling defense propelled them to a statement win in Madison.

The game started as a back-and-forth battle, with three lead changes in the first quarter. However, Groton took control late in the period, closing with a 16-11 advantage. Their momentum carried into the second quarter, where they quickly built a 21-13 lead, forcing Dell Rapids to burn two timeouts in an attempt to stop the surge.

But the Tigers wouldn't be denied. Behind a suffocating defense and efficient shooting, Groton extended their lead to 33-21 at halftime. The turning point came at the end of the second quarter when the Tigers went on a nine-point run that stretched into the third, ballooning their lead to 40-21. By the end of the third quarter, Groton held a comfortable 53-33 advantage, leaving little doubt about the outcome.

Johnson Leads the Charge

Ryder Johnson was the catalyst for Groton's success, delivering a stellar all-around performance with 20 points, seven rebounds, four assists, and four steals. His dominance on both ends of the floor earned him Player of the Game honors. Keegen Tracy added 17 points, while Becker Bosma chipped in 12 to round out the Tigers' trio of double-digit scorers.

Key Stats and Team Play

Both teams grabbed 24 rebounds, but Groton capitalized better on mistakes. The Tigers forced 22 Dell Rapids turnovers, converting them into 10 points, while Dell Rapids managed only two points off of Groton's 14 turnovers. Shooting efficiency played a major role as well, Groton hit 17 of 27 two-pointers and drained eight three-pointers on 22 attempts. At the free throw line, the Tigers were nearly automatic, knocking down nine of 10 shots.

For Dell Rapids, Karson Paye led with 11 points, but the Quarriers struggled to find offensive rhythm against Groton's aggressive defense. While they recorded six blocks on the night, Dell Rapids couldn't keep up with the Tigers' pace.

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Looking Ahead

With the victory, Groton improved to 8-4 on the season and will prepare for another test on Tuesday at Roncalli. Meanwhile, Dell Rapids falls to 8-7 and will look to bounce back in their next contest.

For Groton, this win wasn't just another victory - it was a statement. The Tigers proved they belong among the conference's best, and they'll look to carry that confidence forward as they chase more success in the season ahead.

- Story compiled by ChatGPT

Ryder Johnson: 20 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists, 4 steals, 2 fouls.

Keegen Tracy: 17 points, 2 rebounds, 3 assists, 3 steals, 1 foul.

Becker Bosma: 12 points, 4 rebounds, 4 assists, 4 steals, 4 fouls.

Karson Zak: 7 points, 1 rebound, 2 assists, 1 steal, 2 fouls.

Gage Sippel: 5 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists, 4 fouls, 1 block.

Blake Pauli: 2 points, 1 foul.

Turner Thompson: 2 points.

Logan Warrington: 2 points, 1 rebound, 1 steal.

Easton Weber: 2 assists, 1 foul.

Jayden Schwan: 1 rebound, 1 steal, 4 fouls.

Taylor Diegel: 1 rebound.

Totals: 2-pointers: 17-27 63%, 3-pointers: 8-22 36%, Free Throws: 9-10 90%, 24 rebounds, 14 turnovers, 19 assists, 14 steals, 20 fouls, 1 block.

Dell Rapids: Field Goals: 16-33 48%, Free throws: 8-16 50%, 24 rebounds, 12 fouls, 22 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 hand for the action.



Ryder Johnson was chosen as the Player of the Game Saturday at the DAK XII-NEC Clash after Groton Area defeated Dell Rapids. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Ehresmann earns 200th win, Groton wins own tournament

Christian Ehresmann earned his 200th wrestling win at the Groton Invitational Wrestling Tournament held Saturday. In addition, Groton Area won the team title, easily outdistancing runner-up Watertown JV, 291-185.5.

Placing first were Wyatt Hagen, Keegan Kucker, Chris Schwab, Christian Ehresmann and Korbin Kucker. Runner-up titles went to Donavon Block, Walker Zoellner, Ben Hoeft, Charlie Frost and Gavin Englund. Karter Moody placed third. Those in fourth place were Kyson Kucker and Layne Johnson. In fifth were Lincoln Krause and Isiah Scepaniak. And in sixth place were Noah Scepaniak and Grayson Flores.

1. Groton Area 291.0, 2. Watertown JV 185.5, 3. Clark/Willow Lake 115.5, 4. Potter County 109.5, 5. Huron JV` 91.5, 6. Britton/Hecla 91.0, 7. Webster Area 76.5, 8. Sully Buttes 59.5, 9. Warner/Northwestern 57.0, 10. McLaughlin 46.5, 11. Canistota 39.0, 12. Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington 36.5, 13. Timber Lake 36.0, 14. Redfield 34.0, 15. Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle 32.0, 16. Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV 30.0, 17. Milbank JV 13.0, 18. McIntosh 12.0, 19. Tiospa Zina 0.0



Christian Ehresmann (right) is pictured with Coach Darin Zoellner. Ehresmann earned his 200th win at the Groton Invitational Wrestling Tournament held Saturday. (Photo from Kelsie Ehresmann's facebook page)

106: Wyatt Hagen (21-8) placed 1st and scored 25.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 21-8 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 21-8 won by fall over Lincoln Kilker (Britton/Hecla) 10-17 (Fall 1:31)

Semifinal - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 21-8 won by decision over Easton Rausch (Potter County) 32-19 (Dec 5-2)

1st Place Match - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 21-8 won by tech fall over Jonah Anderson (Watertown JV) 9-12 (TF-1.5 4:27 (18-2))

113: Keegan Kucker (24-9) placed 1st and scored 27.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Keegan Kucker (Groton Area) 24-9 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Keegan Kucker (Groton Area) 24-9 won by fall over Aksel Gjerde (Clark/Willow Lake) 7-8 (Fall 1:36)

Semifinal - Keegan Kucker (Groton Area) 24-9 won by tech fall over Ernest Walette (Huron JV`) 7-5 (TF-1.5 2:17 (16-0))

1st Place Match - Keegan Kucker (Groton Area) 24-9 won by fall over Tanner Urdahl (Watertown JV) 13-14 (Fall 3:10)

138: Chris Schwab (19-16) placed 1st and scored 28.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Chris Schwab (Groton Area) 19-16 won by major decision over Gunnar Knittel (Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle) 2-11 (MD 14-5)

Quarterfinal - Chris Schwab (Groton Area) 19-16 won by fall over Parker Grabow (Milbank JV) 0-7 (Fall 1:19)

Semifinal - Chris Schwab (Groton Area) 19-16 won by fall over Carmine Crow Ghost (McLaughlin) 10-12 (Fall 2:38)

1st Place Match - Chris Schwab (Groton Area) 19-16 won by tech fall over Damian Severson (Clark/Willow Lake) 15-14 (TF-1.5 2:43 (17-1))

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157: Christian Ehresmann (25-3) placed 1st and scored 28.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 25-3 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 25-3 won by fall over Owen Petersen (Watertown JV) 4-10 (Fall 1:25)

Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 25-3 won by fall over Austin Nash (Warner/Northwestern) 5-19 (Fall 0:33)

1st Place Match - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 25-3 won by fall over AJ Olivier (Sully Buttes) 15-16 (Fall 0:40)

175: Korbin Kucker (29-4) placed 1st and scored 27.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 29-4 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 29-4 won by tech fall over Tanen Schmiegl (Milbank JV) 2-5 (TF-1.5 3:03 (16-1))

Semifinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 29-4 won by fall over Ivan Stuwe (Potter County) 15-12 (Fall 3:56)

1st Place Match - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 29-4 won by tech fall over Justin Rohrbach (Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle) 16-10 (TF-1.5 5:38 (17-1))

132: Donavon Block (25-12) placed 2nd and scored 22.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Donavon Block (Groton Area) 25-12 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Donavon Block (Groton Area) 25-12 won by fall over Jayze Kuhl (Canistota) 0-2 (Fall 1:06)

Semifinal - Donavon Block (Groton Area) 25-12 won by fall over Sidney Morgan (Timber Lake) 12-17 (Fall 3:51)

1st Place Match - Isaac Johnson (Clark/Willow Lake) 31-13 won by major decision over Donavon Block (Groton Area) 25-12 (MD 14-1)

144: Walker Zoellner (20-8) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 20-8 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 20-8 won by fall over Joesph Haag (Canistota) 7-11 (Fall 1:39)

Semifinal - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 20-8 won by decision over Tanner Vander Vorst (Potter County) 13-16 (Dec 7-3)

1st Place Match - Austin Vig (Clark/Willow Lake) 29-12 won by major decision over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 20-8 (MD 11-0)

165: Ben Hoeft (18-15) placed 2nd and scored 22.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 18-15 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 18-15 won by fall over Tyler Cronin (Huron JV) 1-16 (Fall 1:07)

Semifinal - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 18-15 won by fall over Jacoby Carry Moccasin (McLaughlin) 4-12 (Fall 3:45)

1st Place Match - Gavin Boyle (Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV) 17-12 won by decision over Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 18-15 (Dec 8-5)

215: Charlie Frost (19-16) placed 2nd and scored 22.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 19-16 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 19-16 won by fall over Cody Wiik (Milbank JV) 1-8 (Fall 2:56)

Semifinal - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 19-16 won by fall over Quentin White Mountatin (McLaughlin) 8-11 (Fall 5:29)

1st Place Match - Tucker Hardy (Britton/Hecla) 24-8 won by fall over Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 19-16 (Fall 1:33)

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285: Gavin Englund (25-7) placed 2nd and scored 22.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 25-7 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 25-7 won by fall over Terrell Wojahn (Milbank JV) 0-7 (Fall 2:16)
Semifinal - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 25-7 won by fall over Zach Bonin (Redfield) 2-7 (Fall 1:34)
1st Place Match - Preston Cavalier (Warner/Northwestern) 29-2 won by decision over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 25-7 (Dec 4-1)

285: Karter Moody (14-8) placed 3rd.

Champ. Round 1 - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 14-8 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 14-8 won by fall over Rollie Betten (Redfield) 4-7 (Fall 2:54)
Semifinal - Preston Cavalier (Warner/Northwestern) 29-2 won by fall over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 14-8 (Fall 1:58)
Cons. Semi - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 14-8 won by fall over Jaspur Gran (Wessington Spings/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington) 8-14 (Fall 0:39)
3rd Place Match - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 14-8 won by fall over Rollie Betten (Redfield) 4-7 (Fall 0:56)

120: Kyson Kucker (22-10) placed 4th and scored 17.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Kyson Kucker (Groton Area) 22-10 won by fall over Taggen Paxton (Timber Lake) 4-16 (Fall 1:42)
Quarterfinal - Kyson Kucker (Groton Area) 22-10 won by fall over Carter Grobe (Britton/Hecla) 10-15 (Fall 5:19)
Semifinal - Brode Lohr (Watertown JV) 11-5 won by tech fall over Kyson Kucker (Groton Area) 22-10 (TF-1.5 3:24 (15-0))
Cons. Semi - Kyson Kucker (Groton Area) 22-10 won by tech fall over Stephen Martens (Huron JV`) 8-10 (TF-1.5 2:51 (16-0))
3rd Place Match - Kadrian Moreno (Huron JV`) 10-9 won by major decision over Kyson Kucker (Groton Area) 22-10 (MD 17-8)

190: Layne Johnson (11-21) placed 4th and scored 16.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 11-21 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 11-21 won by fall over Liam Lehman (Potter County) 3-6 (Fall 3:14)
Semifinal - Kadyn Westergren (Sully Buttes) 21-20 won by fall over Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 11-21 (Fall 2:15)
Cons. Semi - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 11-21 won by fall over Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-9 (Fall 2:47)
3rd Place Match - Isaac Nelson (Webster Area) 19-15 won by fall over Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 11-21 (Fall 0:58)

126: Lincoln Krause (19-13) placed 5th and scored 13.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 19-13 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Braxten Petersen (Watertown JV) 7-8 won by fall over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 19-13 (Fall 3:39)
Cons. Round 2 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 19-13 won by fall over Xavier Ellenbecker (Groton Area) 0-6 (Fall 0:25)
Cons. Round 3 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 19-13 won by fall over Lucas Mathieu (Canistota) 2-17 (Fall 0:33)
Cons. Semi - Evan Mack (Watertown JV) 8-4 won by fall over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 19-13 (Fall 2:22)
5th Place Match - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 19-13 won by fall over Jax Le (Watertown JV) 2-3 (Fall 2:06)

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190: Isiah Scepaniak (4-9) placed 5th.

Champ. Round 1 - Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-9 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Isaac Nelson (Webster Area) 19-15 won by fall over Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-9 (Fall 2:54)
Cons. Round 2 - Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-9 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 3 - Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-9 won by fall over Kameron Hunnel (Potter County) 3-19 (Fall 4:12)
Cons. Semi - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 11-21 won by fall over Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-9 (Fall 2:47)
5th Place Match - Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-9 won by fall over Jensen Wientjes (Watertown JV) 4-15 (Fall 1:18)

120: Noah Scepaniak (16-15) placed 6th.

Champ. Round 1 - Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 16-15 won by fall over Jacob Giles (Milbank JV) 1-15 (Fall 1:57)
Quarterfinal - Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 16-15 won by fall over Chase Dunsmore (Wessington Spings/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington) 16-14 (Fall 2:59)
Semifinal - Jack Stuwe (Potter County) 26-14 won by fall over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 16-15 (Fall 1:01)
Cons. Semi - Kadrian Moreno (Huron JV`) 10-9 won by tech fall over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 16-15 (TF-1.5 3:00 (22-7))
5th Place Match - Stephen Martens (Huron JV`) 8-10 won by decision over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 16-15 (Dec 9-6)

132: Grayson Flores (5-14) placed 6th.

Champ. Round 1 - Grayson Flores (Groton Area) 5-14 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Koda Popkes (Canistota) 6-16 won by tech fall over Grayson Flores (Groton Area) 5-14 (TF-1.5 2:54 (15-0))
Cons. Round 2 - Grayson Flores (Groton Area) 5-14 won by medical forfeit over Ryder Berninghaus (Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle) 3-12 (M. For.)
Cons. Round 3 - Grayson Flores (Groton Area) 5-14 won by fall over Chance Little Bear (McLaughlin) 4-11 (Fall 1:28)
Cons. Semi - Sidney Morgan (Timber Lake) 12-17 won by fall over Grayson Flores (Groton Area) 5-14 (Fall 1:29)
5th Place Match - Leo Dunn (Watertown JV) 2-4 won by decision over Grayson Flores (Groton Area) 5-14 (Dec 11-7)

120: Aiden Strom (1-2).

Champ. Round 1 - Kadrian Moreno (Huron JV`) 10-9 won by tech fall over Aiden Strom (Groton Area) 1-2 (TF-1.5 2:12 (19-4))
Cons. Round 1 - Aiden Strom (Groton Area) 1-2 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - Chase Dunsmore (Wessington Spings/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington) 16-14 won by fall over Aiden Strom (Groton Area) 1-2 (Fall 0:50)

126: Xavior Ellenbecker (0-6)

Champ. Round 1 - Evan Mack (Watertown JV) 8-4 won by fall over Xavior Ellenbecker (Groton Area) 0-6 (Fall 0:38)
Cons. Round 1 - Xavior Ellenbecker (Groton Area) 0-6 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 19-13 won by fall over Xavior Ellenbecker (Groton Area) 0-6 (Fall 0:25)

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Krueger is winner at Groton Invitational

Groton Area's Liza Krueger (35-2), at 107 pounds, took first place at the Groton Invitational Wrestling Tournament held Saturday. She pinned all three of her opponents.

Round 1 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 35-2 won by fall over Olivia Borgen (Britton/Hecla) 1-13 (Fall 1:41)

Round 2 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 35-2 won by fall over Kaylee Tessman (Ortonville) 14-10 (Fall 2:59)

Round 3 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 35-2 won by fall over Eva Eustice (Ortonville) 22-6 (Fall 3:41)

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The Wolves Women Suffers Lost Against Beavers In NSIC Action

Minot, N.D. – The Northern State University women's basketball team came up short against Minot State's late rally, falling 73-64 on Saturday night. Michaela Jewett led the charge, recording 16 points and 13 rebounds for her seventh double-double of the season, marking her fourth consecutive game with a double-double.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 64, MISU 73

Records: NSU 14-8 (NSIC 11-5), MISU 8-15 (NSIC 7-9)

Attendance: 893

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State posted 18 points in the first quarter, 17 in the second, 17 in the third, and 12 in the fourth. The Wolves registered 30 points in the paint, 15 points off turnovers, 13 second-chance points, and 9 bench points.

They shot 39.9% from the floor, compared to Minot State's 49.1% on the night.

Michaela Jewett posted her seventh double-double of the season with 16 points and 13 rebounds.

Rianna Fillipi contributed 15 points, five rebounds, and three assists.

Madelyn Bragg added 14 points, shooting 50.0% from the floor, along with seven rebounds and three assists.

NORTHERN STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Michaela Jewett: 16 points, 13 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal

Rianna Fillipi: 15 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 steals

Madelyn Bragg: 14 points, 7 rebounds, 3 assists, 50.0 FG %

UP NEXT

Northern State hits the road for a matchup with Minnesota Crookston before returning home to host Bemidji State. The games are set for Thursday, February 6 at 7:30 p.m. in Crookston, MN, and Saturday, February 8 at 6:00 p.m. at Wachs Arena against the Beavers.

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Northern State Men Unable to Find a Rhythm in Loss to No. 20 Minot State

Minot, N.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team traveled to Minot on Saturday, falling to the No. 20 Beavers. Three Wolves scored in double figures in the game led by James Glenn with 17 points.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 65, MiSU 101

Records: NSU 1-21 (0-16 NSIC), MiSU 21-4 (12-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 1276

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves tallied 33 points in the first and 32 in the second, shooting 44.4% from the field and 50.0% from the 3-point line in the game

They were out-rebounded 42-17 in the contest and added 11 assists, eight steals, and five blocks

NSU scored 16 points in the paint, ten points off turnovers, and nine points off the bench

Glenn tallied 17 points, knocking down 7-of-11 from the field with three assists and four steals

Devon Brooke followed, scoring 14 points with three assists, two steals, and two rebounds

Kwat Abdelkarim was the final Wolf in double figures, notching 11 points, while Kaleb Mitchell led the team at the rim with five rebounds

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

James Glenn: 17 points, 63.6 field goal%, 4 steals, 3 assists, 2 rebounds

Devon Brooke: 14 points, 3 assists, 2 rebounds, 2 steals

Kwat Abdelkarim: 11 points, 1 rebound, 1 assist, 1 block

UP NEXT

Northern will play their second straight split week next Thursday and Saturday. The Wolves will travel to Minnesota Crookston for a 5:30 p.m. match-up on Thursday. They return home on Saturday for a 4 p.m. contest against the Beavers.

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Girls NEC Standings

Roncalli	6-0	10-2
Hamlin	5-0	11-2
Groton Area	6-2	10-4
Clark/Willow Lake	4-2	9-4
Milbank	4-2	8-4
Webster Area	3-5	6-7
Britton-Hecla	2-3	3-10
Deuel	2-3	3-10
Sisseton	2-3	8-5
Redfield	1-9	1-12
Tiospa Zina	0-6	5-8

Jan. 30

Milbank 60, Deuel 40
Clark-Willow Lake 56, Redfield 17
Groton 55, Webster 43
Hamlin 71, Sisseton 58

Jan. 31

Aberdeen Roncalli 67, Britton-Hecla 22

Feb. 3

Tiospa Zina at Roncalli

Feb. 4

Britton-Hecla at Sisseton
Hamlin at Milbank

Feb. 6

Deuel at Groton Area
Milbank at Roncalli
Redfield at Webster Area
Clark/Willow Lake at Sisseton

Feb. 11

Hamlin at Roncalli
Clark/Willow Lake at Britton-Hecla
Sisseton at Milbank

Feb. 13

Sisseton at Tiospa Zina
Hamlin at Deuel

Feb. 18

Hamlin at Britton-Hecla
Sisseton at Deuel
Tiospa Zina vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Clark

Boys NEC Standings

Hamlin	5-0	12-2
Groton Area	6-1	8-4
Clark/Willow Lake	5-1	12-2
Roncalli	4-1	6-7
Deuel	4-1	10-3
Britton-Hecla	3-3	7-5
Milbank	2-3	4-8
Webster Area	2-6	4-9
Sisseton	1-4	3-8
Tiospa Zina	0-5	0-13
Redfield	0-6	0-12

Jan. 30

Aberdeen Roncalli 76, Britton-Hecla 35
Deuel 51, Milbank 38
Hamlin 77, Sisseton 22

Jan. 31

Clark-Willow Lake 82, Redfield 30

Feb. 4

Groton Area at Roncalli
Britton-Hecla at Sisseton
Hamlin at Milbank

Feb. 6

Deuel at Groton Area
Redfield at Webster Area

Feb. 7

Roncalli at Milbank
Sisseton vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Clark

Feb. 11

Hamlin at Roncalli
Clark/Willow Lake at Britton-Hecla
Sisseton at Milbank

Feb. 13

Hamlin at Deuel

Feb. 14

Tiospa Zina at Sisseton

Feb. 17

Tiospa Zina at Roncalli

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



*But now, O Lord, You are our Father;
We are the clay, and
You our potter;
And all we are
the work of
Your hand.*

ISAIAH 64:8

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Who said, "Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars but the ark of the covenant ... remaineth under curtains"? *David, Nathan, Saul, Solomon*

3. From Numbers 12, why was Miriam shut out of camp for seven days? *Ungodly act, Leprous, Fasting, Lent*

4. Who took David in as his own after the slaying of Goliath? *Jonathan, Solomon, Saul, Eliakim*

5. About how tall was Goliath in approximate cubits? *3, 4, 5, 6*

6. Upon which mountain did Aaron die? *Hor, Carmel, Pisgah, Sinai*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) David, 3) Leprous, 4) Saul, 5) Six, 6) Hor

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

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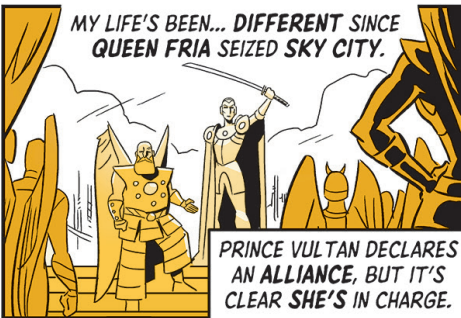


FLASH GORDON

THOSE SPINNY LITTLE GYROSHIPS ARE BRINGING BOK AND HIS FRIENDS BACK TO DRY LAND.

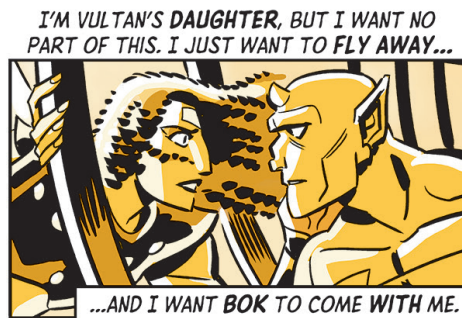
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF -- I FLY UP TO GREET THEM FIRST.

THE WALKERS CAN WAIT THEIR TURN.



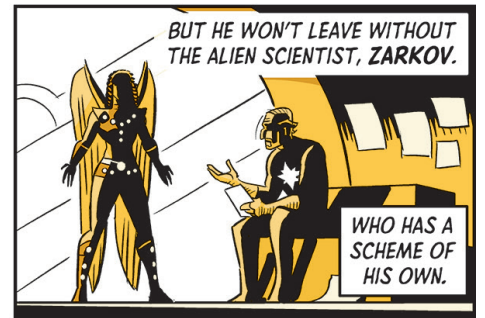
MY LIFE'S BEEN... DIFFERENT SINCE QUEEN FRIA SEIZED SKY CITY.

PRINCE VULTAN DECLARES AN ALLIANCE, BUT IT'S CLEAR SHE'S IN CHARGE.




I'M VULTAN'S DAUGHTER, BUT I WANT NO PART OF THIS. I JUST WANT TO FLY AWAY...

...AND I WANT BOK TO COME WITH ME.



BUT HE WON'T LEAVE WITHOUT THE ALIEN SCIENTIST, ZARKOV.

WHO HAS A SCHEME OF HIS OWN.



HE COPIES A HOARD OF FRIGIAN WAR PLANS AND WEAPON SPECS ONTO A DATA STONE.

AND HE LOCKS THE STONE IN A CODEX.



THE THREE OF US ESCAPE, LOSE THE CODEX, AND FINALLY GET IT BACK.

ALL THEIR FRIENDS WATCH AS HE UNLOCKS IT...

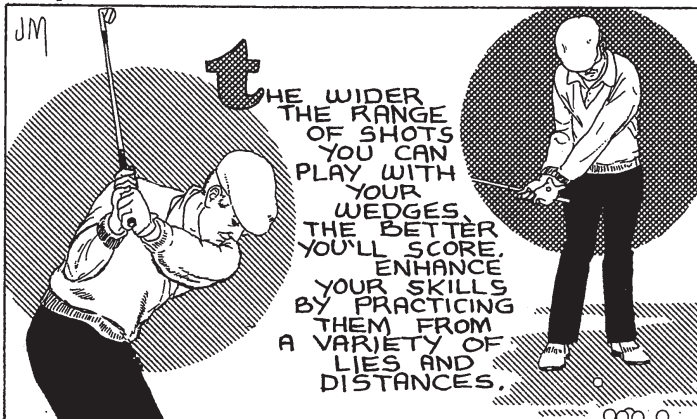


...AND SEES IT'S EMPTY. THE STONE IS GONE.

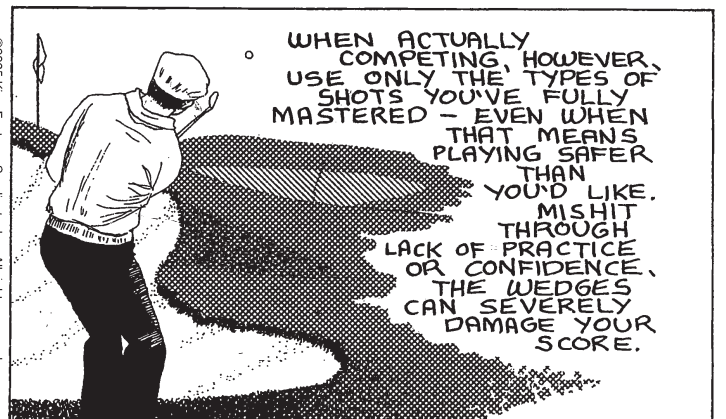
DAN SCHKADE 2-2-25

NEXT: MASS TRANSIT

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



THE WIDER THE RANGE OF SHOTS YOU CAN PLAY WITH YOUR WEDGES, THE BETTER YOU'LL SCORE. ENHANCE YOUR SKILLS BY PRACTICING THEM FROM A VARIETY OF LIES AND DISTANCES.



WHEN ACTUALLY COMPETING, HOWEVER, USE ONLY THE TYPES OF SHOTS YOU'VE FULLY MASTERED - EVEN WHEN THAT MEANS PLAYING SAFER THAN YOU'D LIKE. MISHIT THROUGH LACK OF PRACTICE OR CONFIDENCE, THE WEDGES CAN SEVERELY DAMAGE YOUR SCORE.



Understanding the Mechanisms Behind a Nuclear Stress Test

DEAR DR. ROACH: I had a comment about your recent column on nuclear stress tests. As an 87-year-old person who has experienced atrial fibrillation and a mild stroke, I have had two nuclear stress tests done. In both cases, I told the supervising nurse I wanted to go to the max limits that they would allow. Even though I attempted to prepare by briskly walking up the hill close to my home and thought I was doing well on the treadmill, I failed to reach the final parameters that they were seeking.

To get me there, I was injected with something (the name escapes me) that is supposed to achieve the same result as the final stage of a nuclear stress test. As I recall the discussion, the nurse stated that many couldn't

get as far as I did. Medications were a way for them to obtain the needed results. -- J.M.

ANSWER: Stress testing may be done for several reasons, but the most common is to determine whether there are blockages in the arteries in the heart that are severe enough to limit blood flow. When ordering a stress test, the clinician has to decide how to stress the heart and get information from it.

In people who can exercise (meaning they don't have an orthopedic or neurological condition that keeps them from being able to move), then using exercise is the best approach in almost all cases. Exercise is safer since you can stop doing it at any time, and it also provides useful information. People who can exercise for a longer time (9 minutes on a standard protocol called a Bruce) have a very good prognosis; whereas if you can't make it to 3 minutes, this is a poor prognosis.

The treadmill gets steeper and faster every 3 minutes on a Bruce protocol so that eventually even an Olympic athlete has to give up. The goal is to get to maximum exercise where a person simply can't go any further. The person who runs the stress test looks for any sign of incipient heart damage through an electrocardiogram (EKG), a blood pressure monitor, or symptoms so that the test can be stopped if it seems dangerous.

Despite trying really hard, some people cannot get their heart rate and blood pressure high enough where the stress test can diagnose heart disease. In this case, the exercise stress test is converted to a pharmacologic stress test. A medication, such as dobutamine, is given to make the heart beat faster and stronger until the adequate workload is achieved.

Many of my patients tell me that this is uncomfortable, and more than once, I have heard someone say, "My heart was going to jump out of my chest." If there are signs of danger, the medication can be stopped, and in some cases, a reversal agent is given.

Once the heart is at an adequate level of exertion, abnormalities in the blood flow can be detected by the EKG. However, the test's sensitivity can be improved by looking at blood flow through a radioactive chemical injected in the blood, which can measure blood flow to various regions of the heart more precisely. The sensitivity can also be improved by examining the heart's wall movement through echocardiography.

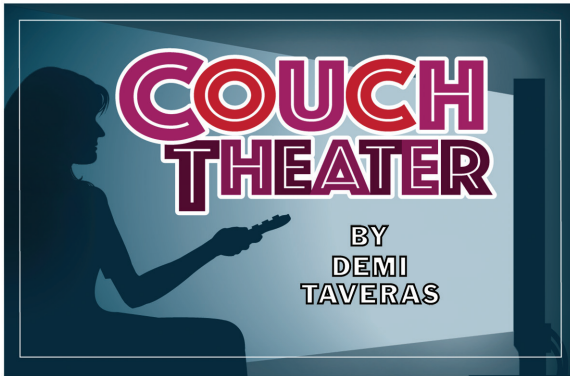
In other cases, a more limited stress test is done to determine the safety of exercise. This is often done after a heart attack to determine which exercises a person can do as part of their cardiac rehab.

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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Lee Jung-jae stars in "Squid Games 2." Courtesy of MovieStillsDB

"Moana 2" (PG) -- The third highest-grossing film of 2024 was this sequel to Disney's hit 2016 animated film about Moana (Auli'I Cravalho), the daughter of a Polynesian village chief. Having a bit more experience in the realm of wayfinding and sailing after her last adventure with Maui (Dwayne

Johnson), Moana is tasked with searching for a sunken island called Motufetu that can connect all of the islands across the ocean. This time around, she has a bit more help than just the demigod Maui, with a crew consisting of Maui superfan Moni, a quirky craftswoman named Loto, and a grumpy farmer named Kele. Together, they will be able to break the curse of Motufetu. Out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Babygirl" (R) -- The creators behind this erotic thriller starring Nicole Kidman ("A Family Affair") and Harris Dickinson ("The Iron Claw") knew exactly what they were doing by signing on these two actors to star opposite each other. Kidman plays tech CEO Romy Mathis, who's deeply unsatisfied with her marriage with husband Jacob (Antonio Banderas). When a young man named Samuel (Dickinson) begins interning at her company, Romy is immediately enticed by him, and a torrid love affair commences between the two of them. But Romy's career and family life will hang in the balance as she continues to let her inhibitions overpower her reasoning. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"67th Annual Grammy Awards" (TV-PG) -- Hosted by Trevor Noah ("The Daily Show") for the fifth consecutive time, the Grammy Award ceremony is now available on streaming after being broadcasted live on Feb. 2. Topping the list of most nominations is none other than Beyonce, thanks to the release of her eighth studio album, "Cowboy Carter." Other notable names who were nominated and dominated music during 2024 include Sabrina Carpenter for her album "Short n' Sweet," Charli XCX for her album "Brat," and Best New Artist Chappell Roan. The three aforementioned women also performed during the ceremony, as well as Benson Boone, Billie Eilish, Shakira and Teddy Swims. (Paramount+)

In Case You Missed It

"Squid Game 2" (R) -- The second season of the South Korean survival series "Squid Game" is out now to stream three years after the first season was released. After bingeing season one in a couple of days, envisioning another season that could follow up its success seemed nearly impossible, but season two does not disappoint! Following Seong Gi-hun (Lee Jung-jae), the winner of the Squid Game in the first season, viewers watch as he once again enters the deadly survival game in an attempt to warn participants of its sinister nature and stop the game entirely. However, the Front Man is hot on Gi-hun's heels to ensure that his precious game remains intact. (Netflix)

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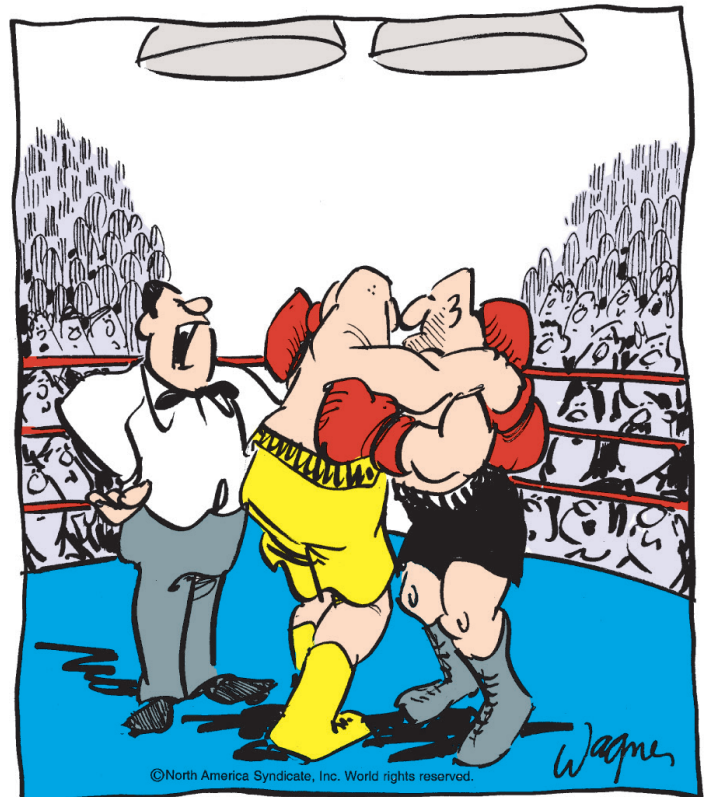


1. Which Bob Seger song was written as a result of an incident in a truck stop?
2. What was the first hit by the Del Vikings?
3. Who released "Return to Me?"
4. The Doors had two No. 1 hits, one with "Light My Fire." What was the other one?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Baby saw that when they pulled that big top down, They left behind her dreams among the litter."

Answers

1. "Turn the Page," in 1973. Seger and his band had stopped for gas and the locals weren't too kind to all the band members with their long hair. Seger turned it into a song.
 2. "Come Go With Me," in 1957. The song was used in several films, including "American Graffiti" in 1973 and "Stand by Me" in 1986.
 3. Dean Martin, in 1958. Bob Dylan recorded a version for the television series "The Sopranos" in 2001.
 4. "Hello, I Love You," in 1968.
 5. "Don't Cry Out Loud," by Melissa Manchester, in 1978. The song was allegedly written by co-writer Peter Allen in response to the death of his father. Miss America 1980 used the song in the pageant's piano and singing talent competition.
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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



"The Donald Trump-Rosie O'Donnell fight was better than this!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Shovel is shorter. 2. Arm is lower. 3. Snow is missing from mailbox. 4. Doorknob is missing. 5. Zipper is missing. 6. House is not as wide.

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* "For a small splinter that is buried, try this trick before you go digging around with a tweezer or a sterilized needle. Use a piece of banana peel laid pulp-side-down over the splinter and cover it with a bandage. Leave it on overnight if possible. It has something to do with the enzymes in the peel as it ripens, but it will help draw out the splinter. The peel needs to be nice and ripe, and it might take a couple of tries." -- D.M.

* Need a substitution for buttermilk? You can use an equal amount of plain, unflavored yogurt, or for each cup, add a teaspoon of vinegar or lemon juice to a cup of milk.

* "On chore days, I write each chore or step of a chore on a sticky note and attach them to the kitchen counter. Then we all get together and decide who will do what. We end up with

our stack of sticky notes and can complete the chores in an organized fashion." -- R.E. in Alabama

* Keep a lint roller by the sewing machine to quickly swipe up those tiny bits of thread. It'll keep your sewing area from getting messy.

* Sharpen scissors by cutting through a piece of aluminum foil that has been folded over several times. It really does work!

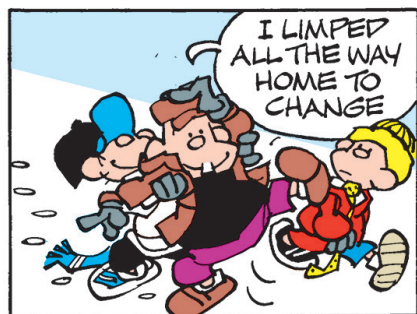
* Parents of twins (or other multiples): It really does make a difference when you join a multiples club or keep in touch with an organization for that purpose. Most do clothing swaps or sales fairly often, and the money you'll save in the clothing the first year is worthwhile.

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 Beanies
- 5 Enfold
- 9 Stanley Cup org.
- 12 Luau dance
- 13 Roof overhang
- 14 Parisian "yes"
- 15 Pedestal occupant
- 16 Sketch
- 17 Trio after Q
- 18 Church organ feature
- 19 Retrieve
- 20 Bogus
- 21 Canonized Fr. woman
- 23 Soul, to Sartre
- 25 "Fantasia" ballerinas

- 28 Esteem
- 32 Commence
- 33 Biblical king
- 34 Gave a speech
- 36 Sipping aids
- 37 Weep
- 38 Spigot
- 39 "Holy cow!"
- 42 Away from SSW
- 44 Foot fraction
- 48 Flight stat
- 49 "Misery" star James
- 50 Olympian Lipinski

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

- 51 Altar promise
- 52 Bullets
- 53 Family
- 54 Fresh
- 55 Low digits
- 56 Warmonger
- 7 Online icon
- 8 Church seat
- 9 Director Ephron
- 10 Corn cover
- 11 Low-calorie
- 20 Frenzied state
- 22 Photocopier need
- 24 Maestro Zubin —
- 25 "Westworld" network
- 26 Suffix with hotel
- 27 Links org.
- 29 Notable time
- 30 Tier
- 31 Mag. staff
- 35 Energetic person
- 36 Shorthand pros
- 39 Profit
- 40 Shoppe description
- 41 Pack cargo
- 43 Handle
- 45 "The Lion King" lion
- 46 Gullet
- 47 Slugger Aaron
- 49 Purring pet

DOWN

- 1 Poker token
- 2 BMW rival
- 3 Fall into a chair
- 4 Merchant's spiel
- 5 Hunks of cheese
- 6 Exceptional

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— King Crossword —

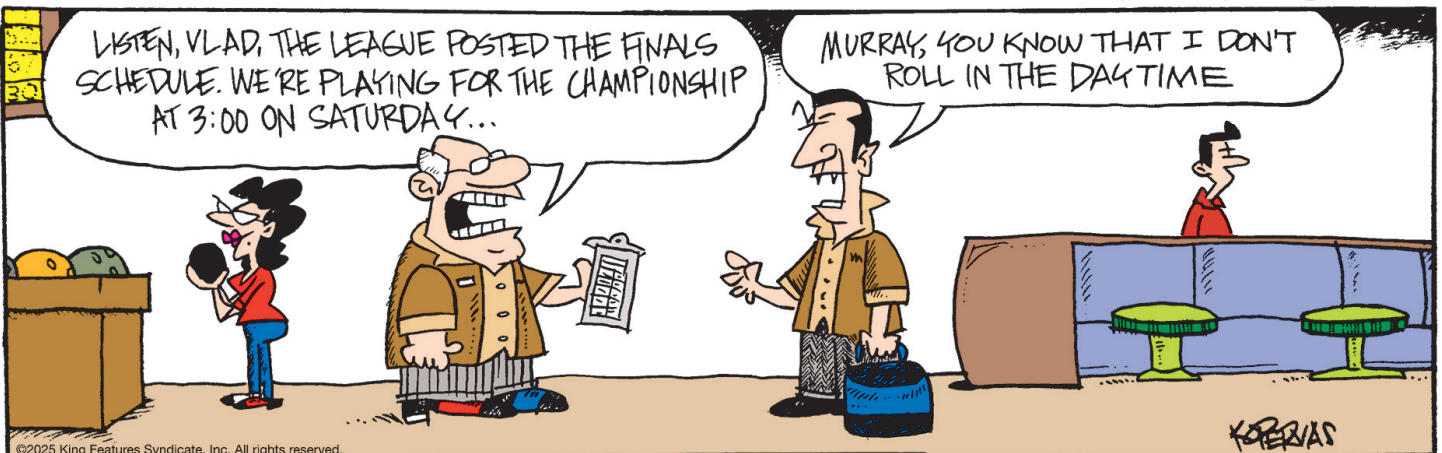
Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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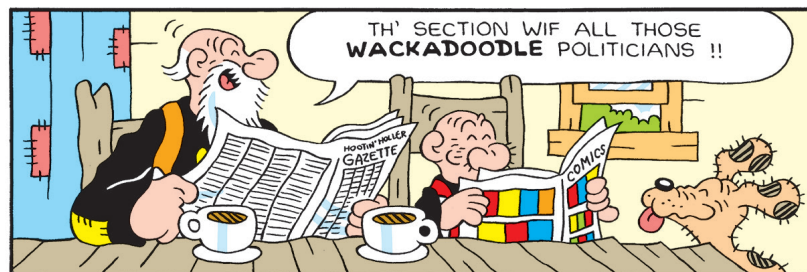
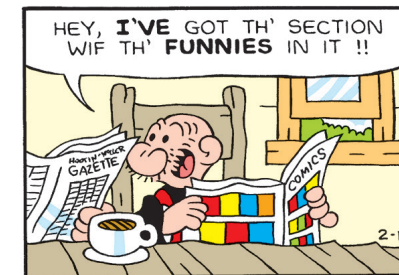
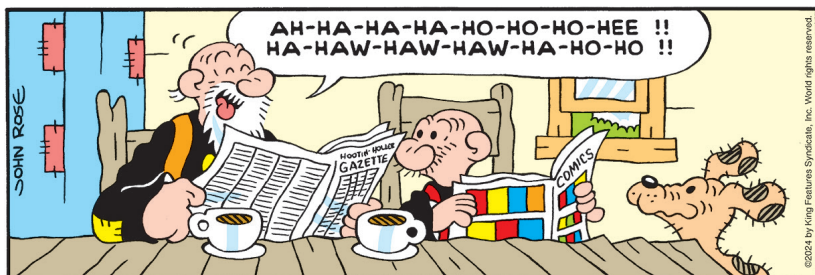
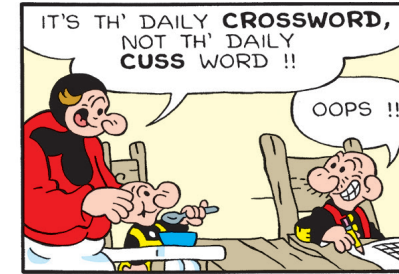
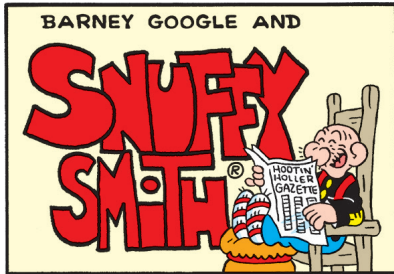
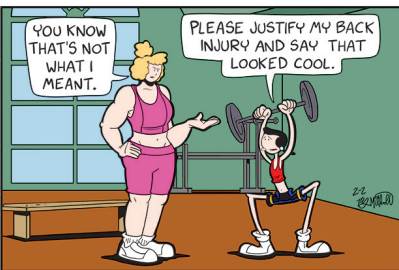
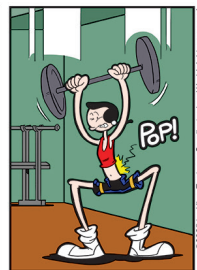
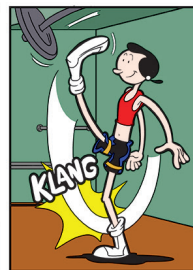
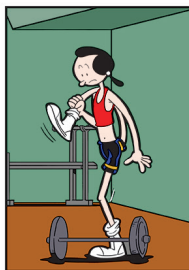
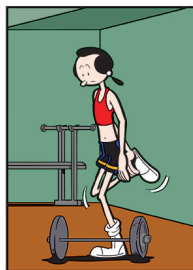
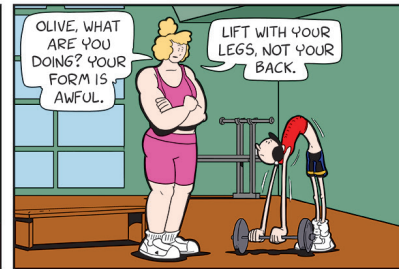
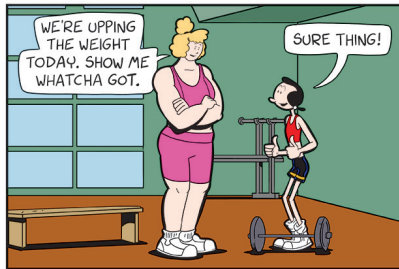
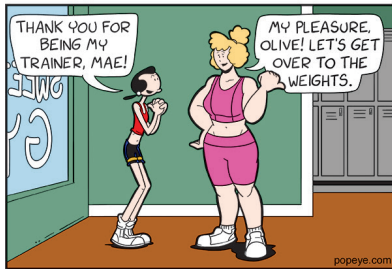
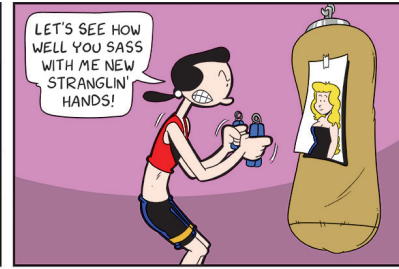
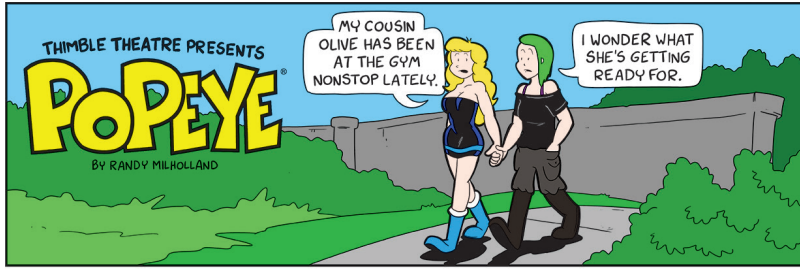
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



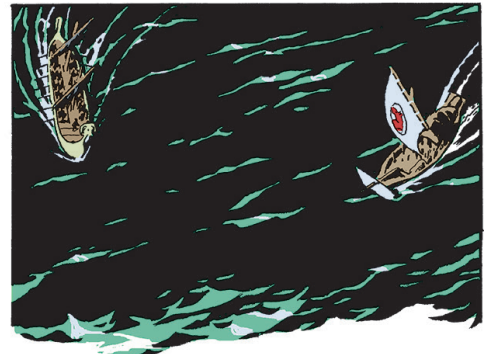
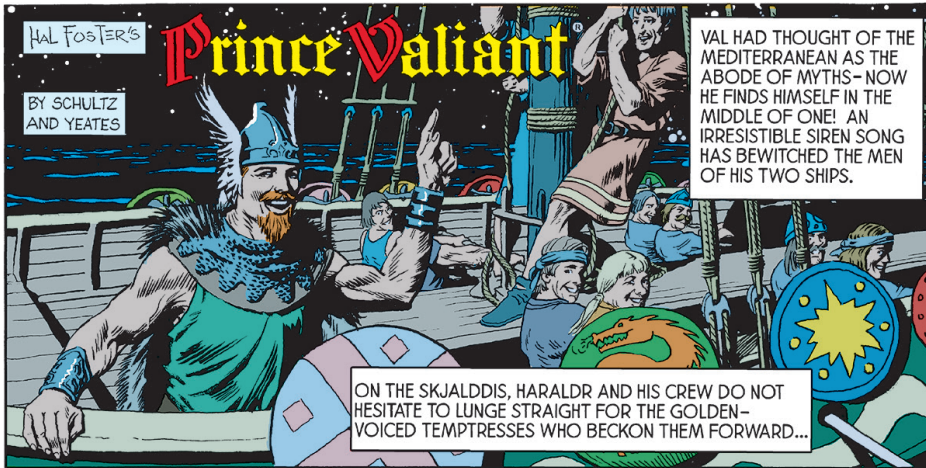
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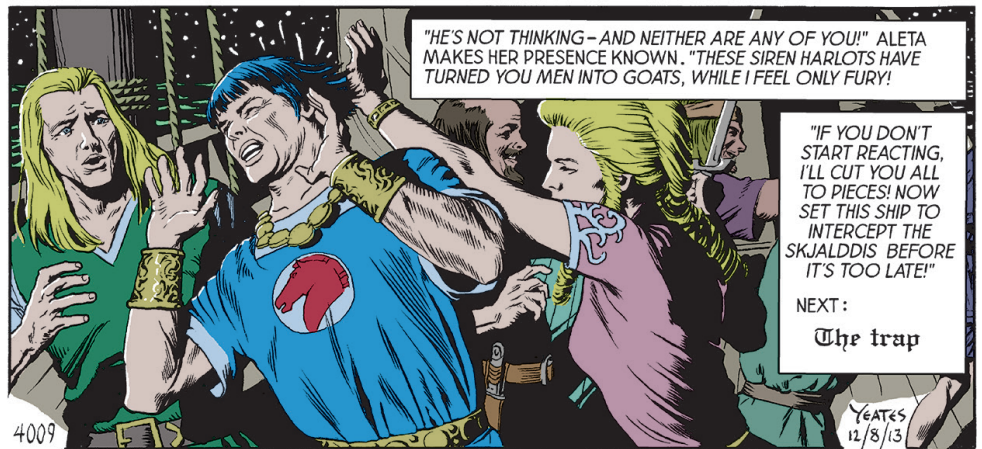


...WHICH SETS THEM ON A COURSE THAT WOULD TAKE THE SWIFT DRAGON BOAT DIRECTLY ACROSS THE ISLAND QUEEN'S BOW. "THE YOUNG FOOL!" CRIES GUNDAR HARL ...

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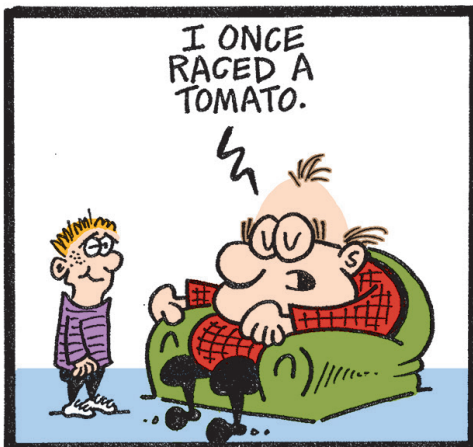


"MY SON KNOWS OF THE LORELEI, WHOSE SONGS LURE CARELESS SAILORS TO THEIR DOOMS ALONG THE RHINE! WHY WOULD HE SUBMIT TO THIS TEMPTATION? WHAT IS HE THINKING?"

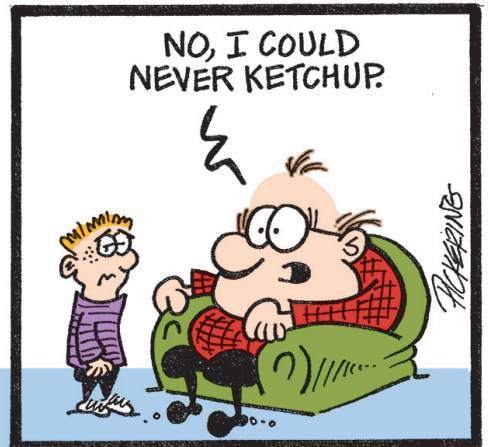


The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Calculating the price of eggs

Here we go again. Because of the avian influenza, many hens have had to be culled, leaving fewer to produce eggs. Supply and demand being what it is, the price of eggs has jumped up again because there are fewer eggs.

A recent trip to the store was a shocker. In the space of less than 10 days, a dozen eggs at my local store had shot up over \$2 ... to a whopping \$6.95 for large eggs. This wasn't even extra large or jumbo.

I almost walked away without buying eggs. Instead, I pulled out my calculator and did the math. At that price, each egg cost 58 cents. A two-egg omelet would, therefore, cost \$1.16 for the eggs, and would provide 12 grams of protein.

And it was then I realized something: For all the complaining I've done about the price of eggs, maybe the price really isn't so bad when it's calculated that way.

To be considered: There is tuna with a high protein level, but we're told not to eat it every day because of the mercury in many types. There's rice, but we shouldn't have that every day either because of the arsenic in it. (And how many of us adhere to the 1/4-cup serving size?) Beef is a protein powerhouse, but where are we going to get a serving of beef for \$1.16? Not at my store.

In my hunt for "cheap protein," I discovered cottage cheese. One 1/2-cup serving gets us 14 grams of protein and costs 72 cents. Two tablespoons of peanut butter gets us 7 grams of protein.

Then there are beans, lentils and oatmeal, and a snack of cheese with a few grapes and crackers.

So, instead of looking at the cost of an item (and cringing), maybe we need to look instead at the cost of a serving.

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Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460
Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



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1. Xaviar Babudar, sentenced to more than 17 years in prison for a string of armed bank robberies, was a wolf-costumed superfan of what NFL team?

2. Tennis player Ons Jabeur, Wimbledon ladies' singles finalist in 2022 and '23, hails from what country?

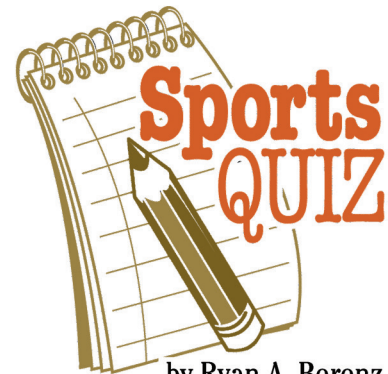
3. What is the name of the Arizona State Sun Devils' official athletic mascot?

4. What umpire blew a call at first base in the bottom of the ninth inning to help the Kansas City Royals defeat the St. Louis Cardinals in Game 6 of the 1985 World Series?

5. Basketball Hall of Famer Tom Heinsohn was a player, coach and broadcaster for what NBA franchise?

6. Greece's Athanasia Tsoumeleka won a gold medal at the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics competing in what athletics event?

7. Ty Detmer, Mark Brunell, Doug Pederson, Matt Hasselbeck and Jim McMahon were among what Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback's backups?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. The Kansas City Chiefs (Babadur was known as "ChiefsAholi").

2. Tunisia.

3. Sparky.

4. Don Denkinger.

5. The Boston Celtics.

6. Race walking.

7. Brett Favre.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Cold weather can be deadly for outdoor cats

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I care for a rescued barn cat who refuses to come indoors -- she will come onto the porch for food and water, and let me pet her, but that's about it. I was able to get "Gertie" spayed a few years back, so that's no longer a problem. However, I worry about her in the cold weather. What do you recommend to keep outdoor cats from suffering in freezing temperatures? -- Caroline in Roanoke, Virginia

DEAR CAROLINE: Shelter is important during the coldest months of the year, and even if an outdoor cat has survived OK in past winters, that can change -- especially as they get older.

Food, water and shelter are the three biggest things you can provide to help an outdoor cat survive and remain healthy during the winter. Place fresh water in a container that won't freeze easily, such as a thick-walled dish.

The Humane Society of the United States recommends building (or purchasing) an outdoor cat shelter that is appropriate for their size -- not too snug, but not so large that it can't hold in the cat's body heat (www.humanesociety.org/resources/how-care-outdoor-cats-winter).

You can line the inside of the shelter with Mylar sheets that reflect body heat even better. For bedding, an old pillowcase filled with packing peanuts or crumpled newspaper is helpful, or you can use straw. Place the shelter near where you've observed the cat resting, or try placing it on the porch next to her food and water. (Don't put water inside the shelter in case it spills.)

Remove and replace bedding every couple of weeks to keep things fresh and help maintain warmth.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* It is illegal to publish photographs of handcuffed suspects in France, as they're not to appear guilty until actually proved so.

* The word "king" in a snake's name indicates that it preys on other snakes.

* St. Lucia is the only country in the world named after a woman. Originally called the Island of the Iguanas by early Carib settlers, the name was later changed after French seamen were shipwrecked there on Dec. 13, the feast day

of St. Lucy.

* Studies have shown that spending only a few minutes every day in the New York City subway system can ultimately result in hearing loss.

* When you snap your finger, it moves at about 20 mph.

* Pope Gregory I decreed that rabbit fetuses were marine mammals and they could therefore be eaten during Lent.

* A bobsled is so named because early racers bobbed their heads back and forth in an attempt to gain speed. (It didn't work.)

* The annual World's Biggest Liar competition in Cumbria, England invites entrants from around the world to tell the biggest and most convincing lie they can muster in five minutes. No props or scripts are allowed, nor are politicians or lawyers permitted to compete, as "they are judged to be too skilled at telling porkies."

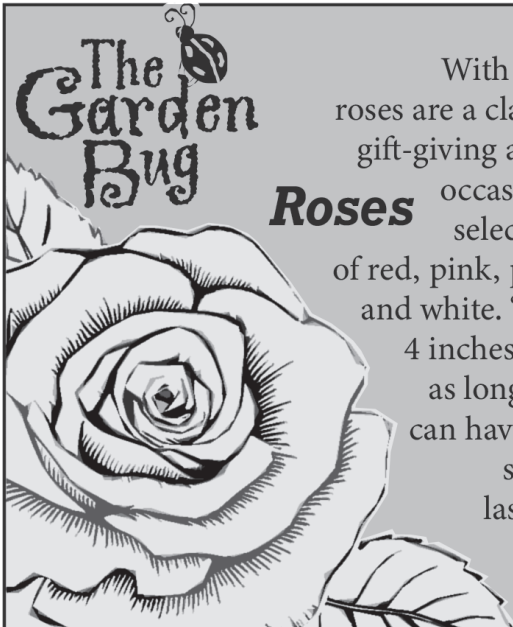
* More than four tons of old U.S. paper money is mulched into compost every day.

* Cockroaches are so repulsed by humans that if they're touched by a human, not only do they run away, but they wash themselves. (Personal to cockroaches: The feeling is mutual!)

* Bananas are curved because they grow towards the sun, in a process called "negative geotropism."

Thought for the Day: "Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." -- Marcel Proust

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The Garden Bug

Roses

With over 120 varieties available, roses are a classic and popular option for gift-giving and commemorating special occasions. The colors available to select from range in every shade of red, pink, purple, orange, coral, peach and white. "Tea" roses can bloom up to 4 inches across; stem lengths can be as long as 30 inches. "Spray" roses can have several blooms on a single stem. A bouquet of roses can last up to 5 to 7 days in a vase.

— Brenda Weaver
Source: Society of American Florists

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by Freddy Groves

New benefits guide for 2025

The Department of Veterans Affairs has released a new publication that you'll want to see. The "2025 VA Federal Benefits Guide for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers" is now available.

Go online to va.gov and search for "pamphlet 80-25-1" for a link to the handbook.

This 120-page handbook is full of info you may need, if not now then later. Whether it's education benefits, life insurance, home loans or mental health resources and more, it's there.

Just seeing it all in one publication is an eye-opener. We really do have a lot of benefits. The guide is well done; somebody was thinking about it when they included all the eligibility requirements for each benefit, including the periods of service.

Right in the front is a list of help phone numbers, ranging from Camp Lejeune Family Member Program, to National Cemetery Scheduling Office, to 72-Hour Emergency Care Notification Line and many more. This is followed by pages of department websites, complete with click links right in the online document.

Save the link as a bookmark on your computer so you can find it again.

Getting a printed copy, however, might be a bit difficult. A recent VA news release says that "a limited number" of copies might be available at your closest VA facility. (See www.va.gov/find-locations for the ones near you.) Which means that by the time you read this, they'll be gone. I would hope that veteran service organizations will print out a few copies of the handbook to have for members to use.

If you don't have a computer to access the handbook and your local VA facility doesn't have copies, you can call the VA with your questions at 800-827-1000 from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday. They'll get you to the right department.

For another collection of resources, see www.va.gov/welcome-kit for a Welcome Kit, even if you're not new to the VA. It's 53 pages and includes a mobile app for download.

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Wishing Well®

4	5	4	5	6	3	8	2	7	8	2	5	7
S	E	W	X	S	H	R	U	P	E	S	P	E
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7	8	3	8	4	3	6	3	2	8	4	3	6
E	T	T	E	R	E	A	E	S	D	Y	M	L

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

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1. TELEVISION: What is the name of the spaceship on the TV drama "Firefly"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What is the only tropical rainforest in the United States?
3. LITERATURE: What is the title of author Oscar Wilde's only complete novel?
4. MOVIES: What is the name of the killer in the movie "Silence of the Lambs"?
5. SCIENCE: What are the three branches of science?
6. AD SLOGANS: Which fast-food chain's slogan is, "What you crave"?
7. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many NFL teams are named after animals (including birds)?
8. U.S. STATES: In which state is the U.S. Naval Academy located?
9. ASTRONOMY: How many constellations are visible from Earth?
10. ART: What is the Japanese art of arranging flowers called?

Answers

1. Serenity.
2. El Yunque National Forest, Puerto Rico.
3. "The Picture of Dorian Gray."
4. Buffalo Bill.
5. Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Formal Sciences.
6. White Castle.
7. 14 (Atlanta Falcons, Arizona Cardinals, Baltimore Ravens, Carolina Panthers, Chicago Bears, Cincinnati Bengals, Denver Broncos, Detroit Lions, Indianapolis Colts, Jacksonville Jaguars, Los Angeles Rams, Miami Dolphins, Philadelphia Eagles and Seattle Seahawks).
8. Maryland.
9. 88.

Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Let Me Introduce Myself

This past week, I started out in a new job. After six years serving as your lieutenant governor, I had the opportunity to shorten my title. I'd like to take some time to share some things you might not know about me.

I have a wonderful wife named Sandy who I have been married to for nearly 44 years. I wouldn't be here today without her support and encouragement. Together, we have four sons, four daughters-in-law, and seven grandchildren: Jesse and Sarah and their children Ladd, Sully, and Gus; Cody and Liz and their children Tally and Josey; Reggie and Jennifer and their son Lincoln; and Tristen and Kalen and their daughter Birkin.

I'm a fifth-generation South Dakotan. My father's grandfather, Allen Rhoden, came to a place in western South Dakota called Chalkbutte in 1907. My mother was a Murphy. Her family came west on horses and wagons and homesteaded in the Two Rivers area, about 20 miles west of Union Center. Some of the original foundations of my family's homesteads still stand today.

My dad was named Allen after his grandfather. He and my mom, Mildred, raised five kids. My twin sister, Lorie, and I are the fourth and fifth. Mom and Dad taught us the importance of faith in Jesus Christ, and faith is still central in my life.

My parents also taught us the value of work. Hard work is part of life on the ranch. Even today, I'm still happiest when I'm working with my hands. There's value in working to create something from start to finish.

Service in the military has always been a big part of my family. My great-great-grandfather came to America with General Lafayette to fight in the Revolutionary War, and his four brothers all died in the Revolution. My grandfather, John, served in World War I and fought in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. My dad served in World War II and fought at the Battle of the Bulge. Two of my brothers served in the Army, one of them in Vietnam. And my son Cody was a Black Hawk pilot.

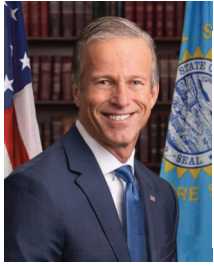
So when I came of age, I signed up for the South Dakota National Guard and served for six years. As a former Guardsman, it is a great honor to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the South Dakota National Guard.

I've also been active in my community around Union Center. I've been a leader in our church. I served on the board at our local Cenex. For several years, I coached women's softball and boys' basketball. I still sing bass in a men's quartet. And I served five years on the Meade County school board.

I got elected to the State Legislature in 2001 and served there for 16 years, including in various leadership positions. In 2018, Kristi Noem asked me to be her running mate. We won that election and were reelected in 2022, so I served six years as her Lieutenant Governor before rising to the office of Governor just a short time ago.

I promise you that I am prepared for this job and understand the gravity of the responsibility that has been placed on me. Serving the people of South Dakota in this capacity will be the great honor of my life. I promise to lead with civility, openness, responsiveness, and the common-sense conservative values that have made South Dakota so great.

I would like to make one request of each of you. Please pray for me and for my family. We all work hard and try to do our best, but we are nothing without the help of the Good Lord. Thank you. May God continue to bless the great state of South Dakota.



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

A New Direction in Washington

In the first two weeks since President Trump took the oath of office, the U.S. Senate has moved to confirm his Cabinet as swiftly as possible. Despite Democrats' obstruction, we have been able to confirm eight nominees within 10 days of President Trump's inauguration. These individuals are on the job, and the Senate is hard at work to get more of President Trump's team into place.

The first order of business was the president's national security team. At a time of global instability, President Trump's promise of restoring peace through strength is a needed change in direction from the last four years.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has made it clear that every decision he makes will be rooted in advancing America's interests. Under Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, our borders will be secure. The Pentagon is once again focused on warfighting, not woke distractions, under the leadership of Secretary Pete Hegseth. And Director John Ratcliffe is intent on returning the CIA to its core mission.

Energy is another top priority for the Trump administration. On his first day in office, President Trump took a number of actions to restore American energy dominance and put a stop to the anti-energy policies of his predecessor. America has the resources to be energy dominant, but we have to start saying "yes" to American energy.

President Trump has assembled a team committed to removing unnecessary barriers to American energy production. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum will restore a multiple-use approach to public lands management and leverage America's resources for a safe and more prosperous future. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin shares the president's commitment to easing regulations, and he brings a collaborative approach to an agency that has often lacked it in the last four years.

President Trump has brought a new direction to Washington. It's needed. The Biden administration demonstrated weakness around the world, and its open-border policies led to years of crisis at the southern border and in many communities across the country. The Biden administration's hostility toward conventional energy set our energy security on a dangerous path, and we were already beginning to see the warning signs of a future energy crisis.

President Trump and his team have a lot of work to do, and I look forward to working with them toward a more secure and prosperous America.

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There is more work to be done

BIG Update

Earlier this week, President Trump signed into law the Laken Riley Act which makes it easier to deport illegal immigrants with a criminal record. This was the first bill Trump signed into law during his second term which had broad support from Republicans and Democrats in both the House and Senate.

We've seen Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) off to a strong start implementing strengthened border and immigration policies. Working together, we can and will secure the border and make our communities safe.

BIG Idea

Schools on reservations are in disrepair. Many are outdated and deteriorating, with leaky roofs and walls, mold, and signs of asbestos. Tribal educators and students are desperate for relief.

A recent Office of Inspector General report from the Department of Interior showed the Bureau of Indian Education's systemic mismanagement and noted a backlog of more than \$1 billion in deferred maintenance. Some schools have waited years for their maintenance requests to be completed. This is simply unacceptable.

I called on the House Committees on Natural Resources and Education & Workforce to hold an oversight hearing on the Bureau of Indian Education to highlight these disparities and identify ways to improve the education environment. Our students and teachers deserve better.

BIG News

On Wednesday night, a military Blackhawk helicopter tragically collided with a passenger flight from Kansas as it was landing in Washington, D.C. With no survivors, this is the deadliest aircraft accident in 23 years.

My thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of those who passed and the first responders who have worked tirelessly to recover the remains. My office and I will continue to monitor the situation as it develops. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am hopeful we can work together to make sure this doesn't happen again.

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JANUARY 20-26, 2025

Welcome back to another edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up! It's been a busy few days in DC, starting last week with President Trump's inauguration and then beginning to confirm his nominees. Our first order of business last week was confirming our now-former colleague Marco Rubio as Secretary of State. His vote in the Senate was

unanimous, and while we'll miss having him as a colleague, he'll do great work in his new role. We also voted in committee on some of President Trump's nominees and passed a big piece of legislation related to cracking down on illegal immigration. We worked over the weekend to confirm two more critical cabinet members: Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense and our fellow South Dakotan Kristi Noem as Secretary of Homeland Security. This is just the beginning as we work to get America back on track. Here's my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota meetings: I met with Casey Peterson, chair of the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority; Dr. Benjamin Soukup, Chairman/CEO Emeritus at Communication Service for the Deaf; Dale Bartscher, Executive Director of South Dakota Right to Life; Peter Burwell, President and CEO of Burwell Enterprises; and the South Dakota Realtors Association.

Met with South Dakotans from: Aberdeen, Huron, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Watertown.

Cabinet nominee meetings: I met with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President Trump's nominee to lead the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). We had an excellent discussion on the need to incorporate AI in our health care. We agree that improving quality of life is crucial and that AI can help in the development of vaccines as well as curing chronic illnesses in the near future. We also had a very frank discussion about concerns from South Dakota farmers and ranchers regarding any actions impacting their ability to feed and fuel the world that the Secretary of HHS might have a role in.

Other meetings: I met with David Malpass, former President of the World Bank Group; Rosemary Banks, New Zealand's Ambassador to the United States; Jens Stoltenberg, former Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Mike Fitts, President of Tulane University; Kent Walker, President of Global Affairs at Google; Andrei Muraru, Romania's Ambassador to the United States; General Timothy Haugh, commander of U.S. Cyber Command and Director of the National Security Agency; Roberta Cordano, President of Gallaudet University; Bernard Hurwitz with the Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf; and Jason Matheny, President and CEO of RAND.

I also attended our Senate Bible Study and Senate Prayer Breakfast, where Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York was our speaker.

Hearings: While none of my committees had any full hearings last week, we did have business meetings to pass President Trump's nominees through committee. On Monday, we met in the Intelligence Committee to vote on John Ratcliffe, nominee to lead the Central Intelligence Agency, and in the Senate Armed Services Committee on Pete Hegseth, nominee to lead the Department of Defense. They have both now been confirmed by the full Senate. We also met in the Banking Committee to vote on Scott Turner, nominee to lead the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Turner has not yet come up for a full vote in the Senate. I voted YES on all of these nominees.

Classified briefings: I attended a classified briefing on the National Security Agency's Cybersecurity Collaboration Center.

Votes taken: 11 – as I mentioned, one of these was on Marco Rubio's nomination for Secretary of State. We also voted to pass the Laken Riley Act that I mentioned last week, which also passed the House last week and now heads to President Trump's desk to be signed into law. We also voted to confirm John Ratcliffe as the next director of the CIA, Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense and Kristi Noem as Secretary of Homeland Security.

Subcommittee assignments: I received word on my subcommittee assignments for the 119th Congress. I will be serving as chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, where I've held the top Republican position since the subcommittee was created in 2017. I will also chair the Senate Banking Committee's Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investments.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Spearfish.

Steps taken: 46,698 steps or 23.44 miles.



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

My Days of Wonder in the Hospital

My plans for the New Year were horribly changed by ending up in the hospital.

Around the middle of the month, it seemed like I may have had the flu. After all, everybody around me had the flu, and I just wanted to fit in with society in general.

I had to cancel my Sunday ministry because of this which is something I do not like to do. But, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said I had to do it to protect anybody who would come to the service and catch my flu.

Everybody around me seemed to have the flu, so I went along with her.

A certain incident happened on a Sunday afternoon. It was the first Sunday in a long time that I had not been at our Sunday morning ministry. I was in the bathroom, and on the floor of the bathroom was a little rug so that I wouldn't get water all over the floor.

When I stepped on that rug, it slipped out from under me, and I went crashing to the floor. It was unexpected at the time. As I lay there on the floor, I could not, for some reason, get back up on my feet. I didn't seem to have any strength.

With no other option, I had to call out to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage to come and help me. It took me several minutes to put that all together, and I had no other choice.

She came and was not able to help me get up, so she immediately called the ambulance, who came and helped me out of the bathroom and into my bed. But the situation was a little more than I understood, and so the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage had the ambulance take me to the hospital for some examination.

That was the beginning of four days of wonderment. By that, I mean every day, I wondered if this would be the last day and if I would go home today. I had never wondered so much in my life.

The medical team assumed I probably had a heart attack, and so I was up for every examination known in the civilized world. I had so many needles plunged into my body that I began looking like a porcupine.

I went through one examination after another after another. They were trying to find out some evidence I had a heart attack. But, to my satisfaction, I did not have a heart attack. They did find out I probably had pneumonia.

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Because I fell, I was not allowed to get out of bed without a nurse supervising. I had to go to the bathroom so many times, but I needed a nurse to help me get out of bed. If a nurse wasn't there, a little motion light and siren went off if I stepped away from my bed.

In order to go to the bathroom, I had to call for the nurse to come and make sure I didn't fall. Many times, the nurse wasn't available at the time.

Every day, I asked if this was the day I was going to be released from the hospital. Much to my discouragement, the nurses all said that I would have to wait one more day. The next day, the same news came to me: I had to wait just one more day. Oh, just one more day.

I wanted to figure out how I could get out of here.

All of the nurses looked at me and said that I was not allowed to leave the room. I told them I wanted to sneak out, run away, and go home. All of the nurses looked at me and said, "I will never allow you to do that."

As I lay in bed one afternoon, I thought of how I could escape this hospital room. Then, it occurred to me that if I could harass the nurses enough, they would get so perturbed that they would want to let me go immediately.

I worked on my little plan and tried to figure out ways to harass the nurses to make them want me to leave. However, the more I harassed them, the more they made sure they were not going to let me leave.

There are times in life when I wish I wasn't so charming, and this was one of them. I wanted to be one of those patients the nurses wanted to get rid of quickly.

Every time I did something to harass the nurse, that nurse would always look at me and laugh out loud, and then, with both hands on her hips, would look at me and say, "That's not going to work today." Then, she would leave the room laughing.

I needed some plan to get out of the hospital, and I wondered day after day how can I accomplish that.

Laying on my hospital bed some scripture came to my mind.

"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).

Either the stress in my life can frustrate me or, I can let it work for my good. I'm anxious to see the good that will come out of this frustration.

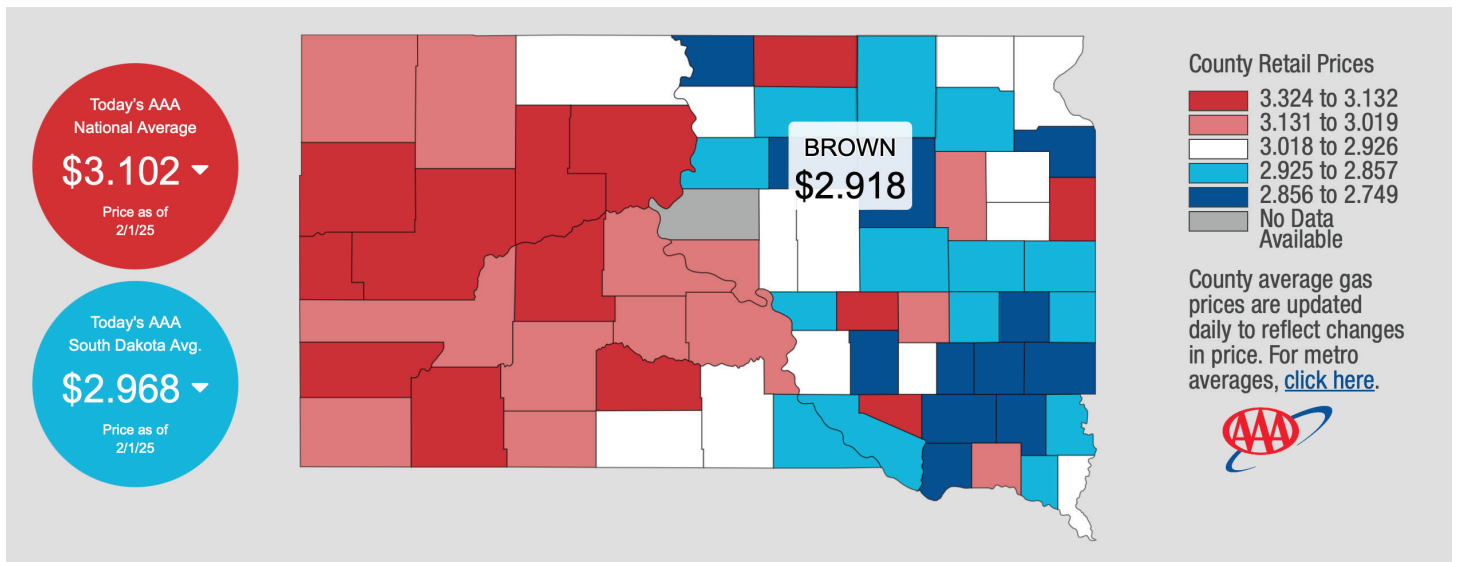
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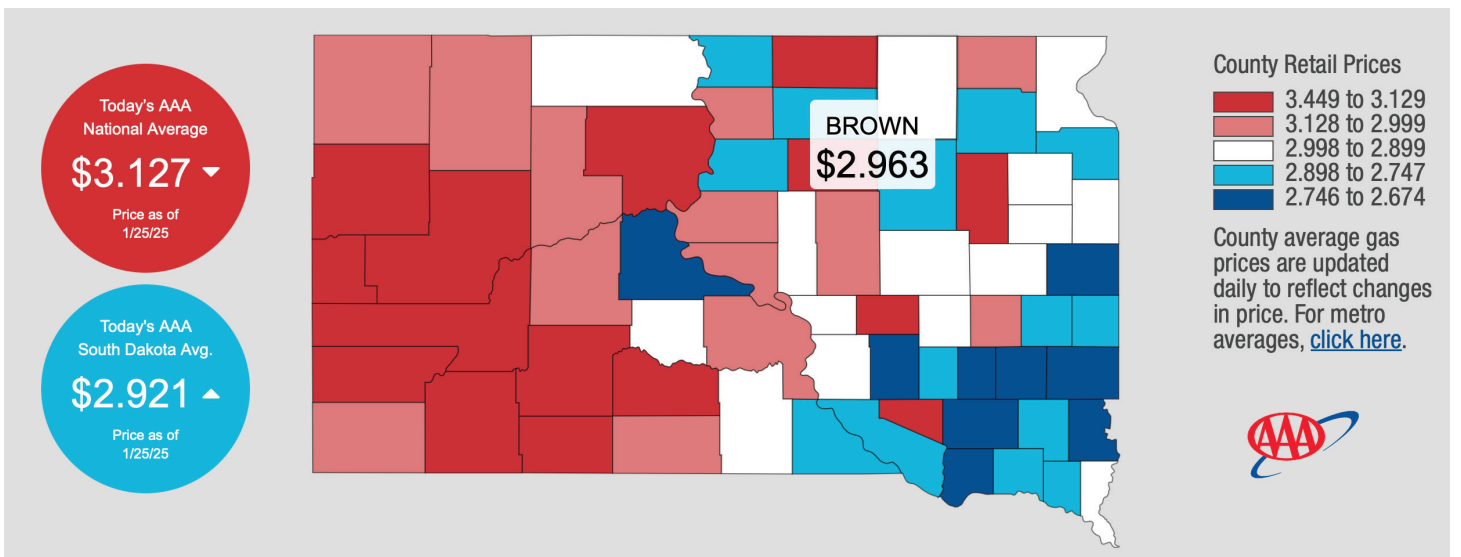
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.968	\$3.146	\$3.587	\$3.394
Yesterday Avg.	\$2.974	\$3.147	\$3.595	\$3.378
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.921	\$3.114	\$3.556	\$3.411
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.823	\$3.033	\$3.486	\$3.249
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.842	\$3.003	\$3.487	\$3.580

This Week



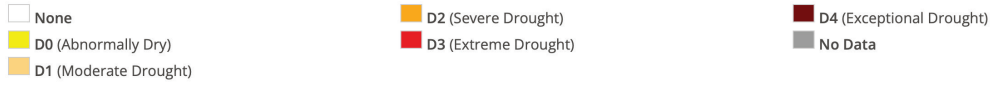
Last Week



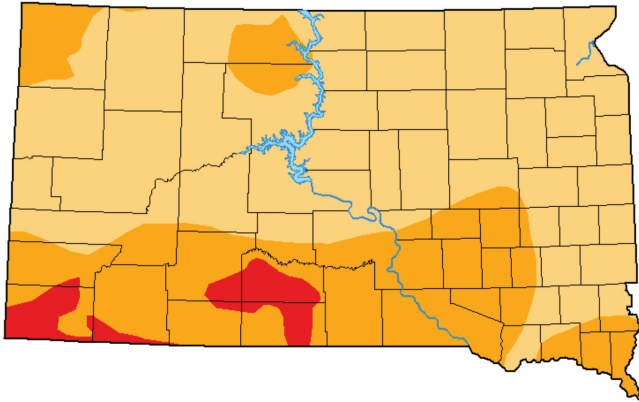
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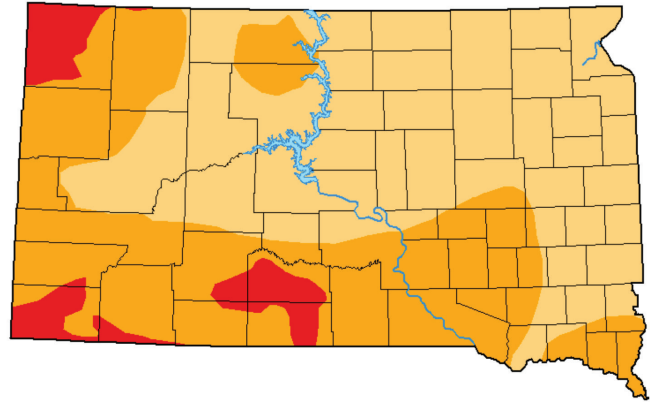
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



January 28



January 21

Northern areas were warmer than normal with departures of 3-9 degrees above normal in the Dakotas and northeastern Montana. Colder-than-normal temperatures dominated the rest of the region with some areas of Wyoming 12-15 degrees below normal for the week. Areas of western South Dakota, southwest North Dakota, southeast Montana and northeast Wyoming improved this week as conditions over the last few months were reassessed and the indicators were not aligning with the drought depiction. In many instances the drought is still considered severe or worse, but where the intensity was reduced, it was due to not all the indicators converging to what was being shown. In Wyoming, conditions were improved in the central and southwest where severe and moderate drought as well as abnormally dry conditions were improved. Some extreme drought was extended in the Wind River where snow and precipitation numbers supported the change.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: What's the connection between climate change and an increase in so-called atmospheric rivers?

-- John H., Bridgeport, CT

Atmospheric rivers are narrow bands of water vapor that form in the mid to high latitudes. These can span several miles and carry immense amounts of water - up to 27 times the flow of the Mississippi River. They primarily transport water from tropical oceans toward the poles, causing heavy precipitation during landfall. Their formation begins with evaporation over warm oceans, and then moves to cooler latitudes, with the moisture then falling as rain or snow when it reaches coastal regions. A common example of this is the Pineapple Express, which carries tropical moisture from Hawaii to the U.S West Coast



Climate change is making atmospheric rivers more frequent and more intense. Credit:

Pexels.com.

These have both positive and negative effects. They are necessary and they contribute to 50 percent of California's annual precipitation which prevents severe droughts and replenishes water supplies. On the down side, they can be destructive through flooding, landslides and ice shelf melting. In January 2023, California experienced a series of atmospheric rivers that caused widespread flooding, power outages and landslides, causing over 20 deaths and billions of dollars in damages. California and other parts of the West Coast have since experienced additional storms, highlighting their recurring impact on the region.

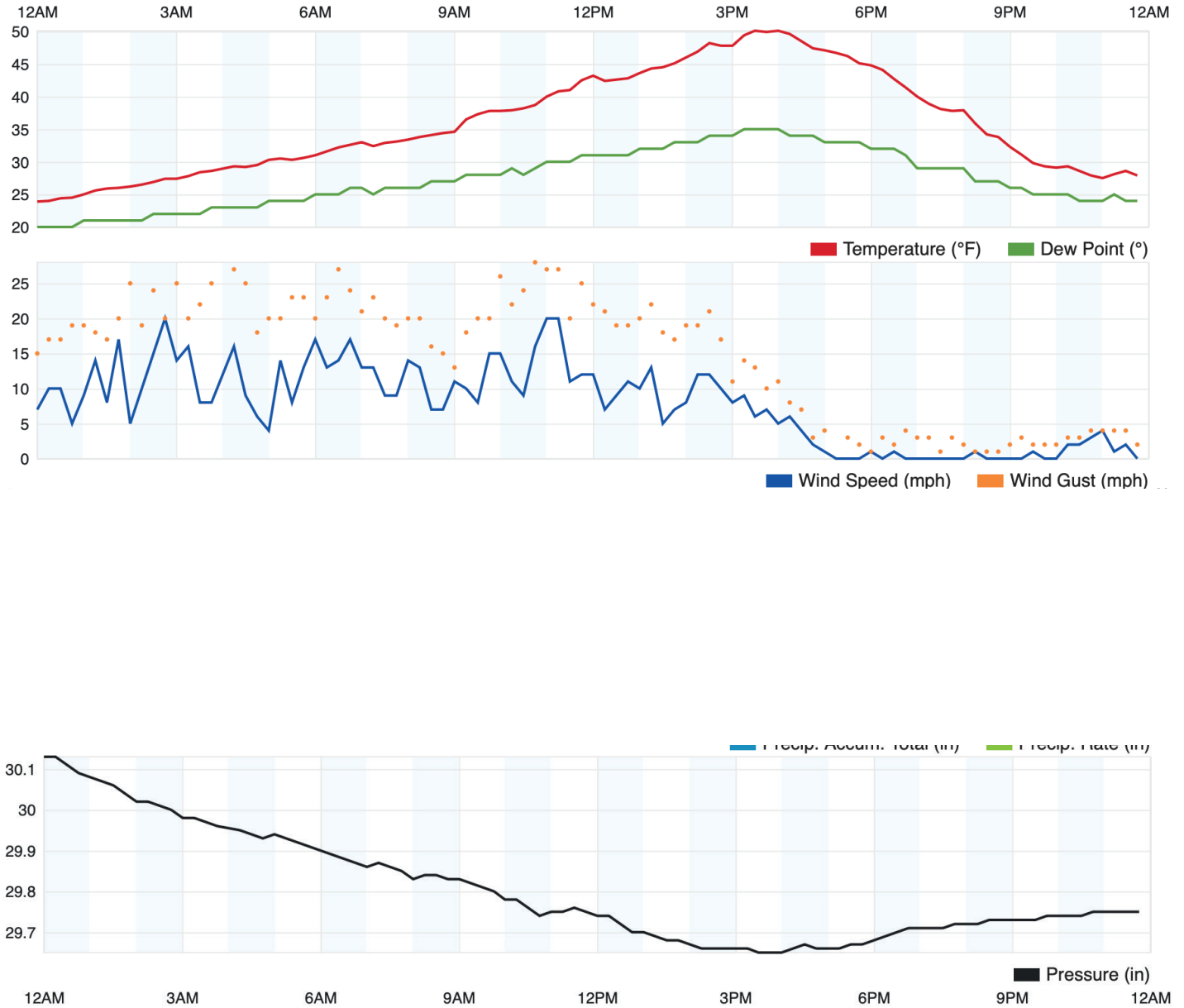
Climate change has amplified the intensity and frequency of atmospheric rivers, because warmer air holds more moisture. Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at University of California, Los Angeles, estimates that due to the effect of climate change, atmospheric rivers currently carry 5-15 percent more precipitation now than they would have before. Research led by scientists at NSF NCAR have also estimated that by 2100, the Pacific Northwest could experience such severe atmospheric rivers that would temporarily raise ocean levels up to three times higher, creating a significant flooding risk. Regions up and down the West Coast will be at the forefront of these impacts, with California especially vulnerable to intense swings between drought and heavy precipitation. The Pacific Northwest can expect to face severe flooding and coastal impacts as well.

Individuals can be part of the solution. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is essential, from adopting personal sustainability practices to supporting policies that address climate change, you can help mitigate the frequency of atmospheric rivers. Advocating for investments in flood infrastructure, water management systems, and forecasting technologies is also critical to improve resilience to disasters. Furthermore, educating others about the potential risks and factors can increase awareness.

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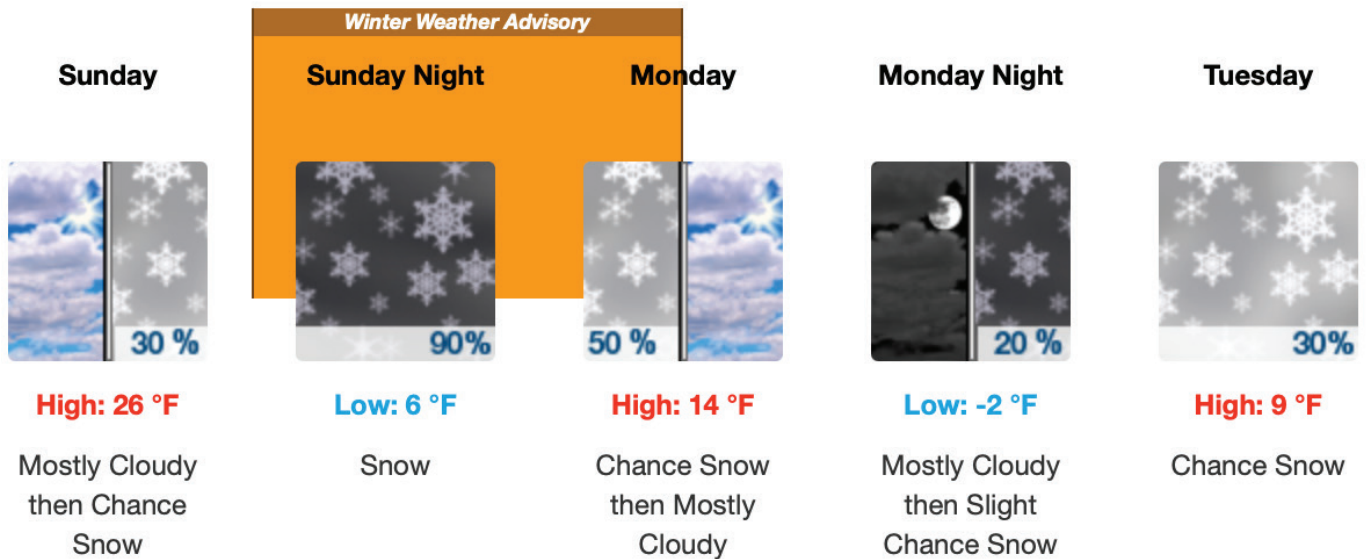
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Winter Weather Advisory Today into Monday February 2, 2025 3:59 AM

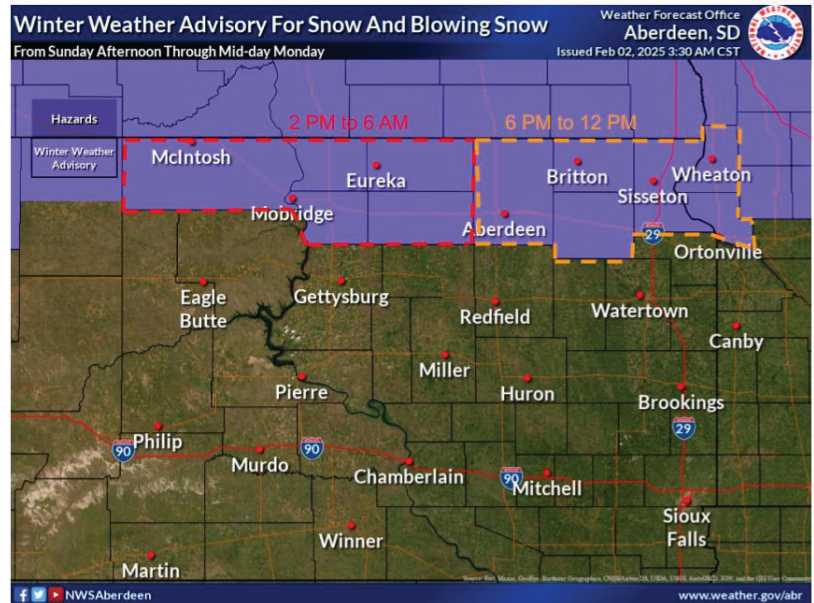
Widespread minor impacts, including hazardous driving conditions, are expected.

Key Messages

- A band of snow will move over northern SD Sunday evening into Monday morning.
- A **Winter Weather Advisory** is in effect from **2 PM today to 6 AM Monday** and from **6 PM today to 12 PM Monday**. 2-5 inches of snow is expected for these areas.
- The period with the heaviest snowfall expected is Midnight to 6 AM Monday.
- Hazardous driving conditions for the Monday morning commute are expected.

NEW What Has Changed?

- Winter Weather Advisories have been issued for the counties colored **purple** in the image on the right.
- The position of the band has again moved slightly north.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A band of snow will move over South Dakota Sunday afternoon into Monday morning, bringing 2-5 inches of snow to north central and northeastern South Dakota as well as western Minnesota. A Winter Weather Advisory is in effect for those areas.

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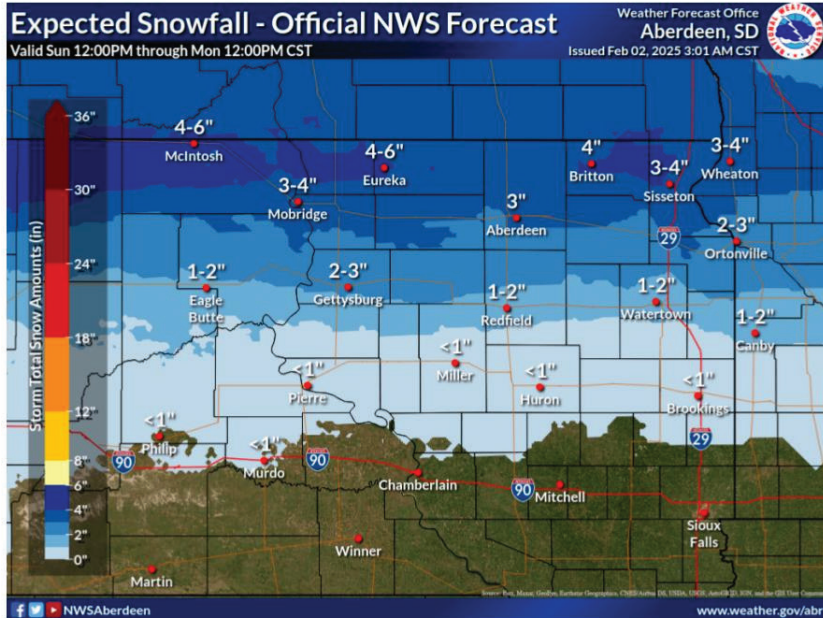
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Snowfall Totals Sunday Into Monday Morning

February 2, 2025
3:59 AM

Light to moderate snowfall potential with a band of snow.



Key Messages

What's The Concern?

- Accumulating snow on area roadways (2-5 inches) impacting travel Monday morning.
- Potential for heavier snow (4+ inches) exists generally along Hwy 12 northward to the ND/SD border.

What's Still Uncertain?

- Axis of heaviest snow band continues to shift northward slightly. Confidence in it's placement is moderate at best.



What you can do?

Continue to monitor forecasts if you have travel plans Sunday night and Monday.

NWS Aberdeen
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

2-5 inches of snow is expected over north central and northeastern South Dakota, as well as western Minnesota. There is still some uncertainty with where the heaviest snow will set up, and confidence is moderate at best.

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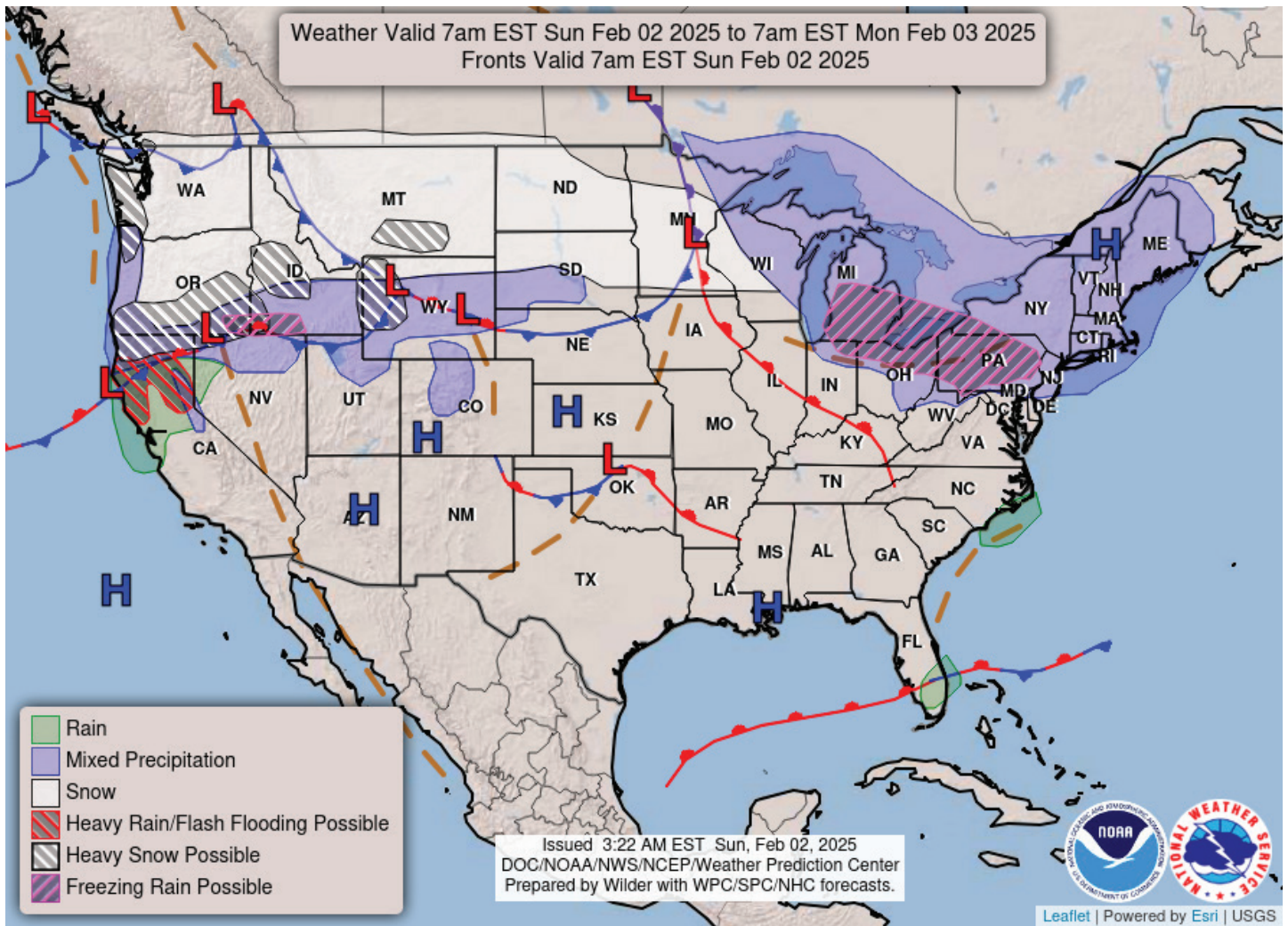
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 50 °F at 3:52 PM
Low Temp: 24 °F at 12:00 AM
Wind: 28 mph at 10:40 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 52 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 60 in 1991
Record Low: -39 in 1917
Average High: 25
Average Low: 2
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.04
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.59
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:42:36 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:48:25 am



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Today in Weather History

February 2, 1960: Heavy icing from freezing rain accumulations from the afternoon of the 2nd to the afternoon of the 3rd occurred mainly across the eastern half of the state. Severe damage to power lines and telephone service happened in the Watertown and Wessington Springs area. Ice coatings of up to 3 inches thick and has an estimated weight of nine pounds per foot of wire formed around the telephone and some power lines over a wide area of the eastern counties. A 300-foot tower high collapsed at Wessington Springs, and in some areas, utility wires were entirely down for stretches of 2 to 3 miles. Some 170 long-distance telephone circuits were knocked out in larger cities, and 19 towns from Bonesteel to Watertown on the north were without phone service for two to three days after the storm. Many highways were treacherous, and numerous vehicles collided or slid off the road into the ditch. Many schools were also closed.

February 2, 2003: Widespread freezing rain developed across parts of central and into northeast South Dakota through the late-night hours producing significant icing of a quarter to a half-inch by the late morning hours. No significant tree damage or power outages occurred. However, travel was significantly disrupted with many accidents and vehicles sliding off the road. The freezing rain changed over to snow during the mid-morning hours and became heavy, with 6 to 9 inches of snow accumulating before it ended in the late evening. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Ree Heights, Miller, and Faulkton, 7 inches at Clear Lake, 8 inches at Bryant, and 9 inches at Milbank.

February 2, 2011: Blizzard conditions developed along and east of the Sisseton Hills late on February 2nd and continued into the mid-morning hours of February 3rd. Strong southwest winds of 30 to 40 mph, gusting to around 55 mph, picked up the existing snow cover causing blizzard conditions wreaked havoc along Interstate-29. Whiteout conditions and massive drifting brought traffic to a halt along a stretch of Interstate-29 from north of Wilmot to Sisseton. One-hundred fifty to two-hundred vehicles were stranded along this stretch. A full-scale rescue operation ensued during the night and continued into the next day. Interstate-29 was closed from Watertown to the North Dakota border as it took most of the day to clean up all of the stalled vehicles. There were also many accidents along the stretch of the interstate, with people stranded for up to twelve hours. No injuries occurred as a result of this incident. The Roberts County Emergency Manager was stranded and conducted emergency operations from his vehicle. Interstate-29 reopened the evening of the 3rd.

1870: Congressman Halbert Paine, who represented Wisconsin's Second District, introduced a joint resolution in the House of Representatives "to authorize the Secretary of War to provide for taking meteorological observations at the military stations and other points in the interior of the continent, and for giving notice on the Northern Lakes and seaboard of the approach and force of storms."

The House adopted the resolution by unanimous consent and, two days later, it passed the Senate. Five days later, on Feb. 9, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the joint resolution into law, officially creating the nation's first weather service.

1898: The naming of hurricanes after women was always the center of controversy. In the Southern Hemisphere near Australia, tropical cyclones were once called Willy-Willies. An Australian Meteorologist, Clement Wragge, is credited for giving girls names to tropical cyclones by the end of the 19th Century. On this date, Wragge's weather journal showed a Willy Willy named "Eline."

1952: An area of low pressure moved out of the Gulf of Mexico and across southern Florida during the evening and late-night hours on February 2, 1952. It produced 60 mph winds and two to four inches of rain on February 2 and 3. The low pressure remains the only tropical storm to impact the United States in February.

1996: An Arctic outbreak that lasted from late January through early February produced nearly 400 hundred record lows, 15 all-time low readings, and over 50 new record lows. Four states recorded their all-time record low temperatures, including Tower, Minnesota, on this date with a reading of 60 degrees below zero, canceling Tower's annual Icebox Days festival because it is too cold. Locations that reported their all-time record low or tied included: Cresco, IA: -36°, Osage, IA: -34°, Charles City, IA tied their record low with -32° and Lancaster, WI tied their all-time record low with -31°. International Falls, MN, and Glasgow, MT set records for February with -45° and -38°, respectively. The temperature at Embarrass, MN, plummeted to -53°. Rochester, MN, dipped to -34° for its coldest temperature in 45 years. Green Bay, WI only reached -16° for the high temperature for the day, their coldest high temperature on record in February. The place to be this day was in Orlando, FL, where it was a balmy 85 degrees.



BE WHO GOD WANTS YOU TO BE

When Bill Robinson joined the New York Yankees, he was introduced as the “new Mickey Mantle.” He tried desperately to live up to that title, and in the process, he failed.

After being traded from one team to another, he ended up with the Pittsburgh Pirates. The coach came to him one day and said, “Bill, stop trying to be Mickey Mantle. Be yourself!”

When he did, he became a star.

Paul wrote, “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”

In His infinite wisdom, God created each of us to be different from every other person who has ever lived. So, when we try to act, be like or think like another person we are, in fact, abandoning the plan that He has designed especially for us.

When we accept the fact that God has “transformed” us into new persons that makes life so very exciting for the Christian. Imagine the limitless possibilities that become ours as a result of allowing God to change the way we think! New thoughts will result in our eyes being opened to see the limitless opportunities that God has designed for each of us that only we can do.

We limit God’s power in our lives when we refuse to allow Him to transform our minds. Transformed minds always result in transformed lives that are truly unique.

Prayer: Father, we pause in a moment of humility to consider the fact that You have a special plan for each of us. May we be willing to change our minds and follow You. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

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: 01.31.25

9 28 48 56 63 2

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$77,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 02.01.25

14 15 21 35 52 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$23,240,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 02.01.25

4 34 36 42 47 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 54 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 02.01.25

2 5 17 24 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$26,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 02.01.25

3 15 37 49 69 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 02.01.25

23 29 32 49 61 8

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$100,000,000

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

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 55, Sioux Falls Lutheran 27
Bennett County 56, Freeman Academy-Marion 41
Dakota Valley 63, Deuel 57
DeSmet 59, Sioux Valley 52
Dupree 88, Crow Creek Tribal School 66
Elkton-Lake Benton 68, Great Plains Lutheran 45
Groton 67, Dell Rapids 41
Hamlin 53, West Central 48, 20T
Hemingford, Neb. 69, Edgemont 34
Hill City 61, Alcester-Hudson 51
Ipswich 46, Highmore-Harrold 34
Iroquois-Lake Preston 89, James Valley Christian School 74
Lemmon High School 74, Herreid-Selby 41
Lennox 57, Aberdeen Roncalli 47
Leola-Frederick High School 54, Irene-Wakonda 44
Lyman 72, Wall 69
Madison 80, Webster 40
Milbank 50, Elk Point-Jefferson 30
New Underwood 66, Harding County 47
Platte-Geddes 55, Beresford 50
Rapid City Stevens 54, Rapid City Central 46
Redfield 56, Canton 41
Sioux Falls Christian 71, Clark-Willow Lake 44
Sioux Falls Jefferson 58, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 57
Sioux Falls Lincoln 52, Tea 18
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 67, T F Riggs High School 63
Sisseton 50, Tri-Valley 44
South O'Brien, Paullina, Iowa 66, Lakota Tech 43
St. Francis Indian 41, Kimball-White Lake 37, OT
Sully Buttes 77, Warner 51
Todd County 50, McLaughlin 49
Unity Christian, Iowa 58, Stanley County 45
Vermillion 67, Sturgis Brown High School 47
Wessington Springs 66, Miller 52
Western Christian, Iowa 64, Aberdeen Christian 40
Dakota Oyate Challenge=
Championship=
Omaha Nation, Neb. 72, Lower Brule 66
Consolation Final=
Wakpala 54, Tiospaye Topa 31
Seventh Place=
Tiospa Zina 54, Flandreau Indian 52
Third Place=

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Marty 63, Crazy Horse 57

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Bennett County 48, Jones County 32
Centerville 61, Mobridge-Pollock 49
Crow Creek Tribal School 54, Dupree 44
Dakota Valley 67, Winner 41
Edgemont 63, Hemingford, Neb. 39
Elk Point-Jefferson 65, Arlington 39
Faith 64, Potter County 41
Faulkton 50, Hitchcock-Tulare 43
Flandreau 45, Lakota Tech 42
Florence-Henry 45, St. Francis Indian 31
Great Plains Lutheran 51, Elkton-Lake Benton 36
Harding County 44, New Underwood 17
Herreid-Selby 54, Lemmon High School 48
Iroquois-Lake Preston 43, James Valley Christian School 21
Lyman 63, Wall 49
McLaughlin 55, Todd County 37
Sioux Falls Christian 60, Sioux Valley 42
Sioux Falls Jefferson 62, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 47
Sisseton 69, Philip 41
St Thomas More 58, Custer 24
Sully Buttes 52, Warner 51
Vermillion 55, Parkston 54
Wagner 67, Milbank 37
Wessington Springs 61, Miller 53
Dakota Oyate Challenge=
Championship=
Omaha Nation, Neb. 70, Tiospaye Topa 50
Consolation Final=
Lower Brule 62, Wakpala 54
Seventh Place=
Flandreau 52, Crazy Horse 49
Third Place=
Marty 57, Tiospa Zina 50

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

North Dakota wins 80-75 over South Dakota State

By The Associated Press undefined

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) — Eli King scored 24 points as North Dakota beat South Dakota State 80-75 on Saturday.

King shot 10 of 16 from the field, including 3 for 5 from 3-point range, and went 1 for 3 from the line for the Fightin' Hawks (9-15, 3-6 Summit League). Treysen Eaglestaff went 7 of 19 from the field (3 for 7 from 3-point range) to add 19 points. Mier Panoam went 6 of 9 from the field to finish with 12 points.

The Jackrabbits (15-9, 6-3) were led in scoring by Joe Sayler, who finished with 20 points and two steals. Kalen Garry added 12 points and four assists for South Dakota State. Oscar Cluff had 10 points and 19 rebounds. The Jackrabbits broke a five-game winning streak with the loss.

NEXT UP

Both teams play again on Thursday. North Dakota visits Omaha and South Dakota State hosts St. Thomas.

Russia and Ukraine trade blame over an attack on a boarding school in Russia's Kursk region

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Competing claims emerged over a deadly attack on a boarding school in Sudzha, a city in Russia's Kursk region that has been under Ukrainian control for five months, with Ukraine and Russia accusing each other of carrying out the strike.

The General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces said Saturday night that four people were killed and a further four seriously wounded in the strike, with 84 people rescued by Ukrainian servicemen from the rubble of the building. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Moscow had bombed the boarding school where civilians were sheltering and preparing to evacuate.

The General Staff said those in need of additional medical assistance were evacuated to medical facilities in Ukraine.

The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed in the early hours of Sunday that it was Ukrainian forces that had launched a missile strike on the school, saying that the missiles were launched from Ukraine's Sumy region.

Meanwhile, the death toll from a Russian missile strike on an apartment block in the Ukrainian city of Poltava on Saturday rose to 14, including two children, local officials said Sunday. Seventeen people were injured in the attack on the five-story building, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said.

Moscow sent 55 drones into Ukraine overnight into Sunday, Ukrainian officials said. According to Ukraine's Air Force, 40 drones were destroyed during the overnight attacks. A further 13 drones were "lost", likely having been electronically jammed.

Two people were wounded in a drone attack in the Kharkiv region, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said Sunday.

In Russia, the Defense Ministry said that five Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight in five regions of western Russia: three over the Kursk region, and one each over the Belgorod and Bryansk regions.

A man was killed in a drone strike in the Belgorod region, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said.

Syria's interim president lands in Saudi Arabia on first trip abroad, likely a signal to Iran

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Syria's interim president made his first trip abroad Sunday, traveling to Saudi Arabia in a move likely trying to signal Damascus' shift away from Iran as its main regional ally.

Ahmad al-Sharaa, who was once aligned with al-Qaida, landed in Riyadh alongside his government's foreign minister, Asaad al-Shaibani. The two men traveled on a Saudi jet, with a Saudi flag visible on the table behind them.

Saudi state television trumpeted the fact that the first trip by al-Sharaa, first known internationally by the nom de guerre Abu Mohammed al-Golani, made Riyadh his first destination.

Syria's new three-star, tricolor flag flew next to Saudi Arabia's own at the airport as al-Sharaa in a suit and tie walked off the plane. He was scheduled to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, on the trip.

Saudi Arabia had been among the Arab nations that poured money into insurgent groups that tried to topple former President Bashar Assad after Syria's 2011 Arab Spring protests turned into a bloody crackdown. However, its groups found themselves beaten back as Assad, supported by Iran and Russia, fought the war into a stalemate in Syria.

That changed with the December lightning offensive led by al-Sharaa's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. The group was once affiliated with al-Qaida but has since denounced its former ties.

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Al-Sharaa and HTS have carefully managed their public image in the time since, with the interim president favoring an olive-colored military look similar to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, appointing women to roles and trying to maintain ties to Syria's Christian and Shiite Alawite populations.

That also includes keeping both Iran and Russia largely at arms' length as well. Iran has yet to reopen its embassy in Damascus, which had been a key node in running operations through its self-described "Axis of Resistance," including Assad's Syria, Lebanon's Hezbollah militia and other partners. Russia meanwhile would like to maintain access to air and sea bases it has in Syria, but took in Assad when he fled Syria during the advance.

Those moves appear aimed at reassuring the West and trying to get crippling sanctions lifted on Syria. Rebuilding the country after over a decade of war will likely cost hundreds of billions of dollars, not to mention covering the needs of Syria's people, millions of whom remain impoverished.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan visited Damascus in January and said Riyadh has been "actively engaging in dialogue" to lift sanctions on Syria. Saudi Arabia, unlike Al-Sharaa's key allies in Turkey and Qatar, restored ties with Assad in 2023 alongside most of the Arab world. Getting sanctions lifted could go a long way in cementing their relationship.

Meanwhile, Syria's interim government still faces challenges from the Islamic State group and other militants in the country. On Saturday, a car bomb exploded in Manbij, a city in Syria's Aleppo governorate, killing four civilians and wounding nine, SANA reported, citing civil defense officials.

Turkish-backed Syrian rebels had seized Manbij in December, part of a push by Ankara to secure Syrian territory close to its border for a buffer zone.

Israel's Netanyahu heads to US to discuss 'victory over Hamas' with Trump

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday he will discuss "victory over Hamas," countering Iran and expanding diplomatic relations with Arab countries in his meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump.

Tuesday's meeting at the White House will be Trump's first with a foreign leader since returning to office. It comes as U.S. and Arab mediators begin the daunting work of brokering the next phase of an agreement to wind down the war in the Gaza Strip and release dozens of militant-held hostages.

Hamas, which has quickly reasserted its control over Gaza since the ceasefire took hold last month, has said it will not release the hostages slated to go free in the second phase without an end to the war and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Netanyahu, who is under mounting pressure from far-right governing partners to resume the war after the first phase ends in early March, has said Israel is still committed to victory over Hamas and the return of all the hostages captured in the militants' Oct. 7, 2023 attack that triggered the war.

It's unclear where Trump stands in all this.

He has been a staunch supporter of Israel, but has also pledged to end wars in the Middle East and took credit for helping to broker the ceasefire agreement. The deal has halted the fighting and led to the release of 18 hostages who had been held for over 15 months, as well as hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

Netanyahu embraces Trump's call for 'peace through strength'

In a statement released ahead of his departure on Sunday, Netanyahu said they would discuss "victory over Hamas, achieving the release of all our hostages and dealing with the Iranian terror axis in all its components," referring to Iran's alliance of militant groups across the region, including Hamas.

He said that by working together, they could "strengthen security, broaden the circle of peace and achieve a remarkable era of peace through strength."

The war began when thousands of Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostage. Over 100 hostages were freed

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during a weeklong ceasefire in November 2023, eight have been rescued alive and dozens of bodies have been recovered by Israeli forces.

Israel's air and ground war has killed over 47,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to local health authorities who do not say how many of the dead were fighters. The war has left large parts of several cities in ruins and displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people.

Under the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, Hamas is to release a total of 33 hostages, eight of whom Hamas says are dead, in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Israeli forces have pulled back from most areas and allowed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to devastated northern Gaza.

Negotiations on the second phase, in which the war would end and the remaining 60 or so hostages would be returned, are set to begin Monday. If the United States, Qatar and Egypt are unable to broker an agreement between Israel and Hamas, the war could resume in early March.

Aspirations for a bigger deal

Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, joined the yearlong ceasefire negotiations in their final weeks last month and helped push the agreement over the finish line. He met with Netanyahu in Israel last week and the two were expected to formally begin talks on the second phase in Washington on Monday.

Trump, who brokered normalization agreements between Israel and four Arab countries in his first term, is believed to be seeking a wider and potentially historic agreement in which Israel would forge ties with Saudi Arabia.

But the kingdom, which resisted similar entreaties from the Biden administration, has said it would only agree to such a deal if the war ends and there is a credible pathway to a Palestinian state in Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem, territories Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

Netanyahu's government is opposed to Palestinian statehood, and a key partner, far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, has threatened to leave the governing coalition if the war is not resumed next month. That would raise the likelihood of early elections in which Netanyahu could be voted out.

Trump puts tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China, spurring trade war as North American allies respond

By JOSH BOAK, ZEKE MILLER, ROB GILLIES and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday signed an order to impose stiff tariffs on imports from Mexico, Canada and China, drawing swift retaliation and an undeniable sense of betrayal from the country's North American neighbors as a trade war erupted among the longtime allies.

The Republican president posted on social media that the tariffs were necessary "to protect Americans," pressing the three nations to do more to curb the manufacture and export of illicit fentanyl and for Canada and Mexico to reduce illegal immigration into the U.S.

The tariffs, if sustained, could cause inflation to significantly worsen, threatening the trust that many voters placed in Trump to lower the prices of groceries, gasoline, housing, autos and other goods as he promised. They also risked throwing the global economy and Trump's political mandate into turmoil just two weeks into his second term.

Trump declared an economic emergency in order to place duties of 10% on all imports from China and 25% on imports from Mexico and Canada. Energy imported from Canada, including oil, natural gas and electricity, would be taxed at a 10% rate. Trump's order includes a mechanism to escalate the rates charged by the U.S. against retaliation by the other countries, raising the specter of an even more severe economic disruption.

"The actions taken today by the White House split us apart instead of bringing us together," Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a somber tone as he announced that his country would put matching 25% tariffs on up to \$155 billion in U.S. imports, including alcohol and fruit.

He channeled the betrayal that many Canadians are feeling, reminding Americans that Canadian troops

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fought alongside them in Afghanistan and helped respond to myriad crises from wildfires in California to Hurricane Katrina.

"We were always there standing with you, grieving with you, the American people," he said.

Mexico's president also ordered retaliatory tariffs.

"We categorically reject the White House's slander that the Mexican government has alliances with criminal organizations, as well as any intention of meddling in our territory," Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum wrote in a post on X while saying she had instructed her economy secretary to implement a response that includes retaliatory tariffs and other measures in defense of Mexico's interests.

"If the United States government and its agencies wanted to address the serious fentanyl consumption in their country, they could fight the sale of drugs on the streets of their major cities, which they don't do and the laundering of money that this illegal activity generates that has done so much harm to its population."

The premier of the Canadian province of British Columbia, David Eby, specifically called on residents to stop buying liquor from U.S. "red" states and said it was removing American alcohol brands from government store shelves as a response to the tariffs.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the country's government "firmly deplores and opposes this move and will take necessary countermeasures to defend its legitimate rights and interests."

China began regulating fentanyl-related drugs as a class of controlled substances in 2019 and conducted "counternarcotics cooperation with the U.S.," the ministry said, calling on the U.S. government to correct what it considers wrongful actions.

The Ministry of Commerce in China said it would file a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization for the "wrongful practices of the U.S." and take measures to safeguard its rights and interests.

The tariffs will go into effect on Tuesday, setting up a showdown in North America that could potentially sabotage economic growth. A new analysis by the Budget Lab at Yale laid out the possible damage to the U.S. economy, saying the average household would lose the equivalent of \$1,170 in income from the taxes. Economic growth would slow and inflation would worsen, and the situation could be even worse with retaliation from other countries.

Democrats were quick to warn that any inflation going forward was the result of Trump's actions.

"You're worried about grocery prices. Don's raising prices with his tariffs," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York wrote in a series of posts on X. "You're worried about tomato prices. Wait till Trump's Mexico tariffs raise your tomato prices," read another. "You're worried about car prices. Wait till Trump's Canada tariffs raise your car prices," read another.

A senior U.S. administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity to brief reporters, said the lower rate on energy reflected a desire to minimize disruptive increases on the price of gasoline or utilities. That's a sign White House officials understand the gamble they're taking on inflation. Price spikes under former President Joe Biden led to voter frustration that helped return Trump to the White House.

The order signed by Trump contained no mechanism for granting exceptions, the official said, a possible blow to homebuilders who rely on Canadian lumber as well as farmers, automakers and other industries.

The official did not provide specific benchmarks that could be met to lift the new tariffs, saying only that the best measure would be fewer Americans dying from fentanyl addiction.

The order would also allow for tariffs on Canadian imports of less than \$800. Imports below that sum are currently able to cross into the United States without customs and duties.

"It doesn't make much economic sense," said William Reinsch, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former U.S. trade official. "Historically, most of our tariffs on raw materials have been low because we want to get cheaper materials so our manufacturers will be competitive ... Now, what's he talking about? He's talking about tariffs on raw materials. I don't get the economics of it."

With the tariffs, Trump is honoring promises that are at the core of his economic and national security philosophy. But the announcement showed his seriousness around the issue as some Trump allies had played down the threat of higher import taxes as mere negotiating tactics.

The president is preparing more import taxes in a sign that tariffs will be an ongoing part of his second term. On Friday, he mentioned imported computer chips, steel, oil and natural gas, as well as copper,

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pharmaceutical drugs and imports from the European Union — moves that could essentially pit the U.S. against much of the global economy.

Trudeau warned of economic pain as the tariffs take effect and encouraged Canadians to “choose Canadian products and services rather than American ones.” But he also voiced optimism in the enduring relationship between the two countries.

“It is going to have real consequences for people, for workers on both sides of our border. We don’t want to be here. We didn’t ask for this, but we will not back down in standing up both for Canadians and for the incredible successful relationship between Canada and the United States,” Trudeau said.

Luka Doncic to the Lakers, Anthony Davis to the Mavs in blockbuster trade, AP source says

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Luka Doncic led Dallas to the NBA Finals last season. Anthony Davis won a championship with the Los Angeles Lakers.

They’re switching teams now — in an absolute blockbuster.

Doncic is being traded by the reigning Western Conference champion Mavericks to the Los Angeles Lakers for Davis, a person with knowledge of the agreement said early Sunday.

Doncic, Maxi Kleber and Markieff Morris are headed to the Lakers, while Davis and Max Christie are going to Dallas, said the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither team can announce the deal while it awaits league approval.

The Utah Jazz also are involved in the deal, said the source. ESPN, which first reported the trade, said Jalen Hood-Schifino and two draft picks will be headed to the Jazz. The Dallas Morning News also reported those details on the trade.

The trade news broke about an hour after the Lakers beat New York at Madison Square Garden. Davis was not with the Lakers for the game; he has been back in Los Angeles because of an abdominal injury that needed assessing.

Doncic has not played for Dallas since Christmas Day, when he was sidelined with a strained left calf.

“I believe that defense wins championships,” Mavericks general manager Nico Harrison told ESPN. “I believe that getting an All-Defensive center and an All-NBA player with a defensive mindset gives us a better chance. We’re built to win now and in the future.”

The deal, at least for now, would pair Doncic with LeBron James as the new 1-2 punch in Los Angeles, while Davis would be forming a new star duo with Kyrie Irving in Dallas. And it also reunites Doncic with his former teammate, Lakers coach JJ Redick.

Doncic was one of the Mavs on the floor when Redick came out of a game for the final time on May 11, 2021.

There was one game still going on in the NBA on Saturday night when reports began swirling of the trade, that being Phoenix-Portland. Suns guard Devin Booker said someone in the stands told him and his teammates of the trade.

“They said Luka. I said, ‘Luka Garza?’” Booker said, referencing a Minnesota center.

Booker wasn’t trying to be funny. He just thought what many probably thought — that there was no way the Mavericks would move Doncic.

“It’s crazy, man. I really don’t know what to say about it,” Booker said. “Luka being a guy that everybody has claimed is untouchable and untradeable. The NBA shows you again. Can’t predict. It’s a business. They’re always having a conversation about you. So don’t think you’re safer than you are.”

Added fellow Suns star Kevin Durant: “Insane. It’s crazy. Crazy. Damn, would of never thought Luka Doncic would get traded. At his age, midseason, the NBA is a wild place, man. If he can get traded then anybody is up for grabs.”

And there was immediate shock on social media when the news hit as well.

“Luka getting traded from Dallas has to have a deeper story behind it,” Cleveland center Tristan Thomp-

son wrote on X. "This just doesn't happen on a random Saturday night."

"Wait what?" posted Patrick Mahomes, the star Kansas City quarterback who sits courtside at Mavs games occasionally during the offseason, NBA playoffs included.

And Knicks guard Jalen Brunson wondered in another post if it was a joke: "April fools right?" he asked. Evidently not.

Dallas plays at Cleveland on Sunday, while the Lakers are off until visiting the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday night. It's not clear when Doncic or Davis could play for their new clubs: the trade needs NBA approval, and both are dealing with injuries without any publicly known firm timetable for their returns.

Among players with at least 400 games, Doncic's 28.6-point average is third in NBA history behind only Michael Jordan and Wilt Chamberlain — both at 30.1. When healthy, he's typically somewhere between dynamic and unstoppable.

He was third in the MVP voting last season after averaging 33.9 points, 9.8 assists and 9.2 rebounds per game, easily one of the greatest statistical seasons in league history. Doncic — who turns 26 later this month and has referred to James as an "idol" — had a 73-point game against Atlanta on Jan. 26, 2024, tying the fourth-highest scoring total ever in an NBA game. Only Chamberlain (100), Kobe Bryant (81) and Chamberlain (78) scored more.

Davis, an All-Star pick this year for the 10th time in his career, turns 32 next month. He's part of the NBA's 75th anniversary team, helped the Lakers win the NBA title in the bubble in 2020, and — like Doncic — is a five-time All-NBA selection.

And for Doncic, there could be a massive — \$115 million — cost to this trade.

Doncic could have signed a supermax contract this coming summer, one that could have paid him about \$345 million over five seasons. He's still extension-eligible, but likely cannot sign a five-year deal worth more than \$230 million this summer now.

Doncic is averaging 28.1 points, 8.3 rebounds and 7.8 assists this season. Davis is averaging 25.7 points and 11.9 rebounds.

As crews clean up from LA wildfires, some residents are furious over hazardous waste

By DORANY PINEDA Associated Press

DUARTE, Calif. (AP) — Not far from where Ceci Carroll lives, a rock-mining company has polluted the air with dust across the San Gabriel Valley, she said.

Now, as crews clean charred remains from the Los Angeles wildfires, she worries about a new potential source of contamination: a site to process hazardous debris from the Eaton Fire.

"I'm concerned about the community and also the school districts here, where we have children," said Carroll, a Duarte resident of 23 years and former local school board member.

"We're dealing with the site with the chemicals and hazardous materials," she said. "Parents are absolutely concerned."

Carroll is among residents from Duarte, Azusa and nearby cities opposing the Environmental Protection Agency's use of Lario Park in Irwindale as a temporary site to separate, package and transport potentially hazardous materials from the Eaton Fire.

In ordinary times, people picnic, bike or ride horses on equestrian trails in the federally owned land. They now worry about dangerous waste that could pollute the air or seep into groundwater.

The blazes that began on Jan. 7 charred thousands of buildings, cars and electronics across the Los Angeles area. The EPA has begun the enormous task of removing potentially hundreds of tons of hazardous materials from the Eaton and Palisades fires. That includes paints, pesticides, solvents, compressed gas cylinders, ammunition and lithium-ion batteries from electric cars that could turn toxic when burned.

"The removal of these materials should not come at the cost of creating a toxic environment for communities already disproportionately impacted by pollution," Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis said in a statement.

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The mostly Latino communities adjacent to the site are exposed to higher levels of ozone and particulate matter pollution than other areas, according to data from the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

Experts acknowledge residents' concerns, but say hazardous waste is not necessarily harmful as long as safety measures are in place and the waste is not stored on site for years.

Residents have questions about waste site

At a town hall Wednesday, California Sen. Susan Rubio and local mayors opposing the site grilled state and federal officials: How was the site chosen? Why weren't we consulted or notified? Why truck toxic waste 15 miles (24 kilometers) from the burn zone and risk contaminating our communities? What testing will be done after it's closed?

Hundreds of residents crammed into the performing arts center and spilled into the hall. They shouted "Shut it down!" and chanted "Leave it in Altadena!"

EPA coordinator Tara Fitzgerald told the audience that sites closer to the Eaton burn zone were being used for emergency fire operations, including the Rose Bowl and the Santa Anita Park in Pasadena. They chose the Lario Park site because it suited their needs and was available.

She emphasized the EPA has done this work for years across the state.

"We did the exact same thing" for the Woolsey, Santa Rosa and Napa fires, Fitzgerald said, and "we did not have any impacts to the community during the entire process."

But the Eaton and Palisades fires are unprecedented. Together, they torched the largest urban area on record in California, according to an Associated Press analysis, and more than double the urban acreage consumed by the 2018 Woolsey Fire.

EPA says protective measures being taken

The EPA said it would regularly monitor air, sample soil, use water trucks to control dust and transport waste out of the area daily.

The agency lines areas with plastic where materials are processed and uses wattles, earthen berms and other items to control spills. The waste will be transported on surface streets, not freeways, so trucks can travel at a slower and safer speed, the EPA's Celeste McCoy told the county Board of Supervisors. She said the site would likely be used less than six months, and more areas are being considered.

With these protective measures, the risks of groundwater contamination, which takes a long time, are low, said Sanjay Mohanty, a UCLA associate professor who has studied wildfire effects on water and soil.

"There's several feet of soil that the pollutant has to pass through, and that also requires lots of water to leech from the system," Mohanty said. "And even if there is leeching, they would not migrate far into the soil in a short time."

The bigger risks are soil and air pollution from possible dust emissions, he added, but those too can be mitigated.

Residents should stay vigilant

Duarte resident Laura Jasso did not leave the meeting reassured and remained upset about the lack of transparency from state and federal officials.

"It's hard to have confidence when they've really done this behind our backs," she said.

While crews continue their work, residents should be vigilant to what is happening at the site and ask how materials are being handled, about emergency response plans and truck routes and schedules, said Rachael Jones, professor and director of the UCLA Center for Occupational and Environmental Health.

"The community has the right to know that information from the EPA and the Army Corps," Jones said.

Jasso said her community is committed to holding the EPA accountable for ensuring safety.

"Ultimately, we don't want it here, and we're going to continue to fight to not have it here," she said of the site. "But the fact is, it's here right now. And so we have to just acknowledge the safety of our students, the concerns of our families."

The power of independent journalism: From her Brooklyn apartment, she 'scooped' the nation's media

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

First word of the Trump administration's since-rescinded order to freeze spending on federal loans and grants came not from a major news organization, but from a woman working alone in her Brooklyn apartment.

Marisa Kabas' scoop this past week was a key moment for a growing cadre of journalists who work independently to gather and analyze news and market themselves as brands. Many are refugees from legacy outlets while others are scrappy newcomers like Kabas, who found traditional career paths unappealing or out of reach.

"This week has been career-changing," Kabas said in an interview. "In a sense, my job has changed overnight."

She was sitting at her kitchen table last Monday, sifting through emails on her laptop, when a source forwarded her a copy of a memo announcing the freeze sent by the Office of Management and Budget's acting director. Kabas has her own website, the Handbasket, but to give the story wider visibility, she posted a screen shot of the memo on the social media site Bluesky.

Then she waited.

Her stomach was in knots. She calmed herself with a walk on a frigid night. Despite her belief in independent journalism — and her own work — she recognized that to many, news only becomes "real" when it appears in a major outlet. Three hours later, The Washington Post published its story, with a hat-tip to Kabas.

The directive caused such an uproar that the administration walked back its order two days later.

Kicking around jobs until she found her calling

Kabas, 37, kicked around in various journalism and publicist jobs and freelanced for outlets like MSNBC.com, the Huffington Post and New Republic. She started her website in 2022 primarily for personal writing and decided to go "all in" with journalism the next year.

The advantage to going it alone is that "I get to write about things that I care about," she said. "I don't have to work on assignments that are given to me that I don't care about." The down side is she's all alone, dependent upon her own hustle.

Kabas wrote on ex-congressman George Santos, the raid on a weekly newspaper in Kansas and Elon Musk, although much of her writing was essays instead of reported work.

Like many in the independent journalism world, she doesn't hide her opinions. She wrote that the OMB memo was "a truly unhinged document that sounds like it was written by the world's most petty 4Chan poster."

"She's got attitude, she's got personality," said Greg Munno, a journalism professor at Syracuse University. "I think attitude and personality help these independent journalists connect with readers and potentially sources."

Indie journalists making their mark in a variety of subject areas

A wide variety of independent journalists have made their mark, often working on publishing platforms like Substack and Beehiiv.

Seamus Hughes' Court Watch pulls together interesting legal documents from around the country. Heather Cox Richardson's Letters From an American explores the intersection of history and today's politics. Peter Geoghegan's Democracy for Sale investigates money in politics.

Casey Newton, a former editor at The Verge, looks at the tech world on Platformer, and this past week urged people worried about the A.I. company DeepSeek to take "a few long, deep breaths." Molly Knight's The Long Game writes smartly about sports and even admits to her clunkers, like recently revisiting her prediction that the Texas Rangers would repeat as American League champions.

Oliver Darcy left CNN to break news and offer commentary about the media on his own site, Status. Two former Washington Post journalists have set up their own shops: opinion writer Jennifer Rubin's site, The

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Contrarian, boasts the tagline "Not owned by anybody," and tech writer Taylor Lorenz's User Mag broke its own news last week on conservative influencer Candace Owens' new venture.

Days ago, CNN anchor Jim Acosta announced he was setting up shop at Substack after quitting the network rather than accept a transfer to a middle-of-the-night time slot.

"Independent journalism is now the way forward," Dan Rather, the former CBS News anchor and perhaps quintessential old-school journalist, posted on Facebook Thursday. "Sadly, we can no longer rely on legacy media to hold the powerful accountable."

Expand the definition of independent journalist more broadly, and you can include the exploding world of podcasts, many of which played a key role in the presidential election, and TikTok or YouTube influencers who comment on the news.

The more that traditional news outlets shrink or die, "something is going to fill that gap," said Jeremy Littau, a Lehigh University journalism professor. "There is going to be a need for it."

How much room is there for journalists and who can you trust?

It's exciting for those who seek variety and new voices, particularly with legacy media lagging in public esteem. The danger comes in figuring out who to trust in a world where a single person often performs the role of reporter, editor, sales person and business manager.

That's particularly important with breaking news, Littau said. Who is out there cutting corners, or re-packaging things they see online without the standards that a traditional news organization imposes?

Munno is skeptical about how much support there is in the marketplace.

"I don't think the consumer's appetite for news is high enough to support a really deep pool of independent journalists that would be able to create an audience and make a living," he said.

Kabas cobbled together what she considered a typical journalist's living — translation: modest — before this past week. Her earnings through the Handbasket come through subscribers who pay \$8 a month or \$80 annually. This week alone, she jumped from 800 paid subscribers to about 1,500.

Her scoop is making her rethink the purpose of her work, that now the pressing need is to report deeply on how the country is changing as the result of its new government. She's even thinking of hiring another reporter to help.

"I've gone from very much taking my time, sitting with my thoughts and writing from a personal perspective to being a breaking news reporter," Kabas said. "They are very different skills."

Women represent half of the US. But they sometimes lack clout in budget and tax talks

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Women represent half of the U.S. population but it's still rare for them to have leading roles in setting taxes or budgets in some states.

Take Mississippi, for example. Only one woman currently serves on the 14-member Joint Legislative Budget Committee. The elite group makes the first recommendations on how much money the state should spend on schools, prisons, Medicaid and other programs, giving these lawmakers substantial influence over their colleagues and over the lives of people who use government services.

Second-term Sen. Nicole Akins Boyd was appointed to the committee by Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann, a fellow Republican who said he did not consider whether to choose a balance of men and women.

"I don't look at it so much like, 'We need a woman here,' or something like that," Hosemann said. "I look at the abilities and there are plenty of people that have great abilities, male and female. Nicole Boyd, I believe, is outstanding."

Just over 2,400 women are serving in state legislatures across the U.S., or about 33% of the total, according to the Center for American Women and Politics, at Rutgers University. Almost 1,600 are Democrats, just over 800 are Republicans and the others are nonpartisan or independent.

Last year, when 31% of state lawmakers nationwide were women, they held about 30% of the seats

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on committees overseeing taxes, revenues and other financial matters, according to a review by The Associated Press.

But participation varies widely by state, and by session. In Utah, women held only 5% of those seats in 2024. This year, they hold 28%. In Nevada, 62% of finance-related seats were held by women when the Legislature last met in 2023.

Jean Sinzduk, associate director of The Center for American Women and Politics, notes that people who serve in legislatures for a long time tend to receive the most desired committee assignments.

"Anything budget- and appropriations-related is always one at the top," Sinzduk said. "And so part of the challenge of getting more women is that women haven't been serving as long and in the numbers needed."

Women 'add to the conversation'

Mississippi has the third-lowest percentage of women in its legislature, at 15%, according to the center. The only states behind it are South Carolina, with 13%, and West Virginia, with 11%.

All together, women hold just over 11% of seats on Mississippi's five money committees: Joint Legislative Budget, House and Senate Appropriations, House Ways and Means and Senate Finance.

Mississippi has never had a woman as governor or House speaker. Only two women have been elected lieutenant governor, decades ago. All of those roles are crucial to setting taxes and budgets.

"Look, I want to see more women there because I think we add to the conversation," Boyd said. "We work together differently, and I think those are all good things for the Legislature."

For example, women in the Mississippi Legislature banded together in 2023 to secure money for evidence testing in rape cases when a backlog at the state crime lab was delaying trials.

"Our male colleagues supported us just as strongly," Boyd said.

Money committees aren't the only way to serve

In West Virginia, Republican Delegate Kathie Hess Crouse said she believes women generally get the committee assignments they ask for. The low number of women on tax and budget committees is not only due to the fact that few serve in the legislature, but also because female lawmakers sometimes prioritize other committees, she said.

That's the case for Hess Crouse, who chaired the House Committee on Workforce Development and served on other committees focusing on energy, manufacturing and government organization last year. She said legislative leadership has conversations with all the GOP lawmakers before the session starts and asks what their interests are. She always has received her top picks; it just so happens finance is not one of them.

"Do I like money? Yes," Crouse said. "I do my home budget. I don't necessarily like it, but I do it. I file my own taxes normally. I work on those things, but it's not my main interest area. So do I want to serve on finance? No, I have interests elsewhere."

Women are taking the lead in some states

The balance is different in Nevada, which in 2019 became the first state where a majority of legislators were women.

That is reflected on key committees. Women have most of the seats on the Assembly's Revenue and Ways and Means committees. And they hold seven of eight seats on the Senate's finance committee, including the entire Democratic delegation on the committee.

The chair, Sen. Marilyn Dondero Loop, said there could be areas, such as breast cancer funding, where female lawmakers might be more likely to put taxpayer money because of their personal connections to the issue. But she said she doesn't approach her work thinking about gender.

"Whenever I vote and my other colleagues vote," Dondero Loop said, "we do it solely as being a Nevanadan and making things better."

Elizabeth Steiner served as co-chair of the Oregon Legislature's Ways and Means Committee, which handles money matters and has members from the House and Senate, before being elected state treasurer last year. She said it's important for women's personal and professional life experiences to be brought into state decision-making.

"If you don't include 50% of the population, the perspective of 50% of the population in your decision-

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making, then you're really disadvantaging everybody: men and women, and certainly children," said Steiner, a Democrat.

Other states also have women in prominent roles. In Alaska, a Republican woman was one of three co-chairs of the House Finance Committee last year. Connecticut has two Democratic women leading the Appropriations Committee and another co-chairing the Finance Committee. Vermont had two Democratic women in charge of the Appropriations committees for 2023-24.

South Carolina has never had a woman chair a money committee. Three served on the 25-person House Ways and Means Committee in 2024. A Republican woman was rising in the 23-member Senate Finance Committee, but she took a stand against a total abortion ban and lost her primary along with the only two other Republican women in the South Carolina Senate.

The Grammys are here with Beyoncé leading all nominees at a show shaped by the LA wildfires

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The 67th Grammy Awards will take place Sunday but with a dramatically different tone this year.

As Los Angeles continues to recover from fires that destroyed more than 14,000 structures and displaced tens of thousands, the Recording Academy has reformatted its award show to benefit to help wildfire victims.

Since the fires began, the Grammys and its affiliated MusiCares charity have distributed \$2 million in emergency aid and pledged more than \$4 million to help those in the music industry impacted by the wildfires.

The Grammys on Sunday will seek to add to those donations.

Viewers and attendees will still see trophies handed out and a bespoke concert experience — but they will also watch the show raise awareness, drive donations and resources to funds that benefit people in need.

Comedian Trevor Noah will host for a fifth year in a row and history could be made when some of the biggest names in music gather. Here's some key things to know ahead of Sunday's show at the Crypto.com Arena:

How to watch

The Grammys will air live on CBS and Paramount+ beginning at 8 p.m. Eastern. Paramount+ with Showtime subscribers can also watch live and on demand.

The award show can also be watched through live TV streaming services that include CBS in their lineup, like Hulu + Live TV, YouTube TV and FuboTV.

The premiere ceremony, hosted by songwriter Justin Tranter, will take place at 3:30 p.m. Eastern/12:30 p.m. Pacific at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles on Sunday. It can be streamed at the Recording Academy's YouTube channel and on live.GRAMMY.com.

Who's nominated at the 2025 Grammys

Beyoncé leads the Grammy nods with 11, bringing her career total to 99 nominations. That makes her the most nominated artist in Grammy history.

Since 2023 she's also been the most decorated artist, having earned 32 trophies across her career.

Is it finally her time to take home the top prize? If she wins the album of the year, she'll become the first Black woman to do so in the 21st century.

Post Malone, Billie Eilish, Kendrick Lamar and Charli xcx follow with seven nominations.

Taylor Swift and first-time nominees Sabrina Carpenter and Chappell Roan boast six nominations each.

Who's attending and performing at the Grammys

Carpenter, Eilish, Roan, Shaboozey, Charli xcx, Doechii, RAYE, Benson Boone, Shakira, Teddy Swims, Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars will perform at the 2025 Grammys.

Stevie Wonder, Janelle Monáe and Will Smith will pay tribute to the late, legendary producer Quincy Jones.

Brad Paisley, Brittany Howard, Coldplay's Chris Martin, Cynthia Erivo, Herbie Hancock, Jacob Collier, John

Legend, Lainey Wilson, Sheryl Crow and St. Vincent will also appear.

Taylor Swift, who last month wrapped her massive Eras tour, will be a presenter.

Other presenters will include Smith, Cardi B, Gloria Estefan, Olivia Rodrigo, Queen Latifah, SZA, Victoria Monét and the Red Hot Chili Pepper's Anthony Kiedis and Chad Smith.

Democrats elect Ken Martin, the party leader in Minnesota, as their national chair

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

OXON HILL, Md. (AP) — Democrats on Saturday elected Ken Martin, the party leader in Minnesota, as the national chair, turning to a low-profile Midwestern political operative to coordinate their resistance to Donald Trump's presidency.

Martin succeeds Jaime Harrison of South Carolina atop the Democratic National Committee. Harrison did not seek another term after the 2024 election when Trump became the first Republican to win the popular vote in two decades and made modest gains with core Democratic constituencies — African Americans, Latinos and working-class voters, among them.

Martin offered a warning to Trump and his Republican allies after the vote was announced: "We're coming. This is a new Democratic Party. We're taking the gloves off."

Martin now becomes one of the most important players in the Democratic Party's comeback attempt as Trump pushes the limits of presidential power. While Martin promised bold changes, he said he could not discuss specific actions until the party conducted a postelection review to determine what went wrong in November.

It is unclear how long the process might take. Martin said it would be completed "as quickly as possible" and then released publicly.

The party leadership election played out in suburban Washington as more than 400 DNC members from every state and U.S. territory assembled at the DNC's winter meeting.

Martin's ascendance comes less than two weeks after Trump's inauguration and as Democrats struggle to confront the sheer volume of executive orders, pardons, personnel changes and controversial relationships taking shape in the new administration. At the same time, public perception of the Democratic Party has hit rock bottom.

Just 31% of voters have a favorable opinion of the Democratic Party, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released this week. Forty-three percent of voters have a favorable opinion of the Republican Party.

Martin, 51, easily defeated Wisconsin party chair Ben Wikler, who had earned the backing of leading Democratic donors and leaders in Congress, including the top Democrats in the House and Senate.

Ultimately, Martin's relationships with DNC members helped him overcome Wikler's higher-profile alliances. Martin is one of the longest serving state party chairs, having led the Minnesota Democratic-Labor-Farmer Party since 2011.

While the Democrats inside the cavernous hotel ballroom cheered Martin's election, not every one was convinced that he alone can lead the party's resurgence.

Jeanna Repass, the Kansas Democratic chair and an unsuccessful candidate for DNC vice chair, described Martin as "a workhorse" instead of "a champion."

"Your workhorse pulls the plow, and you need that. But we don't have that voice, that champion, to get out in front of us," Repass said. "Donald Trump, for all of his faults, is able to get up there and lie with impunity and do it convincingly, and I don't hear or see that voice in our party."

Martin on Saturday promised to refocus the Democratic message on working-class voters, strengthen Democratic infrastructure across the country and improve the party's anti-Trump rapid response system. He has pledged not to shy away from Democrats' dedication to diversity and minority groups, a pillar of the modern-day party.

Still, Martin became the first white man to lead the DNC since 2011.

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Also in the race were Martin O'Malley, a former Maryland governor and Biden administration official, and Faiz Shakir, who managed Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' last presidential campaign.

Candidate Marianne Williamson, an activist and author, surprised DNC members before voting began by endorsing Martin as "our best chance to cut the cord with the billionaire funded corruption that will otherwise obstruct and limit our possibilities."

Fundraising was one of the few issues that differentiated the front-runners.

Some candidates criticized Wikler for relying on billionaires to fund his campaign. George Soros and Reid Hoffman, the LinkedIn cofounder, each gave Wikler \$250,000, according to federal filings.

Martin received a donation from a billionaire as well — Vance Opperman, a Minnesota-based businessman, donated \$100,000. Martin has defended the party's need accept money from wealthy donors to keep up with Republicans. He has said he would not take contributions from people who do not share his values.

The Democrats' connection to such wealthy contributors could undermine one of the party's central arguments against Trump, who has tapped more than a dozen billionaires for prominent roles in his nascent administration, none more prominent than Elon Musk.

Some of Martin's competitors were more willing to make sweeping changes.

Shakir called for a reliance on small-dollar donors, much more coordination with labor unions and less focus on minority groups sorted by race and gender. The only Muslim seeking the chairmanship, Shakir was alone during a recent candidate forum in opposing the creation of a Muslim caucus at the DNC.

Shakir earned just two votes, however. Martin got 246, Wikler 134 and O'Malley 44.

Some Democratic leaders remain concerned about the direction of their party.

"As positive as I am and as hopeful as I am, I'm watching this in real time, thinking to myself, 'We're in real trouble because I don't see a desire to change,'" Repass said.

Argentines protest President Milei's diatribe against 'wokeism' at Davos

Associated Press undefined

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — Thousands of demonstrators gathered in Argentina's capital Buenos Aires and in cities across the country to protest President Javier Milei's speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos last week, during which he slammed 'wokeism,' feminism and other progressive ideals.

Protesters were clad in rainbow-colored flags and bore banners that read "rights are not negotiable." Dubbed the "Federal March of Anti-Fascist and Anti-Racist Pride," the LGBTQ+ community called the protest after the speech on Jan. 23 to combat "the economic violence, political persecution and sexual repression of Javier Milei's government."

Rights' groups, unions and political parties also joined the protest.

In Switzerland, Milei sharply criticized "sick wokeism," social welfare, feminism, identity politics and the fight against climate change, adding that "in its most extreme versions gender ideology constitutes plain and simple child abuse."

Protester Germán Paladino, an industrial engineer, said Milei's government was not taking care of public issues such as healthcare and education and was instead lashing out at people's private life.

"I don't know if this march can change anything, but if it could put a break on Javier Milei's remarks which were rather aggressive," Paladino said.

"I am here to defend our rights, those which we have won and those that are currently under attack," said Milagros, a 33-year-old visual artist.

In recent decades, Argentina has enshrined progressive laws consecrating sexual diversity and equal marriage rights, among others.

Data from the deadliest U.S. air accident in a generation show conflicting altitude readings

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — Preliminary data from the deadliest U.S. aviation accident in nearly 25 years showed conflicting readings about the altitudes of an airliner and Army helicopter when they collided near Reagan National Airport in Washington, killing everyone aboard both aircraft, investigators said Saturday.

Investigators also said that about a second before impact, the jet's flight recorder showed a change in its pitch. But they did not say whether that change in angle meant that pilots were trying to perform an evasive maneuver to avoid the crash.

Data from the jet's flight recorder showed its altitude as 325 feet (99 meters), plus or minus 25 feet (7.6 meters), when the crash happened Wednesday night, National Transportation Safety Board officials told reporters. Data in the control tower, though, showed the Black Hawk helicopter at 200 feet (61 meters) at the time.

The roughly 100-foot (30-meter) discrepancy has yet to be explained.

Investigators hope to reconcile the altitude differences with data from the helicopter's black box, which is taking more time to retrieve because it became waterlogged after it plunged into the Potomac River. They also said they plan to refine the tower data, which can be less reliable.

"That's what our job is, to figure that out," said NTSB member Todd Inman, who grew increasingly agitated with reporters' questions seeking more information and clarity about the readings during a Saturday evening news conference.

He acknowledged that there was dissension within the investigative team about whether to release the information or wait until they had more data.

Officials say the helicopter's maximum allowed altitude at the time was 200 feet (61 meters).

No one survived the collision, which occurred as an American Airlines flight from Wichita, Kansas, with 64 people on board was preparing to land at Ronald Reagan National Airport, just across the Potomac from the capital. The Army Black Hawk helicopter, which apparently flew into the jet's path, had three soldiers on board.

"This is a complex investigation," said Brice Banning, NTSB investigator in charge. "There are a lot of pieces here. Our team is working hard to gather this data."

Banning also discussed the last moments from the jet's two black boxes, which captured sound in the cockpit and flight data.

"The crew had a verbal reaction," Banning said, with the data recorder showing "the airplane beginning to increase its pitch. Sounds of impact were audible about one second later, followed by the end of the recording."

Inman expressed frustration, too, that accidents like these occur, noting that the board has made "several hundred" recommendations to improve aviation that have not been acted upon.

"From tragedy we draw knowledge to improve the safety for us all. That's what we're doing right now, we're dealing with tragedy, but we need to improve safety," he said.

"You want to do something about it? Adopt the recommendation of the NTSB. You'll save lives," he said, adding that he has spent hours with victims' families since the crash. "I don't want to have to meet with those parents like that again."

The families, he said, are struggling.

"Some wanted to give us hugs. Some are just mad and angry," Inman said. "They are just all hurt. And they still want answers, and we want to give them answers."

Earlier Saturday, recovery crews and divers searched the river and cleared wreckage. A Coast Guard cutter outfitted with a crane waited nearby, as occasional recovery team members slipped into the water amid a group of smaller emergency boats.

The remains of 42 people had been pulled from the river as of the afternoon, including 38 that have been positively identified, Washington emergency officials said. They expect to recover all of the remains,

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though the plane's fuselage will probably have to be pulled from the water to get the rest.

Also Saturday, the Army identified Cpt. Rebecca M. Lobach, of Durham, North Carolina, as the third soldier who died in the crash. The names of the other two were released Friday, but Lobach's name was withheld at the time at the request of her family.

Army officials have said the helicopter crew was highly experienced and familiar with the congested skies around the city. Military aircraft frequently make such flights to practice routes they would use if key government officials need to be evacuated during an attack or major catastrophe.

Investigators are examining the actions of the military pilot and air traffic control. The Federal Aviation Administration has long struggled with a shortage of controllers.

Full NTSB investigations typically take at least a year, though investigators hope to have a preliminary report within 30 days.

More than 300 responders were taking part in the recovery effort at a given time, officials said. After a rainy Friday, clear skies and warmer temperatures made for better conditions Saturday for workers in the field. Two Navy salvage barges were also deployed to lift heavy wreckage.

"This is heartbreaking work," Washington Fire Chief John Donnelly Sr. told reporters Friday. "It's been a tough response for a lot of our people."

With the nation already grieving the collision, an air ambulance slammed into a busy intersection in Philadelphia on Friday night, killing all six people on board, including a child who had just undergone treatment at a hospital, and at least one person on the ground. At least three people remained hospitalized Saturday with injuries, and officials said it could be days until the full toll of the dead and injured is clear.

In Washington, the FAA heavily restricted helicopter traffic around Reagan National on Friday, hours after President Donald Trump claimed in a social media post that the helicopter had been flying higher than allowed.

But a day after he questioned the helicopter pilot's actions and alleged, without offering any evidence, that diversity initiatives have undermined air safety, Trump said the helicopter was "flying too high."

"It was far above the 200-foot limit. That's not really too complicated to understand, is it???" Trump wrote in a Truth Social post.

Wednesday's crash was the deadliest in the U.S. since Nov. 12, 2001, when a jet slammed into a residential neighborhood in the New York City borough of Queens, just after takeoff from Kennedy Airport. The crash killed all 260 people on board and five people on the ground.

Experts regularly highlight that plane travel is overwhelmingly safe, but the crowded airspace around Reagan National can challenge even the most experienced pilots.

Elon Musk's DOGE commission gains access to sensitive Treasury payment systems: AP sources

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Government Efficiency, run by President Donald Trump's billionaire adviser and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, has gained access to sensitive Treasury data including Social Security and Medicare customer payment systems, according to two people familiar with the situation.

The move by DOGE, a Trump administration task force assigned to find ways to fire federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations, means it could have wide leeway to access important taxpayer data, among other things.

The New York Times first reported the news of the group's access of the massive federal payment system. The two people who spoke to The Associated Press spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

The highest-ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Ron Wyden of Oregon, on Friday sent a letter to Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent expressing concern that "officials associated with Musk may have intended to access these payment systems to illegally withhold payments to any number of programs."

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"To put it bluntly, these payment systems simply cannot fail, and any politically motivated meddling in them risks severe damage to our country and the economy," Wyden said.

The news also comes after Treasury's acting Deputy Secretary David Lebryk resigned from his position at Treasury after more than 30 years of service. The Washington Post on Friday reported that Lebryk resigned his position after Musk and his DOGE organization requested access to sensitive Treasury data.

"The Fiscal Service performs some of the most vital functions in government," Lebryk said in a letter to Treasury employees sent out Friday. "Our work may be unknown to most of the public, but that doesn't mean it isn't exceptionally important. I am grateful for having been able to work alongside some of the nation's best and most talented operations staff."

The letter did not mention a DOGE request to access Treasury payments.

Musk on Saturday responded to a post on his social media platform X about the departure of Lebryk: "The @DOGE team discovered, among other things, that payment approval officers at Treasury were instructed always to approve payments, even to known fraudulent or terrorist groups. They literally never denied a payment in their entire career. Not even once."

He did not provide proof of this claim.

DOGE was originally headed by Musk and former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, who jointly vowed to cut billions from the federal budget and usher in "mass headcount reductions across the federal bureaucracy."

Ramaswamy has since left DOGE as he mulls a run for governor of Ohio.

USAID website goes offline in Trump administration's 2-week-old freeze on foreign aid worldwide

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The website of the U.S. Agency for International Development went offline without explanation Saturday as thousands of furloughs, layoffs and program shutdowns continued in President Donald Trump's freeze on U.S.-funded foreign aid and development worldwide.

Congressional Democrats battled the Trump administration increasingly openly, expressing concern that Trump may be headed toward ending USAID as an independent agency and absorbing it into the State Department. Democrats say Trump has no legal authority to eliminate a congressionally funded independent agency, and that the work of USAID is vital to national security.

Trump and congressional Republicans say much of foreign aid and development programs is wasteful. They single out programs they say advance liberal social agendas.

The fear of even tougher administration action against USAID comes two weeks into the administration's shutdown of billions of dollars of the United States' humanitarian, development and security assistance.

The U.S. is the world's largest donor of humanitarian aid by far. It spends less than 1% of its budget on foreign assistance, a smaller share overall than some other countries.

Administration officials had no comment Saturday when asked about concerns expressed by lawmakers and others that Trump may be planning to end USAID's separate status..

President John F. Kennedy created the organization at the height of the Cold War to counter Soviet influence. USAID today is at the center of U.S. challenges to the growing influence of China, which has a successful "Belt and Road" foreign aid program of its own.

Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act in 1961, and Kennedy signed that law and an executive order establishing USAID as an independent agency.

USAID staffers spent Friday and Saturday in chat groups monitoring its fate, giving updates on whether the agency's flag and signs were still up outside agency headquarters in Washington. As of late Saturday afternoon, they were.

In a post on X, Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy said presidents cannot eliminate congressionally appropriated federal agencies by executive order, and said Trump was poised to "double down on a constitutional crisis."

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"That's what a despot — who wants to steal the taxpayers' money to enrich his billionaire cabal — does," Murphy said.

Billionaire Elon Musk, advising Trump in a campaign to whittle down the federal government in the name of efficiency, endorsed posts on his X site calling for dissolving USAID.

"Live by executive order, die by executive order," Musk tweeted in reference to USAID.

Trump placed an unprecedented 90-day freeze on foreign assistance on his first day in office Jan. 20. The order, a tougher-than-expected interpretation of Trump's freeze order on Jan. 24 drafted by Peter Marocco, a returning political appointee from Trump's first term, shut down thousands of programs around the world and forced the furloughs or layoffs of many thousands.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has since moved to keep more kinds of strictly life-saving emergency programs going during the freeze. Aid groups say confusion surrounding what programs are still allowed to operate is contributing to paralysis in global aid organizations.

Rubio, in his first public comments on the matter, said Thursday that USAID's programs were being reviewed to eliminate any that are not in the U.S. national interest, but he said nothing about eliminating it as an agency.

The shutdown of U.S.-funded programs during the 90-day review meant the U.S. was "getting a lot more cooperation" from recipients of humanitarian, development and security assistance, Rubio said.

Republicans and Democrats long have fought over the agency, arguing whether humanitarian and development aid protects the U.S. by helping stabilize partner countries and economies or is a waste of money. Republicans typically push to give State more control of USAID's policy and funds. Democrats typically build USAID autonomy and authority.

A version of that battle played out in Trump's first term, when Trump tried to cut the budget for foreign operations by a third.

When Congress refused, the Trump administration used freezes and other tactics to cut the flow of funds already appropriated by Congress for foreign programs. The General Accounting Office later ruled that it violated a law known as the Impoundment Control Act.

Seven dead, 19 injured in 'high-impact' air ambulance crash in Philadelphia

By MATT ROURKE and MARC LEVY Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A person in a car was the seventh fatal victim of the fiery crash of an air ambulance onto a busy Philadelphia street, authorities said Saturday, as investigators sifted through burned cars, damaged homes and charred debris for clues to determine why the aircraft plummeted shortly after takeoff.

Carrying six people from Mexico, including a child who spent months in treatment at a hospital, the Learjet 55 went down just after departing from the Northeast Philadelphia Airport, creating what witnesses described as a massive fireball, shaking houses and leaving a chaotic street scene.

Authorities couldn't yet say why the jet crashed, and Adam Thiel, the city's managing director, said it could be days — or longer — until officials are able to fully count the number of dead and injured across a sprawling impact area in a densely populated residential area.

The plane took off, reached about 1,500 feet of altitude and then plummeted in a steep descent, crashing less than a minute after takeoff in what National Transportation Safety Board chair Jennifer Homendy called a "high-impact crash" that left the plane "highly fragmented."

Seven dead and 19 hurt, although the toll could go higher

As of Saturday morning, officials said, there were seven dead — six on the jet and the person in the car — and 19 injured. Most of the injured had been treated and released, hospitals said.

There are "a lot of unknowns about who was where on the streets" when the plane crashed, and it is possible that the casualty figures will grow, Thiel said.

The crash scene was at least four to six blocks, and authorities were working to assess the damage,

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including going house to house to inspect the dwellings, Thiel said.

Homendy said her agency's staff was working to collect debris from the plane, which could take days or weeks, and haul it away to a secure location to begin evaluating it.

Air traffic controllers didn't hear anything concerning before the crash, and her agency was still looking for the cockpit voice recorder, a helpful piece of evidence in the investigation, Homendy said.

It is likely damaged and possibly fragmented because of the impact, although her agency's researchers and engineers have significant expertise in repairing them, she said.

The plane hit the ground just after 6 p.m., during a busy Friday evening dinner hour less than 3 miles (5 kilometers) from the airport.

"All of sudden I heard like a 'boom,' and I thought it was a thunderstorm," said Selkuc Koc, a waiter at the Four Seasons Diner on Cottman Avenue. "And I get up and look at the smoke and the fire, it was like a balloon. I thought it was a gas station that blew up."

One diner patron was hit and injured by a small but heavy metal object that flew through the window, Koc said.

Child patient had just finished treatment for life-threatening condition

Of the six people on board the medical transport jet, one was a child who had just completed treatment at Shriners Children's Philadelphia hospital, one was her mother and four were crew members, officials said.

A hospital spokesperson said the girl spent four months there receiving life-saving treatment for a condition not easily treated in Mexico. Shriners officials said they couldn't give details about the girl or her family because of patient privacy rules.

"Her journey was one of hope and of aspiration," spokesperson Mel Bower told The Philadelphia Inquirer. The relationships that the girl formed with staff "were true and were dear," and she'll be missed greatly by them, he said.

All the victims on the jet were from Mexico

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said all six victims on the plane were from her country. In a statement on the social media platform X, she mourned their deaths.

"Consular authorities are in constant contact with the families; I have asked the Foreign Affairs Secretary to support whatever is needed. My solidarity with their loved ones and friends," she said in Spanish.

Tijuana, Mexico, across the border from San Diego, was to have been the flight's final destination after a stop in Missouri.

Neither Philadelphia officials nor plane owner Jet Rescue Air Ambulance disclosed the identities of the dead.

But XE Médica Ambulancias, a Mexican emergency service, identified one of its doctors, Raúl Meza, as a victim. In a post on X, it said he was the service's chief of neonatology and assigned to a the ISEM Atizapán hospital, which is in the State of Mexico near Mexico City.

In Veracruz, a city on the Gulf of Mexico, relatives of Josué Juárez said he was the aircraft's co-pilot. They were preparing to hold a family ceremony and staying away from TV and social media to avoid seeing images of the crash.

They hadn't seen videos, but they were told that there was a horrible explosion, that the plane broke apart and that the crash scene covered several blocks, brother Édgar Juárez told The Associated Press by phone.

Josué Juárez, 43, lived in central Mexico, loved salsa dancing and video games and had been a pilot for more than a decade, his brother said. He loved to fly and worked for the air ambulance service for more than a year, flying mostly from Mexico's Caribbean coast to the United States.

"He was always aware that he had his risks, but the truth is that more accidents happen on the road," Édgar Juárez said.

Crash comes on the heels of devastating D.C. midair collision

The crash came just two days after the deadliest U.S. air disaster in a generation. On Wednesday night, an American Airlines jet carrying 60 passengers and four crew members collided in midair in Washington,

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D.C., with an Army helicopter carrying three soldiers. There were no survivors.

Homendy said the NTSB is a highly skilled agency, and that it is not unusual for it to investigate two major accidents at the same time.

Jet Rescue Air Ambulance, which operated the Mexico-registered Learjet 55, is based in that country and has operations both there and in Miami. A company spokesperson said a seasoned crew operated the plane, and all flight crews undergo rigorous training.

The Philadelphia crash was the second fatal incident in 15 months for Jet Rescue. In 2023 five crew members were killed when their plane overran a runway in the central Mexican state of Morelos and crashed into a hillside.

Air traffic controller lost contact with Learjet

The Learjet took off from Northeast Philadelphia Airport, which primarily serves business jets and charter flights.

Audio recorded by LiveATC captured an air traffic controller telling "Medevac Medservice 056" to turn right when departing. About 30 seconds later, the controller repeats the request before asking, "You on frequency?" Minutes later the controller says, "We have a lost aircraft. We're not exactly sure what happened, so we're trying to figure it out. For now the field is going to be closed."

Michael Schiavone was sitting at his home nearby when he heard a loud bang and the house shook.

"There was a large explosion, so I thought we were under attack for a second," he said.

A doorbell camera captured video of the plane plunging in a streak of white and exploding as it hit the ground.

"All we heard was a loud roar and didn't know where it was coming from," said Jim Quinn, the doorbell's owner. "We just turned around and saw the big plume."

AP Interview: Zelenskyy says excluding Ukraine from US-Russia talks about war is 'very dangerous'

By SUSIE BLANN, SAMYA KULLAB and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday that excluding his country from talks between the U.S. and Russia about the war in Ukraine would be "very dangerous" and asked for more discussions between Kyiv and Washington to develop a plan for a ceasefire.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, Zelenskyy said Russia does not want to engage in ceasefire talks or to discuss any kind of concessions, which the Kremlin interprets as losing at a time when its troops have the upper hand on the battlefield.

He said U.S. President Donald Trump could bring Russian President Vladimir Putin to the table with the threat of sanctions targeting Russia's energy and banking system, as well as continued support of the Ukrainian military.

"I think these are the closest and most important steps," he said in the interview in the Ukrainian capital that lasted for more than an hour.

Zelenskyy's remarks followed comments Friday by Trump, who said American and Russian officials were "already talking" about ending the war. Trump said his administration has had "very serious" discussions with Russia, but he did not elaborate.

"They may have their own relations, but talking about Ukraine without us — it is dangerous for everyone," Zelenskyy said.

He said his team has been in contact with the Trump administration, but those discussions are at a "general level," and he believes in-person meetings will take place soon to develop more detailed agreements.

"We need to work more on this," he said, adding that Trump understandably appeared to be focused on domestic issues in the first weeks after his inauguration.

The nearly three-year war in Ukraine is at a crossroads. Trump promised to end the fighting within six months of taking office, but the two sides are far apart, and it is unclear how a ceasefire deal would take shape. Meanwhile, Russia continues to make slow but steady gains along the front, and Ukrainian forces

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are enduring severe manpower shortages.

Most Ukrainians want a pause in fighting to rebuild their lives. The country faces near-daily Russian attacks on homes, and strikes on power systems have plunged entire cities into darkness.

Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, unable to return to their homes after vast tracts of the country's east have been reduced to rubble. Nearly a fifth of Ukraine is now occupied by Russia. In those areas, Moscow-appointed authorities are swiftly erasing any hint of Ukrainian identity.

With Trump back in the White House, Ukraine's relationship with the U.S., its largest and most important ally, is also at a tipping point.

In an initial phone call with Trump during the presidential campaign, Zelenskyy said, the two agreed that if Trump won, they would meet to discuss the steps needed to end the war. But a planned visit by Trump's Ukraine envoy, Keith Kellogg, was postponed "for legal reasons" Zelenskyy said. That was followed by a sudden foreign aid freeze that effectively caused Ukrainian organizations to halt projects.

"I believe that, first and foremost, we (must) hold a meeting with him, and that is important. And that is, by the way, something that everyone in Europe wants," Zelenskyy said, referring to "a common vision of a quick end to the war."

After the conversation with Trump, "we should move on to some kind of format of conversation with Russians. And I would like to see the United States of America, Ukraine and the Russians at the negotiating table. ... And, to be honest, a European Union voice should also be there. I think it would be fair, effective. But how will it turn out? I don't know."

Zelenskyy cautioned against allowing Putin to take "control" over the war, an apparent reference to Russia's repeated threats of escalation during President Joe Biden's administration.

Without security guarantees from Ukraine's allies, Zelenskyy said, any deal struck with Russia would only serve as a precursor to future aggression. Membership in the NATO alliance, a longstanding wish for Kyiv that Moscow has categorically rejected, is still Zelenskyy's top choice.

NATO membership is the "cheapest" option for Ukraine's allies, and it would also strengthen Trump geopolitically, Zelenskyy argued.

"I really believe that these are the cheapest security guarantees that Ukraine can get, the cheapest for everyone," he said.

"It will be a signal that it is not for Russia to decide who should be in NATO and who should not, but for the United States of America to decide. I think this is a great victory for Trump," he said, evidently appealing to the president's penchant for winners and business deals.

In addition, Zelenskyy said, Ukraine's 800,000-strong army would be a bonus to the alliance, especially if Trump seeks to bring home U.S. troops who are stationed overseas.

Other security guarantee proposals should be backed up by sufficient weapons from the U.S. and Europe, and support for Kyiv to develop its own defense industry, he said.

Zelenskyy also said a French proposal to put European forces in Ukraine to act as a deterrent against Russian aggression is taking shape, but he expressed skepticism, saying many questions remained about the command-and-control structure and the number of troops and their positions. The issue was raised by French President Emmanuel Macron and with Trump, he said.

"I said in the presence of the two leaders that we are interested in this as a part of the security guarantee, but not as the only guarantee of safety," he said. "That's not enough."

He added: "Imagine, there is a contingent. The question is who is in charge? Who is the main one? What will they do if there are Russian strikes? Missiles, disembarkation, attack from the sea, crossing of the land borderline, offensive. What will they do? What are their mandates?"

Asked if he put those questions directly to Macron, he smiled and said: "We are still in the process of this dialogue."

Following a statement by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio that the war has set Ukraine back by 100 years, Zelenskyy urged Rubio to visit Ukraine.

Rubio "needs to come to Ukraine, first of all, to see what Russia has done," the Ukrainian president said.

"But also to see what the Ukrainian people did, what they were able to do for the security of Ukraine and the world, as I said, and just talk to these people."

Army releases name of 3rd soldier who died in helicopter and airliner crash

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army on Saturday released the name of the third soldier who died Wednesday when an Army helicopter collided with an American Airlines jet near Reagan National Airport in D.C.

Cpt. Rebecca M. Lobach, of Durham, N.C., served as an Army aviation officer since July 2019. Her awards include an Army commendation medal and an achievement medal.

In a statement released by the Army, her family said she was a distinguished military graduate in ROTC at the University of North Carolina, and was in the top 20% of cadets nationwide. They said she had more than 450 hours of flight time, and earned "certification as a pilot-in-command after extensive testing by the most senior and experienced pilots in her battalion."

The family also noted that she served as a certified sexual harassment/assault response and prevention victim advocate and hoped to become a physician when she got out of the Army.

"We are devastated by the loss of our beloved Rebecca. She was a bright star in all our lives. She was kind, generous, brilliant, funny, ambitious and strong. No one dreamed bigger or worked harder to achieve her goals," the statement said, adding, "we request that you please respect our privacy as we grieve this devastating loss."

The names of the two other soldiers were released on Friday, but Lobach's name was withheld at the time at the request of her family. The others were: Staff Sgt. Ryan Austin O'Hara, 28, of Lilburn, Georgia, who was the crew chief, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Loyd Eaves, 39, of Great Mills, Maryland, who was a pilot.

There has been no specific explanation from the Army for the one-day delay in releasing her name. But while the investigation into the crash has only just begun, President Donald Trump has publicly blamed the helicopter for flying at too high an altitude. And he issued a lengthy critique about an FAA diversity hiring initiative — particularly regarding air traffic controllers — saying they eroded flight safety.

No evidence has emerged that rules seeking to diversify the FAA played any role in the collision.

Gaza ceasefire sees its smoothest exchange yet of Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners

By MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH and IMAD ISSEID Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — The ceasefire in Gaza saw its smoothest exchange yet of Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners on Saturday, and the crucial Rafah border crossing reopened two days before discussions on the truce's far more difficult second phase begin.

And Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will meet with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House on Tuesday, giving him a chance to showcase his ties to Israel's closest ally and press his case for what should come next after 15 months of war.

The ceasefire's second phase calls for the release of remaining hostages and an indefinite extension of the truce in the deadliest and most destructive war ever between Israel and Hamas. The fighting could resume in early March if an agreement isn't reached.

Netanyahu's office said he spoke Saturday evening with Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff. They agreed that negotiations on the second phase will begin at their meeting Monday, and Witkoff later in the week will speak with the other mediators, Qatar and Egypt.

Hamas on Saturday freed three male hostages, and Israel released 183 Palestinian prisoners in the fourth such exchange. Another exchange is planned for next Saturday.

Militants handed Argentinian-Israeli Yarden Bibas and French-Israeli Ofer Kalderon to Red Cross officials

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in the southern city of Khan Younis, while American-Israeli hostage Keith Siegel, looking pale and thin, was handed over in Gaza City.

All three were taken during the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on Israel that sparked the war. Eighteen hostages have now been released since the ceasefire began on Jan. 19.

The latest releases were quick and orderly, in contrast to chaotic scenes on Thursday when armed militants appeared to struggle to hold back a crowd. On Saturday, the militants stood in rows as the hostages walked onto a stage and waved.

Hamas has sought to show it remains in control in Gaza even though a number of its military leaders have been killed.

A bus later departed Ofer Military Prison with over two dozen Palestinian prisoners bound for the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Jubilant crowds cheered and hoisted the prisoners on their shoulders. Many appeared frail and thin.

The Israeli Prison Authority said all 183 prisoners set for release had been freed. In another sign of progress in the ceasefire, they included 111 who were arrested after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack but who weren't involved in it. They had been held without trial and were released to Gaza. Seven serving life sentences were transferred to Egypt.

Joy and relief, but fears for those still held

Siegel, 65, originally from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, was taken hostage from Kibbutz Kfar Aza, along with his wife, Aviva, who was released during a brief 2023 ceasefire.

There were sighs of relief and cheers as kibbutz members watched Siegel's release.

"You can see that he's lost a lot of weight, but still he's walking and talking and you can feel that it's still him. And one of the first things he told us is that he's still vegan," said Siegel's niece, Tal Wax.

The release of Bibas, 35, brought renewed attention to the fate of his wife, Shiri, and their two sons, Ariel and Kfir, who were 4 years old and 9 months old when they were abducted from Kibbutz Nir Oz.

Kfir was the youngest of the roughly 250 people who were taken captive on Oct. 7, and his plight came to represent the helplessness and anger in Israel.

Israel expressed "grave concern" for Bibas' wife and children and pleaded with negotiators to provide information. Hamas has said they were killed in an Israeli airstrike, but Israel has not confirmed it.

After his release, Bibas closed his eyes as his father, Eli, and sister Ofri hugged him and cried. "Sweet-heart," his father said.

"A quarter of our heart has returned to us," the Bibas family said in a statement.

Kalderon, 54, was also captured from Kibbutz Nir Oz. His two children, Erez and Sahar, were taken alongside him and released during the earlier ceasefire.

"I am here. I am here. I didn't give up," Kalderon said as they embraced.

There were similar scenes among the released Palestinians.

"Certainly, it's an indescribable feeling, and undoubtedly a mixed feeling of both sadness and joy, as we have left our brothers in captivity," said Mohammad Kaskus, who had been sentenced to 25 years over attacks against Israelis.

Yaser Abu Hamad, arrested for involvement in the Islamic Jihad militant group in 2006, found that 20 family members including his mother and sisters had been killed by Israeli airstrikes during the war. He visited their graves.

Palestinians who had been sentenced over their connection to deadly attacks against Israelis described harsh conditions, beatings and other abuse in prison. The Israeli Prison Authority didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Ceasefire brings respite to battered Gaza

The ceasefire has held for two weeks, allowing for hundreds of trucks of aid to flow into the tiny coastal territory and for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to shattered homes in northern Gaza.

And on Saturday, 50 sick and wounded Palestinian children were leaving Gaza for treatment through the Rafah border crossing to Egypt as the enclave's sole exit opened for the first time since Israel captured

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it nine months ago.

During the ceasefire's six-week first phase, 33 Israeli hostages are to be freed in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Israel says it has received information from Hamas that eight of those hostages are dead. About 80 hostages remain in Gaza.

"We will not allow you to blow up this deal. We will not allow you to force us back into war or to sentence the hostages left behind to death," Naama Weinberg, cousin of deceased hostage Itay Svirsky, told a weekly gathering in Tel Aviv, addressing the warring sides.

Israel says it is committed to destroying Hamas. The militant group says it won't release the remaining hostages without an end to the war and a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

About 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the attack that sparked the war. More than 47,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's retaliatory air and ground offensive, over half women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many of the dead were militants.

The Israeli military says it killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence. It blames civilian deaths on Hamas because its fighters operate in residential neighborhoods.

With plans in the works and troops on the way, military assumes a mostly familiar role on the border

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Dozens of Marines unfurled coils of concertina wire — one on the ground and one slightly above — making it more difficult to climb a border wall separating Tijuana from San Diego. They worked with speed and efficiency amid a weekend rush of cars nearby at the busiest border crossing between the U.S. and Mexico.

Fortifying barriers has long been a military task on border missions that date back to the administration of George W. Bush. But President Donald Trump has hinted strongly at the unprecedented use of the armed forces to repel what he calls a "disastrous invasion."

Until now, the military has limited itself to a supporting role at the border — surveilling for illegal crossings by ground and air, repairing vehicles, building barriers — adhering to the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 to keep the armed forces away from civilian law enforcement.

The Associated Press toured the border in San Diego with Marines and saw a military operating similar to past missions. But some scholars and advisers close to Trump argue there are legal grounds to summon the military to combat narcotics and mass migration.

Trump's declaration of a national emergency at the southern border indicates he may redirect money, as he did during his first term, to get billions of dollars for border wall construction.

His inaugural day orders raise the possibility of invoking wartime powers, including the Insurrection Act of 1807, allowing him to deploy active-duty troops to suppress a rebellion. He gave Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem 90 days to deliver recommendations.

The Insurrection Act "is just all-purpose. The regular military can do anything on U.S. soil," said Adam Isacson, who follows the role of military at the Washington Office on Latin America, a research and advocacy organization.

Trump has already broken from predecessors. While the military has housed migrants at times, its deportation flights to Guatemala, Ecuador and Colombia mark a departure from previous administrations. Trump said he would use a detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to hold tens of thousands of the "worst criminal aliens," though it hasn't happened yet.

There is a sense among Border Patrol agents and others that there is more to come. Isacson said he believes the administration may see a model in Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's "Operation Lone Star," which thrust the state's National Guard into a central role in border enforcement.

The Defense Department deployed 1,600 active-duty troops to the border during Trump's first week in office. U.S. officials said Friday that they are preparing to deploy at least 1,000 more in Trump's immigration crackdown, about half to the border and half to Guantanamo Bay.

So far, the military has maintained low visibility in San Diego. The Marines laid concertina wire Friday at the bottom of an 18-foot-high (5.5-meter-high) border wall that already had wire on top. Migrants who manage to get over or through the wire face a second, 30-foot-high (9.1-meter-high) wall.

A tour in Osprey military transport aircraft, which have been used to bring concertina to Brown Field Municipal Airport in San Diego, showed Border Patrol vehicles staged at various lookouts. They stretched about 70 miles (112 kilometers) from the Pacific Ocean through boulder-strewn ranches east of San Diego and a treacherous mountain range where few migrants cross.

Border Patrol Chief Michael Banks said Thursday that arrests for illegal crossings averaged 654 a day over the previous week, down from a daily average of 1,527 in December.

San Diego has been the busiest corridor for illegal crossings over much of the last year. Arrests averaged 222 a day in a seven-day period through Jan. 25, down from 237 the previous week.

Sick and wounded children begin crossing into Egypt as Rafah crossing opens after several months

By AHMED HATEM and AMR NABIL Associated Press

RAFAH CROSSING, Egypt (AP) — A group of 50 sick and wounded Palestinian children began entering Egypt for treatment through Gaza's Rafah crossing on Saturday, the first opening of the border since Israel captured it nearly nine months ago. Thousands of other Palestinians need such evacuations, health officials have said.

The reopening of the Rafah crossing represents a significant breakthrough that bolsters the ceasefire deal Israel and Hamas reached last month. Israel agreed to reopen the crossing after Hamas released the last living female hostages in Gaza. Rafah is Gaza's only crossing that does not enter into Israel.

Egypt's Al-Qahera television showed several children being brought out on gurneys and transferred to ambulances on the Egyptian side. They were rushed to hospitals in the nearby Egyptian city of el-Arish and elsewhere. Footage showed one young girl whose foot had been amputated.

Zaher al-Wahidi, an official with Gaza's Health Ministry, said 37 of the children had crossed into Egypt by Saturday evening. The ministry said around 60 family members were accompanying the children.

"We urge for medical evacuations to be expedited through all possible routes. Thousands of lives depend on it," World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on social media.

The children are the first in what are meant to be regular evacuations of Palestinians through the crossing for treatment abroad.

Over the past 15 months, Israel's campaign against Hamas in retaliation for the militants' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel has decimated Gaza's health sector, leaving most of its hospitals out of operation even as more than 110,000 Palestinians were wounded by Israel's bombardment and ground offensives, according to health officials.

Remaining facilities are unable to perform many crucial treatments or specialized surgeries for wounds or diseases. Mohammed Zaqout, the director of hospitals with Gaza's Health Ministry, said more than 6,000 patients were ready to be evacuated abroad and more than 12,000 patients were in urgent need of treatment. He said the small numbers set to be evacuated will not cover the need, "and we hope the number will increase."

Israeli forces closed the Rafah crossing in early May after seizing it during an offensive on the southern city. Egypt shut down its side of the passage in protest.

Even before the Gaza war began, the Rafah crossing represented a crucial escape valve from the territory, where a 15-year Israeli-Egyptian blockade aimed at containing Hamas undermined health facilities and impoverished the population. Palestinians routinely applied for permission to travel outside the territory for life-saving treatments not available in Gaza, including chemotherapy.

It took some diplomatic gymnastics to reopen the crossing and overcome security disputes among Israeli, Egyptian and Palestinian officials. Hamas had overseen the border since 2007, when it took control of Gaza from its rival, the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, or PA, after winning parliamentary

elections in 2006.

Israeli troops remain at the Rafah crossing and in the Philadelphia Corridor, a band of land running the length of the border. Israel has refused to allow Hamas to resume management of the crossing, accusing it of smuggling weapons through tunnels under the border, though Egypt says it destroyed the tunnels from its side and stopped smuggling years ago. Israel also refuses to allow the Palestinian Authority to officially run the crossing.

Instead, the crossing will be staffed by Palestinians from Gaza who previously served as border officers with the PA, but they will not be allowed to wear official PA insignia, a European diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media. Israel has screened the officers to ensure they have no affiliation with Hamas, the European diplomat added.

European Union monitors will also be present, as they were before 2007.

Negotiations on the second phase of the deal — which calls for a permanent ceasefire, full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the release of any remaining hostages — are supposed to begin Monday. Israel has resisted the notion that the PA would control postwar Gaza.

Trump fires the director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump has fired the director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Rohit Chopra, in the latest purge of a Biden administration holdover.

Chopra was one of the more important regulators from the previous Democratic administration who was still on the job since Trump took office on Jan. 20. Chopra's tenure saw the removal of medical debt from credit reports and limits on overdrafts penalties, all based on the premise that the financial system could be fairer and more competitive in ways that helped consumers. But many in the financial industry viewed his actions as regulatory overreach.

In a social media post Saturday about his departure, Chopra thanked people across the country who "shared their ideas and experiences" with the government's consumer financial watchdog agency.

"You helped us hold powerful companies & their executives accountable for breaking the law, and you made our work better," Chopra posted above on X above pictures of his letter announcing that he would no longer lead the bureau.

During Trump's first term, the Republican had picked Chopra as a Democratic member of the Federal Trade Commission.

In his letter, Chopra noted that the bureau was ready to work with the Trump administration. He said the agency had prepared rules to block Russia, China and others from using data brokers to surveil Americans, and had put forth policies intended to prevent people from losing access to banking services for exercising their constitutional right to express their political or religious views.

The letter noted the CFPB has also analyzed Trump's campaign proposal to cap credit card interest rates.

Chopra was notified of his firing in an email, according to a person familiar with the notice who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Under the law, Chopra was to serve a five-year term, which meant he could have stayed on as the CFPB director. But he had publicly stated that he would leave his post if the new president asked.

In many ways, Chopra exemplified some of the tensions between Trump's promises to curb regulations for businesses and his populist appeals to voters. When The Associated Press reported on Jan. 22 that Chopra remained in his job after Trump took the oath of office, his critics in the financial sector quickly said the president needed to dismiss him.

"The longer Director Chopra stays, the harder it will be for this pro-growth administration to undo the politically-driven, government-price setting agenda that former President Biden's appointee has engaged in over the last several years at the Bureau," emailed Weston Loyd, press secretary at the Consumer Bankers Association.

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Richard Hunt, executive chairman of the Electronic Payments Coalition, said Chopra's tenure "was marked by witch-hunts and political weaponization" of the bureau, arguing that Chopra's policies reduced the access that "vulnerable consumers" had to financial credit.

But many liberal groups stressed that Chopra's work helped to return billions of dollars to consumers.

Kitty Richards, a former Treasury Department official and senior strategic adviser at the liberal think tank Groundwork Collaborative, said Chopra had been a "tireless watchdog" who held "predatory corporations accountable."

"Trump was always more interested in serving his billionaire boys club than delivering change for working people," Richards said.

Chopra is an ally of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who developed the idea of the CFPB and is one of Trump's targets for criticism. The Massachusetts Democrat said in a statement that the bureau under Chopra had held "Wall Street accountable" for cheating hard-working families and preventing the de-banking of Americans across the country.

California Rep. Maxine Waters, the top Democrat on the House Financial Services Committee, said in a statement that Chopra's dismissal "marks the end of an era of strong consumer protection and the beginning of a plan to end this important agency."

The bureau was created after the 2008 financial crisis to regulate mortgages, car loans and other consumer finance. It has long been opposed by Republicans and their financial backers.

Last year, the Supreme Court rejected a challenge that could have undermined the bureau, ruling that the way it is funded does not violate the Constitution. Unlike most federal agencies, the bureau does not rely on the annual budget process in Congress, but is funded directly by the Federal Reserve.

US military conducts airstrikes against Islamic State operatives in Somalia

By TARA COPP, AAMER MADHANI and OMAR FARUK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military has conducted airstrikes against Islamic State operatives in Somalia, the first attacks in the African nation during President Donald Trump's second term.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Saturday that the strikes by U.S. Africa Command were directed by Trump and coordinated with Somalia's government.

An initial assessment by the Pentagon indicated that "multiple" operatives were killed. The Pentagon said it assessed that no civilians were harmed in the strikes.

Trump, in a post on social media, said a senior IS planner and recruits were targeted in the operation.

"The strikes destroyed the caves they live in, and killed many terrorists without, in any way, harming civilians. Our Military has targeted this ISIS Attack Planner for years, but Biden and his cronies wouldn't act quickly enough to get the job done. I did!" Trump said. "The message to ISIS and all others who would attack Americans is that "WE WILL FIND YOU, AND WE WILL KILL YOU!"

Trump did not identify the IS planner or say whether that person was killed in the strike. White House officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The office of Somalia's president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, said the operation "reinforces the strong security partnership" between the two countries in "combating extremist threats." In a post on X, it said Somalia "remains resolute in working with its allies to eliminate international terrorism and ensure regional stability."

The Pentagon's counterterrorism strategy in Africa has been strained as two key partners, Chad and Niger, ousted U.S. forces last year and took over key bases that the U.S. military had used to train and conduct missions against terrorist groups across the Sahel, the vast arid expanse south of the Sahara Desert.

U.S. military officials have warned that IS cells have received increasing direction from the group's leadership that relocated to northern Somalia. That has included how to kidnap Westerners for ransom, how to learn better military tactics, how to hide from drones and how to build their own small quadcopters.

The IS affiliate in Somalia emerged in 2015 as a breakaway faction from al-Shabab, al-Qaida's East Af-

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rican link, and is most active in Puntland, particularly in the Galgala Mountains, where it has established hideouts and training camps and is led by Abdulkadir Mumin.

While its influence is relatively limited compared to Al-Shabaab, IS in Somalia has been involved in attacks in southern and central Somalia. The group funds its activities through extortion, smuggling, and illicit taxation, particularly in some coastal areas where it has attempted to control local businesses.

Despite facing counterterrorism pressure from Somali security forces, U.S. airstrikes and al-Shabab rivalries, it continues to operate in remote and urban areas, seeking to expand its influence through recruitment and propaganda.

The number of IS militants in the country are estimated to be in the hundreds, mostly scattered in the Cal Miskaat mountains in Puntland's Bari region, according to the International Crisis Group.

Saturday's operation followed military airstrikes on Jan. 30 in northwest Syria, killing a senior operative in Hurras al-Din, an al-Qaeda affiliate, U.S. Central Command said.

Winging it for the Super Bowl? Broccoli might be a cheaper party snack this year

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

The good news? The cost of hosting a Super Bowl party is expected to barely budge this year, with an average increase of about 10 cents from the previous year.

The bad news? Consumers might have to use some fancy footwork to ensure their dollars get further down the field.

Economists with the Wells Fargo Agri-Food Institute found a surprising spread in prices for popular game-day ingredients and prepared foods so finding a balance between more expensive items and those that have dropped in price can help keep the budget from running out of bounds.

They've pegged the price for a Super Bowl party menu for 10 people at around \$139 this year, just 0.1% more than last year.

While inflation and shrinkflation have been grocery store buzzwords for a while now, coming up with a winning game plan to keep party guests happy could become even more of a challenge as the Trump administration looks for opportunities to impose more tariffs.

With no overarching, easily understood theme to explain everything, the Wells Fargo economists say party planners must become "food fluent" to successfully navigate price fluctuations.

A review of data from NielsenIQ, which tracks food scanned at retailers across the U.S., shows that celery and broccoli are the best veggies for dipping this year, as both have seen price decreases. Potato chips, frozen shrimp and cauliflower also have seen decreases.

Salsa and nacho cheese prices are holding steady, but it can get complicated if guacamole dip is on the menu.

Fresh avocados have jumped by 11.5% compared to last year, but prepared guacamole dip increased by only 1.5%. So making guacamole from scratch can still save money despite the hike in avocado prices. This scenario, the experts say, underscores the broader trend of price variability within categories.

Overall, the review found the total cost of chips and guacamole is just two cents higher than last year.

On the beverage front, beer and wine have seen only 2% increases.

Chicken wings continue to be a favorite, but they come at a premium this year. They're up by more than 7%, an increase that reflects not just inflation but also a sustained consumer demand that supports higher prices.

On the bright side, retail prices for whole frozen shrimp have decreased by 4%. This is due to increased supply from shrimp-exporting countries and a subsequent softening in demand following price spikes around the coronavirus pandemic. While shrimp is two and half times more expensive per pound than chicken wings, shrimp might be the "Hail Mary" for reaching those protein goals.

Inside A\$AP Rocky's trial, these are some of the extraordinary moments cameras didn't capture

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The trial of rapper A\$AP Rocky is progressing according to standard legal procedure, but there have been no lack of unusual moments, from visits from Rihanna to a tough-but-quirky judge and lawyers nearly coming to blows.

Testimony is expected to last another week before jurors will decide Rocky's fate on two counts of assault with a semi-automatic firearm. A conviction could lead to up to 24 years in prison for the hip-hop star.

Here are some of the out-of-the-ordinary moments from the first two weeks of the trial, most not captured by the cameras in the courtroom.

Waiting for Rihanna

From the moment it became clear the case was going to trial, nearly everyone involved was asking the same thing: What about Rihanna?

Editors asked it of reporters, who asked it of lawyers. Even Judge Mark Arnold asked it months ago at a hearing: "Will the mother of his children be there?"

Her name came up constantly during jury selection, when prospective panelists were asked whether her attendance would affect their judgment.

Yet when the singing superstar finally did show up, she was easy to miss.

She didn't appear through the first week, but rumors abounded Wednesday that she might appear, on a short court day with important testimony. Yet there was no sign of her outside or in the halls. (Unlike a nearby civil courthouse, where celebrities like Britney Spears and the Kardashians are smuggled in, Rocky and other defendants must use public entrances and many thought she'd accompany him.)

When the media were allowed in the courtroom, many reporters walked past her without noticing she was already sitting inconspicuously between Rocky's mother and sister. She had been brought in through restricted entrances. She could barely be seen from the media section, and the camera capturing the trial is not allowed to shoot the audience.

Her presence caused a quiet stir once the audience realized it, though it's not clear if the jurors had noticed her.

She appeared again the next day, and it soon felt almost unexceptional that she was there. By Friday, she slipped in about 30 minutes into testimony after coming through a public entrance.

Later that day she entered the courtroom together with Rocky for the first time, down a hallway full of jurors from his and other cases that was abuzz.

Attorneys in the octagon

Court observers knew that when Deputy District Attorney John Lewin joined the prosecution shortly before trial, that he and Rocky's equally bullish and vocal attorney, Joe Tacopina, were sure to butt heads. They weren't wrong.

Lewin, a dogged prosecutor, is best known for his successful murder prosecution of real estate heir Robert Durst. Tacopina is a New York attorney and frequent TV commentator whose clients have included President Donald Trump.

Their shouting matches began quickly. Soon, without judge or jury present, the two had to be separated by a fellow lawyer when they went nose-to-nose in a faceoff that looked like it might become a fistfight.

"Mr. Tacopina started literally screaming at me in the courtroom. He basically appeared to challenge me to a fight," Lewin told the judge later.

Tacopina responded. "No one screamed. You weren't there your honor. Mr. Lewin comes up with his little scolding, bullying attitude."

Arnold, a former sheriff's deputy, forbade the two from talking to each other except on the record.

Moments later, he said a UFC fight might be warranted. "Maybe we should get an octagon."

Arnold wasn't wrong either. An even more fierce fight broke out between the two men in front of the judge but off camera a few days later as they argued over evidence. Lewin shouted that the defense as-

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sertion Rocky was carrying a prop gun was "garbage."

"Oh?! Oh?!" Tacopina yelled. "We'll see what the jury says at the end!"

"The argument grew more out of control and turned to personal insults.

"You don't know me! But you will learn!" Tacopina yelled.

The judge, disgusted, refused to keep playing referee.

"That's it, we're off the record," he said, and walked out.

The quirks of the key witness

The testimony of A\$AP Relli, Rocky's accuser, was dark and difficult but brought a couple of oddly light moments.

At one point, Deputy District Attorney Paul Przelomiec asked him how far away Rocky was at a certain moment.

"About three or four skips," Relli said.

"I've never heard about anyone estimating with skips," Przelomiec said.

"Wait, what does a skip mean?" the judge asked.

"You don't know what I mean?" Relli asked.

They determined for the record that it was about 7 to 8 feet.

Arnold's long-for-a-judge hair and rugged, bushy mustache evoke a biker, or a cowboy. His nameplate on the bench is a carved wooden log. Relli let him know he liked his style.

As he testified, Arnold told him he clearly had to say "yes" or "no" for the court reporter.

Relli said sorry, he was nervous, then looking at the judge said, "I like your bracelet."

"What?" Arnold said.

Relli pointed at the silver wristband on the judge's right arm. "Your bracelet."

"Oh," the judge said. "Thank you."

A\$AP's mother and sister at the trial

Rocky's mother, Renee Black, and his sister, Erika Mayers, garnered their own share of attention even before Rihanna sat between them.

The first day they appeared, Arnold asked Rocky who the women in his section were.

"That's my mother and my sister," Rocky said. The judge's marveled at Black's youthful appearance.

"What were you, 7 when you had him?" the judge asked. She said she was 26.

"You are very beautiful," the judge told her. "That's on the record."

Later, Lewin politely approached the women and talked to them during a break. He said of Rocky, "I just hope he's evaluating everything" in a reference to the deal Rocky turned down — a recommendation of 180 days in jail and other relatively minor punishments for a guilty plea on one count.

Tacopina angrily brought it up to the judge later, and Lewin explained himself.

"I walked up very kindly to the defendants mother and sister. I said 'I am very sorry you have to go through this. I hope that your brother and your son, he's really evaluated what he's risking here.'"

The phantom photographer

During jury selection, when the room was packed with tired and seemingly bored potential jurors being questioned one after another, a woman gave everyone a start when she suddenly shouted, "There's a woman taking a picture in that corner!"

She pointed to a door with a small window behind the judge, who pounced into action, his robe flying. He and his clerk opened the door and hurried down the hall behind it, but found no one.

The woman swore she saw someone and tried to justify herself, but Arnold cut her off.

"You did the right thing!" Arnold said. "You done good!"

They kept the window covered after that.

With home prices and mortgage rates high, many families find the American dream out of reach

By R.J. RICO Associated Press

The Petersen family's two-bedroom apartment in northern California is starting to feel small.

Four-year-old Jerrik's toy monster trucks are everywhere in the 1,100-square-foot unit in Campbell, just outside of San Jose. And it's only a matter of time before 9-month-old Carolyn starts amassing more toys, adding to the disarray, says her mother, Jenn Petersen.

The 42-year-old chiropractor had hoped she and her husband, Steve, a 39-year-old dental hygienist, would have bought a house by now. But when they can afford a bigger place, it will have to be another rental. Petersen has done the math: With mortgage rates and home prices stubbornly high, there's no way the couple, who make about \$270,000 a year and pay about \$2,500 in monthly rent, can afford a home anywhere in their area.

According to October data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, a San Jose family with a median income of \$156,700 would need to spend 80% of their income on housing — including an \$8,600 monthly mortgage payment — to own a median-priced \$1.54 million home. That's far higher than the general rule of thumb that people should pay no more than 30% of their income on a mortgage or rent.

Moving out of state is out of the question for the Petersens — they have strong family ties to the area and their income would plummet if they move to a lower cost-of-living area. "I'm not willing to give up my job and close connections with my family for a house," Petersen said.

The issue is widespread and near historic highs nationally: As of last fall, the median homeowner in the U.S. was paying 42% of their income on homeownership costs, according to the Atlanta Fed. Four years ago, that percentage was 28% and had not previously reached 38% since late 2007, just before the housing market crash.

"The American dream, as our parents knew it, doesn't exist anymore," Petersen said. "The whole idea that you get a house after you graduate college, get a steady job and get married? I've done most of those milestones. But the homeownership part? That just doesn't fit financially."

First-time homeowners are getting older

The same is true for an increasing number of American families.

In 2024, the median first-time homebuyer was 38 years old, a jump from age 35 the previous year, according to a recent report by the National Association of Realtors. That's significantly above historic norms, when median first-time buyers hovered between 30 and 32 years old from 1993 to 2018.

The biggest driver of this trend, experts said, is simple: There are far too few houses on the market to match pent-up demand, driving prices past the point of affordability for many people who are relatively early in their careers. Coupled with high mortgage rates, many have concluded that renting is their only option.

"Wage growth hasn't kept up with the increase in home prices and interest rates," said Domonic Purviance, who studies housing at the Atlanta Fed. "Even though people are making more money, home prices are increasing at a faster rate."

That gap has left many out of the housing market, which for generations has been a way for Americans to build equity and wealth that they can pass down or leverage to buy a larger home. It's also led to widespread worries about housing in the U.S. About 7 in 10 voters under age 45 said they were "very" concerned about the cost of housing in their community, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 voters in the 2024 election.

Is the dream of homeownership going to fade?

Brian McCabe, a sociology professor at Georgetown University, said he frequently tells his students that "there are few things that all Americans agree on, but one of them is that they'd rather own a home than rent."

McCabe said homeownership, especially as a wealth-building tool, is the right move for many, especially if the owner intends to be in one place for a long time. But he also said many are realizing that not own-

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ing a home has its advantages, too — it gives people more flexibility to move and allows them to live in exciting neighborhoods they would not be able to afford to buy property in.

McCabe said millennials are getting married later, having children later, have a stronger desire to stay in cities and, especially due to remote work, value the flexibility of being able to move with ease — all of which he said could prompt an end to the notion that homeownership is the “apex of the American dream.”

“The big question is whether we see the sheen of homeownership start to fade,” McCabe said. “It’s such an interesting cultural marker: Why is owning a home the pinnacle for so many people?”

It’s a question Petersen wrestles with because she knows any three-bedroom home she found in her area would leave her family “house poor.”

“I used to subscribe to the idea that owning a house is just a natural milestone you have to reach,” she said. “At some point, though, what are you sacrificing by just owning a house and gaining equity? I want to be able to travel with my kids. I want to be able to sign them up for extracurriculars. How are we supposed to do that if we’re paying a mortgage that’s most of our take-home pay?”

Petersen said she’ll “always hold out a little bit of hope” that homeownership will be in her family’s future. But if they find a townhouse to rent that has space for her kids and fits within their \$3,600 monthly rental budget?

“I’d take that,” she said.

Some cities are providing crucial aid to first-time homebuyers

Lifelong Boston resident Julieta Lopez, 63, spent decades hoping to buy a home but watched as prices became increasingly out of reach.

“The prices in Boston just got higher and higher and higher and higher,” said Lopez, who works for the city traffic department issuing tickets for parking violations.

Two years ago, furious to learn that her subsidized apartment’s monthly rent was being hiked to \$2,900, Lopez, who earns about \$60,000 annually, took out her phone and began searching for government programs that help first-time homebuyers. She was determined to finally own her own place.

Within months, she had succeeded. Lopez qualified to receive \$50,000 from the local Massachusetts Affordable Homeownership Alliance nonprofit and another \$50,000 from the city of Boston’s Office of Housing — funds that helped her with a down payment on the \$430,000 two-bedroom condominium she shares with her 30-year-old son. She now pays about \$2,160 a month on her mortgage.

Lopez knows she is lucky the city has placed such a focus on aiding first-time buyers like herself — Boston has poured more than \$24 million into its homeownership assistance programs since Mayor Michelle Wu took office in 2021, helping nearly 700 residents get their first homes.

But Lopez also feels proud to have her own place after years of working so hard — jobs that included everything from telecommunications to health care to electronics.

“I was determined to have my piece of the pie,” she said. “I felt I deserved that. I’ve always worked. Always. Nonstop.”

Colleges around the US cautiously navigate Trump’s DEI crackdown

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — In Boston, Northeastern University renamed a program for underrepresented students, emphasizing “belonging” for all. In New Jersey, a session at Rutgers University catering to students from historically Black colleges had to be abruptly canceled. And around the U.S., colleges are assessing program names and titles that could run afoul of a Trump administration crackdown on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

New White House orders ban DEI policies in programs that receive federal money. Across higher education, institutions rely on federal funding for research grants, projects and contract work.

As they figure out how to adapt, some schools are staying quiet out of uncertainty, or fear. President

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Donald Trump has called for compliance investigations at some schools with endowments over \$1 billion. Others have vowed to stand firm.

The president of Mount Holyoke College, a liberal arts school in Massachusetts, said she hopes colleagues in higher education will not capitulate to Trump's vision for the country. Danielle Holley said she believes Trump's orders are vulnerable to legal challenges.

"Anything that is done to simply disguise what we're doing is not helpful," said Holley, who is Black. "It validates this notion that our values are wrong. And I don't believe that the value of saying we live in a multiracial democracy is wrong."

Trump has said DEI amounts to discrimination. To get colleges to shutter diversity programs, he said during the campaign he would "advance a measure to have them fined up to the entire amount of their endowment."

Efforts by colleges to build the diversity they seek on campuses already had been constrained by the 2023 Supreme Court ruling that struck down affirmative action in higher education. Many colleges have said they are no less committed to recruiting students of color and helping all students succeed, even if strategies change or go by a different name.

Northeastern changed the name of what had been called "The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" to "Belonging in Northeastern," which it described as a "reimagined approach" that embraces everyone at the school.

"While internal structures and approaches may need to be adjusted, the university's core values don't change. We believe that embracing our differences — and building a community of belonging — makes Northeastern stronger," university spokesperson Renata Nyul said.

The orders are having a chilling effect at many colleges, said Paulette Granberry Russell, president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

"We are also seeing institutions preemptively reevaluating courses, programs and even administrative positions," she said. "The long-term consequences of such shifts could be profound, both for higher education and for the broader workforce and society."

Some changes are outside the control of the colleges.

At Rutgers University, professor Marybeth Gasman awoke Jan. 23 to a contractor's email telling her to cancel an upcoming conference on student internships. The funding, from the Department of Labor, was coming through the contractor and earmarked for DEI programs that were put on hold. About 100 students and staff from historically Black colleges and universities had planned to attend the online session.

"It feels like a punch in the gut," said Gasman, who runs Rutgers' Center for Minority Serving Institutions, which was completing its final project on a \$575,000 grant. With the grant frozen, she now hopes to raise the remaining \$150,000 from other sources so they can finish the work and retain staff.

Beyond scrutiny of their own policies and programs, many universities and faculty members also are worried about research grants.

The White House this week paused federal grants and loans to conduct an ideological review to uproot progressive initiatives. It later reversed itself, but uncertainty remains over the future of research touching on issues related to diversity.

California Polytechnic professor Cameron Jones said he is worried whether he would still get a \$150,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant to study the history of African descendants in early California, even though it's not a DEI grant. He also worries about the ban's effect on his students, especially students of color.

"We're worried that even indirect pressure might lead administrators to back off on programs that benefit students of color (and) first generation students," Jones said, "and I'm a white, cisgender, church-going man."

Colleges already had experience with DEI restrictions in several Republican-led states, including Oklahoma, where Shanisty Whittington, 33, is studying political science at Rose State College.

Compared to her first stint in college, more than a decade ago, she notices some concern "about being able to speak freely," along with "just a lot of confusion."

One effect of the Oklahoma ban was the loss of a long-running networking program for female students interested in politics. Whittington, who is juggling work, school and parenting, recently applied for two jobs at the statehouse, but her applications went nowhere.

"It would be great to have a tool that would help me be able to kind of get into that world and start introducing myself to people and getting to know them," she said.

Sheldon Fields has been through a time like this before. He was a post-doctoral student studying AIDS/HIV prevention in the early 2000s when the conservative tide put his federally funded program on the chopping block. Instead of abandoning the work, he and his colleagues got creative.

"I had to write a whole grant about AIDS prevention without even talking about sex. We were able to do it because we shifted some language," said Fields, president of the National Black Nursing Association and associate dean for equity and inclusion at Penn State University's nursing school.

Others will not be discouraged in the the current political climate, Fields said.

"People have spent their entire careers working on certain areas," said Fields, who has worked to diversify the nursing profession, which is overwhelmingly white and female. "They're not going to completely abandon them."

18 Pakistani soldiers killed in fighting with separatist rebels in Balochistan

By ABDUL SATTAR Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistani troops fought separatist insurgents who set up roadblocks in the restive northwestern region of Balochistan, leaving 18 paramilitary security forces and 23 rebels dead in some of the heaviest clashes in recent years, officials said Saturday.

The military said troops suffered casualties when they engaged the insurgents who erected barricades on a key highway in Kalat, bordering Afghanistan.

The security forces "successfully removed the roadblock" following the fighting overnight into Saturday morning, the military said in a statement.

It said 18 security personnel died during the operation and vowed that "the perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of this heinous and cowardly act, will be brought to justice." Security forces recovered the bodies of 12 insurgents, the military said.

Troops also killed another 11 insurgents in an operation that was still underway, it said.

Pakistan's civil and military security forces in 2024 witnessed a 40% surge in militant attacks by all groups, compared to 2023. However, in December the military insisted that security forces killed 925 insurgents in 2024, a record high compared to the past five years, while 383 soldiers were killed in such operations last year.

The latest attacks drew condemnation from Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as well as provincial leaders in Balochistan, who also praised the security forces for eliminating the "terrorists."

Zardari and Sharif said the operations will continue in Balochistan until the insurgents are eliminated.

The Baloch Liberation Army separatist group claimed responsibility for attack.

In a statement, BLA spokesman Azad Baloch said their fighters "have made significant progress in the Kalat attacks, achieving their targeted objectives." He also claimed that insurgents attacked a military post in the district. Baloch said their 100 fighters took part in the coordinated attacks on security forces in Kalat district.

Abdullah Khan, the managing director of the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, said the latest attack showed that the insurgent group's capability to carry out multiple attacks and hold highways in their control had increased. "The latest attack is one of the deadliest ones since last year," he said.

Khan said Pakistan witnessed a sharp increase in militant attacks in January, surging by 42% compared to the previous month. As many as 74 militant attacks were recorded nationwide in January, he said.

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The BLA often targets security forces, civilians and foreigners, especially Chinese working on multibillion-dollar projects in Pakistan. In November, a BLA suicide bomber detonated at a train station in the southwestern city of Quetta, killing 26 people, including soldiers and railway staff.

Since then, the military and police have stepped up operations against the insurgents in the oil- and mineral-rich Balochistan, which is a hub for the country's ethnic Baloch minority, whose members say they face discrimination and exploitation by the central government.

Balochistan has for years been the scene of a long-running insurgency, with several separatist groups staging attacks, targeting mainly security forces in their quest for independence. The province also has an array of militant groups that are active there.

The BLA also enjoys the backing of Pakistani Taliban, who are known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and are a separate group but allied with the Afghan Taliban.

Authorities say the BLA and TTP have been using weapons that fell into their hands after the Afghan Taliban came into power in neighboring Afghanistan in 2021. The Islamic State group also has a presence in the province.

Today in History: February 2, 'American Sniper' Chris Kyle killed

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Feb. 2, the 33rd day of 2025. There are 332 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Feb. 2, 2013, former Navy SEAL and "American Sniper" author Chris Kyle was fatally shot along with a friend, Chad Littlefield, at a gun range west of Glen Rose, Texas; Eddie Ray Routh was later convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Also on this date:

In 1536, present-day Buenos Aires, Argentina, was founded by Pedro de Mendoza of Spain.

In 1653, New Amsterdam — now New York City — was incorporated as a city.

In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, officially ending the Mexican-American War.

In 1925, the legendary Alaska Serum Run ended as the last of a series of dog mushers brought life-saving medication to Nome, the scene of a diphtheria epidemic, travelling 674 miles (1,085 km) in just six days.

In 1943, the remainder of Nazi forces from the Battle of Stalingrad surrendered in a major victory for the Soviets in World War II.

In 1990, in a dramatic concession to South Africa's Black majority, President F.W. de Klerk lifted a ban on the African National Congress and promised to free Nelson Mandela.

In 2014, Oscar-winning actor Phillip Seymour Hoffman, widely considered one of the greatest actors of his generation, was found dead in his New York apartment from an accidental drug overdose.

In 2021, the Senate approved Pete Buttigieg (BOO'-tuh-juhj) as transportation secretary, making him the first openly gay person confirmed to a Cabinet post.

In 2022, four men were charged with being part of the drug distribution crew that supplied a deadly mix of narcotics to actor Michael K. Williams of "The Wire," who had overdosed five months earlier.

Today's birthdays: Rock singer-guitarist Graham Nash is 83. Television executive Barry Diller is 83. TV chef Ina Garten is 77. Actor Brent Spiner is 76. Football Hall of Famer Dave Casper is 73. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, is 73. Model Christie Brinkley is 71. Singer Shakira is 48. Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala., is 43. Actor Gemma Arterton is 39. Actor Zosia Mamet is 37. Actor Paul Mescal is 29.