

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 1 of 93

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Tigers Claim Seventh Place with Commanding Win Over Clark-Willow Lake](#)
- [12- Custer County Fatal Crash](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: While 'looking forward' and pushing 'reset,' politicians should also learn from the past](#)
- [14- Sunday Extras](#)
- [32- Gov. Rhoden's Weekly Column](#)
- [33- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [34- Rep. Dusty Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [35- Weekly Round\[s\] Up](#)
- [37- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [39- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [40- Drought Monitor](#)
- [41- EarthTalk - Wind Power](#)
- [42- Weather Pages](#)
- [46- Daily Devotional](#)
- [47- Subscription Form](#)
- [48- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [49- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [50- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Sunday, March 23

Welcome home for Boys Basketball Team, 1 p.m., Groton Area Arena.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; No Sunday School; Coffee hour, 10:30 a.m.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; No Sunday School, Choir, 6 p.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.

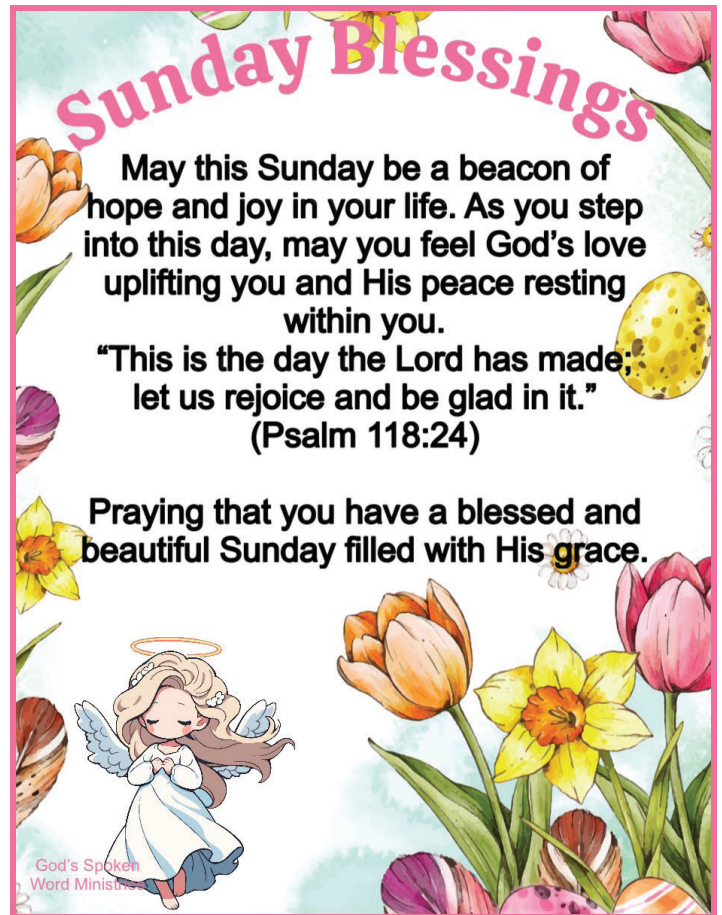
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

## Monday, March 24

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, capri blend, fruit, biscuit.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bages.

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



School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Groton Senior Citizens Meet, Noon Potluck., Groton Community Center

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

United Methodist: PEO Meeting, 7 p.m.

## Tuesday, March 25

Senior Menu: Sloppy joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, corn, fruited Jell-O.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

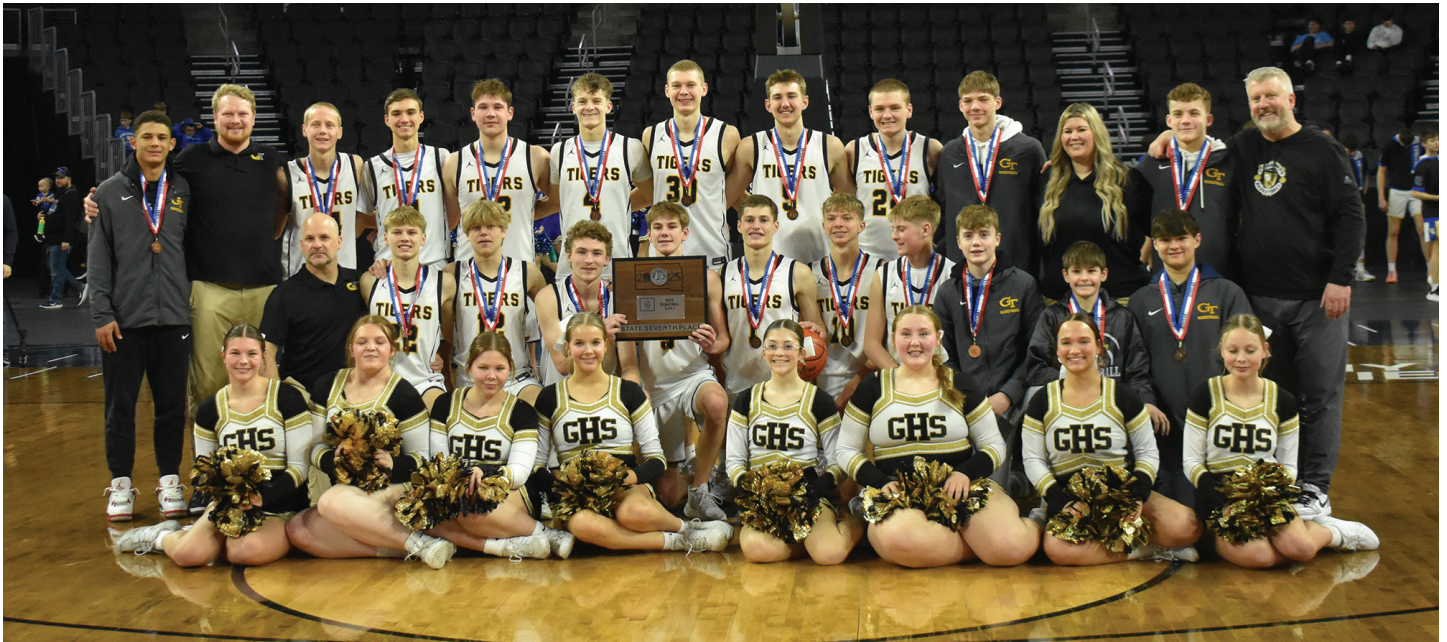
School Lunch: Chicken strips, tri taters.

Milbank FFA CDE

NSU Indoor Track Meeting, 1 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Lenten Supper (Host-Nigeria Circle), 6 p.m.; Worship, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.



## Tigers Claim Seventh Place with Commanding Win Over Clark-Willow Lake

For the second consecutive year, the Groton Area Tigers secured a seventh-place finish in the State A Basketball Tournament, closing their season with a strong 64-52 victory over Clark-Willow Lake. Behind a disciplined defense, efficient shooting, and opportunistic play, the Tigers set the tone early and never looked back.

### Fast Start Fuels Tigers' Momentum

The opening quarter saw both teams battling for control, with the score tied three times. However, Groton erupted for a 12-point run, taking an 18-6 lead before finishing the quarter ahead 18-10. Clark-Willow Lake struggled with turnovers, committing five in the first quarter, which the Tigers converted into eight points. Meanwhile, Groton played clean basketball, avoiding turnovers entirely and shooting an efficient 57% (8-for-14) from the field. The Cyclones, despite dominating the boards with a 12-3 rebounding advantage, struggled to find their rhythm, shooting just 31% (4-for-13).

### Defensive Pressure Extends the Lead

Clark-Willow Lake endured a four-minute scoring drought in the second



**Jayden Schwan**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Gage Sippel**  
(Photo by Tina Kosel)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 3 of 93



**Gage Sippel**

(Photo by Tina Kosel)

quarter, allowing the Tigers to stretch their lead to 29-15 midway through the period. Groton capitalized on the Cyclones' mistakes, turning two more turnovers into four points. At halftime, the Tigers held a comfortable 33-18 lead, thanks to a balanced offensive effort and suffocating defense.

Groton's efficiency continued in the second quarter, shooting 43% (6-for-14), while Clark-Willow Lake struggled, hitting just 23% (3-for-13). Though Groton had two turnovers, the Cyclones failed to take advantage, leaving them with an uphill battle entering the second half.

## Third Quarter Surge Keeps Tigers in Control

Clark-Willow Lake found some offensive rhythm in the third quarter, sinking three three-pointers, but the Tigers' defense proved to be the difference-maker

once again. The Cyclones committed five turnovers in the quarter, all of which led to Groton points—totaling 11.

Groton's shooting cooled slightly, finishing the third at 37% (7-for-19), but their defense kept Clark-Willow Lake at bay. The Cyclones managed to shoot 40% (4-for-10) but could not string together enough momentum to cut into the Tigers' lead. Heading into the final quarter, Groton remained in control, leading 53-36.

## Tigers Seal the Victory

Clark-Willow Lake attempted to rally in the fourth quarter, connecting on two three-pointers and improv-



**Jayden Schwan**

(Photo by Tina Kosel)

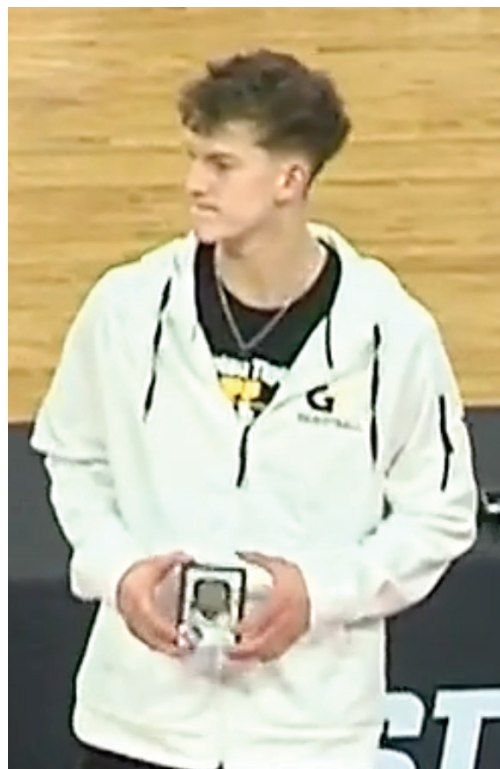
ing their shooting to 59% (7-for-12). However, Groton responded by taking care of the ball, knocking down crucial free throws (5-for-8 in the quarter), and controlling the tempo.

With just under two minutes left, both teams subbed out their starters, sealing the Tigers' well-earned 64-52 win.

## Standout Performances

The Tigers had four players score in double figures, led by Karson Zak's 18 points. Keegen Tracy added 13 points, while Becker Bosma (11) and Ryder Johnson (10) provided key contributions. Gage Sippel (4), Easton Weber (5), and Turner Thompson (3) rounded out the scoring.

Groton won despite being outrebounded 33-25, thanks to their defensive pressure and ball security. The Tigers had just two turnovers all game, while forcing



**Ryder Johnson was selected to the All Tournament Team.** (Photo

lifted from SDPB video)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 4 of 93

Clark-Willow Lake into 12, leading to crucial transition points. Bosma led the team with eight rebounds, while Tracy grabbed five. Johnson dished out five assists, and Bosma had four assists and a block.

For Clark-Willow Lake, Chris Bevers and Beau Begman each scored 13 points, while Sullivan Felberg added 11. Emerson Larson (6), Griffin Muss-er (3), Joey Ries (3), and Max Bratlin (3) also contributed. Despite their strong rebounding presence, the Cyclones struggled with turnovers and inefficiency at the free-throw line, shooting just 58% (10-for-17).

## Final Records and Season Reflections

With the win, Groton closed out the season at 18-7, matching Clark-Willow Lake's 18-7 record. While both teams had successful seasons, the Tigers ended theirs on a high note, securing back-to-back seventh-place finishes in the state tournament.

For Groton, the victory was a testament to their defensive discipline, efficiency, and team-oriented play. Though they weren't dominant on the boards, their ability to capitalize on turnovers and execute offensively proved to be the difference.

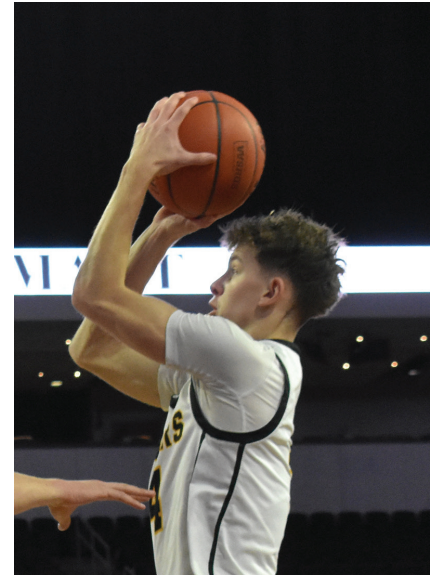
As the final buzzer sounded, the Tigers celebrated a well-earned win, capping off another strong season and setting the foundation for future success.

- Story compiled by ChatGPT



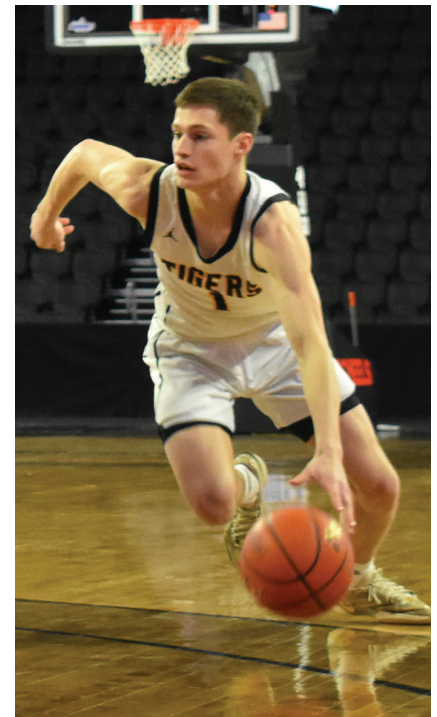
**Karson Zak**

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Ryder Johnson**

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Keegen Tracy**

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Becker Bosma**

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Turner Thompson**

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 5 of 93



**Easton Weber**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Becker Bosma**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Turner Thompson**  
(Photo by Tina Kosel)



**Easton Weber**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Ryder Johnson**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Keegen Tracy**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 6 of 93



**Ethan Kroll**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Teylor Diegel**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



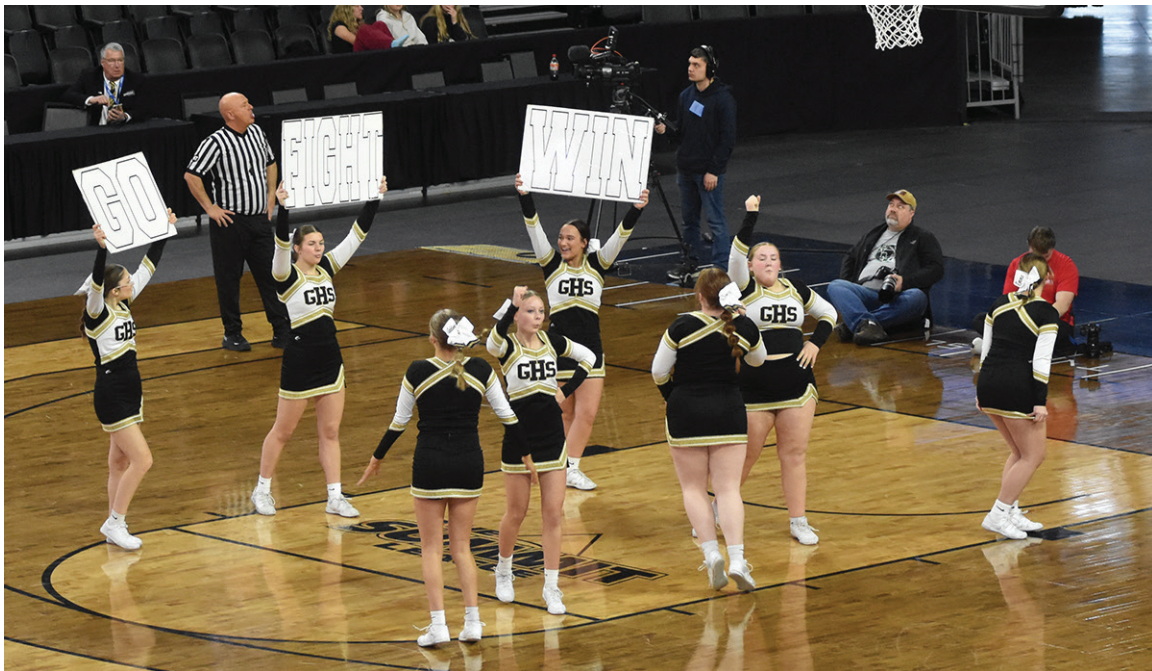
**Turner Thompson**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Seniors Turner Thompson, Blake Pauli and Teylor Diegel.**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 7 of 93



**Cheerleaders**  
(Photo by Tina Kosel)



**Cheerleaders**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 8 of 93



## Groton earns Spirit of Six Award

Groton Area received the Spirit of Six Award for the second straight year at the State A Basketball Tournament. Pictured are Mya Feser, Addison Hoeft, Emily Overacker, Paisley Mitchel, Breslyn Jeschke, Rylie Rose, Emma Davis and Natalia Warrington. The advisors are Maddie Bjerke and Aubray Harry. (Photo lifted from SDPB Broadcast)

## State A Tournament Coverage Sponsored by

Avantara - Groton  
Bary Keith at Harr Motors  
BaseKamp Lodge  
BK Custom T's 'n More  
Blocker Construction  
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Farmers Union Co-op of Ferney/Conde  
Fliehs Sales & Service  
Greg Johnson Construction of Bristol  
Groton American Legion  
Groton Chamber of Commerce  
Groton Chiropractic Clinic  
Groton Daily Independent  
Groton Dairy Queen  
Hanlon Brothers  
Harry Implement  
Heartland Energy

James Valley Telecommunications  
John Sieh Agency  
Ken's Food Fair  
KR Body Shop of Andover  
Krueger Brothers  
Lori's Pharmacy  
MJ's Sinclair  
ML Real Estate of Bristol  
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Ryan Likness Agency  
The Meat House of Andover  
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of Columbia

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 9 of 93**



#	Player	PTS	FG	3FG	FT	OR	DR	REB	A	PF	TO	BL	ST	MIN	+/-	
1*	TRACY, KEEGAN	13	5-7	0-2	3-3	0	5	5	1	0	0	0	2	27	21	
4*	JOHNSON, RYDER	10	4-11	0-2	2-2	1	3	4	5	2	1	0	4	27	7	
5*	BOSMA, BECKER	11	4-6	1-1	2-2	3	5	8	4	2	0	1	0	27	21	
22*	ZAK, KARSON	18	7-13	0-3	4-7	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	28	11	
30*	SIPPEL, GAGE	4	0-2	0-0	4-6	0	2	2	0	4	0	0	0	19	3	
3	PAULI, BLAKE	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	
10	WEBER, EASTON	5	2-5	0-2	1-1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	8	6	
11	SCHWAN, JAYDEN	0	0-2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	-3	
12	SCHELLE, RYDER	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		-3	
14	KROLL, ETHAN	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		-3	
20	JOHNSON, JACE	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		-3	
24	WARRINGTON, LOG	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	-3	
25	DIEGEL, TEYLOR	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	-2	
32	THOMPSON, TURN	3	1-5	0-2	1-1	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	15	8	
TM	TEAM	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0		0	
TOTALS		64	23-51	1-13	17-22	6	19	25	12	11	2	1	8		0	
GAME PCT			45.1	7.7	77.3											0
THIS HALF		31	10-24	1-9	10-14	2	8	10	6	9	0	0	4		0	
HALF PCT			41.7	11.1	71.4											0

## Clark/Willow Lake Full Box Score

[illegible]

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 10 of 93

## 2025 SDHSAA State Boys Basketball Saturday Recap

SDPB | By Nate Wek

The 2025 SDHSAA state boys basketball tournaments wrapped up from Rapid City (AA), Sioux Falls (A), and Aberdeen (B) on Saturday. Brandon Valley, Sioux Falls Christian, and Castlewood won state championships.

Here's a quick recap from all the games on Saturday.

### Class B

#### 7th/8th Place Game

##### Aberdeen Christian 64 Lyman 46

Aberdeen Christian defeated Lyman 64-46 for seventh place on Saturday. The Knights shot 57% from the field in the game. Luke Kaiser was the top scorer for Aberdeen Christian. He tallied 22-points and had a couple of steals defensively as well. Dawson Volmer led the Raiders with 16-points in the loss.

#### Consolation Championship

##### Wall 79 Freeman 67

Wall placed fifth in the 'B' state tournament after a 79-67 win over Freeman on Saturday afternoon. Teelan Kjerstad and Emmet Dinger combined for 51-points in the win for the Eagles. The Flyers were led by Tate Sorensen, who finished with 27-points, five rebounds, and three assists.

#### 3rd/4th Place Game

##### St. Mary's 71 Wessington Springs 54

St. Mary's takes home third place after their 71-54 win over Wessington Springs. Trevon Beckman led the scoring for the Cardinals with 21-points. He also had six rebounds and two steals. Maverick LeBrun recorded a double-double for St. Mary's as well. He scored 19-points and had 14 rebounds. The top performer for Wessington Springs was Colby Flowers. He scored 15-points in the loss.

#### Championship

##### Castlewood 52 Viborg-Hurley 31

Castlewood claimed the 'B' state championship with a 52-31 victory over Viborg-Hurley on Saturday night. Bryon Laue had a double-double performance in the win that included 13-points, ten rebounds, and a pair of steals. Luke Baumberger and Brody Bass also combined for 23-points in the contest for the Warriors. Nicholas Hanson was the top scorer for the Cougars with 14-points.

### Class A

#### 7th/8th Place Game

##### Groton Area 64 Clark/Willow Lake 52

Groton Area placed seventh at the 'A' boys tournament, following a 64-52 win over Clark/Willow Lake on Saturday. The Tigers were led by Karson Zak, who scored 18-points in the win. Keegan Tracy, Ryder Johnson, and Becker Bosma also combined for 34-points in the win for Groton Area. For the Cyclones, Chris Bevers and Bo Begeman both scored 13-points in the loss.

#### Consolation Championship

##### West Central 69 Hill City 54

West Central took home fifth place after a 69-54 win over Hill City in the consolation championship on Saturday. The Trojans top performer was Connor Mebius. He scored 23-points, grabbed five rebounds, and recorded five assists. Will Kuhl also had a double-double performance in the win for West Central. He scored 14-points and had eleven rebounds. Hill City was led by Devin Buehler who scored 18-points and had four steals.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 11 of 93

## 3rd/4th Place Game

### Rapid City Christian 60 Lennox 58

Rapid City Christian won a tight one against Lennox, 60-58, to capture third place on Saturday. Simon and Benson Kieffer combined for 35-points in the win to lead the Comets. Julius Frog also contributed with 13-points for Rapid City Christian. Lennox was led by Tate Gerdes. He scored 24-points and nine rebounds in the loss.

## Championship

### Sioux Falls Christian 61 Hamlin 51

Sioux Falls Christian gets redemption from last year by defeating Hamlin 61-51 in the title game rematch. Griffen Goodbary had an incredible game for the Chargers. He scored 32-points, snagged 15-rebounds, and had a pair of blocks. Brant Wassenaar also scored 11-points in the win for Sioux Falls Christian. For Hamlin, Jackson Wadsworth scored 18-points and had four rebounds in the loss.

## Class AA

## 7th/8th Place Game

### Spearfish 61 O'Gorman 55

Spearfish placed seventh at the state 'AA' tournament after a 61-55 win over O'Gorman on Saturday. The Spartans were led offensively by Kamren Davis, who scored 24-points in the win. Bennett Kortan also had a nice day for Spearfish scoring 11-points, grabbing seven rebounds, and having nine assists. The Knights top scorer was Austin Terveen, who finished with 17-points.

## Consolation Championship

### Sioux Falls Jefferson 61 Huron 60

Sioux Falls Jefferson defeated Huron 61-60 on Saturday to win the consolation championship. Colby Nuttbrock led the Cavaliers with 20-points on offense. Jase Unzen also scored 13-points in the win for Jefferson. Huron's top scorer was Blake Ellwein. He finished with 24-points and also recorded five rebounds and five assists.

## 3rd/4th Place Game

### Sioux Falls Lincoln 81 Harrisburg 52

Sioux Falls Lincoln defeated Harrisburg 81-52 to capture third place. Sam DeGroot and Sam Ericsson both scored 17-points in the win for the Patriots. As a team, Lincoln shot 54% from the field. Stellen Larson led the Tigers with 22-points, six rebounds, and a pair of assists.

## Championship

### Brandon Valley 53 Mitchell 45

Brandon Valley topped Mitchell 53-45 to win the 'AA' championship. Briggs Knutson was the top scorer for the Lynx. He ended with 17-points, while Landon Dulaney, another solid contributor in the title game, had 13-points. Mitchell was led by Gavin Hinker, who scored 15-points, and Markus Talley, who had 13-points.

## **Custer County Fatal Crash**

What: Single vehicle fatal crash  
Where: 26205 Lime Kiln Road, Pringle, SD  
When: 2:08 a.m., Saturday, March 22, 2025  
Driver 1: 24-year-old male from Cherokee, IA, fatal injuries  
Vehicle 1: 2019 Ford Fusion  
Seat belt Used: No

Custer County, S.D.- A Cherokee, Iowa man died early this morning in a single vehicle crash in Pringle, SD. The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2019 Ford Fusion was traveling eastbound on Lime Kiln Road in Pringle when the vehicle left the road and entered the ditch, striking a culvert and overturned. The driver was ejected and died at the scene.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### COMMENTARY

## While 'looking forward' and pushing 'reset,' politicians should also learn from the past

by Dana Hess

Too often lately our leaders seem to come from the Satchel Paige School of Political Thought: "Don't look back, something may be gaining on you."

The very act of looking back should supply some useful lessons. But if the view to the rear is ugly, or something they don't want to talk about, too often the response from our political leaders is that they want to "look forward."

One recent example of looking forward because the past was way too ugly to contemplate came from South Dakota Sen. John Thune. As majority leader of the U.S. Senate, it was only natural for him to be asked about his reaction to President Donald Trump's mass pardon of the Jan. 6 insurrectionists. Thune, displaying a lack of political courage that has become the standard in the Republican Party, briefly told reporters outside of a congressional committee room, "We're not looking backwards, we're looking forward."

Thune did look backward long enough to blame Trump's pardons on the pardons issued by Joe Biden. Like a boy caught fighting on the school yard, Thune's response to the white-washing of that dark day is to claim, "He started it!"

There was a time when a Republican leader like Thune would have relished the opportunity to look back at the day when his house was invaded by a mob to praise the heroes who defended him, mourn the dead and injured and call for the full weight of justice to be brought to bear on the renegades that broke the law. In the age of Donald Trump however, Republicans must be careful about when and where they take their law-and-order stance. Illegal immigrants? Kick them out. Insurrectionists? Let them walk.

Thune's penchant for steadfastly gazing into the future because the past is too messy to contemplate may be catching on as a political tactic for avoiding painful conversations. Whether he learned that tactic from Thune or made it up on his own, Gov. Larry Rhoden seems to have embraced looking into the future as a way to escape the discomfort that lives in the past.

The past that Rhoden doesn't want to talk about is the more than \$600,000 worth of charges rung up on state-issued credit cards by Kristi Noem during her six years as governor of South Dakota.

In a story published by The Dakota Scout, Rhoden refused to comment on Noem's level of spending. Rhoden explained that when the check comes, he often forgets that he even has a state-issued credit card. Like Thune, Rhoden preferred to have his eye on the future: "I'm not looking back and I don't know what happened in the past," Rhoden said. "I just know where I am at and it's not a problem."

In the grand scheme of the state budget, \$600,000 spent over six years is a drop in the bucket. That drop does come with a helping of hypocrisy. After all, are lavish meals and high-end hotel rooms really how South Dakota citizens expect their governor to spend their tax dollars? This is the same governor who, during breaks from talking with her travel agent, liked to remind legislators that they had a duty to be upright stewards of the state budget because, after all, they were spending taxpayer dollars.

Looking to the future is what we expect of our leaders. But we also expect them to have the courage to look at the past and call out the bad behavior that lingers there. Satchel Paige cautioned against looking back because something might be gaining on him. Our leaders aren't looking back because something there might cause them to have to take a stand.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 14 of 93



## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

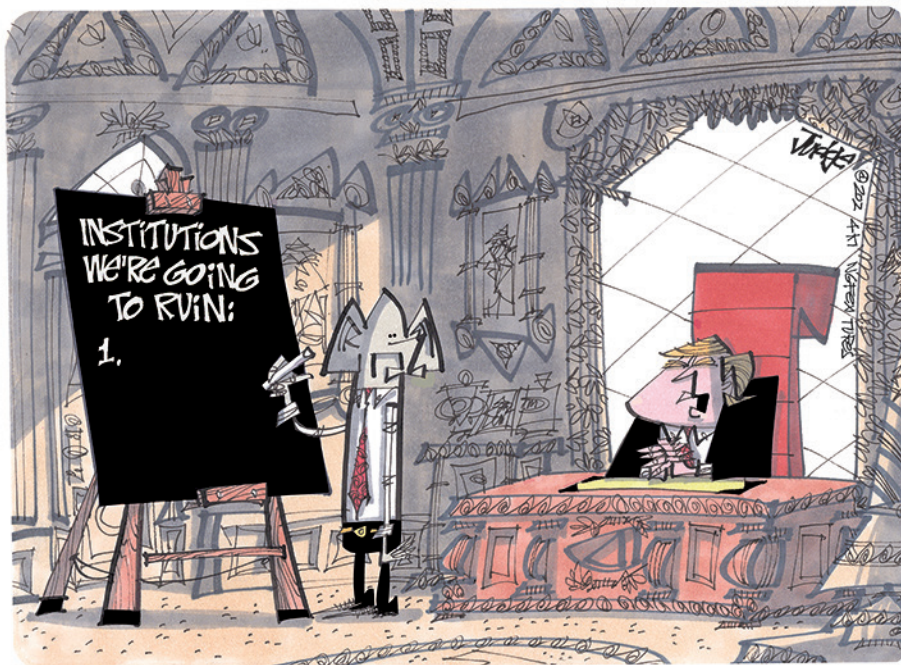


*For no one is cast off by the Lord forever.  
Though he brings grief, he will show  
compassion, so great is his unfailing love.  
For he does not willingly bring affliction  
or grief to anyone.*

LAMENTATIONS 3: 31-33

*Detail of "The Widow I" by Käthe Kollwitz (1922-23)*

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"I BELIEVE IN AMERICA FIRST."

## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. From 2 Chronicles 14, where was Abijah buried? *City of David, Jerusalem, City of Gath, Nazareth*

3. According to Numbers 33, how old was Aaron when he died? *100, 113, 123, 132*

4. Which of these sons of Jesse did not go into battle with Saul? *Eliab, David, Abinadab, Shimea*

5. From 2 Kings, who was Elijah's successor? *Solomon, Elisha, Nimshi, Nimrod*

6. Which of Saul's daughters loved David? *Merab, Michal, Cornelius, Paulus*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) City of David, 3) 123, 4) David, 5) Elisha, 6) Michal

*Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at [www.patreon.com/triviaguy](http://www.patreon.com/triviaguy). FREE TRIAL!*

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 16 of 93

LOWLAND STATION.

A STORM HAS TRAPPED A GROUP OF TRAVELERS IN THE KOMOK'S BRIDE PUB...

...WHERE SIX STRANGERS SHARE THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ALIEN WARRIOR

## FLASH GORDON

ONE'S JUST BEEN LISTENING SO FAR... AND NOW STANDS...

THIS IS WILDA -- AND FOR YEARS NOW, SHE HASN'T HURT A FLY.

NOT SINCE SHE MET FLASH GORDON.

DAN SCHKADE  
ART BY JORDAN  
3-23-25



BUT SHE USED TO BE A FLAGMAN FOR MING THE MERCILESS.

SHE STOOD AND WATCHED AS HE TORTURED HIS OWN DAUGHTER--



--THE REBEL PRINCESS AURA.



WHO TOLD WILDA THAT A BETTER LIFE WAS POSSIBLE.

A LIFE FREE OF MING'S EVIL...



BUT WILDA WAS STILL A FLAGMAN.

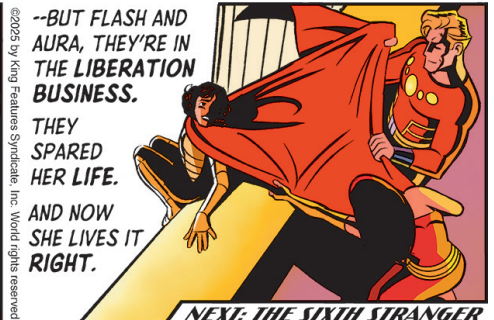
AND THAT PLACED HER IN THE PATH OF FLASH GORDON'S JAILBREAK.



SET UP TO FALL, LIKE SO MANY BEFORE HER--



--BUT FLASH AND AURA, THEY'RE IN THE LIBERATION BUSINESS. THEY SPARED HER LIFE. AND NOW SHE LIVES IT RIGHT.



NEXT: THE SIXTH STRANGER

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

THERE ARE THREE REASONS I USUALLY PREFER TO MAKE UP MY OWN MIND ON ALL PUTT READINGS.

THE FIRST IS THAT BREAK DEPENDS ON SPEED AND ONLY I KNOW HOW HARD I'M GOING TO STROKE THE BALL.



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THE SECOND IS THAT DISCUSSION ABOUT LINE DISTRACTS ATTENTION FROM DISTANCE, WHICH IS THE HARDEST AND MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT TO JUDGE. THE THIRD REASON IS THAT I WANT TO BE ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT ABOUT THE UPCOMING STROKE WHEN I STAND OVER THE BALL, WHICH REQUIRES PERSONAL DECISIVENESS ABOUT MY INTENTIONS.



## Floater in Eye Proves To Be Incredibly Distracting

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 67-year-old male with generally good vision. I've had a few floaters in my eyes over the years, but they have generally been small and have not significantly affected my vision. However, about six months ago, I suddenly had a large floater appear in one of my eyes that did affect my vision. It is right in the center of my field of vision and is very distracting.

I had a checkup with my optometrist soon after, and she said there were no major issues with my eye. She said that my brain would adjust to the floater so I would not notice it as much. However, six months later, I still find it very distracting. I frequently have to move my eye to try and

get it out of my center vision so I can see clearly. Are there any treatments that can be done to remove distracting floaters? -- D.H.

ANSWER: "Floaters" are bits of cellular debris in the vitreous humor, which is the gel-filled space in between the lens and the retina. The sudden appearance of floaters can represent serious eye disease, such as a detached retina, so it was wise to get an evaluation when you noticed a sudden change.

The eye does not have a way to remove floaters, so you will have them as long as you live unless you do something about it. As your optometrist said, they don't bother most people; however, several of my readers over the years have been so bothered by floaters that they have undergone surgical vitrectomy. This is the removal of all the gel material from the vitreous cavity, including all (or nearly all) of the vitreous opacities that cause floaters. Published complication rates with this procedure are less than 1% in experienced hands.

I have also read about using a laser to break up large floaters into smaller and presumably easier-to-ignore pieces, but I have no personal experience with this. In addition, the literature is mixed.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was diagnosed with sleep apnea decades ago. While I was not obese, I was a little overweight at the time and made a commitment to eat better. I lost 10-20 pounds, and I'm down to under 250 pounds at 6 feet, 1 inch tall. Voila, my sleep apnea was cured! I kept the weight off and have not snored since.

While you note the connection between excess weight and sleep apnea, I didn't see any mention of weight loss as a cure. Is it really this easy, or was I just lucky? -- D.K.

ANSWER: Weight loss is effective at treating sleep apnea in many people. However, losing and keeping the weight off in the long-term is very hard for most people. The GLP-1 drug tirzepatide (Zepbound) was recently approved for obstructive sleep apnea in people who are obese, in combination with a healthy diet and physical activity. GLP-1 agonists are quite effective at helping people lose weight and keeping the weight off (as long as the person keeps taking the medication).

It's critical to note that not everyone with obstructive sleep apnea is obese. Some people just have the anatomy in the back of their throats that makes sleep apnea more likely, despite having a normal weight. Weight loss may not help them at all in these cases.

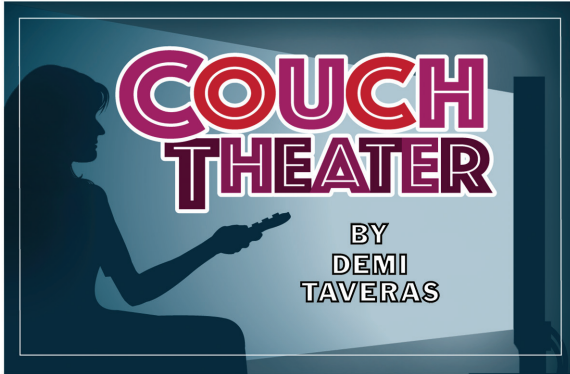
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 18 of 93



**Nicole Kidman stars in "Holland."** Courtesy of Movi-

eStillsDB

"I'm Still Here" (PG-13) -- To finish out the last of this year's award season darlings, this Brazilian political-biographical film was nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars, and its leading actress Fernanda Torres ("Love Me Forever or Never") took home a Best Actress award at the Golden Globes.

Torres plays wife and mother Eunice Paiva, who deals with the sudden disappearance of her politician husband, Rueben. Relentless to uncover what truly happened to her husband, Eunice stops at nothing to bring the truth to light, turning an apparent tragedy into a revolutionary moment to stand against a dictatorship. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"Running Point" (TV-MA) -- This sports-comedy series led by Kate Hudson ("Glass Onion: Knives Out") was such a success after its February release that it has already been renewed for a second season by Netflix. After her older brother, Cam (Justin Theroux), steps down as the president of their family business following a car accident, Isla (Hudson) is appointed as the new president of the Los Angeles Waves basketball team. Although she has the help of two other brothers, Ness and Sandy, Isla feels severely unprepared for her new position as a "reformed party girl." Can she prove that she's got what it takes to lead her team to a championship? Find out for yourself -- all 10 episodes are available to binge! (Netflix)

"Holland" (R) -- Following the heels of her "Babygirl" campaign that unfortunately fell under the radar during award season, Nicole Kidman stars in this new mystery thriller, opposite Matthew Macfadyen ("Succession"). Kidman and Macfadyen play the Vandergroots, who appear to be your usual suburbanites raising a child in the midwestern town of Holland, Michigan. But as Nancy's (Kidman) picture-perfect life begins to wrinkle due to a suspicion about her husband living a double life, she enlists the help of her friend, Dave (Gael Garcia Bernal), to get to the bottom of the situation. Rachel Sennot ("Saturday Night") and Lennon Parham ("Minx") co-star in "Holland," premiering March 27. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Parenting" (R) -- This campy horror film out now has such an incredible ensemble cast that one would expect it to be a sleeper hit, but its cringey plot and dialogue can only take these actors' performances so far. Nik Dodani ("Murphy Brown") and Brandon Flynn ("13 Reasons Why") respectively play Rohan and Josh, a young couple who plan a getaway to a country house so that they can introduce each other to their parents. Thinking that awkward moments with the in-laws will be the worst of their problems, Rohan and Josh are shocked to find out that their rental is, in fact, haunted by a 400-year-old evil entity. The film is only saved by comedic moments with Brian Cox ("Succession"), Edie Falco ("Bupkis"), Lisa Kudrow ("No Good Deed"), Parker Posey ("The White Lotus"), and Dean Norris ("Carry On").

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 19 of 93



1. Who was the first to record "Delta Dawn"?
2. Name the singer who wrote and released "Blowin' in the Wind."
3. Belinda Jo Carlisle was lead singer for which band?
4. Who wrote and released "Bad Medicine"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Your lips on mine are soft as dew, Your kiss is so divine, Your eyes are like the skies of blue, And stars that brightly shine."

Answers

1. No, it wasn't Tanya Tucker, although hers was the best known, nor was it Helen Reddy, although she topped the charts with her cover of the song. The first to release the song was Bette Midler on her debut album in 1971.
2. Bob Dylan, in 1962. The song didn't get much attention when it first came out, but it ended up as No. 14 on the Rolling Stone list of 500 greatest songs of all time and went into the Grammy Hall of Fame.
3. The all-female The Go-Go's, organized in 1978.
4. Bon Jovi, in 1988.
5. "So Many Ways," by Brook Benton, in 1959. Benton (born Benjamin Franklin Peay) had three songs top the R&B charts that year, and "So Many Ways" stayed there for three weeks.

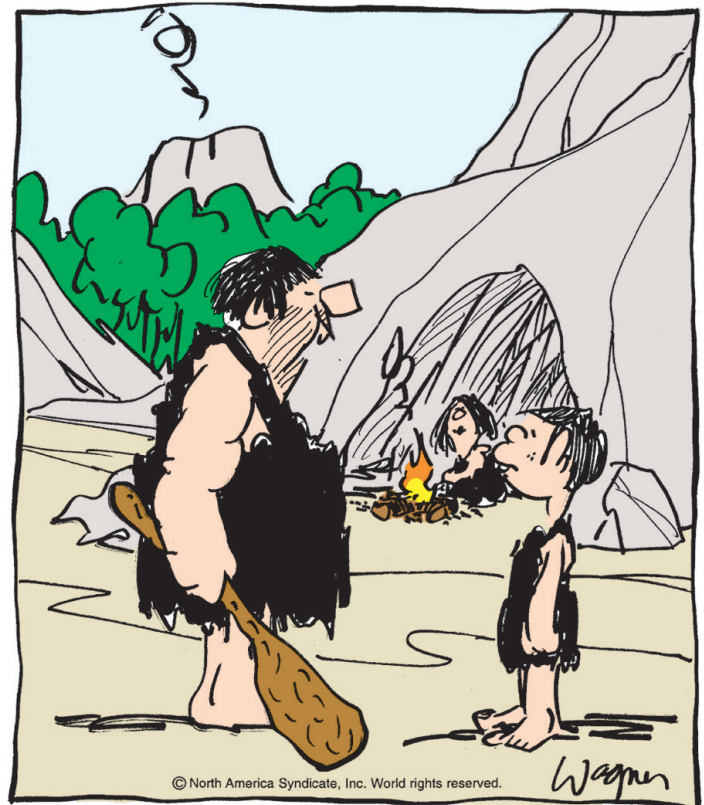
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## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



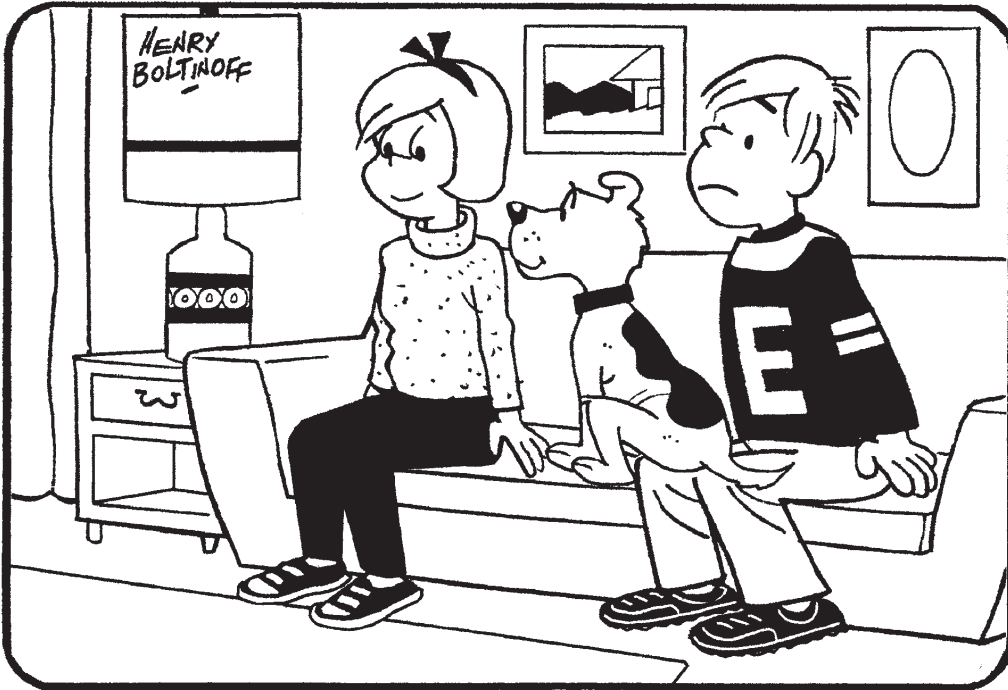
## GRIN and BEAR IT



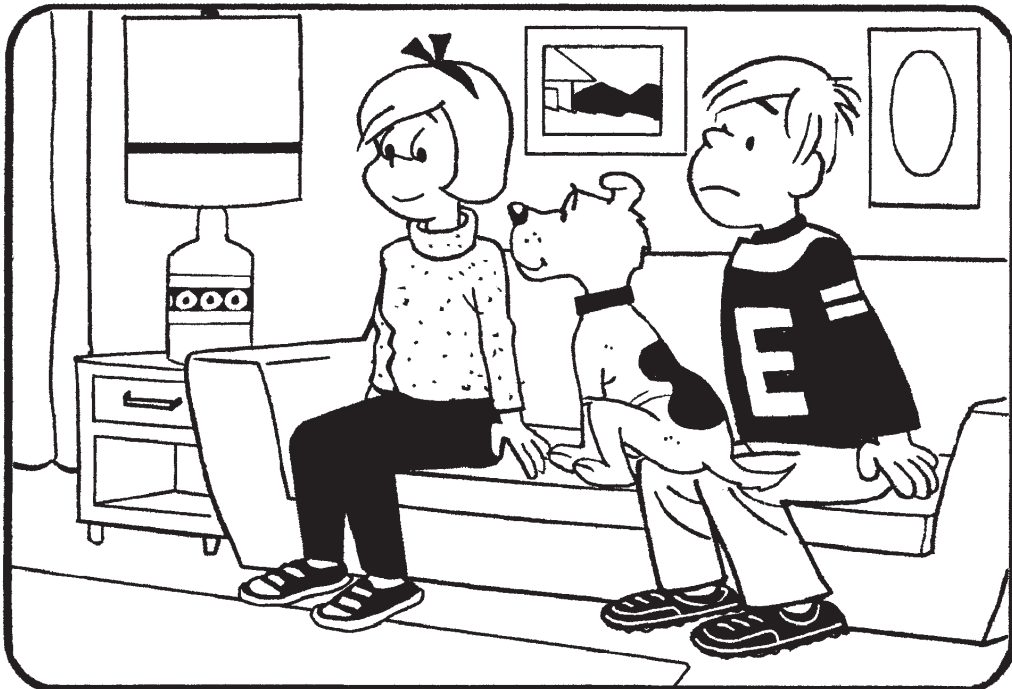
"I think we need to have that chat, son ... now that we can talk."

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Drawer handle is different. 2. Picture is reversed. 3. Stripes on sleeve are higher. 4. Spot on dog's back is smaller. 5. Curtain is shorter. 6. Design on lamp is different.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 21 of 93



\* There's no end to the quick time-savers and innovations in the kitchen. Today's homemakers are likely to have a full-time job already. Here's one for those mornings when you want to get a little fancy, but don't have all day: Make hash browns in a waffle iron. Parboil shredded potatoes the night before. Store in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. Generously oil your waffle iron and scatter precooked potato shreds on. They cook twice as fast, and have all of the double-sided crispiness of pan-fried.

\* Freeze leftover wine for use in cooking. Use an ice-cube tray for uniform measuring.

\* Want to hard-cook many eggs at once? Bake the eggs in the oven 325-350 for 30 minutes, then submerge them in ice water for 10 minutes. Peel and enjoy.

\* "Tension rods can be used in cabinets to separate cookie sheets and have them stored upright. Use two shorter ones mounted vertically in the cabinet, and slide the sheets right in. You can also use a dish rack to store pot lids upright. This is something I do, and my cabinets are nice and organized." -- R.L. in Indiana

\* Try prep cooking once a week for as many elements of that week's meals as possible. Chop veggies, saute or even brown meats for casseroles or prep slow cooker bags. It does save time if you are able to cook two meals at once, say, roast two chickens: one for tonight's dinner and another for chicken enchiladas later in the week.

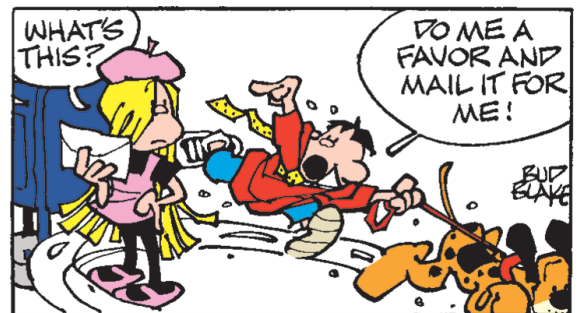
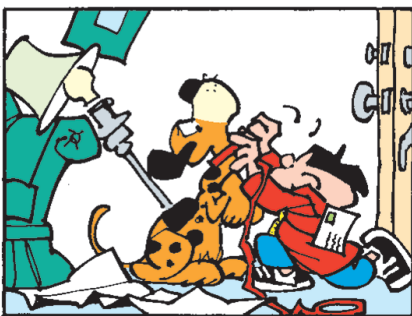
\* I only buy my bread when it's two for one. I freeze it in half loafs, so I always have fresh bread, even if my nest is empty now! -- D.D. in Maryland

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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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 22 of 93

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Menagerie  
4 Embedded spies  
9 "Frontline" ailer  
12 Year in Spain  
13 Empathic words  
14 Land in la mer  
15 Unfortunate soul  
17 "Wham!"  
18 Ga. neighbor  
19 Tabloid subjects  
21 Cal — (baseball's "Iron Man")  
24 Scored 100 on  
25 Buckeyes' sch.

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15				16						17		
				18				19		20		
21	22	23					24					
25				26		27		28			29	30
31				32		33		34		35		
36				37		38		39		40		
			41			42		43		44		
45	46						47					
48				49		50				51	52	53
54				55						56		
57				58						59		

- 26 Crater edge  
28 Succinct  
31 Shakespeare title starter  
33 LAPD alert  
35 Peruse  
36 Sasha's sister  
38 With it, once  
40 Summer mo.  
41 Norms (Abbr.)  
43 In a morose way  
45 Concludes by  
47 Tank filler  
48 Zodiac cat  
49 Precinct canine  
54 Fiddle stick  
55 Ten — (long odds)  
56 Flying saucer  
57 New England cape  
58 Trudges  
59 Apply cream  
**DOWN**  
1 Microwave  
2 Yoko from Tokyo  
3 Tic-tac-toe win  
4 Bette in "Beaches"  
5 South Pacific region  
6 Restroom, for short  
7 Writer Jong  
8 Choose  
9 Fantasy  
10 Shapeless mass  
11 Stitches  
16 '60s Atty. General  
20 Lusty look  
21 Meander  
22 Actress Fisher  
23 Earns  
27 Speedometer stat  
29 Biblical king  
30 Jittery  
32 Poses  
34 Imploring  
37 Conforms  
39 Locales  
42 Pub seat  
44 Employ  
45 Exile isle  
46 Inert gas  
50 Brit's restroom  
51 Flop  
52 One — kind  
53 Sailor

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 23 of 93

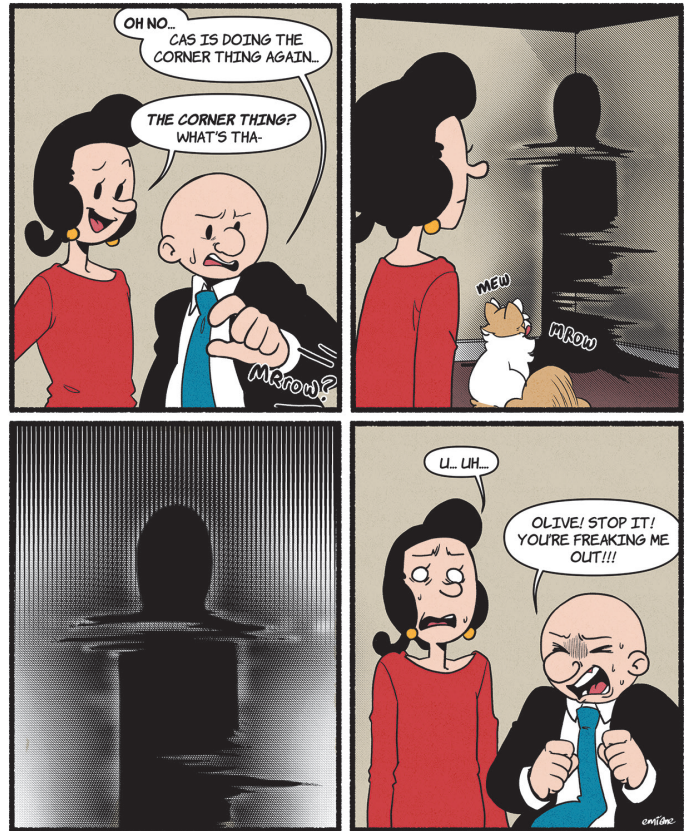
## King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

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

## Olive



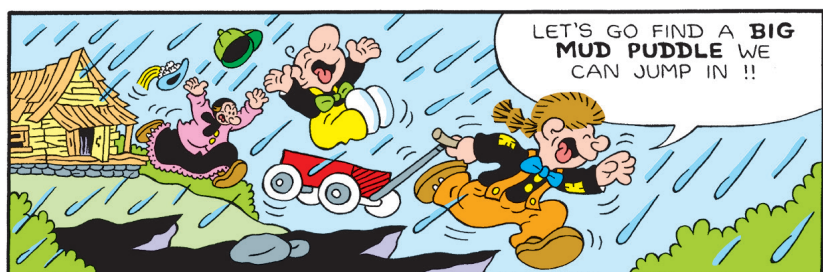
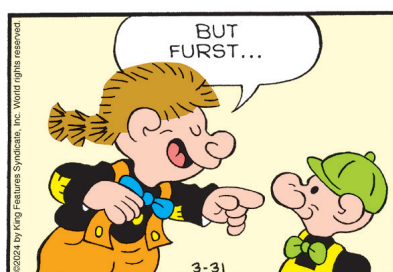
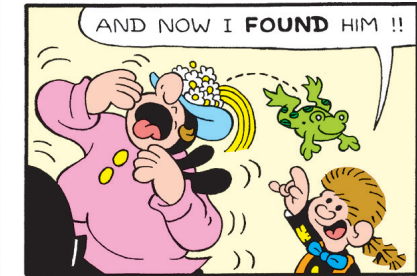
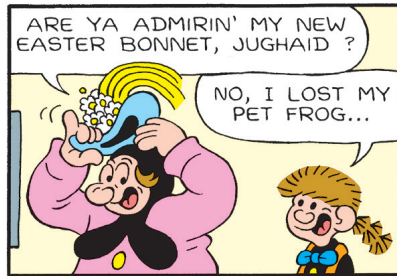
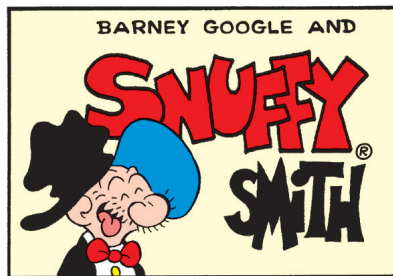
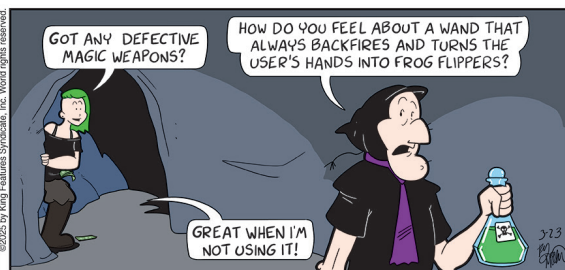
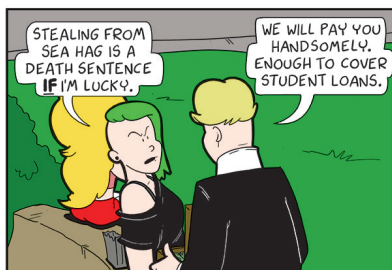
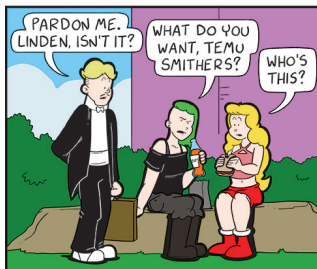
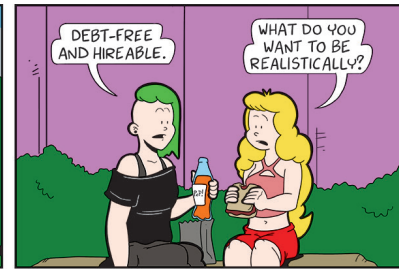
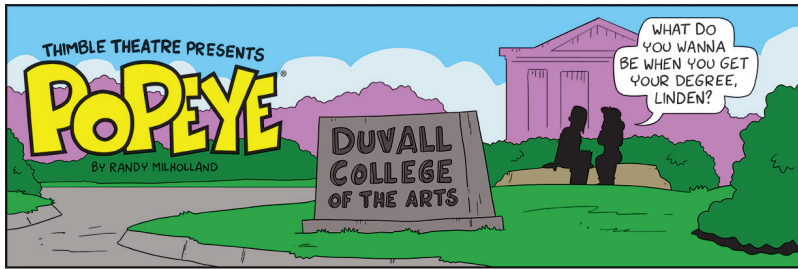
## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



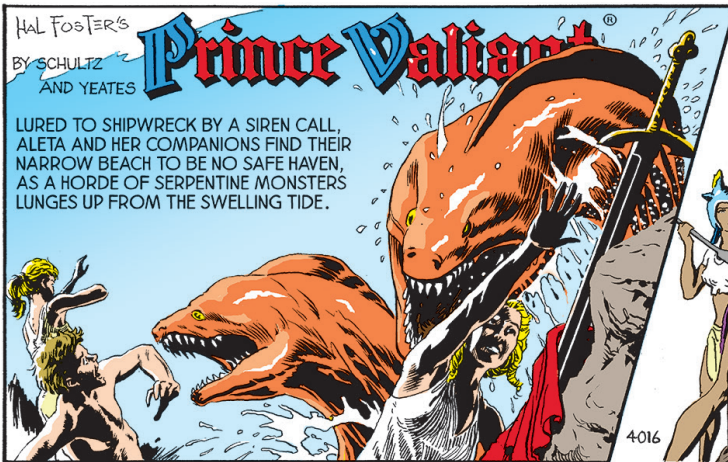
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 24 of 93



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 25 of 93



VAL FINDS HIMSELF IN PERIL OF A DIFFERENT SORT. THE FEMALE PHANTOM WHO, A MOMENT BEFORE, WAS ABOUT TO END HIS LIFE, NOW PASSIONATELY CLAIMS HIM AS HER "CHOSEN ONE!"



AT LAST VAL'S SENSES RETURN, AND HE REACTS TO THIS MOST UNUSUAL OF CIRCUMSTANCES: "MY LADY, I ALREADY BELONG TO ANOTHER!"

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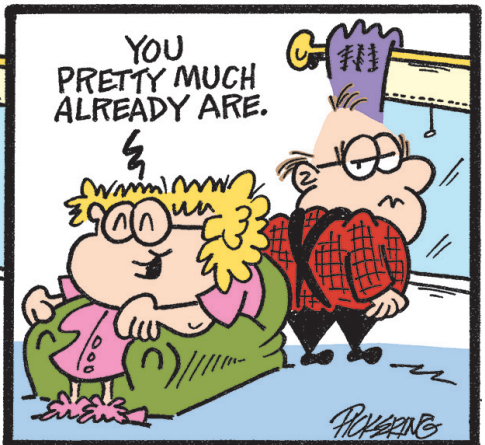
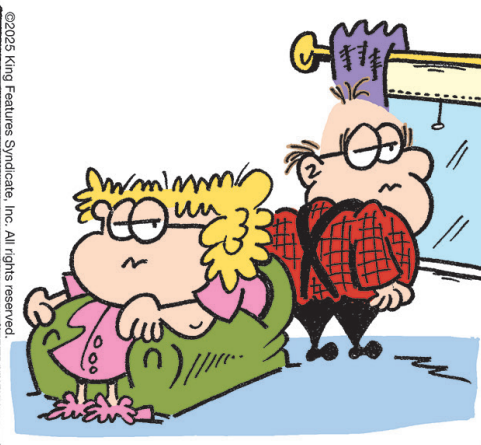
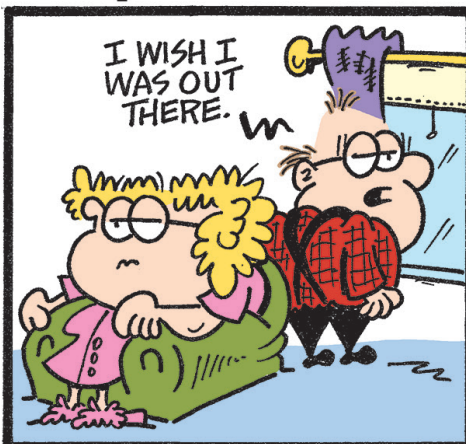


THAT, APPARENTLY, IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE REACTION. "YOU HAVE WRECKED YOUR SHIP ON MY SHORES AND I AM QUEEN HERE. YOU ARE INDEED MINE..."



## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Starting a garden indoors

The many feet of snow on the ground where I live is an indication of just how far I am from starting a vegetable garden this year. However, it's not too early to start vegetable seeds indoors.

Not all vegetables are good candidates for starting inside from seed (root vegetables such as carrots won't do well started in shallow containers), but peppers, onions and spinach are good candidates to start indoors. Later, I'll add seedlings for more variety, including marigolds to repel garden pests.

On my to-do list:

Schedule the guy with his tiller to come break up the ground in a month. There's no sense in renting a heavy machine I'll have no way to operate.

Order a load of mulch for delivery later to be spread for weed control and preserving moisture in the soil.

Cut the milk cartons I've saved over the winter into seed germination pots. A 3-inch depth will be deep enough -- and they're free. A layer of plastic wrap will serve as a humidity dome.

Collect from my neighbor all the ice-pop sticks her grandchildren have left so I can use them as plant markers.

Be sure the indoor grow light works, that I don't need a new bulb.

But most fun of all the things on my to-do list will be choosing the seeds and deciding what to grow. Catalogs have been arriving (they all also have websites), each more beautiful than the last.

If you have no yard, consider container gardening. If you have a sunny location, you can grow peas, strawberries, lettuce, potatoes, spinach and so much more right outside your door. Do an online search for "container vegetable garden" for advice on the size of containers to use, the type of soil and a list of vegetables that should not be planted next to each other.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 27 of 93

1. Name the golfer from Spain who won the Masters in 1994 and 1999 and was captain for Europe in the 2012 Ryder Cup.

2. Pro track league Grand Slam Track was founded in 2024 by what four-time Olympic gold medal-winning American sprinter?

3. Who was fired as head coach of the Chicago Blackhawks four games into the 2008-09 NHL season?

4. What short-lived (1989-90) winter pro baseball league for players ages 35 or older (32 for catchers) included teams like the St. Petersburg Pelicans, the West Palm Beach Tropics and the Orlando Juice?

5. What was the name of the turbojet-powered vehicle that driver/designer Art Arfons used to claim the land speed record three times from 1964-65?

6. What Soviet/Russian figure skater, along with husband Sergei Grinkov, won gold medals in the pairs event at the 1988 Calgary and 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics?

7. Businesswoman and philanthropist Joan Whitney Payson was co-founder and served as president of what Major League Baseball team from 1962-75?



## Answers

1. Jose Maria Olazabal.

2. Michael Johnson.

3. Denis Savard.

4. The Senior Professional Baseball Association (SPBA).

5. The Green Monster.

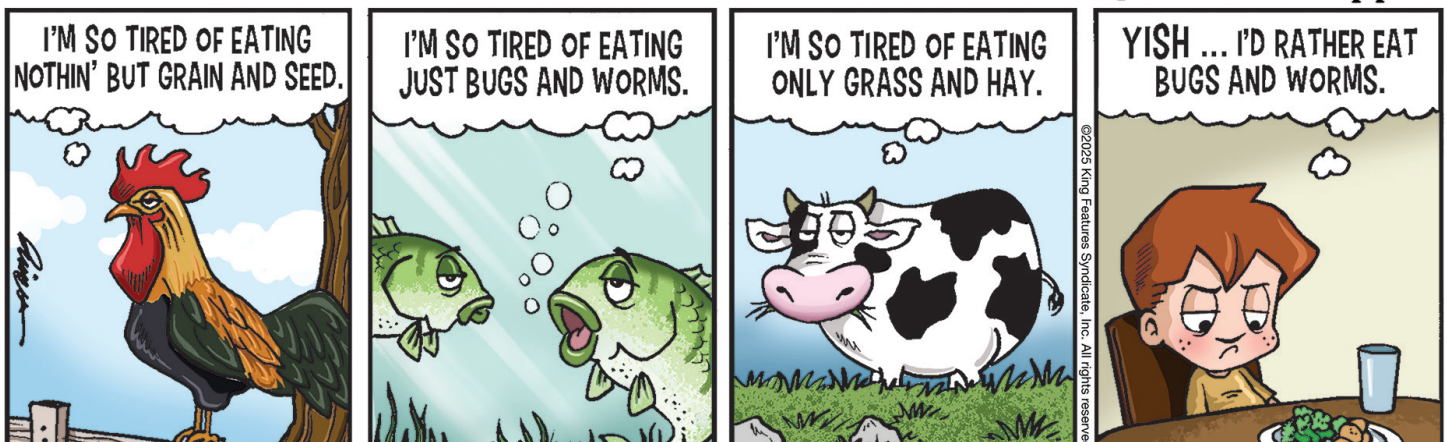
6. Ekaterina Gordeeva.

7. The New York Mets.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Stray cat advice stirs up pet owners

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I received quite a few responses to my recent article on a stray cat that was being fed by a neighbor! Here are a couple of them from opposite sides.

DEAR PAWS: Bad advice in your article regarding stray cats. The complaining neighbor never mentions she has a cat while expressing concern for neighbor cats. This means she's a busybody or a cat hater who should mind her own business. Why should she care if the cat feeder buys specialty food? Not her business, and you should have said so.

Your answer mentions contracting FIV. This is a small risk. If cat owners are worried about disease, they should keep their cats inside. You didn't mention that the complainer could help by getting involved with TNR [trap-neuter-return], by working with the feeder to help the homeless cats. There are proactive ways to help.

You should have commended the person who feeds the cats for helping. We need more people like her and less like the person who was complaining. -- Debbi J.

DEAR PAWS: I completely disagree with your answer to feeding outdoor stray cats. Those cats would not be strays if PEOPLE would act like grownups, spay and neuter their pets and stop dumping cats whenever they feel like it.

One unspayed female dumped outside will struggle to survive and can have two or three litters a year. Her babies will be feral because they don't have human contact. At three months of age the kitten can also reproduce. There could be 40 or so by the end of the year. Relocating them does not work. A trap/neuter/return program reduces their numbers humanely.

Getting a pet is a 15- to 20-year commitment. If you can't do it, then don't acquire a pet and certainly don't dump them. -- Linda G.

Send your tips, comments or questions to [ask@pawscorner.com](mailto:ask@pawscorner.com).

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 29 of 93

## Strange BUT TRUE

\* Africa is the only continent with land in all four of Earth's hemispheres.

\* Programmer Terry Davis, who suffered with schizophrenia, spent a decade working on an operating system to "talk to God."

\* The highest golf course in the world is the Tuctu Golf Club in Morococha, Peru, sitting 14,335 feet above sea level at its lowest point.

\* Vladimir Putin's grandfather worked as a chef for Ras-

putin, Lenin, and Stalin.

\* Bluetooth technology was named after 10th-century King Harald Bluetooth, who united Denmark and Norway, just like technology united computers and cellphones.

\* Colonel Sanders got fired from a dozen jobs, was a lawyer who once assaulted his own client in court, started a restaurant that went out of business, and found himself broke at the age of 65. That's when he started KFC.

\* The Mayans drilled holes in their teeth to insert semiprecious stones.

\* North Korea's 105-story Ryugyong Hotel, nicknamed "The Hotel of Doom," is one of the world's tallest unoccupied building.

\* Iceland has an official book-buying season that runs from September through December. More than half of all the books sold in the country are purchased during the month before Christmas.

\* Australian compass termites construct their mounds on a north-south axis.

\* According to a study of 79,777 patients, violent criminals had a much lower level of cholesterol than nonviolent individuals.

\* Linonophobia is a fear of string.

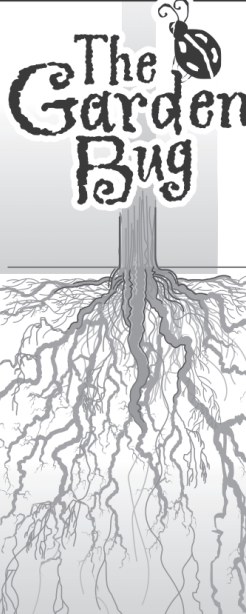
\* Hasbro has a "Monopoly Speed Die" and an official rulebook for "extreme" Monopoly variants.

\* Composer Richard Wagner used to preserve his own nose hair clippings for posterity.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "If you always have something in your life that you're trying to improve upon, then every day you have a reason to get out of bed, and you have a reason to achieve something and feel good." -- Nick Offerman

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### The Garden Bug

The three main types of root systems are called "taproot," "lateral root" and "heart root" (also known as "oblique root"). **Tap root systems** are very stable. Some common species with tap roots are oaks, pines, hickory, sweet gum, tupelo and walnut.

**Tree roots**

**Lateral root systems** spread widely under the tree and help distribute its weight. Most trees have a lateral root system. **Heart** (or oblique) **root systems** get their stability from the weight of the root "ball." If the soil is very wet, a strong wind can make the tree and its root ball rotate in the ground, like a ball-and-socket joint. – Brenda Weaver

Sources: [aplustree.com](http://aplustree.com), [vicstreeservice.com](http://vicstreeservice.com)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 30 of 93



by Freddy Groves

## A slimmed-down VA

The staffing cuts at the Department of Veterans Affairs continue. As of today, another 585 non-mission-critical or duplicate contracts are terminated, out of 90,000 existing contracts totaling \$67 billion. This will put \$900 million back in the kitty to be spent on veterans, their caregivers, families and survivors.

That's a lot of money.

It makes me wonder how those contracts came to be in the first place. The canceled contracts covered such services as taking minutes at meetings, leadership coaching, mentoring staff, creating meeting agendas and creating PowerPoint slides (laughingly called "executive support.")

Are those not things that staff should be doing?

These contract cancellations are on top of the additional 1,400 probationary positions that were eliminated (employees who had worked for the VA for less than a year), saving \$83 million to be spent on veterans for benefits, services and health care.

Meanwhile, plans continue to fill 300,000 mission-critical positions at the VA that were exempted from the hiring freeze. These include: 94,000 nurses, 8,300 psychologists, 12,000 pharmacists and 3,000 physical therapists -- all hands-on for care of veterans.

I do, however, worry about the VA Office of Inspector General in all of these cuts. I hope cool heads prevail and they take a moment to realize just how much money the VAOIG saves by identifying, investigating and auditing VA waste. At this time I can't find any mention of staff cuts at the VAOIG, thankfully. Recent updates on their activities show scammers being caught for fraud (\$1 million), fraud (\$300,000) and more fraud (\$392,000). In the last 12 months, the OIG has derailed schemes totaling \$3 billion being stolen from the VA.

If anything, I would wish that the VAOIG be listed as a "mission critical" department and have their staff doubled. My second wish would be that the penalties (prison time, fines and restitution) also be doubled. Too often the criminals seem to only get a slap on the wrist for their scams against the VA.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 31 of 93

## Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. GEOGRAPHY: Mount Everest is part of which mountain range?
2. MOVIES: Which color film was the first to win an Academy Award for Best Picture?
3. ASTRONOMY: Which planet in our solar system is believed to be the windiest?
4. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Where is the U.S. Constitution stored?
5. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of lemurs called?
6. TELEVISION: Which city is the setting for the dramatic series "The Wire"?
7. GEOLOGY: Which country has the most active volcanos?
8. LITERATURE: Which character in a Charles Dickens novel famously said, "Please, sir, I want some more"?
9. ART: Which Dutch artist is considered a master of light and shadow, creating dramatic effects in paintings?
10. SCIENCE: What is an ectothermic animal?

### Answers

1. The Himalayas.
2. "Gone With the Wind."
3. Neptune.
4. The National Archives.
5. A conspiracy.
6. Baltimore, Maryland.
7. Indonesia.
8. Title character in "Oliver Twist."
9. Rembrandt.
10. Cold-blooded.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 32 of 93

South Dakota Governor



## Larry Rhoden



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

### Rhoden RhoundUp

One of my favorite parts of serving the people of South Dakota is visiting communities around the state. I like to look folks in the eye, shake their hands, and gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities that they face.

I recently launched my Open for Opportunity Tour across the state. The first week of visits was pretty great. You can keep track of our progress with the new Rhoden RhoundUp video series that we'll post every day on social media.

Lieutenant Governor Venhuizen joined me in Sioux Falls. We visited Silencer Central, the nation's largest dealer, distributor, and manufacturer of suppressors. They're adding a \$20 million expansion to increase their distribution. We toured Scherer, Inc.'s manufacturing facility where they build tools for grain rolling and crushing – they're making sure that our products are Made in America! We visited the modern new Steel District, including businesses like Burwell Enterprises, Lloyd Companies, and several fantastic restaurants. And we wrapped the day up with a well-attended event hosted by the Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce.

We spent Tuesday in the Pierre area and started with an interview with Dakota Radio Group's Jody Heemstra. I celebrated National Ag Day by visiting Ringneck Energy up in Onida and grabbing coffee with Onida residents and area ag producers. A local farmer hosted me for their "lambing" season. And we wrapped the day up with a pancake feed that the Pierre-Ft. Pierre Kiwanis Club was hosting for the community.

On Wednesday, I went to Aberdeen and started the day at Northern State University – President Schnoor showed us their facilities, and I met with several students. I spoke to the local Hub City Radio about our tour. Then, I visited BAE Systems, which produces some of the world's most advanced, technology-led systems to keep our nation safe. Finally, we swung by ATEC Academy, where Aberdeen-area students are learning career and technical education.

On Thursday, we were a little closer to my neck of the woods in Belle Fourche and Spearfish. I visited Black Hills State University, went to the Belle Fourche livestock market, and spoke at the groundbreaking for the new Belle Fourche Police Department facility – it's important to me that we continue to show respect and support for law enforcement. Finally, I highlighted South Dakota's unifying conservation efforts at the launch of a new organization called "Nature Is Nonpartisan." Our state is living proof that conservation – without government mandates – doesn't have to damage the economy. In fact, South Dakota does conservation in a way that actually boosts our economy.

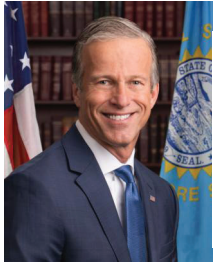
One thing I'm proud of: we haven't heard many complaints of state government getting in the way of opportunity. We have, however, had some folks asking us to advocate to the federal government to have them change policy. So the relationships that we have and are developing with the Trump Administration will be crucial to expand opportunity for South Dakota workers, businesses, and ag producers.

In the coming days and weeks, I'll visit more communities in every corner of the state. We've got a lot of ground to cover! So if you see me in your community, bring me your ideas. Share the opportunities that you're looking to pursue.

Opportunity is not limited by my vision, or even the vision of any one person in our state. It is as broad as the South Dakota prairie and as high as Black Elk Peak. If we all link arms and pledge to chase down opportunities together, South Dakota will be in pretty good shape.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 33 of 93



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

## Working for South Dakota's Farmers and Ranchers

You can't go far without seeing some sign of agriculture in South Dakota – it's the lifeblood of our state. Advocating for the farm and ranch families in our state is one of my top priorities as a U.S. senator. I'm proud to be a voice for these hardworking South Dakotans who carry on an important way of life that helps feed and fuel our country and the world.

Farmers and ranchers are facing considerable headwinds today, and we need to deliver an updated farm bill that ensures farmers and ranchers have the resources they need to face today's challenges and tomorrow's. I'm disappointed that a new farm bill was not a priority for Democrats during the Biden administration, and I remain committed to finishing our work and sending an up-to-date farm bill to the president's desk.

Depressed commodity prices and extreme weather events are among the challenges facing agriculture today. At the end of last year, Congress approved the \$10 billion Emergency Commodity Assistance Program, which provides economic assistance for farmers and ranchers. South Dakota producers qualify for this aid, which is now available through the Farm Service Agency. Additional aid for farmers and ranchers affected by natural disasters will be available soon.

Improving the farm safety net is a priority of mine in the next farm bill. Crop insurance is the cornerstone of the farm safety net, and I introduced the Crop Insurance for Future Farmers Act to make it more affordable for beginning farmers and ranchers in their first 10 years of operation. I also introduced the Livestock Disaster Assistance Improvement Act to help provide greater and expedited assistance to producers when they need it and to improve the drought monitor and other USDA data to make these programs more effective for producers.

I'm also working to help farmers and ranchers adopt next generation technologies in their operations. I recently introduced the Promoting Precision Agriculture Act, which would encourage partnership between the federal government and the private sector to develop standards for connectivity and security so farms and ranches can use precision technology with confidence. And I'm also working to accelerate deployment of broadband in unserved rural areas by encouraging the removal of unnecessary barriers from programs that promise to connect these areas to the internet.

Farmers' and ranchers' priorities are always at the top of my priority list. I remain committed to providing critical tax relief to American agriculture, including ending the death tax once and for all. I've also introduced legislation to restore mandatory country of origin labelling for beef. And as always, I continue to advocate for new markets for our agriculture commodities and support year-round, nationwide access to E15.

Life on a farm or a ranch isn't easy. It involves backbreaking work and the consistent risk that a storm, drought, or an early freeze will wipe out herds or crops, sometimes in an instant. Add market fluctuations, and processing and transportation challenges. It's a hard way to make a living. But despite its many challenges, it is a tradition worth living. I'm proud to serve the extraordinary men and women who keep the rich agriculture heritage of South Dakota alive and work to feed America and the world.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 34 of 93



## Make America Healthy and Patriotic Again

### BIG Update

China's vaping sector is estimated to be worth \$28 billion, but the sale of electronic cigarette devices is banned within its own borders. Thus, China makes a great effort distribute them in America, evading shipping regulations and customs enforcement to do so. If these products are not safe for their own citizens, I question their efforts to smuggle and sell them into the United States.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved only 34 electronic cigarette devices, but nearly 9,000 types are sold in the U.S. – the overwhelming majority of which are made in China. We're aware of the health risks of vaping and smoking, particularly for youth, but there is an added risk of these illegal products from China that haven't been approved by the FDA – consumers and regulators have no clue what is in these vapes.

I sent a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, Attorney General Pam Bondi, and Acting FDA Commissioner Sara Brenner to bring attention to this issue and ask them to work together to address this concern. The Trump Administration is uniquely positioned to take a strong stance against this illicit activity and curb the flow of these illegal products – protecting Americans' health and safety..

### BIG Idea

Nearly five years ago, President Trump stood beneath Mount Rushmore and announced his plans to establish a National Garden of Heroes to honor those who have had an impact on our nation. The President recently reaffirmed his goal in an executive order planning the celebration of America's 250th birthday. The Lien family, a patriotic family in South Dakota, has offered to donate 40 acres of their land near Mount Rushmore to be the future site of this statuary garden.

For the last two months, I've been working with the Lien family, the White House, and Secretary Bur-gum to get the Garden of Heroes built in the beautiful Black Hills. I'm looking forward to working with the governor and our congressional delegation to make this happen!.

### BIG News

This week, I introduced legislation to prohibit the 340B drug program from being used by health care facilities to fund transgender surgeries and hormone replacement therapy. The No 340B Savings for Transgender Care Act has the support of Riley Gaines, an outspoken advocate on transgender males competing in women's sports.

I am and will continue to be a strong supporter of the 340B program. This program allows safety-net providers to serve the health care needs of low-income and rural communities. But the program must not be abused by subsidizing gender altering surgeries when our nation faces significant health crises. My bill will ensure these dollars are used where needed most to keep the program sustainable and as effective as possible to help those in need..

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 35 of 93



**MARCH 10-16, 2025**

Welcome to the Weekly Round[s] Up! We've reached the end of a 10-week in-session work period. This is the longest continuous stretch that the Senate has been in session in over 15 years. During this time, we've confirmed 21 out of 22 of President Trump's cabinet level nominees and kept the govern-

ment open and funded. On Friday night, we passed a continuing resolution (CR) to avert a government shutdown and keep it open until the end of this fiscal year. While I believe we should always aim to fund the government through regular order appropriations, a government shutdown would be detrimental for our country. This CR makes certain our troops and other essential personnel get their paychecks. More on this and the rest of my week in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakotans I met with: The Rapid City Youth City Council; South Dakota members of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; Tommy Ibrahim, President and CEO of Sanford Health Plan; the School Nutrition Association of South Dakota; South Dakota members of the Livestock Marketing Association; representatives from South Dakota Impact Aid schools; a group of small business owners from South Dakota; South Dakota members of the International Dairy Foods Association; South Dakota members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals; Chairman J. Garret Renville and leaders of Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate; and Matt Brakke, New York Life insurance agent from Pierre.

South Dakota towns represented: Artesian, Belle Fourche, Beresford, Bonesteel, Box Elder, Bullhead, Chamberlain, Colman, Custer, Dupree, Estelline, Fairfax, Geddes, Harrisburg, Hurley, Huron, Kenel, Martin, Milbank, Mitchell, New Underwood, Pierre, Pine Ridge, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Spearfish, Sturgis, Timber Lake, Wall, Winner, Woonsocket and Yankton.

Other meetings: Alexander Yui, Taiwan's Ambassador to the United States; Travis Hill, Acting Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Lt. Gen. Maria Barrett, Commander of U.S. Army Cyber Command; David Solomon, CEO of Goldman Sachs; Robert Dussey, Togo's Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mauro De Lorenzo, Executive Director of the Strategy and Policy Council in the Office of the President of Rwanda; Gen. Michael Langley, Commander of U.S. Africa Command; and Mark Rutte, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). I spoke at an event hosted by Punchbowl News on space policy, which you can watch here. I also attended our weekly Senate Bible Study, where our verse of the week was Psalm 111:10.

Hearings: I attended three hearings this week. We had one closed hearing in the Select Committee on Intelligence. We had one hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee to discuss the Military Health System, which you can watch a clip of here. We also had one hearing in the Banking Committee to discuss housing policy.

Classified briefings: I had one classified briefing as part of my work on the Senate Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Cybersecurity.

Votes taken: 25 – We confirmed one more cabinet level nominee this week: Lori Chavez-DeRemer to lead the Department of Labor. In addition, we voted to keep the government open and running through the end of the fiscal year.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 36 of 93**

As I mentioned earlier, I firmly believe continuing resolutions are no way to run our government funding. However, the alternative of a government shutdown – where troops and other essential personnel are not getting paid – is much worse. This CR goes until the end of September of this year, which coincides with the end of this fiscal year. I joined the Appropriations Committee this Congress precisely to prevent this process of kicking the can down the road with a series of CRs each fiscal year. I look forward to working with my colleagues to get the appropriations process done on time this year.

Legislation introduced: I introduced two bills that would strengthen Second Amendment rights for military families and full-time travelers. Both pieces of legislation, the Traveler's Gun Rights Act and the Protect Our Military Families' 2nd Amendment Rights Act, would amend sections of the Gun Control Act of 1968 to make exceptions for Americans with unique living situations. This includes spouses of service members and full-time travelers whose permanent residence is a private mailbox or post office box.

In addition, I introduced legislation to extend the reporting deadline for Indian Health Service (IHS) patients who seek emergency care outside of IHS facilities. The IHS Emergency Claims Parity Act would extend the emergency notification requirements of IHS's Purchased and Referred Care program from within 72 hours to 15 days. .

Medical debt resolution: I introduced a Congressional Review Act resolution to repeal the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Medical Debt Rule. Finalized with only days left in the Biden administration, the rule would ban credit bureaus from including medical debt on credit reports. In turn, banks and credit unions have a less clear credit picture of who they're lending money to, which could force them to limit access to capital.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen and Fort Pierre.

Steps taken: 48,849 steps or 24.31 miles.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 37 of 93



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

## Another Week On My Own

Several weeks ago, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage informed me she would be in St. Augustine with our daughter and granddaughter for spring break.

As always, I really didn't properly process this information. I get so busy with other things that there are some things I can't process.

It was a Monday, and as I was drinking my morning coffee, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came into my office and said, "Well, I guess the girls and I will be leaving for the week. I hope you have a good week."

I put my coffee cup down, looked at her, and said, "What are you talking about? Where are you going?"

"Don't you remember weeks ago I told you that our daughter, granddaughter and I will be going to St. Augustine for the spring break?"

I was stunned and said, "I guess I forgot."

She looked at me and smiled. As she was going out the front door, she said, "Try to behave yourself this week, and most importantly of all, do not get any apple fritters. Remember our agreement?"

Then she opened the door and said, "Your dinners and suppers are in the refrigerator. Try not to make a mess." Then she closed the door.

It took me a few minutes to process this whole idea, and I'm sure she told me about it, and was helping me prepare for this week. There are times I get so busy with a project that I don't hear what's going on around me. I may not be at my computer, but I'm still writing in my head and thinking about my project.

I may know what's happening around me, but I'm not processing it as I should.

Sitting back in my chair, I thought about the week before me. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage will be in St. Augustine, and I will be here managing every moment of every day. That doesn't happen often, and I wasn't sure where to begin.

I went back to my office and worked until lunchtime. Usually, at lunchtime, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has my lunch all prepared for me. All I have to do is sit down and eat it. That has been my schedule since I said, "I do."

I walked into the kitchen, and there is nothing. I almost call out for my wife, but then I remember that she isn't here. I am in charge of my week.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 38 of 93**

I was beginning to feel rather happy. I have the whole week to do whatever I want, which rarely happens.

Opening the refrigerator, I saw that she had prepared a whole week's worth of eating. There were dishes and bowls in the refrigerator, and all of them had tags telling me what they were.. That was rather convenient for me, and I appreciated it very much.

As I was planning my apple fritter, I remembered that in the Publix store where I usually get them, all the workers know my wife, and she knows them. I remember one time when she was away, I got an apple fritter.

When she came home and went to Publix to buy groceries, everybody told her I had bought an apple fritter. By the time my wife got home from shopping, she knew I had bought an apple fritter behind her back. How can you buy something behind her back when everybody knows her?

I had to put a plan together, which was to go across town to a Publix that she had never been to.

I got in my vehicle to drive across town to acquire several apple fritters for the week. As I began my journey, I just couldn't help but chuckle and smile. I can't remember the last time I had an apple fritter, and I was surely looking forward to this one.

As I was driving, I was listening to some preacher on a radio station. I was listening as I was driving, still very happy inside. Unfortunately for me, his sermon that day was on lying.

I enjoyed his sermon, and as I was driving into the Publix parking lot, I began to think about it. What is a lie?

I knew I could go into that store, buy as many apple fritters as I wanted, and then take them home. I knew I could put this together so that The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage would never know about it.

Then, a thought burned into my head. Am I cheating on The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage?

Halfway from my vehicle to the store, I stopped. Is it worth lying?

I'm unsure what was happening in my heart, but I stopped, turned around, returned to my vehicle, and went home. Not all the apple fritters in the world are worth lying to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Driving home, I remembered a hymn that had the phrase, "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin." I can't stop the temptation, but I can refuse to yield to it.

I also thought of a Bible verse. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Temptations will come, but I do not have to yield.

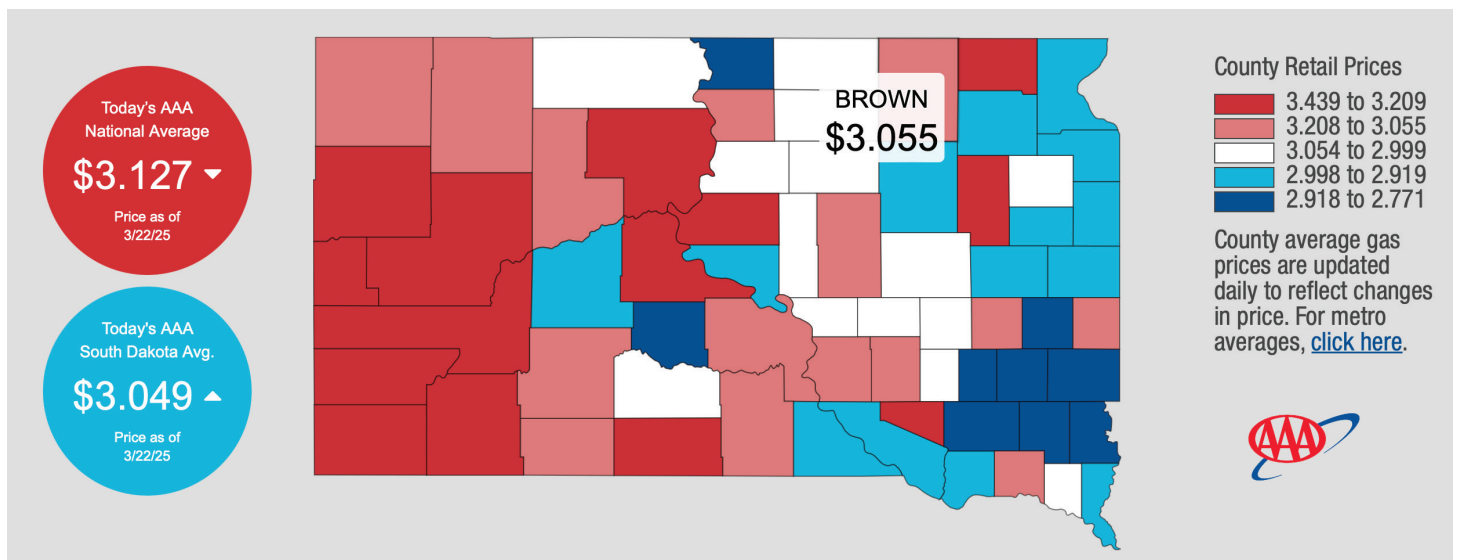
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 39 of 93

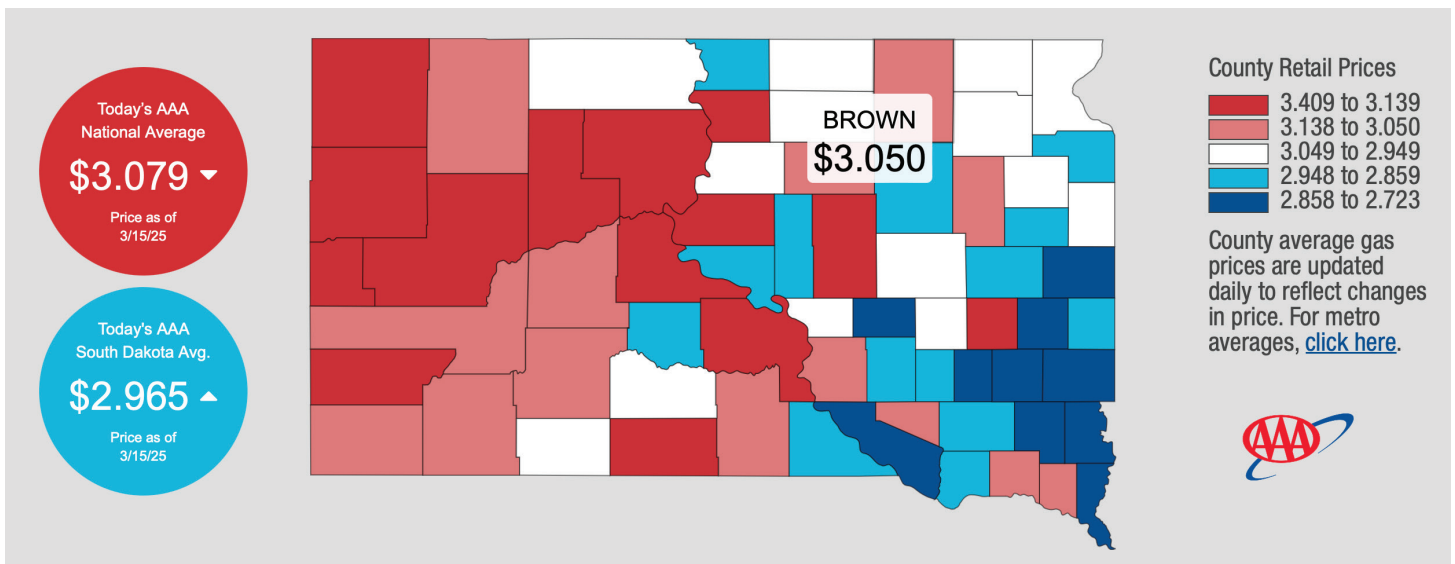
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.049	\$3.226	\$3.675	\$3.285
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.048	\$3.223	\$3.662	\$3.287
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.965	\$3.149	\$3.585	\$3.276
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.018	\$3.185	\$3.617	\$3.392
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.271	\$3.425	\$3.857	\$3.723

### This Week



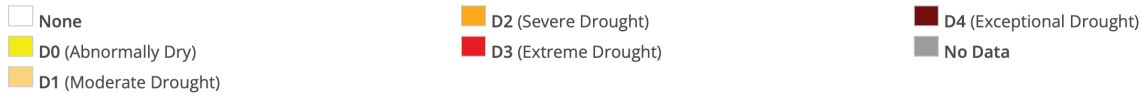
### Last Week



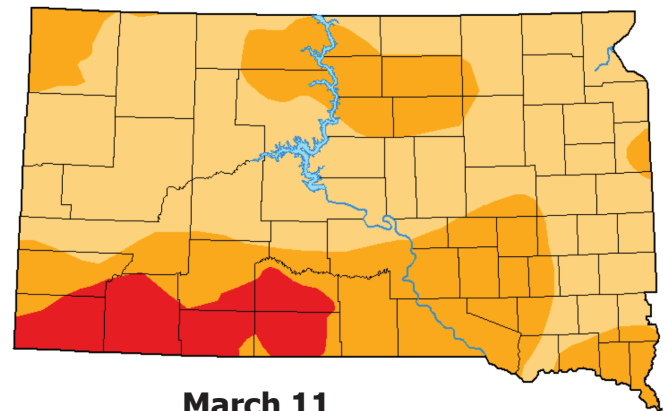
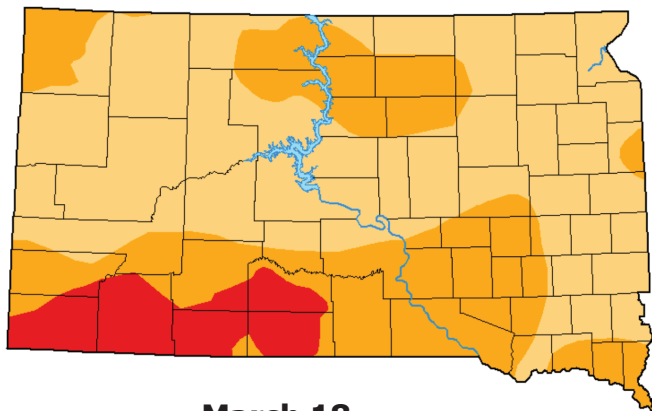
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 40 of 93

## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



Significant changes were largely limited to Kansas, where expansion or introduction of dryness (D0) and moderate to severe drought (D1 to D2) resulted from mostly warm, dry, windy weather. By March 16, the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicated that statewide topsoil moisture in Kansas was rated 47% very short to short. Elsewhere, some drought improvement was introduced in central Wyoming, largely based on favorable snowpack observations.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 41 of 93

## EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: How is wind power doing in the U.S.? Is Trump going to harm it? – P.K. via email

Wind energy is the largest single source of renewable energy in the U.S., comprising 10 percent of the nation's electricity mix. In Iowa and South Dakota, wind provides more than half the electricity. In 2024, U.S. wind electricity generation surpassed coal-fired generation in March and April, as wind power generally produces more electricity in the springtime. Over the course of 2024, the wind industry avoided 351 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions—equivalent to 61 million cars worth of emissions.



**Wind power has been on the rise in the U.S. in recent years but proponents worry about its future under Trump.** Credit: Roddy Scheer.

The wind industry is also a major job creator. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DoE), 131,000 people are employed directly in the sector, with more than 300,000 jobs supported overall. "Wind turbine technician" is the fastest growing job in the country, likely to increase by 44 percent over the next decade. The industry has attracted \$330 billion in investment over the past 20 years.

Small wind turbines are emerging as key players in the growing distributed wind market, which generates electricity for on-site, local needs. In 2022, DoE estimated that distributed wind could meet half of U.S. electricity demand, offering communities rate stability. They are particularly valuable in rural areas, where water conservation needs make thermal generators less desirable. Innovation continues to drive the wind industry. In 2024, the Massachusetts-based Pecos Wind Power won a \$200,000 award to bring the PW85, an 85-kilowatt small wind turbine, to market. The PW85 is designed to maximize efficiency in low-wind conditions, reducing costs by 55 percent compared to similar projects. Its installation process requires no crane and takes just a week instead of the usual six, further cutting costs and expanding wind energy's reach.

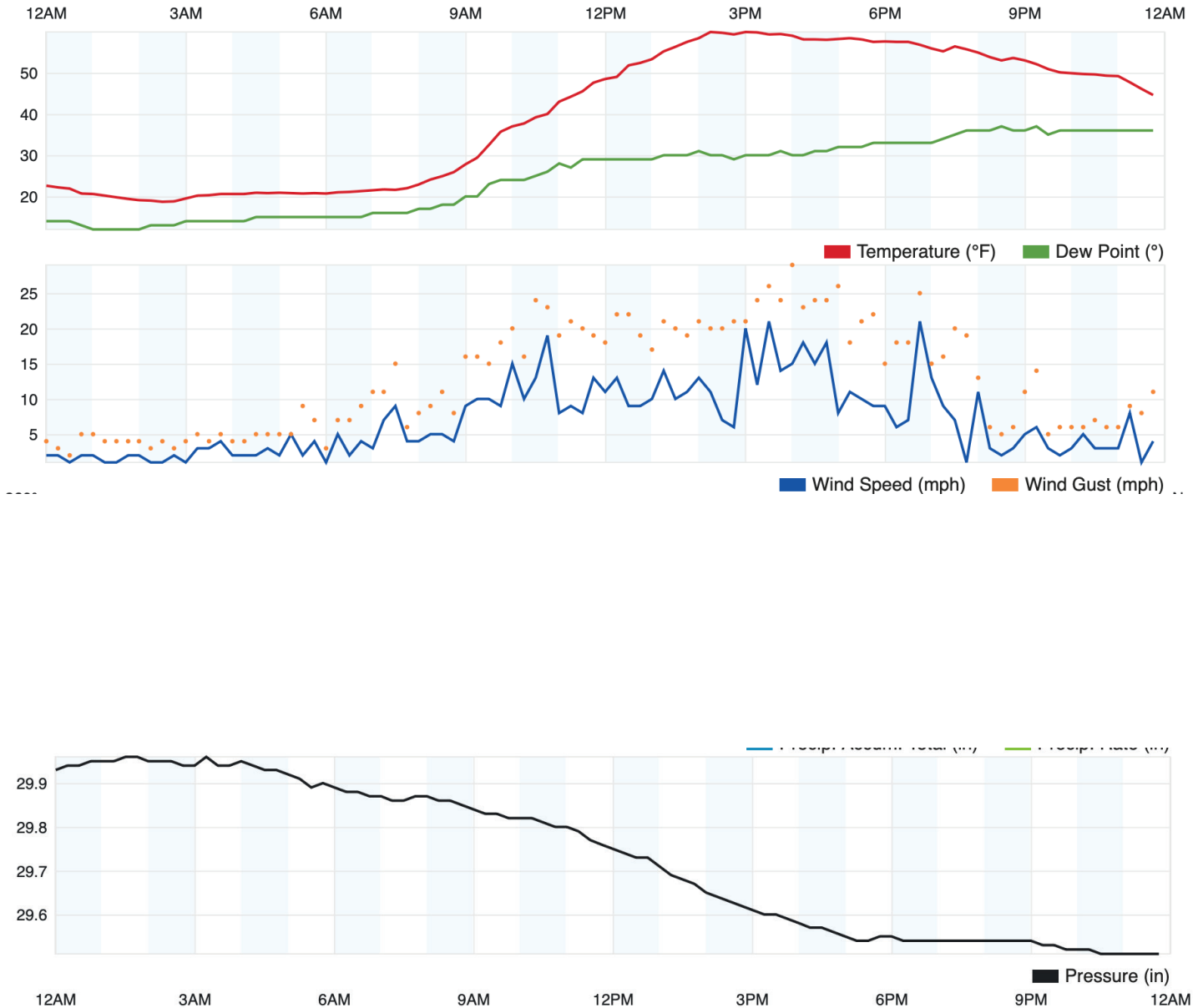
Despite these advancements, the wind industry faces political challenges. On January 24, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order halting approvals, permits and loans for new wind energy projects on federal lands or waters. The order prohibits the development of the Lava Ridge Wind Project, a large wind farm in Idaho that the Biden administration approved in December. The administration justified the orders by citing wind energy's supposed unreliability and potential harm to wildlife, particularly whales, despite no specific evidence linking offshore wind to whale deaths.

This executive order raises concerns about long-term investment in wind. Developers may hesitate to invest due to high political risk. Francis Pullaro, president of RENEW Northeast, an association of energy industry and environmental advocates, notes that "there's a lot of uncertainty now as to how all this is going to be implemented." The potential rollback of projects could slow the country's transition to renewable energy and weaken progress made in reducing carbon emissions.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 42 of 93

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 43 of 93

## Wind Advisory

### Today



**High: 45 °F**

Decreasing  
Clouds and  
Breezy

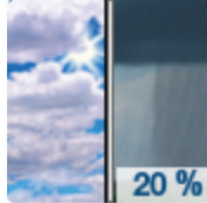
### Tonight



**Low: 22 °F**

Mostly Clear

### Monday



**High: 52 °F**

Partly Sunny  
then Slight  
Chance  
Showers

### Monday Night



**Low: 30 °F**

Mostly Cloudy

### Tuesday



**High: 59 °F**

Partly Sunny  
then Mostly  
Sunny and  
Breezy



TODAY



HIGHS: 39-54°F  
LOWS: 21-32°F

WINDS: NW AT 20-30 MPH,  
GUSTING 35-45 MPH

Its going to be a windy one out there today - northwest sustained winds of 20-30 mph with gusts of 35-45 mph (highest over central SD). These gusty winds and ongoing dry conditions will create elevated fire weather concerns over central SD. A Wind Advisory is in effect for central and northeastern SD as well as west central MN.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 44 of 93

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 60 °F at 2:33 PM**

**Low Temp: 19 °F at 2:26 AM**

**Wind: 29 mph at 3:50 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 12 hours, 23 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 81 in 1963

Record Low: -21 in 1899

Average High: 46

Average Low: 23

Average Precip in March.: 0.61

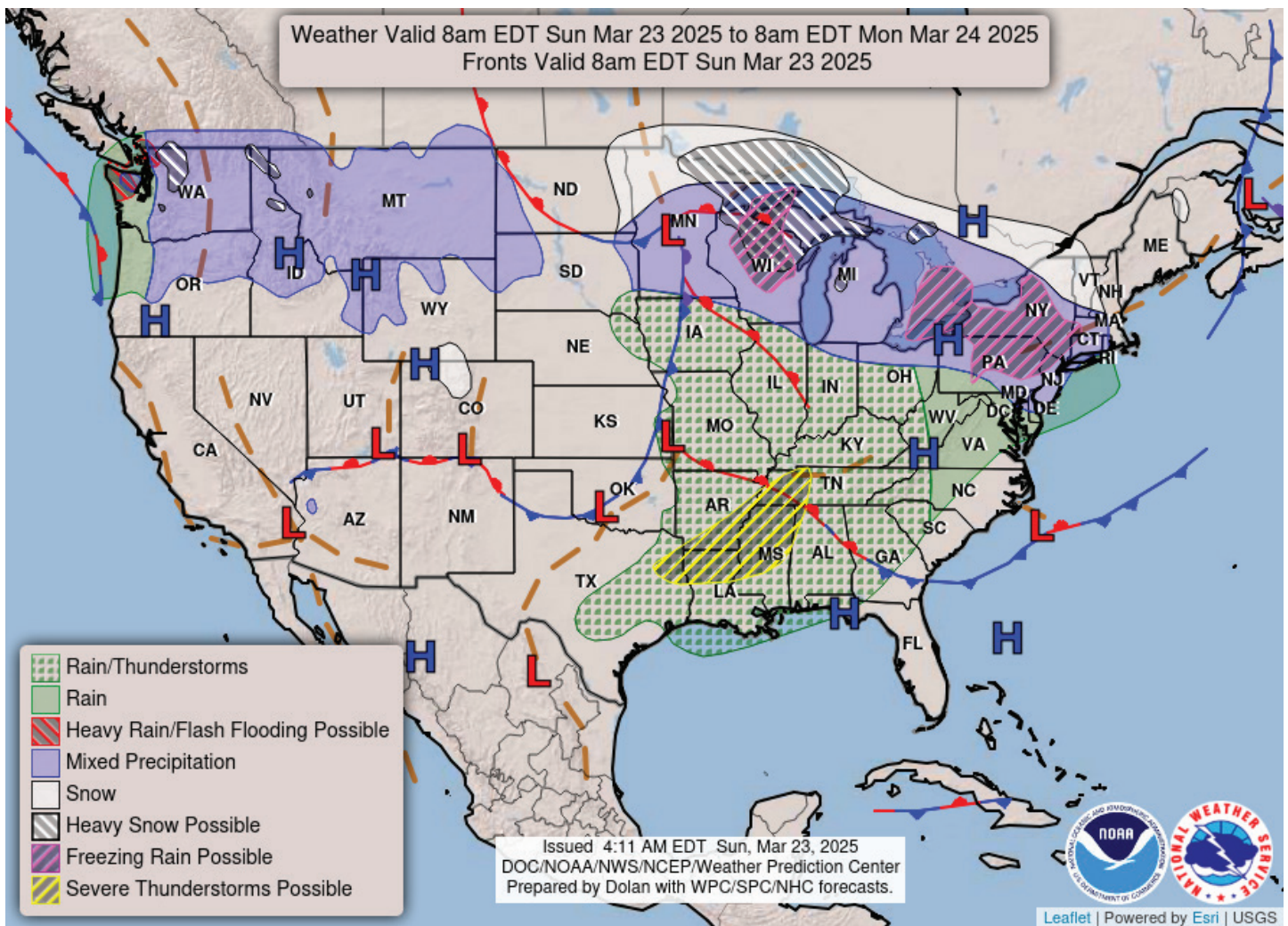
Precip to date in March.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.78

Precip Year to Date: 0.45

Sunset Tonight: 7:50:33 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:25:08 am



# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 45 of 93**

## **Today in Weather History**

March 23, 1987: Strong winds and heavy snow produced blizzard conditions across South Dakota March 23rd through the 25th. Snow amounts ranged from 6 to 19 inches. Snow totals included 19" at Winner (in Tripp County), 15" at Murdo (in Jones County), and 12" at Woonsocket (in Sanborn County) and Platte (in Charles Mix County). The wind piled the snow into drifts up to 10 feet deep. The heavy, wet snow broke power lines in several counties in the south-central and east-central parts of the state knocking out power for up to a few days.

March 23, 2011: A low-pressure system brought a variety of precipitation to central and eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota on March 22nd and 23rd. Areas experienced rain, hail, sleet, snow and in some cases thundersnow. Click [HERE](#) for rain and snowfall totals.

1907: Today was the warmest March day ever recorded in Washington, DC with a maximum temperature of 93 degrees. Washington DC has seen three, 90 degrees days in March, all of which occurred in 1907.

1913: A significant tornado outbreak occurred in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa on this day. Seven estimated F2 or stronger tornadoes killed 168 people and caused extensive damage to the area on Easter Sunday.

1916 - Pocatello, ID, received a record 14.6 inches of snow in 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A blizzard raged across western Kansas, and the panhandle of Texas and Oklahoma. Pampa TX received 21 inches of snow, and winds gusted to 78 mph at Dodge City KS Altus OK. Governor Hayden declared forty-six counties in western Kansas a disaster area. In southwest Kansas, the storm was described as the worst in thirty years. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a strong cold front spawned tornadoes near Roberts ID and Bridger MT. Strong and gusty winds prevailed in the western U.S. Wind gusts in the southwest part of Reno NV reached 89 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Charlotte and Wilmington, NC, reported rainfall records for the date as showers and thunderstorms prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Freezing rain glazed parts of North Carolina and southern Virginia. Gale force winds produced a heavy surf along the coast of North Carolina. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - An upper level storm system produced heavy snow in the Lower Missouri Valley. Snowfall totals ranged up to nine inches at Kansas City MO, with eight inches reported at Falls City NE, Columbia MO and Saint Louis MO. Thunderstorms produced heavy snow in the Kansas City area during the evening rush hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2007 - A trailer is thrown through a bowling alley as a tornado moves through Clovis, NM. About 100 homes and businesses are destroyed, at least three schools are damaged and telephone poles are snapped. Thirteen tornadoes struck a dozen communities along the New Mexico/Texas border. Two people were critically injured.

2011 - A series of tornados are spawned from severe thunderstorms in Pennsylvania. In Hempfield Township dozens of homes and a high school auditorium where students are rehearsing a play are severely damaged.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 46 of 93



## DISMOUNT!

Stories of the Knights of the Round Table are fascinating - often intriguing. There are many hidden messages in the way they did things.

For example, when they were fully dressed, they would ride a large, strong horse to bear the weight of their armor. When they went hunting, they would ride a small, swift horse that could run fast to catch up with the prey. When in a parade, they would ride a tall, high horse. This made them appear bigger than the poor peasant who had no horse at all and was forced to look up to them.

In fact, the expression "Get off your high horse" originated from their exploits. It meant to the onlookers, "Stop acting as if you are above us! Remember, you're on a horse."

Wise Solomon had some advice for those who act as if they are above others. He said, "Haughty eyes, a proud heart, and evil actions are all sin."

God wants us to develop talents carefully and use wisely the skills, talents, and gifts that He has given us. We are to be thankful for all that we can do in His name to bring Him glory and honor. We must never have an inflated opinion of our value or importance. We have what we have because of His grace. We are what we are and what we can be because of Him. We must realize at all times that we are His and are obligated to serve Him faithfully each day.

Prayer: Father, may we be ever thankful for all of the gifts You have given us and use them to honor You. May we set ourselves aside at all times and exalt only You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Haughty eyes, a proud heart, and evil actions are all sin. Proverbs 21:4

*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*

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 47 of 93

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 48 of 93



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.21.25

15 22 31 52 57 2

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$344,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.22.25

6 21 43 47 52 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$27,110,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.22.25

13 14 32 46 47 10

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 3 Mins 13 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.22.25

9 10 13 17 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$76,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.22.25

2 4 47 53 64 11

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.22.25

6 7 25 46 57 12

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$461,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 49 of 93**

## **Upcoming Groton Events**

03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm  
03/29/2025 Men's Singles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle 10am, 1pm & 4pm  
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  
04/12/2025 Groton Firemens Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm  
05/12/2025 High School Girls Golf Meet at Olive Grove  
05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm  
06/07/2025 Day of Play  
06/13/2025 SDSU 4 Person Scramble at Olive Grove  
06/21/2025 Groton Triathlon  
06/23/2025 Ladies 2 Person Scramble at Olive Grove  
07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm  
07/11-13/25 2025 VFW 12U Class B State Baseball Tournament  
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm  
07/16/2025 Men's Pro Am Golf at Olive Grove  
07/25/2025 Ferney Open Scramble Golf at Olive Grove  
08/01/2025 Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove  
08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm  
08/14/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm (2nd Thursday)  
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove  
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm  
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm  
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove  
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am  
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park  
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm  
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 50 of 93

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

### Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

#### **BOYS PREP BASKETBALL**

SDHSAA State Tournament

##### **Class AA**

Championship: Brandon Valley 53, Mitchell 45

Consolation Championship: Sioux Falls Jefferson 61, Huron 60

Seventh Place: Spearfish 61, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 55

Third Place: Sioux Falls Lincoln 81, Harrisburg 52

##### **Class A**

Championship: Sioux Falls Christian 61, Hamlin 51

Consolation Championship: West Central 69, Hill City 54

Seventh Place: Groton 64, Clark-Willow Lake 52

Third Place: Rapid City Christian 60, Lennox 58

##### **Class B**

Championship: Castlewood 52, Viborg-Hurley 31

Consolation Championship: Wall 79, Freeman 67

Seventh Place: Aberdeen Christian 64, Lyman 46

Third Place: Dell Rapids St Mary 71, Wessington Springs 54

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

## March Madness: Mathiowetz, Meyer help South Dakota State rally past Oklahoma State in NCAA opener

By JIM FULLER Associated Press

STORRS, Conn. (AP) — Facing a double-digit deficit early in the second half did not shake the confidence level of a South Dakota State women's basketball team that starts all juniors and seniors.

Using a more aggressive mindset after halftime, the 10th-seeded Jackrabbits won their NCAA tournament opener for the fifth time in program history with a 74-68 win over No. 7 seed Oklahoma State.

Madison Mathiowetz scored all 17 of her points in the second half while Brooklyn Meyer finished with 19 points as the Jackrabbits advance to play second-seeded UConn on Monday in the second round.

"The chance to play again is great," South Dakota State women's basketball coach Aaron Johnston said. We are looking forward to it. It is going to be a good challenge against Connecticut but I am happy that our team can come together and celebrate something that we worked really hard for."

South Dakota State was limited to 24 points as the Jackrabbits had 11 first-half turnovers. The Jackrabbits had just five turnovers and shot 56% from the field in the second half.

"I feel like we just had to dig in on defense and keep rebounding," Meyer said. "On offense, I feel like we had to move a little better without the ball and just play better together. Once it got a little smoother, I think that's when things started to work for us."

Stailee Heard led five Oklahoma State starters scoring in double figures with 20 points. Anna Gret Asi finished with 16 points including two late 3-pointers to keep the Cowgirls within range.

#### Takeaways

South Dakota State: The Jackrabbits have now made it out of the first round five times with the last before this year coming in 2023. The team has only made it out of the second round once and that came in 2019.

Oklahoma State: The Cowgirls fall to 12-18 in the NCAA Tournament. They reached the Sweet 16 in 1991,

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 51 of 93**

2008 and 2014. Oklahoma State has lost its tourney opener in each of the last two seasons with the last NCAA Tournament win coming in 2021 against Wake Forest.

Key moment

Mathiowetz had a driving layup just before the third-quarter buzzer went off to break a 50-50 tie. She opened the scoring in the fourth quarter with another basket before back-to-back hoops by Paige Meyer pushed San Diego State's lead to eight. Oklahoma State pulled within three points on a Micah Gray 3-pointer but could get no closer.

Jackrabbit nation makes it to UConn

"We love Jackrabbit Nation," senior guard Paige Meyer. "We still have a lot of fans who came out to support us. They mean a lot to us. Over the years of playing here, we have always had support from our fans. We appreciate it and aren't really surprised when we see the ones who follow us."

Up next

South Dakota State faces No. 2 seed UConn and will look to pull off a monumental upset. The Huskies routed Arkansas State 103-34 in the opener.

## **Wildfires prompt evacuations and an emergency declaration in the Carolinas**

By The Associated Press undefined

Wildfires forced a mandatory evacuation in one North Carolina county as emergency crews fought separate fires in an area of the state still recovering from Hurricane Helene, while South Carolina's governor declared an emergency in response to a growing wildfire.

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety announced a mandatory evacuation starting at 8:20 p.m. Saturday for parts of Polk County in western North Carolina about 80 miles (129 kilometers) west of Charlotte.

"Visibility in area will be reduced and roads/evacuation routes can become blocked; if you do not leave now, you could be trapped, injured, or killed," the agency said in a social media post.

The public safety department said a shelter had been established in Columbus, North Carolina.

The North Carolina Forest Service's online wildfire public viewer indicated three active fires in Polk County, with the two largest spanning between 1,100 and 1,240 acres (445 and 502 hectares). Two other fires were active in nearby Burke and Madison counties, with a third wildfire burning in Stokes County on the northern border with Virginia.

In South Carolina, Gov. Henry McMaster declared a state of emergency Saturday as part of an effort to stop a blaze in Pickens County called the Table Rock Fire that started the previous day in an area within the Blue Ridge Mountains.

"As this wildfire continues to spread, the State of Emergency allows us to mobilize resources quickly and ensure our firefighters have the support they need to protect lives and property," McMaster said in a statement that reinforced a statewide outdoor burning ban issued Friday by the South Carolina Forestry Commission.

Local fire officials called for voluntary evacuations Saturday of some residents near Table Rock Mountain, the forestry commission said in a social media post.

The Pickens County Sheriff's Office posted an update late Saturday saying crews had ceased operations and would resume Sunday morning with ground personnel and machinery and assistance from helicopters and air tankers. The fire was about 110 acres (45 hectares) and the public was asked to avoid state Highway 11.

North Carolina's western region already had been hit hard by Hurricane Helene in September. Among the extensive damage, flooding washed away more than a mile (1.6 kilometers) of eastbound lanes on Interstate 40 leading to eastern Tennessee and remained partially closed to traffic until March.

The hurricane damaged or impacted 5,000 miles (8,046 kilometers) of state-maintained roads and damaged 7,000 private roads, bridges and culverts in North Carolina.

## Pope arrives home at Vatican after 5-week hospital stay to beat life-threatening bout of pneumonia

By NICOLE WINFIELD, PAOLO SANTALUCIA and TRISHA THOMAS Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A weak and frail Pope Francis returned home to the Vatican from the hospital on Sunday after surviving a five-week, life-threatening bout of pneumonia, making a surprise stop at his favorite basilica on the way home before beginning two months of prescribed rest and recovery.

The motorcade carrying the 88-year-old pope entered the Perugino gate into Vatican City, and Francis was seen in the front passenger seat wearing nasal tubes to give him supplemental oxygen.

During the trip home from Gemelli hospital, Francis took a slight detour to bring him to the St. Mary Major basilica, where his favorite icon of the Madonna is located and where he always goes to pray after a foreign visit. Francis didn't get out of the car, but handed a bouquet of flowers to the cardinal to place in front of the Salus populi Romani icon, a Byzantine-style painting on wood that is revered by Romans.

Before leaving the hospital, Francis gave a thumbs up and acknowledged the crowd after he was wheeled out onto the balcony overlooking the main entry. Hundreds of people had gathered on a brilliant Sunday morning to say goodbye.

"I see this woman with the yellow flowers. Brava!" a tired and bloated-looking Francis said. He gave a weak sign of the cross before being wheeled back inside.

Chants of "Viva il papa!" and "Papa Francesco" erupted from the crowd, which included patients who had been wheeled outside just to catch his brief appearance.

Doctors, who announced his planned release at a Saturday evening news conference, said he needs two months of rest and convalescence, during which he should refrain from meeting with big groups of people or exerting himself. But they said eventually he should be able to resume all his normal activities.

His return home, after the longest hospitalization of his 12-year papacy and the second-longest in recent papal history, brought tangible relief to the Vatican and Catholic faithful who have been anxiously following 38 days of medical ups and downs and wondering if Francis would make it.

"Today I feel a great joy," said Dr. Rossella Russomando, a doctor from Salerno who didn't treat Francis but was at Gemelli on Sunday. "It is the demonstration that all our prayers, all the rosary prayers from all over the world, brought this grace."

Pope is happy to go home

At the Vatican Sunday, pilgrims flocked as they have all year to St. Peter's Basilica to participate in the 2025 Holy Year. They swarmed St. Peter's Square and progressed through the Holy Door in groups, while big TV screens in the square were turned on to broadcast Francis' hospital greeting live.

No special arrangements have been made at the Domus Santa Marta, the Vatican hotel next to the basilica where Francis lives in a two-room suite on the second floor. Francis will have access to supplemental oxygen and 24-hour medical care as needed, though his personal physician, Dr. Luigi Carbone, said he hoped Francis would progressively need less and less assistance breathing as his lungs recover.

While the pneumonia infection has been successfully treated, Francis will continue to take oral medication for quite some time to treat the fungal infection in his lungs and continue his respiratory and physical physiotherapy.

"For three or four days he's been asking when he can go home, so he's very happy," Carbone said.

Two life-threatening crises

The Argentine pope, who has chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed as a young man, was admitted to Gemelli on Feb. 14 after a bout of bronchitis worsened.

Doctors first diagnosed a complex bacterial, viral and fungal respiratory tract infection and soon thereafter, pneumonia in both lungs. Blood tests showed signs of anemia, low blood platelets and the onset of kidney failure, all of which later resolved after two blood transfusions.

The most serious setbacks began on Feb. 28, when Francis experienced an acute coughing fit and inhaled vomit, requiring the use of a noninvasive mechanical ventilation mask to help him breathe. He suffered two more respiratory crises a few days later, which required doctors to manually aspirate "copious" amounts

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 53 of 93**

of mucus from his lungs, at which point he began sleeping with the ventilation mask at night to help his lungs clear the accumulation of fluids.

He was never intubated and at no point lost consciousness. Doctors reported he always remained alert and cooperative, though they say he has probably lost a bit of weight given a natural loss of appetite.

"Unfortunately yes, there was a moment when many were saying that he might not make it. And it was painful for us," said Mario Balsamo, the owner of coffee shop in front of Gemelli. "Instead, today with the discharge, we are very happy that he is well and we hope he will recover soon and will recover his strength."

'I'm still alive!'

Dr. Sergio Alfieri, the medical and surgical chief at Gemelli who coordinated Francis' medical team, stressed that not all patients who develop such a severe case of double pneumonia survive, much less are released from the hospital. He said Francis' life was at risk twice, during the two acute respiratory crises, and that the pope at the time understandably lost his typical good sense of humor.

"But one morning we went to listen to his lungs and we asked him how he was doing. When he replied, 'I'm still alive,' we knew he was OK and had gotten his good humor back," he said.

Alfieri confirmed that Francis was still having trouble speaking due to the damage to his lungs and respiratory muscles. But he said such problems were normal, especially in older patients, and predicted his voice would eventually return to normal.

No confirmed appointments for now

The Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni, declined to confirm any upcoming events, including a scheduled audience on April 8 with King Charles III or Francis' participation in Easter services at the end of the month. But Carbone said he hoped Francis might be well enough to travel to Turkey at the end of May to participate in an important ecumenical anniversary.

Francis is also returning to the Vatican in the throes of a Holy Year, the once-every-quarter-century celebration scheduled to draw more than 30 million pilgrims to Rome this year. The pope has already missed several Jubilee audiences and will presumably miss several more, but Vatican officials say his absence hasn't significantly impacted the numbers of expected pilgrims arriving.

Only St. John Paul II recorded a longer hospitalization in 1981, when he spent 55 days at Gemelli for minor surgery and treatment of an infection.

## **7 killed after Moscow targets Ukraine with a mass drone attack ahead of ceasefire talks**

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — At least seven people were killed after Russia launched a barrage of drones across Ukraine overnight on Sunday, according to local Ukrainian officials and emergency services.

The attack on the Ukrainian capital came ahead of ceasefire negotiations in Saudi Arabia in which Ukraine and Russia are expected to hold indirect U.S.-mediated talks on Monday to discuss a pause in long-range attacks targeting energy facilities and civilian infrastructure.

The Ukrainian delegation is expected to meet with U.S. officials in Saudi Arabia a day ahead of the indirect talks, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. Ukraine is planning to send technical teams to discuss the details of the partial ceasefire.

Russia launched 147 drones across Ukraine, according to the Ukrainian Air Force. Ukrainian air defenses shot down 97 and 25 others didn't reach targets due to Ukrainian countermeasures. The attacks struck the Kharkiv, Sumy, Chernihiv, Odesa and Donetsk regions, as well as the capital, Kyiv.

Three people, including a 5-year-old child, were killed and 10 others were injured in a drone attack on Kyiv, the city's military administration said. Extended sounds of explosions were heard across the Ukrainian capital in the early hours of the night as the air raid blared for over five hours. Russian drones and debris from shot-down drones, which were flying at lower altitudes to evade air defenses, fell on residential buildings.

Ukrainians at the scene of the attacks in Kyiv surveyed the damage done to their homes and neighbor-

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 54 of 93

hoods on Sunday morning. Many were disparaging of the upcoming ceasefire talks, pointing to the burned out homes destroyed in the drone attack, saying these were more indicative of Russia's true intentions.

In an old multistory building on Kyiv's left bank that was damaged in the overnight attack, Dmytro Zapadnya, 37, said he had no faith in Russia upholding any ceasefire agreement.

"There is no point in signing anything (with Russians), because it will not be worth the cost of paper where you put this signature. Well, the only thing that is not very pleasant is that now the United States seems to have little understanding of our situation," he said.

Elsewhere, four people were killed in Russian attacks on Ukraine's Donetsk region, regional Gov. Vadym Filashkin said, including three who died in a strike on the front-line Ukrainian town of Dobropillya.

In a statement on social media, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy said attacks such as the one in Kyiv were a daily occurrence for Ukraine.

"This week alone, more than 1,580 guided aerial bombs, almost 1,100 strike drones and 15 missiles of various types were used against our people," he said. "New solutions are needed, with new pressure on Moscow to stop both these strikes and this war."

Also on Sunday, Russia's Ministry of Defense said it had shot down 59 Ukrainian drones overnight, including 29 over the region of Rostov and 20 more over southwestern Astrakhan. In Rostov, one person was killed and a car caught fire due to the Ukrainian drone attack, according to the area's temporary governor, Yuri Slyusar.

A woman also died in the Russian border village of Novostroyevka-Pervaya in the Belgorod region when a Ukrainian drone hit a car in which she was traveling.

The driver, the woman's daughter, was also seriously injured in the attack, said local Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov.

## **Turkish court orders key Erdogan rival jailed pending trial on corruption charges**

ISTANBUL (AP) — A court formally arrested the mayor of Istanbul, a key rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on Sunday and ordered him jailed pending the outcome of a trial on corruption charges.

Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu was detained following a raid on his residence earlier this week, sparking the largest wave of street demonstrations in Turkey in more than a decade. It also deepened concerns over democracy and rule of law in Turkey.

His imprisonment is widely regarded as a political move to remove a major contender from the next presidential race, currently scheduled for 2028.

Government officials reject accusations that legal actions against opposition figures are politically motivated and insist that Turkey's courts operate independently.

The prosecutor's office said the court decided to jail Imamoglu on suspicion of running a criminal organization, accepting bribes, extortion, illegally recording personal data and bid-rigging. A request for him to be imprisoned on terror-related charges was rejected.

Alongside the mayor, 47 other people were also jailed pending trial, including a key aide and two district mayors from Istanbul. A further 44 suspects were released under judicial control.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said Sunday that 323 people were detained the previous evening over disturbances at protests.

Largely peaceful protests across Turkey have seen hundreds of thousands come out in support of Imamoglu. However, there has been some violence, with police deploying water cannons, tear gas, pepper spray and firing plastic pellets at protesters in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, some of whom hurled stones, fireworks and other missiles at riot police.

A primary to endorse Imamoglu and "solidarity ballots"

The formal arrest came as more than 1.5 million members of the opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP, began holding a primary presidential election to endorse Imamoglu as its presidential candidate.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 55 of 93**

With Imamoglu as the sole candidate, the primary — announced last month — was largely a symbolic show of support.

The party has also set up symbolic ballot boxes nationwide to allow people who are not party members to express their support for the mayor. Large crowds gathered early Sunday to cast a “solidarity ballot.”

“This is no longer just a problem of the Republican People’s Party, but a problem of Turkish democracy,” Fusun Erben, 69, said at a polling station in Istanbul’s Kadikoy district. “We do not accept our rights being so easily usurped. We will fight until the end.”

Speaking at a polling station in Bodrum, western Turkey, engineer Mehmet Dayanc, 38, said he feared that “in the end we’ll be like Russia, a country without an opposition, where only a single man participates in elections.”

In a message posted on social media, Imamoglu called on people to show “their struggle for democracy and justice to the entire world” at the ballot box. He warned Erdogan that he would be defeated by “our righteousness, our courage, our humility, our smiling face.”

Domestic and international supporters slam the court’s action

“Honestly, we are embarrassed in the name of our legal system,” Ankara Mayor Mansur Yavas, a fellow member of Imamoglu’s CHP, told reporters after casting his vote, criticizing the lack of confidentiality in the proceedings.

“We learned from television pundits about the allegations that even lawyers did not have access to, showing how politically motivated this whole ordeal has been,” he said.

CHP leader Ozgur Ozel said Imamoglu’s imprisonment was reminiscent of “Italian mafia methods.” Speaking at Istanbul City Hall, he added: “Imamoglu is on the one hand in prison and on the other hand on the way to the presidency.”

The Council of Europe, a Europe-wide body that focuses on promoting human rights and democracy slammed the decision to imprison the mayor.

“We deplore the decision to place Mayor of Istanbul Ekrem Imamoglu in detention, and demand his immediate release,” said Marc Cools who heads the grouping’s congress of local authorities.

Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and an author of a biography of Erdogan, said with Imamoglu’s arrest, Erdogan was “determined to do whatever it takes to end Imamoglu’s career,” he said.

Imamoglu’s long history of criminal cases

Before his detention, Imamoglu had already faced multiple criminal cases that could result in prison sentences and a political ban. He was also appealing a 2022 conviction for insulting members of Turkey’s Supreme Electoral Council.

Earlier in the week, a university nullified his diploma, citing alleged irregularities in his transfer from a private university in northern Cyprus some 30 years ago. The decision effectively bars him from running for president, since the position requires candidates to be university graduates. Imamoglu had vowed to challenge the decision.

Imamoglu was elected mayor of Turkey’s largest city in March 2019, in a major blow to Erdogan and the president’s Justice and Development Party, which had controlled Istanbul for a quarter-century. Erdogan’s party pushed to void the municipal election results in the city of 16 million, alleging irregularities.

The challenge resulted in a repeat of the election a few months later, which Imamoglu also won.

The mayor retained his seat following local elections last year, during which the CHP made significant gains against Erdogan’s governing party.

## **Greenlanders embrace pre-Christian Inuit traditions as a way to proudly reclaim ancestral roots**

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — Sitting on the pelt of a polar bear hunted by her family, Aviaja Rakel Sanimuinaq says she’s proud to be part of a movement of Greenlanders reclaiming their Inuit traditions and spirituality.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 56 of 93**

The shaman, who has Inuit facial tattoos, works with spiritual healing practices to help people connect with their ancestors and heal generational trauma. A sign outside her studio in the Greenland capital of Nuuk conveys her role: "Ancient knowledge in a modern world."

In recent years, Greenlanders like her have been embracing pre-Christian Inuit traditions, including drum dancing and Inuit tattoos. For some, it's a way to proudly reclaim their ancestral roots. It's also a way to reject the legacy of European Christian missionaries who colonized Greenland in the 18th century and suppressed their traditions, labeling them as pagan.

"The sacredness of Christianity is still sacred in my eyes. But so is Buddhism, so is Hinduism, and so is my work," Sanimuinaq said in her studio, surrounded by skulls of seals, raven feathers and medicinal herbs. They help the "angakkoq," or shaman, communicate with "silam aappaa" or the other world — the spiritual world.

"That's where I stand — that the arising of our culture, and us as a people, is also to get the equality within our culture, to acknowledge that our culture is legit; that it has to have a space here."

The Inuit have survived and thrived for generations in one of the most remote, vast and rugged places on Earth, hunting for seals, whales and polar bears. Their traditional religion is animist.

Inuit believe that "every animal and bird, every stone and every piece of earth, the rain and the snow all have a spirit and a right to be respected," authors Gill and Alistair Campbell write in their travel book, "Greenland."

About 90% of the 57,000 Greenlanders identify as Inuit and the vast majority belong to the Lutheran Church. A Danish missionary brought that branch of Christianity to the world's largest island more than 300 years ago.

Greenland is now a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark, and Greenlanders increasingly favor getting full independence — a crucial issue in a recent parliamentary election.

Some say Greenland's independence movement received a boost after U.S. President Donald Trump pushed their Arctic homeland into the spotlight by threatening to take it over.

"We don't have to walk silenced anymore," Sanimuinaq said. "That's the change we see — that the voice we get out in the world has been forbidden even within our country. Now that we're opening, we have more freedom."

The spiritual and social value of Tunniit — the traditional Inuit tattoos

The suppression of Inuit drums and facial tattoos were part of a broader effort to Christianize and assimilate Inuit into the European way of life, said Asta Mønsted, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. She researches Inuit oral history and its connections to Greenland's archaeology.

"Drum songs and drum duels were central to Inuit spiritual and social life, but the missionaries viewed them as pagan practices and superstitions that needed to be replaced with Christian hymns and prayers," she said. "Drums were confiscated or destroyed in order to break the connection to the pre-Christian beliefs."

In some parts of Greenland, though, the drum songs and knowledge of drum-making were preserved without the church's knowledge.

"Tattoos were also linked to Inuit cosmology and rites, but missionaries labeled them as pagan and especially viewed the facial tattoos as a defilement of God's creation," said Mønsted. "They promoted the European ideal, where the human body should remain unmarked."

"Tunniit," the traditional Inuit tattoos, were etched by poking sod from soapstone lamps onto the skin with a needle or by dragging a sod-covered sinew thread underneath the skin.

Women generally got tattoos as they experienced menstruation and childbirth, viewing them as protection against illness and malevolent spirits, Mønsted said.

But resistance to Inuit tattoos deterred many Greenlanders across generations from getting them; some who had tattoos hid them, fearing repercussions.

Growing up, Therecie Sanimuinaq Pedersen recalled how her grandmother covered her facial tattoos in soot because she didn't want to be alienated from her community.

Therecie only got the tattoos that now cover her face — the way she remembered her grandmother's

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 57 of 93**

— after her daughter, Aviaja, got them in recent years.

"The tattoos I have goes from mother to daughter for thousands of years," Therecie said in Greenlandic, translated by her daughter. "I have the same as my grandmother — that's my heritage."

These days, when she's out on Nuuk's streets and encounters others displaying Inuit tattoos, she feels encouraged, especially when she sees them on young Greenlanders.

"When I see them, it's like we have a connection," she said. "Without knowing them, and them knowing me, we say hi. Some come, give a hug, and say thank you."

Inuit drum for conflict resolution and restoring pride in ancestral tradition

For the Inuit, the "qilaat" played a crucial role in conflict resolution through drum duels.

The drum, Mønsted said, had three main functions: for entertainment and socializing, as a tool for the shaman during their seances, and as part of a pre-colonial juridical system.

"In the drum duels, opponents used songs, insults, and exaggerated body movements to argue their case before the community, which would stand in a circle around them," Mønsted said.

She said the crowd's collective laughter often determined the winner without the need for a formal ruling.

While some duels helped ease tensions, others ended in public humiliation, sometimes forcing the losing party to leave the community and become a "qivittoq" — a person living in nature outside of society. This exile could be tantamount to a death sentence in the frigid Arctic environment.

Greenland was a colony under Denmark's crown until 1953, when it became a province in the Scandinavian country. In 1979, the island was granted home rule, and 30 years ago became a self-governing entity. But Denmark retains control over foreign and defense affairs.

The former colonial ruler is accused of committing abuses against Greenland's Inuit, including removing children from their families in the 1950s with the excuse of integrating them into Danish society and fitting women with intrauterine contraceptive devices in the 1960s and 1970s — allegedly to limit population growth.

Some Greenlanders believe the recent global attention on their mineral-rich country and a unified call for independence from Denmark has allowed them to speak more openly about abuses committed by their former colonial ruler. Some have grown closer to their rich pre-Christian Indigenous culture.

"Our culture is very spiritual ... I want to bring that back," said Naja Parnuuna, an award-winning singer-songwriter.

"I want to be in that wave with my fellow young people... I feel like we've been looked down for so long, and we really haven't had a voice for a long time."

Growing up, she said she felt that it was "cooler to be a Dane, or to speak Danish, and was ashamed to be Greenlandic and follow Inuit traditions. "Maybe not embarrassing," she said, "but it was taboo or weird to do the drums or be Inuk."

Her father, Markus Olsen, is a former Lutheran pastor who was dismissed from his church position in 2022 after he allowed drum dancing during a National Day service at the Nuuk Cathedral. He knew that was risky but did it because he believes the qilaat, the Inuit traditional drum, needs to be reinstated into its valued position in religious services and other aspects of Greenlandic life.

Olsen, who wears a collar with a small qilaat and a crucifix, takes inspiration from the Latin American Liberation Theology movement, which holds that the teachings of Jesus require followers to fight for economic and social justice. He also takes inspiration from the Rastafari legend Bob Marley, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and civil rights activist Malcolm X.

Parnuuna feels inspired by her father. She began to embrace her roots through her music, which encourages Greenlanders to value their Inuit culture and history.

"The more I practiced my art, singing and writing songs, I began to realize how important it is to accept ... my roots, to have more self-respect, to have higher self-esteem and in that way have a healthier way of living and a more positive view of the world," she said.

"It's important to bring that back, so that we can love ourselves again."

## AOC tries to broaden her appeal within a Democratic base spoiling for a fight

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Bernie Sanders stepped onto a stage in downtown Denver, surrounded by tens of thousands of cheering supporters in what he described as the biggest rally he had ever addressed. The Vermont senator put his hand on the shoulder of the woman who had introduced him, a signal for her to stay on stage.

"She has become an inspiration to millions of young people," Sanders said of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, recounting her biography from a girl who helped her mother clean houses and later became a bartender before emerging as political insurgent who ousted a powerful New York Democrat in a U.S. House primary.

The crowd began a chant of her well-known moniker: "AOC! AOC!"

In a leaderless Democratic Party out of power in Washington, Ocasio-Cortez has a message and a connection with a segment of liberals feeling disenchanted with both parties. Now, in her fourth term, the 35-year-old congresswoman is working to broaden her appeal beyond her progressive, anti-establishment roots.

Hitting the road last week with Sanders for his "Fighting Oligarchy" rallies, she is addressing people who disagree with her and reframing the divide in the Democratic Party not as progressive versus moderate, but as those going after Republican President Donald Trump and those being more cautious.

"No matter who you voted for in the past, no matter if you know all the right words to say, no matter your race, religion, gender identity or status," Ocasio-Cortez said to thousands in a rally at Arizona State University. "No matter even if you disagree with me on a few things. If you are willing to fight for someone you don't know, you are welcome here."

Her instinct to brawl is well-matched to the restlessness of the Democratic base, much of which sees top party officials like New York Sen. Chuck Schumer as not confrontational enough.

"We're lacking leadership right now, and we really just need someone to take the reins and tell us what to do," said Kristen Hanson, a 41-year-old small business owner from Phoenix, whose search for a call to action brought her to see Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez. "I'm not in politics, but I would be very happy to follow a leader who I believe in."

But that instinct also irritates some elected Democrats.

Sen. Elissa Slotkin of Michigan, whose profile is also rising after her November victory in a state Trump won, was challenged recently by a constituent to more aggressively confront Trump like Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders and Rep. Jasmine Crockett, a Dallas Democrat who is becoming one of her party's key messengers.

Slotkin said she had to be "more than just an activist" and noted that those lawmakers represent heavily Democratic areas.

"All of those things require me to be more than just an AOC," she said. "I can't do what she does because we live in a purple state and I'm a pragmatist."

AOC tours with Sanders

Sanders, one of the few political leaders with the resources to plan large rallies and the appeal to pack them, has stepped into the Democratic leadership vacuum with appearances across the country. Ocasio-Cortez joined him this past week for five events in Nevada, Arizona and Colorado.

In Denver, the crowd was so immense that people climbed onto statues and sat on the broad steps of buildings across the street to watch. In Tempe, Arizona, outside Phoenix, thousands of people who could not get inside the arena crowded a plaza outside or watched from a parking garage.

In speeches lasting about 25 minutes, Ocasio-Cortez blended the denunciations of economic inequality that have been central to her brand with an offering that "we are not powerless in this moment."

About two-thirds of Democrats have a favorable opinion of Ocasio-Cortez and just 5% view her unfavorably, according to Gallup polling from January. But the broader public is more divided. Among all adults, about 4 in 10 had a negative view of Ocasio-Cortez while about 3 in 10 had a positive view.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 59 of 93**

In her home state, about 4 in 10 New York voters in the November election viewed her favorably while about the same share had an unfavorable opinion, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the 2024 electorate.

Ocasio-Cortez confronted head-on the perception that she is a radical by being magnanimous toward other Democratic factions. She did not walk away from her progressive views but signaled openness to disagreement, saying her movement "is not about partisan labels or purity tests," but rather solidarity with the working class.

At each stop, she spoke supportively of local Democrats in Congress, even those who do not align with her ideologically.

"We need more people like them with the courage to brawl for the working class," she said in Arizona, praising colleagues who voted against a Republican spending bill.

She did poke at former Arizona Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, who was elected as a Democrat in 2018 but infuriated progressives for working with Republicans and blocking Democratic priorities such as raising the minimum wage. Sinema became an independent but declined to run for a second term.

"One thing I love about Arizonans is that you all have shown that if a U.S. senator isn't fighting hard enough for you, you're not afraid to replace her with one who will," Ocasio-Cortez said.

The budget fight creates enduring Democratic anger

The decision by 10 Senate Democrats, led by party leader Schumer, to allow a Republican-led spending bill to advance infuriated the Democratic base, which saw it as capitulation to Trump. (Slotkin, the Michigan senator, voted against advancing the bill.)

Schumer argued the spending bill was "terrible" but a government shutdown — had the measure not passed — would have given Trump the power to make even more cuts as his administration slashes agencies and hundreds of thousands of federal jobs. House Democrats disagreed with him in a rare show of public dissent and several liberal groups are pushing Schumer to resign.

Ocasio-Cortez gave voice to that anger in her speeches. Her plea for "a Democratic Party that fights harder for us" drew the biggest applause of her speeches in Denver and Tempe.

Dane Burgos, 28, snapped a selfie with Ocasio-Cortez as she left the Denver rally. "I was mainly here for Bernie, because he's the OG, but AOC — it's clear she's the heir apparent," Burgos said.

Armando Valdez, a two-time Sanders voter and Navy veteran who gets his medical care through the Department of Veterans Affairs, is especially alarmed at the Trump administration's proposed cuts.

He feels like he knows Sanders well, but is eager to hear what Ocasio-Cortez has to say.

Sanders is, too. Just not as a solo act yet.

The 83-year-old has said he's not running for president a third time. But asked after his Tempe rally whether he sees any promising leaders rising up, he did not give his support to Ocasio-Cortez or anyone else.

"There are dozens and dozens of really strong progressives out there who are I think going to be the future political leaders of our country," Sanders told reporters.

## **America's European allies are trying to pry their unspent money back from USAID**

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, JAMEY KEATEN, MIKE CORDER AND VANESSA GERA Associated Press

Three European allies provided millions of dollars that the United States was supposed to spend for low-income countries. Then the Trump administration and Elon Musk's government-cutters arrived.

Government officials from Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands told The Associated Press that a combined \$15 million they contributed for joint development work overseas has been parked at the U.S. Agency for International Development for months.

After the Republican administration and Musk's Department of Government Efficiency cut USAID's funding and the bulk of its programs, the Europeans asked whether their money would be funneled to projects as expected or refunded.

They have gotten no response.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 60 of 93**

"It's a concern for us, especially as we want our partner organizations to be compensated for the work they have put into the programs," said Julia Lindholm, a spokeswoman for the Swedish government's international development agency.

The true total may be larger. Other foreign governments also had money entrusted with USAID for distribution in a range of joint development projects at the time President Donald Trump ordered the funding freeze on Jan. 20, according to an official directly familiar with the matter who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The worries point to the extent to which the new administration's abrupt cutoff of foreign assistance and canceling of contracts for humanitarian and development work are raising questions about Washington's financial reliability. They also show further strain between allies as Trump revamps American foreign policy.

The State Department and USAID did not immediately respond to questions asking how many foreign governments had money for joint development programs going unspent and unrefunded in the USAID funding freeze, how much money that was in total, and whether the administration was doing anything about it.

## Concerns from American allies

Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands had been partnering with USAID on a project called Water and Energy for Food, or WE4F. It helps farmers and others in poorer countries develop innovative ways to grow more food without straining water supplies or depending on climate-damaging forms of energy.

"Most importantly," Lindholm said by email, the U.S. failure so far to disburse or refund allies' donations is harming "6 million of the poorest and most vulnerable farmers in the world who are dependent on the technologies for their food production and food security."

Other administration actions already have alarmed traditional partners. Trump has said he would not necessarily follow the mutual-defense pact underlying the NATO security agreement, he has advanced some of Russia's talking points and demands in its invasion of Ukraine and has imposed tariffs on Canada, the European Union and others.

## America as a reliable financial partner

Now, doubts about the U.S. as a reliable business partner have emerged in lawsuits over the administration's abrupt cancellation of what Secretary of State Marco Rubio said were 83% of USAID contracts, forcing partner organizations to lay off workers and driving some out of business.

In a brief supporting a lawsuit from federal workers, former Defense Secretaries Chuck Hagel and William Perry, former CIA Director Michael Hayden and more than a dozen other former senior U.S. officials said the administration's mass canceling of thousands of USAID contracts was flouting U.S. financial regulations and "destroying the United States' credibility as a reliable partner."

Canceling the contracts "sends a message that this administration does not feel bound by those regulations — regulations on which every business that works with the United States relies," the former officials said.

In another case, lawyers for nonprofits and businesses seeking payment from USAID told a judge that because of the financial chaos surrounding the agency's dismantling, banks have stopped what used to be routine financing for USAID partners based on their contracts with the U.S. agency.

Since the Cold War, the national security argument for development programs has been that making poorer countries more prosperous and stable lessens refugee flows and conflicts.

Trump and Musk call foreign assistance through USAID in particular a fraud and scam. Administration officials are looking at focusing U.S. development efforts much more narrowly on combating China's influence abroad and boosting U.S. trade and business opportunities.

## Seeking money back from the Trump administration

Growing steadily more alarmed by the administration's foreign aid moves, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands initially sent USAID emails inquiring about the money they had parked in USAID accounts.

Frustrated at getting no response, two of them warned in the government-to-government emails that they were looking at talking to local media about their missing money, according to the official directly familiar with the matter.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 61 of 93**

Under court order, the administration has started making good on some \$2 billion USAID already owed when Trump ordered the freeze in USAID and State Department foreign assistance on Inauguration Day.

But forced leaves and firings have yanked most officials and workers at USAID's headquarters off the job. That includes many who oversaw development programs and would be involved in tracking down numbers and calculating any refunds for the foreign governments.

Sweden's development agency told the AP that it estimates it has \$12 million total, including \$5.1 million for WE4F, sitting in USAID accounts — money going unspent for people in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and unrefunded by the administration.

Lindholm, the spokesperson for Sweden's development agency, called the WE4F program "extraordinarily impactful," with measurable benefits for farmers and others many times greater than the program's initial targets.

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation told the AP that it has received no information about the fate of a \$1.4 million funding tranche for WE4F since Trump began dissolving USAID.

The Dutch Foreign Ministry said it reached out to the U.S. aid agency on how much of the \$1.6 million it had given most recently for WE4F had yet to be disbursed by USAID and should be refunded, but that it had not yet gotten any response.

"Donor partners are now exploring other opportunities to continue to run the WE4F programme to ensure a responsible completion," Lindholm said by email.

## **The US lifts bounties on senior Taliban officials, including Sirajuddin Haqqani, says Kabul**

By The Associated Press undefined

The U.S. has lifted bounties on three senior Taliban figures, including the interior minister who also heads a powerful network blamed for bloody attacks against Afghanistan's former Western-backed government, officials in Kabul said Sunday.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, who acknowledged planning a January 2008 attack on the Serena Hotel in Kabul, which killed six people, including U.S. citizen Thor David Hesla, no longer appears on the State Department's Rewards for Justice website. The FBI website on Sunday still featured a wanted poster for him.

Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said the U.S. government had revoked the bounties placed on Haqqani, Abdul Aziz Haqqani, and Yahya Haqqani.

"These three individuals are two brothers and one paternal cousin," Qani told The Associated Press.

The Haqqani network grew into one of the deadliest arms of the Taliban after the U.S.-led 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. The group employed roadside bombs, suicide bombings and other attacks, including on the Indian and U.S. embassies, the Afghan presidency, and other major targets. They also have been linked to extortion, kidnapping and other criminal activity.

A Foreign Ministry official, Zakir Jalaly, said the Taliban's release of U.S. prisoner George Glezzmann on Friday and the removal of bounties showed both sides were "moving beyond the effects of the wartime phase and taking constructive steps to pave the way for progress" in bilateral relations.

"The recent developments in Afghanistan-U.S. relations are a good example of the pragmatic and realistic engagement between the two governments," said Jalaly.

Taliban see the opening in breaking out of isolation

Another official, Shafi Azam, hailed the development as the beginning of normalization, also citing the Taliban's announcement they were in control of Afghanistan's embassy in Norway.

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, China has been the most prominent country to accept one of their diplomats. Other countries have accepted de facto Taliban representatives, like Qatar, which has been a key mediator between the U.S. and the Taliban. U.S. envoys have also met the Taliban.

The Taliban rule, especially bans affecting women and girls, has triggered widespread condemnation and deepened their international isolation.

Haqqani has previously spoken out against the Taliban's decision-making process, authoritarianism and

alienation of the Afghan population.

He has been under U.N. sanctions since 2007, because of his involvement with the network founded by his father, Jalaluddin.

But the global body has allowed him to travel in the past 12 months, including to the United Arab Emirates to meet the country's leadership and to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage. Those were his first trips abroad since the Taliban takeover.

Ibraheem Bahiss, a senior analyst with International Crisis Group's Asia program, said the removal of the bounties was a win for Taliban officials wanting to do business with the international community. The U.S. was showing it could reward those who made compromises within their own remit, even if these compromises didn't translate to national policy, he said.

The international community had made demands of the Taliban, specifically lifting restrictions on women and girls, but offered nothing in return, said Bahiss. Scrapping bounties was a sign that small diplomatic overtures were possible.

While recognition as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan might not immediately be on the horizon, the Taliban viewed normalization as enough progress given their existing diplomatic inroads in the region, according to Bahiss.

"For the Taliban, the removal of sanctions is more important than (official) recognition. Sanctions bite. They inhibit your ability to do business, to travel. That's why they would celebrate this as a victory. The transactional nature of this diplomacy suits both the Taliban and Trump."

His partial rehabilitation on the international stage is in contrast to the status of the reclusive Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, who could face arrest by the International Criminal Court for his persecution of women.

## **Stressed? Sick? Swiss town lets doctors prescribe free museum visits as art therapy for patients**

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

NEUCHÂTEL, Switzerland (AP) — The world's woes got you down? Feeling burnout at work? Need a little something extra to fight illness or prep for surgery? The Swiss town of Neuchâtel is offering its residents a novel medical option: Expose yourself to art and get a doctor's note to do it for free.

Under a new two-year pilot project, local and regional authorities are covering the costs of "museum prescriptions" issued by doctors who believe their patients could benefit from visits to any of the town's four museums as part of their treatment.

The project is based on a 2019 World Health Organization report that found the arts can boost mental health, reduce the impact of trauma and lower the risk of cognitive decline, frailty and "premature mortality," among other upsides.

Art can help relax the mind — as a sort of preventative medicine — and visits to museums require getting up and out of the house with physical activity like walking and standing for long periods.

Neuchâtel council member Julie Courcier Delafontaine said the COVID crisis also played a role in the program's genesis. "With the closure of cultural sites (during coronavirus lockdowns), people realized just how much we need them to feel better."

She said so far some 500 prescriptions have been distributed to doctors around town and the program costs "very little." Ten thousand Swiss francs (about \$11,300) have been budgeted for it.

If successful, local officials could expand the program to other artistic activities like theater or dance, Courcier Delafontaine said. The Swiss national health care system doesn't cover "culture as a means of therapy," but she hopes it might one day, if the results are positive enough.

Marianne de Reynier Nevsky, the cultural mediation manager in the town of 46,000 who helped devise the program, said it built on a similar idea rolled out at the Fine Arts Museum in Montreal, Canada, in 2019.

She said many types of patients could benefit.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 63 of 93**

"It could be a person with depression, a person who has trouble walking, a person with a chronic illness," she said near a display of a feather headdress from Papua New Guinea at the Ethnographic Museum of Neuchatel, a converted former villa that overlooks Lake Neuchatel.

Part of the idea is to get recalcitrant patients out of the house and walking more.

Dr. Marc-Olivier Sauvain, head of surgery at the Neuchatel Hospital Network, said he had already prescribed museum visits to two patients to help them get in better shape before a planned operation.

He said a wider rollout is planned once a control group is set up. For his practice, the focus will be on patients who admit that they've lost the habit of going out. He wants them to get moving.

"It's wishful thinking to think that telling them to go walk or go for a stroll to improve their fitness level before surgery" will work, Sauvain said on a video call Saturday, wearing blue scrubs. "I think that these patients will fully benefit from museum prescriptions. We'll give them a chance to get physical and intellectual exercise."

"And as a doctor, it's really nice to prescribe museum visits rather than medicines or tests that patients don't enjoy," he added. "To tell them 'It's a medical order that instructs you to go visit one of our nice city museums.'"

Some museum-goers see the upsides too.

"I think it's a great idea," said Carla Fragniere Filliger, a poet and retired teacher, during a visit to the ethnography museum. "There should be prescriptions for all the museums in the world!"

## **'Give me liberty or give me death' turns 250. Here's what it meant in 1775**

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

The phrase "Give me liberty or give me death!" has been expressed by protesters from the 1989 Tiananmen Square uprising in China to those who opposed COVID-19 restrictions in the U.S. in 2020.

Malcolm X referenced it in his 1964 "Ballot or the Bullet" speech, demanding equal rights for Black Americans. President Donald Trump quoted it on his Truth Social platform last year, lambasting a judge during his criminal hush money trial.

The phrase was reportedly first used 250 years ago Sunday by lawyer and legislator Patrick Henry to persuade Virginia colonists to prepare for war against an increasingly punitive Great Britain, just weeks before the American Revolution.

Tensions were coming to a boil, particularly in Massachusetts, where the British replaced elected officials, occupied Boston and shuttered the harbor.

"The entire episode was about helping our brethren in Massachusetts," said historian John Ragosta, who wrote a book on Henry. "It's about the community. It's about the nation. It's not about, 'What do I get out of this personally?'"

The printed version of Henry's galvanizing speech in a crowded church was about 1,200 words. And yet those seven words have survived the centuries like a line from a Shakespeare play.

"It's a very malleable phrase," said Patrick Henry Jolly, a fifth great grandson of Henry. "It's something that can be applied to many different circumstances. But I think it's important that people understand the original context."

Jolly is set to reenact Henry's speech Sunday in the same church where his ancestor delivered it. The presentation, which will be streamed online, is part of Virginia's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's birth.

Here's more information on Henry and his speech:

Who was Patrick Henry?

Born to an influential Virginia family in 1736, Henry became a successful trial lawyer in his 20s.

According to the Library of Congress, he once astonished a courtroom with an argument that "man is born with certain inalienable rights," an idea echoed in the Declaration of Independence.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 64 of 93**

In 1765, Henry won a seat in Virginia's colonial legislature. He was instrumental in opposing Great Britain's Stamp Act, which levied a direct tax on the American colonies to raise money for Britain.

As tensions increased, many Americans felt like second-class citizens with no representation in parliament, Ragosta said. By the time of Henry's speech, many were thinking: "The king won't listen to us. They've invaded Boston. What should we in Virginia do about that?"

Did he really say it?

In his 2004 book, "Founding Myths," historian Ray Raphael wrote "it is highly unlikely" Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death!"

Henry did not write down the speech and the version we know today was published 42 years later in an 1817 biography of him. The biographer, attorney William Wirt, pieced together Henry's words from the decades-old recollections of people who were there.

The printed version, Raphael wrote, "reflects the agendas of 19th century nationalists who were fond of romanticizing war."

But other historians said there is ample evidence Henry uttered those words.

"We have multiple people, years later, saying, 'I remember like it was yesterday,'" Ragosta said, adding that Thomas Jefferson was one of them.

They recalled Henry lifting a letter opener that looked like a dagger and plunging it under his arm as if into his chest before saying the famous phrase.

"That's 18th century oratory," Ragosta said. "It's very impassioned."

Jon Kukla, another historian who wrote a book on Henry, cited other evidence. Men in Virginia's militias soon embroidered their heavy canvas shirts with "liberty or death."

The popular 1712 play "Cato" about a Roman senator also contains the line, "It is not now a time to talk of aught, but chains or conquest, liberty or death."

"It would have been part of the literate culture of the age," Kukla said.

What happened next?

The most immediate impact of Henry's speech was more support for independence and the expansion of Virginia's militias.

In the months afterward, Henry and others also were driven by fears that the British would free enslaved people, Raphael suggests in "Founding Myths."

Virginia's royal governor, Lord Dunmore, offered freedom to enslaved people who fought for the British.

But Ragosta said that was not a primary motivation for Henry, who enslaved dozens of people.

"That does move a lot of people off the fence into the patriot column, undoubtedly," Ragosta said. "But that's not really what's going on with the Jeffersons, the Washingtons, the Henrys. They had already been very committed to the patriot movement."

Following independence, Henry served as Virginia's governor five times. He also became known as an anti-federalist, opposing ratification of the U.S. Constitution and a strong central government.

But Henry later spoke in support of the founding document at George Washington's urging in 1799, the year Henry died.

"He says, 'Look, I voted against the Constitution, but we the people voted for it. And so we have to abide by it,'" Ragosta said.

Liberty versus license

Jolly, Henry's descendant, said most people react positively to his ancestor's famous words and acknowledge their historical significance.

"And there are some people that react thinking that it's a rallying cry for them today to defend their rights — on both sides of the aisle," Jolly said.

Yet Henry and his contemporaries were careful to distinguish liberty from license, said Kukla, the historian.

"Liberty, as they understood it, was not the freedom to do anything you damn well pleased," Kukla said.

## One of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen remembers struggle for recognition amid Trump's DEI purge

By MEAD GRUVER and THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

AURORA, Colo. (AP) — With members of a trailblazing Black Air Force unit passing away at advanced ages, efforts to remain true to their memory carry on despite sometimes confusing orders from President Donald Trump as he purges federal diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

Col. James H. Harvey III, 101, is among the last few airmen and support crew who proved that a Black unit — the 332nd Fighter Group of the Tuskegee Airmen — could fight as well as any other in World War II and the years after.

He went on to become the first Black jet fighter pilot in Korean airspace during the Korean War, and a decorated one after 126 missions. He was one of four Tuskegee Airmen who won the first U.S. Air Force Gunnery Meet in 1949, a forerunner of today's U.S. Navy "Top Gun" school.

"They said we didn't have any ability to operate aircraft or operate heavy machinery. We were inferior to the white man. We were nothing," Harvey said. "So we showed them."

Shortly after Trump's January inauguration, the Air Force removed new recruit training courses that included videos of the Tuskegee Airmen.

The removal drew bipartisan outrage and the White House's ire over what Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth described as "malicious implementation" of Trump's executive order.

The Air Force quickly reversed course.

Announcing the reversal, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Allvin said in a statement that the initial removal was because the service, like other agencies, had to move swiftly to comply with Trump's executive order with "no equivocation, no slow-rolling, no foot-dragging."

The videos were shown to troops as part of DEI courses taken during basic military training. Some photos of Tuskegee Airmen were also among tens of thousands of images in a Pentagon database flagged for removal.

"I thought there was progress in that area, but evidently there isn't," said Harvey, who blamed Trump for contributing to what he sees as worsening prejudice in the U.S.

"I'll tell him to his face. No problem," he said. "I'll tell him, 'You're a racist,' and see what he has to say about that. What can they do to me? Just kill me, that's all."

The Tuskegee Airmen unit was established in 1941 as the 99th Pursuit Squadron based at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The 99th became the 332nd Fighter Group, which by war's end destroyed or damaged more than 400 enemy aircraft in North Africa and Europe during the war and sank a German destroyer in action.

Of the 992 Tuskegee Airmen trained as pilots starting in 1942, 335 were deployed, 66 were killed in action and 32 who were shot down became war prisoners.

In 1949, two months after the airmen's gunnery meet victory in the propeller-driven class, the U.S. Air Force integrated Black and white troops and the Tuskegee Airmen were absorbed into other units.

It took the Air Force almost half a century to recognize 332nd's last achievement: Its success in aerial bombing and shooting proficiency in the gunnery meet at what is now Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada.

For decades, the winners were listed as "unknown" and their trophy was missing.

"We won them all," Harvey said. "We weren't supposed to win anything because of the color of our skin."

Harvey trained during World War II but was not deployed to combat before the war ended. In Korea, he flew the F-80 Shooting Star jet fighter and earned medals including the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1965 and received an honorary promotion to colonel in 2023.

Trump in 2020 promoted another of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen, Charles McGee, to brigadier general. McGee died in 2022 at age 102.

Harvey still regards the Air Force Gunnery Meet as his biggest accomplishment, one the Air Force finally recognized in 1993.

Their missing trophy was found in a museum storeroom not long after.

"We were good, and they couldn't take it away from us," Harvey said. "We were good. And I'll repeat it until I die."

## Prosecutors request formal arrest of Istanbul mayor and top challenger to Turkey's Erdogan

ISTANBUL (AP) — Prosecutors early Sunday requested that detained Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, the top challenger to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, be formally arrested over allegations of corruption and terror links.

A court is now set to decide whether the popular opposition figure will be charged and jailed pending a trial.

The arrest this week of Imamoglu has intensified political tensions and sparked widespread protests across Turkey, with demonstrators rallying in multiple cities to voice their opposition.

Many view his arrest as a politically driven attempt to remove Imamoglu from the next presidential race, currently scheduled for 2028. Government officials reject the accusation and say Turkey's courts are independent.

Police questioned Imamoglu for around five hours on Saturday as part of an investigation into allegations of aiding the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, the Cumhuriyet newspaper reported. A day earlier he was questioned for four hours over the corruption accusations. The mayor rejected all charges during both interrogations.

He was later transferred to a courthouse for questioning by prosecutors along with some 90 other people who were also detained with him.

Authorities barred access to the courthouse using barricades on local roads and closing nearby metro stations. Hundreds of police officers and over a dozen water cannon trucks were deployed. Still, hundreds gathered in front of the building shouting: "Rights, law, justice!"

Largest wave of protests in Turkey in more than decade

Others gathered outside the Istanbul city hall or took to the streets to denounce the mayor's resignation for a fourth night of nationwide protests, in the largest wave of street demonstrations in Turkey in more than a decade.

The demonstrations were largely peaceful but a group of protesters, trying to break through barricades to reach Istanbul's main square, threw flares, stones and other objects at police, which responded with pepper spray. Some demonstrators said rubber bullets were fired.

Police used water cannons and tear gas to scatter demonstrators in Ankara.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said 323 people were detained following protests Saturday night. Earlier, he said: "There will be no tolerance for those who seek to violate societal order, threaten the people's peace and security, and pursue chaos and provocation."

Growing protests in reaction to the arrest

Imamoglu was detained on Wednesday following a dawn raid on his residence over allegations of financial crimes and links to Kurdish militants. Dozens of other prominent figures, including two district mayors, were also detained.

The Istanbul governor's office announced it was expanding a ban on demonstrations until March 26 and imposed restrictions on the entry and exit of vehicles deemed to be transporting people "likely to participate in unlawful activities."

Erdogan on Saturday accused the leadership of the opposition CHP of turning the party "into an apparatus to absolve a handful of municipal robbers who have become blinded by money."

He also accused it of "doing everything to disturb the public peace, to polarize the nation."

Presidential primary to be held

Imamoglu's arrest came just days before he was expected to be nominated as the opposition Republican People's Party's presidential candidate in a primary on Sunday. Ozel has said that the primary, where around 1.5 million delegates can vote, will go ahead as planned.

The opposition party has also urged citizens to participate in a symbolic election on Sunday — through improvised ballot boxes to be set up across Turkey — to show solidarity with Imamoglu.

In a tweet posted shortly before his arrival at the courthouse, Imamoglu urged the public to safeguard the ballot boxes for Sunday's primary, "Don't forget: they are very afraid of you and your democratic right to vote."

In an earlier message, Imamoglu described his arrest as a "coup" and accused the government of exploiting the judiciary and worsening the country's troubled economy.

## **Netflix documentary about Missouri tornado revisits one of the deadliest twisters in the US**

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

The horror of the Joplin tornado is the subject of a new documentary film, released nearly 14 years after the twister struck Missouri with cataclysmic force, ripping into a hospital, destroying neighborhoods and killing around 160.

"You see pictures of World War II, the devastation and all that with the bombing," Kerry Sachetta, then the Joplin High School principal, told The Associated Press on the evening of May 22, 2011, after the school was destroyed.

"That's really what it looked like," Sachetta said.

As he spoke on that dreadful night, fires from gas leaks burned across town. The EF-5 twister, then the single deadliest in six decades, packed winds of 200 mph (320 kph). At times, it was nearly a mile (1.6 kilometers) wide. Left in its wake was a hellscape of cars crushed like soda cans and shaken residents roaming streets in search of missing family members. About 7,500 homes were damaged or destroyed.

"The Twister: Caught in the Storm" was released last week by Netflix following a recent spate of deadly storms that have unleashed tornadoes, blinding dust storms and wildfires.

Hospital became a disaster zone

Some of the most startling damage in Joplin was at St. John's Regional Medical Center, where staff had only moments to hustle patients into the hallway before the 367-bed hospital was knocked off its foundation.

Flying debris blew out windows and disabled the hospitals' exposed generators, causing ventilators to stop working. The winds also scattered X-rays and medical records around 75 miles (121 kilometers) away.

Five patients and one visitor died in the immediate aftermath. And other patients later died of injuries they suffered in the storm.

On the morning after the storm, Dr. Jim Riscoe told the AP that some members of his emergency room staff showed up after the tornado with injuries of their own but worked through the night anyway.

"It's a testimony to the human spirit," Riscoe said, comparing the scene to a nuclear disaster. "Cars had been thrown like playing cards. Power lines were sparking. I couldn't believe it."

The building was so badly damaged it had to be razed the following year.

Recent grads and nursing home residents among the dead

The deaths from the storm were so numerous that a makeshift morgue was set up next to a football stadium in Joplin. Hundreds of others were injured in the city of 53,000.

Among the dead was 18-year-old Will Norton who was headed home from his high school graduation when he was sucked out of his family's SUV through the sunroof. His father desperately held on to his legs. Norton's body was found five days later in a nearby pond.

In the following years, his family kept his room as it was: an open pack of chewing gum, his trademark mismatched socks, his computer and the green screen that helped earn him a YouTube following for his travel chronicles.

"It's a little comfort to go in there, go back in time and remember how it was," his father, Mark Norton, said close to the five-year anniversary.

Around a dozen died in a single nursing home after the tornado tossed four vehicles, including a full-size van, into the building. Those who survived were scattered to nursing homes in four states, their records

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 68 of 93**

and medications blown away. Widespread phone outages then complicated efforts to locate the residents, some of whom had dementia.

Officials still disagree about the final death toll. The federal storm center says 158 died while local officials count the deaths of three additional people, including a person struck by lightning after the tornado blew through the city.

Schools were devastated but persisted

The tornado forced school officials to end the spring term nine days early. Six school buildings were destroyed, including the high school. Seven other buildings were badly damaged.

The district scrambled to rebuild with federal funds, donations, insurance money and a \$62 million bond, cobbling together a hodgepodge of temporary locations while construction was underway. Seniors and juniors took classes in a converted big-box store in a shopping mall, while freshmen and sophomores went to school in a building across town.

Then-President Barack Obama was the commencement speaker during the high school's 2012 commencement and then-Vice President Joe Biden attended the 2014 dedication of the new high school, calling the community the "heart and soul of America."

The dedication included two live eagles, the school's mascot. During the first home football game after the tornado, a single eagle flew over the football field and became a symbol signifying that the students, like the bird who returns to the same nesting spot each year, would come home again.

## **Trump makes NCAA men's wrestling championships his latest sports-focused trip**

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. (AP) — President Donald Trump attended the NCAA wrestling championships on Saturday night for the second time in three years, the latest example of how he has mostly limited travel early in his new term to trips built around sports events.

Trump arrived at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia to loud cheers and a standing ovation. He pumped his fists amid chants of "U-S-A!" As the matches occurred, Trump stood near the action and personally congratulated most of the winning wrestlers. Hours later, he left the arena, shaking hands along the way as the crowd roared.

The Republican president spent Friday night at his club in Bedminster, New Jersey, about 70 miles north-east of Philadelphia, on what was his first visit there of his second term.

"We're going to the big fight," Trump told reporters as he left the White House on Friday evening. "I've always supported the wrestlers." He added, "These are the great college wrestlers from the various schools."

Trump traveled with billionaire and top adviser Elon Musk. Oklahoma Sen. Markwayne Mullin greeted the president as he arrived at the Philadelphia airport. Pennsylvania Sen. Dave McCormick and U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan were also at the arena sitting in the same section as Musk and White House chief of staff Susie Wiles.

In the two-plus months since returning to the White House, Trump attended the Super Bowl in New Orleans and the Daytona 500 in Florida, where his motorcade drove a portion of the track. While president-elect he went to a UFC fight in New York.

That's more travel for sports than for policy announcements or official duties, though a long January swing took Trump to tour damage from Hurricane Helene in North Carolina and wildfires in Los Angeles. He then gave a speech and visited the floor of Las Vegas' Circa Resort & Casino before heading to Doral, Florida, to address a House Republican policy conference.

Trump has long built his public and political persona around sporting events, and relishes turning up at live events to hear cheers from the crowd, even if some in attendance boo him. He also has signed an executive order intended to ban transgender athletes from participating in girls' and women's sports — an action which he points to frequently to fire up his core supporters.

The president played football as a student at the New York Military Academy. As a New York business-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 69 of 93**

man in the early 1980s, he owned the New Jersey Generals of the United States Football League.

Trump had sued to force a merger of the USFL and the NFL. The USFL eventually folded.

During an interview on Air Force One with "Outkick the Show" podcast host Clay Travis on Saturday night, Trump was asked about the NFL champion Philadelphia Eagles being set to visit the White House, after not doing so following their Super Bowl win in 2018.

That year, Trump said he was rescinding the team's invitation after some players indicated that they planned to boycott.

"It's a great honor to come," Trump said.

The president said he also planned to host the Kansas City Chiefs after the Eagles, saying that the visit would make up for one that couldn't happen when the Chiefs won the 2020 Super Bowl because of the coronavirus pandemic.

That's despite Trump's predecessor, Democratic President Joe Biden, having hosted the Chiefs after they won the title in 2023, a visit that was considered as also making up for the missed White House stop in 2020.

"They missed their turn because of COVID," Trump said of the Chiefs.

The president has used most Saturdays and Sundays to play golf at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, though he also sometimes remained in Washington to give weekend speeches.

Trump was a candidate for reelection when he went to the 2023 NCAA wrestling championships in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

During the in-flight interview, Trump was asked about his administration's release of thousands of files related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and he conceded that they didn't contain many startling new revelations.

"I think the papers have turned out to be somewhat unspectacular," Trump said. "And maybe that's a good thing."

## **Israel fires on Lebanon after rocket attack in the heaviest exchange since the truce with Hezbollah**

By BASSEM MROUE and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Israel launched airstrikes on several locations in Lebanon on Saturday in retaliation for a rocket attack, killing six people in the heaviest exchange of fire since its ceasefire with the militant group Hezbollah began nearly four months ago.

The exchange sparked concern about whether the ceasefire would hold, days after Israel relaunched its war with another Iran-backed militant group, Hamas, in Gaza. In a statement, Hezbollah denied being responsible for the attack, saying it was committed to the truce.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it instructed the army to respond forcefully against dozens of targets in Lebanon, where the Iran-backed Hezbollah is based. Israel's army said six rockets were fired toward Metula, a town along the border with Lebanon. Three crossed into Israel and were intercepted.

The army said it "cannot confirm the identity of the organization that fired the rockets." It said it struck Hezbollah command centers and dozens of rocket launchers.

An Israeli strike on the southern Lebanese village of Touloun killed five people, including a child, and wounded 10 others, including two children, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported.

Another Israeli strike Saturday night hit a garage in the coastal city of Tyre, the NNA reported, with one person killed and seven wounded. It was the first attack on the city since the ceasefire took effect Nov. 27. And a strike on Hawsh al-Sayed Ali village along the border with Syria wounded five people, according to the NNA.

In a statement, Lebanon's prime minister, Nawaf Salam, asked the country's military to take all necessary measures in the south, but said the country does not want to return to war.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 70 of 93**

Hezbollah began launching rockets, drones and missiles into Israel the day after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack out of Gaza ignited the war there. The Israel-Hezbollah conflict boiled over into all-out war in September as Israel carried out waves of airstrikes and killed most of the militant group's senior leaders. The fighting killed over 4,000 people in Lebanon and displaced about 60,000 Israelis.

Israeli forces were supposed to withdraw from all Lebanese territory by late January under the ceasefire deal. The deadline was extended to Feb. 18, but Israel has remained in five locations in Lebanon across from communities in northern Israel. Meanwhile, Israel has carried out dozens of airstrikes on southern and eastern Lebanon, saying it attacked Hezbollah, while continuing drone attacks that have killed several members of the militant group.

Lebanon has appealed to the U.N. to pressure Israel to fully withdraw. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon said it was alarmed at the possible escalation of violence and urged all parties to avoid jeopardizing the progress made.

**Israeli airstrikes pound Gaza**

The strikes came a day after Israel said it would carry out operations in Gaza "with increasing intensity" until Hamas frees the 59 hostages it holds — 24 of whom are believed to be alive.

Israeli strikes on Friday night killed at least nine people, including three children, in a house in Gaza City, according to Al-Ahli Hospital, which received the bodies.

"Rubble and glass started falling on us," said Sameh al-Mashharawi, who lost his brother in the attack. He mourned with his young nephew Samir al-Mashharawi, whose parents and siblings were killed. The 12-year-old, his head and wrists bandaged, sat in the back of a truck and cried.

Israel's military said Friday that its forces were planning fresh assaults into three neighborhoods west of Gaza City and issued warnings on social media for Palestinians to evacuate the areas.

"Hamas, unfortunately, understands military pressure," Netanyahu's foreign policy advisor Ophir Falk told The Associated Press.

Around 600 Palestinians have been killed since Israel relaunched the war on Tuesday. Israel had already cut off the supply of food, fuel, and humanitarian aid to Gaza's roughly 2 million Palestinians, aiming to pressure Hamas over ceasefire negotiations.

The international community has condemned the resumed attacks.

The initial 2023 attack by Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 hostages. Most of the hostages have been freed in ceasefire agreements or other deals. Israeli forces have rescued eight living hostages and recovered the bodies of dozens more.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 49,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It does not say how many were militants but says more than half of those killed were women and children. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

**Uproar over Shin Bet chief**

Tens of thousands of Israelis on Saturday again protested the government's failure to negotiate a hostage deal and its move to fire the head of the country's Shin Bet internal security service. They called for new elections.

The Supreme Court has ordered a temporary halt to Ronen Bar's dismissal until an appeal is heard. Israel's attorney general has ruled that the Cabinet has no legal basis to dismiss him.

Netanyahu said in a statement late Saturday that Bar "will not remain the head of the Shin Bet" and "Israel will remain a democratic state." He argued that his loss of confidence in Bar long predates the Shin Bet investigation into illicit ties between several of his aides and Qatar.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid called for a tax rebellion and general strike if the government defies the court ruling, saying: "If this happens, the entire country needs to grind to a halt."

## Venezuela to resume repatriation of migrants after deal with US, official says

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela will once again accept repatriation flights from the United States carrying its deported nationals after reaching an agreement with the U.S., a Venezuelan official said on social media Saturday.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro suspended flights on March 8, after the U.S. Treasury Department announced the withdrawal of Chevron's license to export Venezuelan oil.

"We have agreed with the U.S. government to resume the repatriation of Venezuelan migrants with an initial flight tomorrow, Sunday," said Jorge Rodríguez, president of Venezuela's Assembly and Maduro's chief negotiator with the U.S.

Venezuela accepted the deal to guarantee the "the return of our compatriots to their nation with the safeguard of their Human Rights," Rodríguez said.

In his statement, Rodríguez referred to the deportation by Donald Trump's government of some 250 Venezuelans to a high-security prison in El Salvador.

"Migrating is not a crime and we will not rest until we achieve the return of all those who require it and until we rescue our brothers kidnapped in El Salvador," Rodríguez said.

Maduro ratified the measure during a public event later in the day. "We are resuming flights to rescue and release migrants from U.S. prisons," Maduro said.

The Venezuelan leader also said that he held the president of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele, responsible for the well-being of the Venezuelans deported to that country.

"You guarantee their health and, sooner rather than later, you have to hand them over and release them, because they are kidnapped," Maduro said.

Trump alleged the deportees were members of the Tren de Aragua gang. He labeled the Tren de Aragua an invading force on March 15 when he invoked the Alien Enemies Act, a little-used authority from 1798 that allows the president to deport any non-citizen during wartime. A federal judge issued an order temporarily barring the deportations, but flights were in the air when the ruling came down.

Tren de Aragua, which the U.S. Department of State designated a foreign terrorist organization, originated in a prison in the South American country. Members accompanied an exodus of millions of Venezuelans, the overwhelming majority of whom were seeking better living conditions after their nation's economy came undone last decade.

Trump's administration has not provided evidence that the deportees are members of Tren de Aragua or that they committed any crime in the U.S.

Maduro's government has mostly refused the entry of immigrants deported from the U.S. Those deportations have sharply picked up since Trump took office on Jan. 20.

In recent weeks, some 350 people were deported to Venezuela, including some 180 who spent up to 16 days at the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The Trump administration said that the Venezuelans sent to Guantanamo are members of Tren de Aragua, but offered little evidence to back this up.

## UK government orders probe into Heathrow shutdown that sparked concern over energy resilience

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government on Saturday ordered an investigation into the country's "energy resilience" after an electrical substation fire shut Heathrow Airport for almost a day and raised concerns about the U.K.'s ability to withstand disasters or attacks on critical infrastructure.

While Heathrow Airport said it was now "fully operational," thousands of passengers remained stuck, and airlines warned that severe disruption will last for days as they scramble to relocate planes and crews and get travelers to their destinations.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 72 of 93**

Inconvenienced passengers, angry airlines and concerned politicians all want answers about how one seemingly accidental fire could shut down Europe's busiest air hub.

"This is a huge embarrassment for Heathrow airport. It's a huge embarrassment for the country that a fire in one electricity substation can have such a devastating effect," said Toby Harris, a Labour Party politician who heads the National Preparedness Commission, a group that campaigns to improve resilience.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said he'd asked the National Energy System Operator, which oversees U.K. gas and electricity networks, to "urgently investigate" the fire, "to understand any wider lessons to be learned on energy resilience for critical national infrastructure."

It is expected to report initial findings within six weeks.

"The government is determined to do everything it can to prevent a repeat of what happened at Heathrow," Miliband said.

Heathrow announced its own review, to be led by former transport secretary Ruth Kelly, a member of the airport's board.

Heathrow Chairman Paul Deighton said Kelly will look at "the robustness and execution of Heathrow's crisis management plans, the airport's response during the incident and how the airport recovered."

## Stalled journeys

More than 1,300 flights were canceled and some 200,000 people stranded Friday after an overnight fire at a substation 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) away cut power to Heathrow, and to more than 60,000 properties.

Heathrow said Saturday it had "added flights to today's schedule to facilitate an extra 10,000 passengers." British Airways, Heathrow's biggest airline, said it expected to operate about 85% of its 600 scheduled flights at the airport Saturday.

While many passengers managed to resume stalled journeys, others remained in limbo.

Laura Fritschie from Kansas City was on vacation with her family in Ireland when she learned that her father had died. On Saturday she was stranded at Heathrow after her BA flight to Chicago was canceled at the last minute.

"I'm very frustrated," she said. "This was my first big vacation with my kids since my husband died, and ... now this. So I just want to go home."

## Shutdown points to a broader problem

Residents in west London described hearing a large explosion and then seeing a fireball and clouds of smoke when the blaze ripped through the substation. The fire was brought under control after seven hours, but the airport was shut for almost 18 hours. A handful of flights took off and landed late Friday.

Police said they do not consider the fire suspicious, and the London Fire Brigade said its investigation would focus on the substation's electrical distribution equipment.

Still, the huge impact of the fire left authorities facing questions about Britain's creaking infrastructure, much of which has been privatized since the 1980s. The center-left Labour government has vowed to improve the U.K.'s delay-plagued railways, its aged water system and its energy network, promising to reduce carbon emissions and increase energy independence through investment in wind and other renewable power sources.

"The last 40, 50 years we've tried to make services more efficient," said Harris. "We've stripped out redundancy, we've simplified processes. We've moved towards a sort of 'just in time' economy. There is an element where you have to make sure you're available for 'just in case.' You have to plan for things going wrong."

## 'Clear planning failure'

Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports for international travel, and saw 83.9 million passengers last year.

Chief executive Thomas Woldbye said he was "proud" of the way airport and airline staff had responded.

"The airport didn't shut for days. We shut for hours," he told the BBC.

Woldbye said Heathrow's backup power supply, designed for emergencies, worked as expected, but it wasn't enough to run the whole airport, which uses as much energy as a small city.

"That's how most airports operate," said Woldbye, who insisted "the same would happen in other air-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 73 of 93**

ports" faced with a similar blaze.

But Willie Walsh, who heads aviation trade organization IATA, said the episode "begs some serious questions."

"How is it that critical infrastructure – of national and global importance – is totally dependent on a single power source without an alternative? If that is the case, as it seems, then it is a clear planning failure by the airport," he said.

Walsh said "Heathrow has very little incentive to improve" because airlines, not the airport, have to pay the cost of looking after disrupted passengers.

'No back-up plan'

Friday's disruption was one of the most serious since the 2010 eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano, which shut Europe's airspace for days.

Passengers on about 120 flights were in the air when Friday's closure was announced and found themselves landing in different cities, and even different countries.

Mark Doherty and his wife were halfway across the Atlantic when the inflight map showed their flight from New York's John F. Kennedy Airport to Heathrow was returning to New York.

"I was like, you're joking," Doherty said.

He called the situation "typical England — got no back-up plan for something happens like this. There's no contingency plan."

## **3 people killed in Russian attacks on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia despite truce talks**

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched a drone attack on the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, killing three people and wounded 14, Ukrainian officials said Saturday, despite agreeing to a limited ceasefire.

Zaporizhzhia was hit by 12 drones, police said. Regional head Ivan Fedorov said that residential buildings, cars and communal buildings were set on fire in the Friday night attack. Photos showed emergency services scouring the rubble for survivors.

Ukraine and Russia agreed in principle Wednesday to a limited ceasefire after U.S. President Donald Trump spoke with the countries' leaders, though it remains to be seen what possible targets would be off-limits to attack.

The three sides appeared to hold starkly different views about what the deal covered. While the White House said "energy and infrastructure" would be part of the agreement, the Kremlin declared that the agreement referred more narrowly to "energy infrastructure." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he would also like railways and ports to be protected.

The dead in Zaporizhzhia were three members of one family. The bodies of the daughter and father were pulled out from under the rubble while doctors unsuccessfully fought for the mother's life for more than 10 hours, Fedorov wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

The Ukrainian air force reported that Russia fired a total of 179 drones and decoys in the latest wave of attacks overnight into Saturday. It said 100 were intercepted and a further 63 lost, likely having been electronically jammed.

Officials in the Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions also reported fires breaking out due to the falling debris from intercepted drones.

Russia's Ministry of Defense, meanwhile, said its air defense systems shot down 47 Ukrainian drones.

Local authorities said two people were injured and there was damage to six apartments when a Ukrainian drone hit a high-rise apartment block in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don on Friday night.

Zelenskyy told reporters after Wednesday's call with Trump that Ukraine and U.S. negotiators will discuss technical details related to the partial ceasefire during a meeting in Saudi Arabia on Monday. Russian negotiators are also set to hold separate talks with U.S. officials there.

Zelenskyy emphasized that Ukraine is open to a full, 30-day ceasefire that Trump has proposed, saying:

"We will not be against any format, any steps toward unconditional ceasefire."

Russian President Vladimir Putin has made a complete ceasefire conditional on a halt of arms supplies to Kyiv and a suspension of Ukraine's military mobilization — demands rejected by Ukraine and its Western allies.

Kremlin spokesperson Maria Zakharova said Saturday that Ukraine was continuing with "treacherous attacks" on energy infrastructure facilities, and that Russia reserved the right to a "symmetrical" response.

Her comments came after Russia accused Ukrainian forces Friday of blowing up a gas metering station near the town of Sudzha in Russia's Kursk region. Ukraine's military General Staff rejected Moscow's accusations and blamed the Russian military for shelling the station as part of Russia's "discrediting campaign."

## **The Pentagon's DEI purge: Officials describe a scramble to remove and then restore online content**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Every day over the past few weeks, the Pentagon has faced questions from angry lawmakers, local leaders and citizens over the removal of military heroes and historic mentions from Defense Department websites and social media pages after it purged online content that promoted women or minorities.

In response, the department has scrambled to restore a handful of those posts as their removals have come to light. While the pages of some well-known veterans, including baseball and civil rights icon Jackie Robinson, are now back up on Pentagon websites, officials warn that many posts tagged for removal in error may be gone forever.

The restoration process has been so hit or miss that even groups that the administration has said are protected, like the Tuskegee Airmen, the first Black military pilots who served in a segregated World War II unit, still have deleted pages that as of Saturday had not been restored.

This past week chief, Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a video that mistaken removals will be quickly rectified. "History is not DEI," he said, referring to diversity, equity and inclusion.

But due to the enormous size of the military and the wide range of commands, units and bases, there has been an array of interpretations of what to remove and how as part of the Pentagon directive to delete online content that promotes DEI. Officials from across the military services said they have asked for additional guidance from the Pentagon on what should be restored, but have yet to receive any.

The officials, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to describe internal deliberations, said, for example, they were waiting for guidance on whether military "firsts" count as history that can be restored. The first female Army Reserve graduate of Ranger School, Maj. Lisa Jaster, or the first female fighter pilot, Air Force Maj. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt, both had their stories deleted.

Some officials said their understanding was it did not matter whether it was a historic first. If the first was based on what Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth found to be a disqualifying characteristic, such as gender or race, it had to go, they said.

One Army team has taken a very deliberate approach.

According to the officials, the team took down several major historical heritage sites that had many postings about women and various ethnic or racial groups. They are now going through them all and plan to rework and repost as much as possible on a new website focused on Army heroes. The process, the officials said, could take months.

Overall, tens of thousands of online posts that randomly mention dozens of key words, including "gay," "bias" and "female" — have been deleted. Officials warn that the bulk of those images are gone for good. Even as complaints roll in, officials will be careful about restoring things unless senior leaders approve.

The officials described the behind-the-scenes process as challenging, frustrating and emotionally draining. Workers going through years of posts to take down mentions of historic accomplishments by women or minorities were at times reduced to tears or lashed out in anger at commanders directing the duty, the officials said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 75 of 93

Others were forced to pull down stories they were proud of and had worked on themselves. They were often confused about the parameters for removal once a key word was found, and they erred on the side of removal, according to the officials.

Not complying fully with the order was seen as dangerous because it could put senior military service leaders at risk of being fired or disciplined if an errant post celebrating diversity was left up and found. Officials said the department relied in large part on a blind approach — using artificial intelligence computer commands to search for dozens of those key words in online department, military and command websites.

If a story or photo depicted or included one of the terms, the computer program then added “DEI” into the web address of the content, which flagged it and led to its removal.

Purging posts from X, Facebook and other social media sites is more complicated and time intensive. An AI command would not work as well on those sites.

So military service members and civilians have evaluated social media posts by hand, working late into the night and on weekends to pore over their unit’s social media pages, cataloging and deleting references going back years. Because some civilians were not allowed to work on weekends, military troops had to be called in to replace them, as the officials described it.

The Defense Department is publicly insisting that mistakes will be corrected.

As an example, the Pentagon on Wednesday restored some pages highlighting the crucial wartime contributions of Navajo Code Talkers and other Native American veterans. That step came days after tribes condemned the removal. Department officials said the Navajo Code Talker material was erroneously erased.

The previous week, pages honoring a Black Medal of Honor winner and Japanese American service members were also restored.

The restorations represent a shift from early, adamant denials that any deletion of things such as the Enola Gay or prominent service members was happening at all. At least two images of the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, during World War II, are still missing.

“This is fake news and anyone with a pulse knows it!” the Defense Department’s new “Rapid Response” social media account asserted March 7. “We are NOT removing images of the Enola Gay or any other pictures that honor the legacy of our warfighters.”

Over time, the Pentagon has shifted its public response as more examples of deleted pages came to light.

On Thursday, Parnell acknowledged in a video posted online that: “Because of the realities of AI tools and other software, some important content was incorrectly pulled off line to be reviewed. We want to be very, very clear: History is not DEI. When content is either mistakenly removed, or if it’s maliciously removed, we continue to work quickly to restore it.”

But others have seen the widespread erasure of history.

“Most female aviator stories and photographs are disappearing—including from the archives. From the WASPs to fighter pilots, @AFThunderbirds to @BlueAngels —they’ve erased us,” Carey Lohrenz, one of the Navy’s first female F-14 Tomcat pilots, posted to X. “It’s an across the board devastating loss of history and information.” Among the webpages removed include one about the Women Air Service Pilots, or WASPs, the female World War II pilots who were vital in ferrying warplanes for the military, and the Air Force Thunderbirds.

Parnell, Hegseth and others have vigorously defended the sweeping purge despite the flaws.

“I think the president and the secretary have been very clear on this — that anybody that says in the Department of Defense that diversity is our strength is, frankly, incorrect,” Parnell said during a Pentagon media briefing. “Our shared purpose and unity are our strength.”

## **A weak Pope Francis is wielding power and rewriting the narrative of how popes exercise authority**

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — During his first foreign trip in 2013, Pope Francis made headlines when he carried his own black leather briefcase as he boarded the Alitalia charter bound for Brazil, since popes never carry

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 76 of 93**

bags and until the 1970s were themselves carried on thrones.

Asked what was in the bag, Francis joked that it wasn't the nuclear codes. But he seemed baffled that something as normal as an airplane passenger carrying a briefcase could create such a fuss.

"I have always taken a bag with me when traveling – it's normal," he told his first news conference as pope. "We must get used to being normal. The normality of life."

Over 12 years, Francis has sought to impose a kind of normality on the papacy with his informal style and disdain for pomp, while ensuring that he still wields the awesome power held by Christ's vicar on Earth and Europe's last absolute monarch.

The way Francis has managed his five-week hospitalization for pneumonia has followed that same playbook, and on Saturday allowed his doctors to announce the very normal news that the 88-year-old pope would be released the following day.

At a news conference, they said he would need two months of rest and convalescence at the Vatican, but that he eventually could resume all his normal activity running the 1.3.-billion strong Catholic Church.

Francis has stayed in control, remotely

But he had never stopped. In between respiratory crises, prayer and physiotherapy, Francis appointed over a dozen bishops, approved a handful of new saints, authorized a three-year extension of his signature reform process and sent off messages public and private. Vatican cardinals stood in for him at events requiring his presence.

That's not as easy a balancing act as it sounds, since there are few positions of power that are both as absolute as the papacy and, during times of illness, as seemingly fragile: According to the church's canon law, the pope possesses "supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the church." He answers to no one but God, and there is no appeal of his decisions.

And while popes aren't subject to re-election campaigns or no-confidence votes, they essentially owe their jobs to the 120 men who elected them. While those same cardinals swear obedience to the pope, they will also eventually choose his successor from within their own ranks. It's no surprise then that talk of conclaves, papal contenders and challenges facing a future pope has been a constant buzz in Rome ever since Francis was admitted to Gemelli hospital Feb. 14.

Francis is well aware that anytime he gets sick, plotting intensifies for the election of the next pope, contributing to a certain lame duck status as he ages. "Some wanted me dead," he said after his 2021 hospitalization, when he learned that secret meetings had already been held to plan the conclave. He knows as well that even before his current hospitalization, an anonymous cardinal had circulated a seven-point memo listing priorities for the next pope to correct the "confusion, division and conflict" sowed by Francis.

But he's not shy about showing weakness

And yet Francis has never been shy about showing his weaknesses, age or infirmities in ways that seem unthinkable for public figures for whom any sign of fragility can threaten their authority and undermine their agenda.

Additionally, within months of being elected, Francis reached out to an Argentine doctor and journalist, Dr. Nelson Castro, and suggested he write a book about the health of popes, himself included.

"My hypothesis is that he wanted first of all to show himself as a human being," Castro said in an interview. "We tend to see popes like saints, but the way he talked about his diseases showed me, 'I'm like you and me, being exposed to diseases.'"

Francis had read and appreciated Castro's earlier book, "The Sickness of Power," about the ailments that have afflicted Argentina's leaders and how power itself had afflicted them. He invited Castro to research and write about past popes and his own case in a similar, not-terribly-flattering light.

"The Health of Popes" was published in 2021. Castro said what struck him most was that Francis disclosed not only his physical ailments, but his mental health challenges too: Francis revealed that he had gone to a psychiatrist when he was the Jesuit provincial during Argentina's military dictatorship in the 1970s to help him cope with fear and anxiety.

"Pope Francis is a man of power," Castro said. "Only a man of power, feeling quite sure of himself, would

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 77 of 93

dare to talk about his diseases so openly.”

The balance of strength in weakness is very Jesuit

For the Rev. John Cecero, Jesuit provincial for the northeast United States from 2014-2020, Francis’ willingness to show his weaknesses while exercising supreme authority is consistent with his Jesuit training and the biblical teaching of St. Paul that “when I am weak, then I am strong.”

“A chief virtue on the part of everyone in the practice of Jesuit authority is humility,” Cecero said in an interview. “On the part of the individual Jesuit (that means) thinking beyond my own self-interest to the common good.”

“I know it’s something that drives Francis: that you have that same humility,” he said.

And yet Francis’ critics often complain that he’s authoritarian, that he takes decisions in a vacuum and without regard to the law, and wields power like a “Dictator Pope,” the title of a book written by a traditionalist critic early in Francis’ papacy.

Many recite the joke about the way Jesuit superiors exercise power, which is supposed to be a process of joint discernment between the superior and the underling but, the joke goes, can be anything but: “I discern, you discern, we discern ... I decide.”

Those same conservative critics, of course, have been keenly watching Francis’ hospitalization and wondering if the end of his papacy is near.

Even if he is absent, and even if he has to cut back his public activities going forward, Francis is very much still in power and leading the church, said Kurt Martens, a canon lawyer at Catholic University of America.

“We’re used to seeing a pope who is everywhere all the time,” he said. “But don’t forget that in the past, not that long ago, popes would show up only rarely.”

He may be absent, but he’s still in control

Francis’ disappearance from public view has led some to doubt the authenticity of the first, and so far only photograph of Francis released by the Vatican since his hospitalization. It was shot from behind and showed Francis at prayer in his private hospital chapel, his face hidden.

Avvenire, the newspaper of the Italian bishops’ conference, said the photo was not only real but showed Francis controlling the image that he wants the faithful to have of the papacy and illness. Francis wants viewers to focus not on the spectacle of a sick pope, but on what should actually matter more to a Catholic anyway.

“If we cannot see his face ... what we must look at is precisely what he himself is facing: the altar and the crucifix,” Avvenire wrote.

## **Pope Francis to be released from hospital Sunday after 5 weeks fighting life-threatening pneumonia**

By NICOLE WINFIELD, TRISHA THOMAS and GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis will be released from the hospital on Sunday after 38 days battling a severe case of pneumonia in both lungs that threatened his life on two occasions and raised the prospect — for now put to rest — of a papal resignation or funeral.

The 88-year-old pontiff will require at least two months of rest, rehabilitation and convalescence back at the Vatican during which time he has been discouraged from meeting in big groups or exerting himself, said Dr. Sergio Alfieri, who coordinated Francis’ medical team at Rome’s Gemelli hospital.

But Francis’ personal doctor, Dr. Luigi Carbone, said if he continues his steady improvements and rehabilitation, he should eventually be able to resume all his normal activities.

The doctors spoke at a hastily called press conference Saturday evening in the Gemelli hospital atrium, their first in-person update on the pontiff’s condition in a month. They said they were discharging Francis after he registered two weeks of stability and increasing progress in his recovery.

“The Holy Father would have wanted to go home a few days ago, as even he realized he was improving, breathing better, and that he could work longer. But I have to say he was an exemplary patient,” Alfieri said. “He listened to the suggestions from me, Dr. Carbone and the rest of the team.”

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 78 of 93**

The doctors confirmed he would be released Sunday, after first offering a blessing to the faithful from his hospital suite, the first time he will have been seen by the public since he was admitted Feb. 14. They provided details on the severity of the infection, which he is still being treated for, and Alfieri noted that not all patients who develop such a severe case of double pneumonia survive, much less be released from the hospital.

"When he was in really bad shape, it was difficult that he was in good spirits," Alfieri said. "But one morning we went to listen to his lungs and we asked him how he was doing. When he replied, 'I'm still alive' we knew he was OK and had gotten his good humor back."

Alfieri confirmed that Francis was still having trouble speaking due to the damage to his lungs and the time he spent on supplemental oxygen and ventilation. But he said such problems were normal and predicted his voice would return.

"When you have a bilateral pneumonia, your lungs get damaged and the respiratory muscles are in difficulty. You lose your voice a bit, like when you speak too high," Alfieri said. "As for all patients, young or old but especially older ones, you need time for it to come back as it was."

Always alert and cooperative

The Argentine pope, who has chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed as a young man, was admitted to Gemelli after a bout of bronchitis worsened.

Doctors first diagnosed a complex bacterial, viral and fungal respiratory tract infection and soon thereafter, pneumonia in both lungs. Blood tests showed signs of anemia, low blood platelets and the onset of kidney failure, all of which later resolved after two blood transfusions.

The most serious setbacks began on Feb. 28, when Francis experienced an acute coughing fit and inhaled vomit, requiring he use a noninvasive mechanical ventilation mask to help him breathe. He suffered two more respiratory crises a few days later, which required doctors manually aspirate "copious" amounts of mucus, at which point he began sleeping with the ventilation mask at night to help his lungs clear the accumulation of fluids.

At no point did he lose consciousness, and doctors reported he always remained alert and cooperative.

Over the past two weeks, he has stabilized and registered slight improvements. He no longer needs to wear the ventilation mask at night, and is cutting back his reliance on high flows of supplemental oxygen during the day. Doctors said the pope, who uses a wheelchair, had probably lost some weight during his hospital stay.

At his home in the Santa Marta hotel, next to St Peter's Basilica, Francis will have access to supplemental oxygen and 24-hour medical care as needed, though Carbone said he hoped Francis would progressively need less and less supplemental oxygen.

"The Holy Father is improving, and we hope soon he can resume his normal activity," Carbone said.

First appearance expected Sunday

While the pneumonia infection has been successfully treated, Francis will continue to take oral medication for several months to treat the fungal infection in his lungs.

Alfieri said it was actually safer for him to continue his recovery and rehabilitation at the Vatican since hospitals "are the worst place to convalesce because it's the place where you can catch the most infections."

The Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni, declined to confirm any upcoming events, including a scheduled audience April 8 with King Charles III or Francis' participation in Easter services at the end of the month. But Carbone said he hoped Francis might be well enough to travel to Turkey at the end of May to participate in an important ecumenical anniversary.

The Vatican announced that before returning to the Vatican, Francis would appear on Sunday morning to bless faithful from his 10th floor suite at the hospital. While Francis released an audio message on March 6 and the Vatican distributed a photo of him March 16, Sunday's blessing will be the first live appearance since Francis was admitted for what has become the longest hospitalization of his 12-year papacy.

## Father of the last living American hostage in Gaza hopes Trump can bring his son home

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TEL AVIV (AP) — Unlike many families who blame Israel's government for not getting their loved ones released from captivity in Gaza, Adi Alexander is hesitant to point fingers. Pragmatic and measured, the father of the last living American being held hostage by Hamas just wants his son to come home.

"I don't want to get into who came first, the egg or the chicken," Alexander told The Associated Press on Friday from his New Jersey home. Still, with the once-promising ceasefire giving way to renewed fighting between Israel and Hamas, he wonders whether Israel can secure his son's freedom and is more hopeful about the U.S.'s chances to do it.

Edan Alexander, a 21-year-old Israeli-American soldier who grew up in the U.S., is one of 59 hostages still in Gaza, more than half of whom are believed to be dead. Last week, Hamas said it would release Edan and the bodies of four other hostages if Israel recommitted to the stalled ceasefire agreement.

Days later, though, Israel launched rockets across Gaza, breaking the two-month-old deal and killing hundreds of Palestinians. The hostilities show no signs of abating, with Israel vowing Friday to advance deeper into Gaza until Hamas releases the remaining hostages.

The return to fighting has inflamed the debate in Israel over the fate of those held captive. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has come under mounting domestic pressure, with mass protests over his handling of the hostage crisis. But he also faces demands from his hard-line allies not to accept any deal that falls short of Hamas' destruction.

### A father's hope

Adi Alexander said he thinks Netanyahu wants to bring everybody home, but on his own terms. He questions Netanyahu's plans whereas he believes U.S. President Donald Trump's message is clear: He's focused on bringing the hostages home. Alexander said he's counting on the U.S. to bridge the large gap between Israel and Hamas. His message to Trump about his administration's efforts to free his son and the others: "Just keep this job going."

Many families of the hostages say Trump has done more for them than Netanyahu, crediting the president with the ceasefire. In December, before taking office, Trump demanded the hostages' immediate release, saying if they weren't freed before he was sworn in for his second term there would be "hell to pay."

Phase one of the deal began weeks later, and saw the release of 25 Israeli hostages and the bodies of eight others in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. The ceasefire was supposed to remain in place as long as talks on the second phase continued, but Netanyahu balked at entering substantive negotiations.

Instead, he tried to force Hamas to accept a new ceasefire plan put forth by U.S. Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff. That plan would have required Hamas to release half its remaining hostages — the militant group's main bargaining chip — in exchange for a ceasefire extension and a promise to negotiate a lasting truce.

Hamas has said it will only release the remaining hostages in exchange for a lasting ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, as called for in the original ceasefire agreement mediated by the United States, Egypt and Qatar.

### The US engages directly with Hamas

As a soldier, Edan would have been released during the deal's second phase. But Hamas announced this month that it would release Edan after the White House said it had engaged in "ongoing talks and discussions" with the group — separate from the main negotiations. It is the first known direct engagement between Hamas and the U.S. since the State Department designated it a foreign terrorist organization in 1997.

Adi Alexander said Adam Boehler, who's helping spearhead the Trump administration's efforts to free the hostages, led those separate talks because phase two was stalled. But he said he didn't believe Hamas' claim that it would release his son because it came out of left field and wasn't being considered as part of the discussions between the group and Boehler.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 80 of 93**

The anxious father said he speaks with Witkoff and Boehler almost daily and understands the negotiations are ongoing despite the resumption of fighting.

A native of Tenafly, a New Jersey suburb of New York City, Edan moved to Israel in 2022 after high school and enlisted in the military. He was abducted from his base during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war, when Hamas killed about 1,200 people in Israel and took 251 others hostage.

The grueling wait

Since Edan's abduction, there's been little news about him.

Hamas released a video of him over Thanksgiving weekend in November. His family said it was difficult to watch as he cried and pleaded for help, but it was a relief to see he was alive.

Freed hostages have given the family more news, according to his father. Some said Edan had lost a lot of weight. Others said he'd been an advocate for fellow hostages, standing up for kidnapped Thai workers and telling their captors that the workers weren't Israeli and should be freed.

Although he knows the resumption of fighting means it will take more time to get his son back, Adi Alexander said he thinks both sides had become too comfortable with the ceasefire and that this was one reason phase two never began. He wants the war to end, and hopes the fighting will be limited and targeted and push everyone back to the table.

"Somebody, I think had to shake this tree to create chaos, and chaos creates opportunities," he said. "The only objective is to get back to the bargaining table to get those people out."

## **Sudan's army says it seized key buildings in Khartoum after retaking the Republican Palace**

BY SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's military on Saturday consolidated its grip on the capital, retaking more key government buildings a day after it gained control of the Republican Palace from a notorious paramilitary group.

Brig. Gen. Nabil Abdullah, a spokesperson for the Sudanese military, said troops expelled the Rapid Support Forces from the headquarters of the National Intelligence Service and Corinthia Hotel in central Khartoum.

The army also retook the headquarters of the Central Bank of Sudan and other government and educational buildings in the area, Abdullah said. Hundreds of RSF fighters were killed while trying to flee the capital city, he said.

There was no immediate comment from the RSF.

The army's gain came as a Sudanese pro-democracy activist group said RSF fighters had killed at least 45 people in a city in the western region of Darfur.

On Friday, the military retook the Republican Palace, the prewar seat of the government, in a major symbolic victory for the Sudanese military in its nearly two years of war against the RSF.

A drone attack on the palace Friday believed to have been launched by the RSF killed two journalists and a driver with Sudanese state television, according to the ministry of information. Lt. Col. Hassan Ibrahim, from the military's media office, was also killed in the attack, the military said.

Volker Perthes, former UN envoy for Sudan, the latest military advances will force the RSF to withdraw to its stronghold in the western region of Darfur.

"The army has gained an important and significant victory in Khartoum militarily and politically," Perthes told The Associated Press, adding that the military will soon clear the capital and its surrounding areas from the RSF.

But the advances doesn't mean the end of the war as the RSF holds territory in the western Darfur region and elsewhere. Perthes argued that the war will likely turn into an insurgency between the Darfur-based RSF and the military-led government in the capital.

"The RSF will be largely restricted to Darfur ... We will return to the early 2000s," he said, in reference to the conflict between rebel groups and the Khartoum government, then led by former President Omar al-Bashir.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 81 of 93

At the start of the war in April 2023, the RSF took over multiple government and military buildings in the capital including the Republican Palace, the headquarters of the state television and the besieged military's headquarters, known as the General Command. It also occupied people's houses and turned it into bases for their attacks against troops.

In recent months, the military took the lead in the fighting. It reclaimed much of Khartoum and its sister cities of Omdurman and Khartoum North, along with other cities elsewhere in the country. In late January, troops lifted the RSF siege on the General Command, paving the way to retake the palace less than two months later.

The military is now likely to try to retake the Khartoum International Airport, only some 2.5 kilometers (1.5 miles) southeast of the palace, which has been held by the RSF since the start of the war. Videos posted on social media Saturday purportedly showed soldiers on a road leading to the airport.

The RSF was accused on Saturday of being responsible for the deaths of at least 45 people in the Darfur city of al-Maliha.

The pro-democracy Resistance Committees, a network of youth groups tracking the war, said the RSF entered the city on Thursday and carried out attacks. The dead included at least a dozen women, according to a partial casualty list published by the group.

Al-Maliha, a strategic desert city in North Darfur near the borders with Chad and Libya, is around 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the city of el-Fasher, which remains held by the Sudanese military despite near-daily strikes by besieging RSF.

The war, which has wrecked the capital and other urban cities, has claimed the lives of more than 28,000 people, forced millions more to flee their homes and left some families eating grass in a desperate attempt to survive as famine sweeps parts of the country. Other estimates suggest a far higher death toll.

The fighting has been marked by atrocities including mass rape and ethnically motivated killings that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, especially in the western region of Darfur, according to the United Nations and international rights groups.

## **Abortion once more plays a key role in a state political fight, this time in Wisconsin's court race**

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — As the candidates for a Wisconsin Supreme Court seat squared off in a recent debate before early voting, one issue came up first and dominated at the start.

"Let's talk about abortion rights," the moderator said.

The winner of the April 1 election could hold the power to determine the fate of any future litigation over abortion because the outcome of the race for a vacancy on the state's highest court will decide whether liberals or conservatives hold a majority.

Abortion has become a central plank of the platform for the Democratic-backed candidate, Dane County Judge Susan Crawford, in part because of its effect on voter turnout, although to a lesser extent than during a heated 2023 state Supreme Court race that flipped the court to a liberal majority. Brad Schimel, a former state attorney general, is the Republican-supported candidate.

"Abortion of course remains a top issue," said Charles Franklin, a Marquette University political scientist. "But we haven't seen either candidate be as outspoken on hot-button issues as we saw in 2023."

Democrats are hoping voters will be motivated by the potential revival of an abortion ban from 1849, which criminalizes "the willful killing of an unborn quick child." The Wisconsin Supreme Court is currently deciding whether to reactivate the 175-year-old ban.

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin filed a separate lawsuit in February asking the court to rule on whether a constitutional right to abortion exists in the state.

The 19th century law was enacted just a year after Wisconsin became a state, when lead mining and the lumber industry formed the bedrock of the state's economy as white settlers rushed into areas left

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 82 of 93**

vacant by forced removals of Native American tribes.

It also was a time when combinations of herbs stimulating uterine contractions were the most common abortion method, said Kimberly Reilly, a history and gender studies professor at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

"During this time, there were no women in statehouses," Reilly said. "When a woman got married, she lost her legal identity. Her husband became her legal representative. She couldn't own property in her name. She couldn't make a contract."

This is the latest instance of long-dormant restrictions influencing current abortion policies after the U.S. Supreme Court in 2022 overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which had granted a federal right to abortion.

The revival of an 1864 Arizona abortion law, enacted when Arizona was a territory, sparked a national outcry last year. Century-old abortion restrictions passed by all-male legislatures during periods when women could not vote — and scientific knowledge of pregnancy and abortion were limited — have also influenced post-*Roe* abortion policies in Alabama, Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas and West Virginia.

Those laws tend to be more severe. They often do not include exceptions for rape and incest, call for the imprisonment of providers and ban the procedure in the first few weeks of pregnancy. Some have since been repealed, while others are being challenged in court.

During the state Supreme Court debate March 12, Crawford declined to weigh in directly on the 1849 abortion case but promoted her experience representing Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin and "making sure that women could make their own choices about their bodies and their health care." In an ad released Wednesday, she accused Schimel of not trusting "women to make their own healthcare decisions."

Schimel calls himself "pro-life" and has previously supported leaving Wisconsin's 1849 abortion ban on the books. He dodged questions about abortion during the debate, saying he believes the issue should be left up to voters, although Wisconsin does not have a citizen-led ballot initiative process, which voters in several other states have used to protect abortion rights.

Anthony Chergosky, a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse political scientist, said Schimel has been "borrowing from the Republican playbook of avoiding the issue of abortion" by leaving the question to voters in individual states.

The message has still gotten across to many Democratic voters, who cited abortion as a top issue while waiting in line for early voting this past week.

Jane Delzer, a 75-year-old liberal voter in Waukesha, said "a woman's right to choose is my biggest motivator. I'm deeply worried about what Schimel may do on abortion."

June Behrens, a 79-year-old retired teacher, spoke about a loved one's abortion experience: "Everyone makes their own choice and has their own journey in life, and they deserve that right."

Republican voters primarily cited immigration and the economy as their top issues, essentially the same ones that helped propel Republican Donald Trump's win over Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris last November in the presidential election. But others said they also wanted conservative social views reflected on the court.

Lewis Titus, a 72-year-old volunteer for the city of Eau Claire, said restricting abortion was his top issue in the Supreme Court race: "I believe that Brad Schimel is the one to carry that on."

While it's one of the key issues this year, abortion played a much larger role two years ago, when a race for Wisconsin's highest court demonstrated how expensive and nationalized state Supreme Court races have become.

This year's campaigns have focused primarily on "criminal sentencing and attempting to paint one another as soft on crime," said Howard Schweber, a University of Wisconsin-Madison political science professor emeritus.

Crawford also has tried to make the race a referendum on Trump after his first months in office and tech billionaire Elon Musk, who is running Trump's massive federal cost-cutting initiative and has funded two groups that have together spent more than \$10 million to promote Schimel.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 83 of 93

"Two years ago, abortion was a hugely mobilizing issue, and we saw that clearly in the lead-up to the election," Schweber said. "We're seeing some of this but not to the same extent, which really makes no sense. The issues and stakes are exactly the same."

The decision to elevate other issues might be the result of anxiety among Democrats that abortion may not resonate as deeply as they once believed after significant election losses in November, despite Harris using abortion as a pillar of her campaign, several Wisconsin politics experts said.

Franklin, the political scientist, said he believes abortion will motivate Democrats, but the issue may not rank high in the priorities of independent voters, who he says will be central to the race's outcome.

"In the early days after Roe v. Wade was overturned, it was still a very hot issue for voters," he said. "But as states have codified their abortion laws, the issue doesn't seem to motivate voters to the same extent. In the fall, many Democrats believed abortion was still this magic silver bullet and would win them the presidential and Senate races. But the outcomes didn't seem to support that."

## New Hampshire town elections offer a preview of citizenship voting rules being considered nationwide

By HOLLY RAMER, MICHAEL CASEY and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A voter in Milford, New Hampshire, missed out on approving the town's \$19 million operating budget, electing a cemetery trustee and buying a new dump truck. In Durham, an 18-year-old high school student did not get a say in who should serve on the school board or whether \$125,000 should go toward replacing artificial turf on athletic fields.

Neither was able to participate in recent town elections in New Hampshire thanks to a new state law requiring proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote. Their experiences, recounted by town clerks, could prove instructive for the rest of the country as the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act advances in Congress and more than a dozen states consider similar legislation.

"Everything that conservatives tried to downplay, New Hampshire told us exactly what would happen on a national scale under the SAVE Act," said Greta Bedekovics, a former policy adviser for Senate Democrats who is now with the Center for American Progress.

Married women with changed names face extra hurdles

Voting rights groups are particularly concerned that married women who have changed their names will encounter trouble when trying to register because their birth certificates list their maiden names.

That is exactly what happened to Brooke Yonge, a 45-year-old hairstylist who showed up at her polling place in Derry last week determined to show her support for public education.

She was turned away initially because she did not have proof of citizenship. When she returned with her birth certificate, that still was not enough because the name on the document did not match the one on her driver's license. Back home she went to fetch her marriage license to prove she had changed her name.

"Third trip around the sun and here we are," said Yonge, who called the registration requirements reasonable despite the hassle. "If I did a little research, I probably would have known that is what I needed."

New Hampshire is among the 20 states that allow voters to register on the day of an election. According to the New Hampshire Campaign for Voting Rights, at least 56 people who tried to register statewide the day of the March 11 town elections were turned away, though it is unknown how many of them later completed the process.

Derry's town clerk, Tina Guilford, wonders how it will go during a November general election, when turnout is much higher.

"It's just heartbreaking to me to see people turn around and think, 'I hope they come back,'" she said.

At least one person who tried to register in Milford on Tuesday did not return, said Joan Dargie, the town clerk. Neither did an older woman who tried to register at Town Hall before the election. The first of the woman's three marriages was in Florida in the 1970s and that license was long gone, Dargie said.

"Sometimes people are like, 'I didn't save any paperwork for that. I wanted to forget all that,'" Dargie said. "It's disenfranchising women."

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 84 of 93**

What's happening at the national level

The U.S. House passed legislation last year to require proof of citizenship for voter registration, but it stalled in the Senate amid Democratic opposition. With Republicans now in full control of Congress, the House is expected to take up the issue again soon.

Before the 2024 election, Donald Trump falsely claimed that noncitizens might vote in large enough numbers to sway the outcome. In fact, research and reviews of state cases have shown voting by noncitizens to be rare and typically a mistake rather than an intentional effort to subvert an election.

Republicans argue that even small numbers of noncitizens voting undermines public confidence.

New Hampshire's new law also has had broad support. About 8 in 10 New Hampshire voters in the 2024 election favored requiring people in their state to show a passport, birth certificate or other evidence of U.S. citizenship when they register to vote, according to AP VoteCast, including about 6 in 10 who were strongly in favor. The vast majority of Trump voters were in support of the requirement, but so were more than half of voters for Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris in the race against Republican Trump.

During the recent town hall elections, Michael Appleton had to return home to get his birth certificate and provide proof of a name change before he could register and vote. Even so, he wasn't critical of the new law.

"It's inconvenient for me personally in this moment, but I don't think it's an unreasonable thing to ask," he said.

Republican state Rep. Bob Lynn, who sponsored New Hampshire's law, does not believe there is rampant voter fraud in the state. He also does not believe the new citizenship requirements are unduly burdensome.

"It seems to me that voting is pretty important, and it's not unreasonable to say to people, look, you're going to have to give a little bit of forethought to what you need in order to vote," said Lynn, a former chief justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court.

Other states also are taking action

New Hampshire is one of eight states with laws that require documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote, and similar legislation is pending in 17 states, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The experience has at times been fraught in some states that have enacted a proof-of-citizenship requirement.

In Arizona, a recent state audit found that problems with the way data was handled had affected the tracking and verification of citizenship. It came after officials had identified some 200,000 voters who were thought to have provided citizenship, but had not.

A proof of citizenship requirement was in effect for three years in Kansas before it was overturned through legal challenges. The state's own expert estimated that almost all the roughly 30,000 people who were prevented from registering to vote during the time it was in effect were U.S. citizens who had been eligible to vote.

In Texas, where Republicans control both houses of the Legislature, lawmakers have introduced a bill that would in some ways expand on the proposed federal SAVE Act. It would require proof of citizenship for voter registration and compel state and local election officials to verify the citizenship status of everyone who is already registered.

If a person's citizenship cannot be verified, that person would be notified and allowed to vote in only congressional elections.

Further changes possible in New Hampshire

Even as New Hampshire's law faces legal challenges, state lawmakers are considering further changes.

The state House gave preliminary approval last week to a bill that would create vouchers to cover the cost for indigent voters of obtaining a birth certificate, though opponents said asking voters to declare themselves poor would be demeaning. It also would instruct the secretary of state to make "reasonable efforts" to verify citizenship if someone is unable to provide documentation. Critics noted the office has access only to birth certificates issued in New Hampshire.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 85 of 93

"If you're going to pass a bill, make sure that it can withstand litigation and make sure that it offers real solutions. This bill does neither," Democratic Rep. Connie Lane said.

In Durham, where voting takes place in the town's high school, students enrolled in civics classes traditionally watch the process. They got an extra lesson during the recent town hall elections. A student who was old enough to vote wanted to register but did not have the documents to prove citizenship, according to Rachel Deane, the town clerk.

"The supervisors of the voter checklist are wonderful in Durham, and they walked the student through the process and encouraged them to come back," she said.

Deane said she believes the student never did return.

## Finding health advice on social media is easier than knowing which claims to trust

By HALELUYA HADERO Associated Press

In the corners of social media dominated by wellness content, influencers recommend an assortment of treatments and products to support weight loss, fight exhaustion or promote other desired health outcomes.

Some of the endorsed approaches may be helpful. Many play into fads with scant evidence to back up enthusiasts' claims, medical experts say.

Some influencers encourage their followers to avoid specific food items, such as seed oils, while others advocate going all in on certain foods, such as the meat-heavy carnivore diet. There are video pitches for berberine, a chemical compound that's been touted online as "nature's Ozempic," and for non-medical IV vitamin therapy, which businesses popularly known as drip bars market as cures for hangovers or fatigue.

To be sure, alternative health practices and cures that lacked the medical establishment's backing were a part of popular culture long before the internet age. But the plethora of advice shared online has both prompted calls for safeguards and found a measure of mainstream acceptance.

The new U.S. health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., had his Instagram account suspended in 2021 for posting misinformation about vaccine safety and COVID-19, but many of the ideas he champions have a widespread following. Critics of Dr. Mehmet Oz accused him of sometimes making misleading assertions on the talk show he used to host; Oz now is President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services.

A Netflix series released last month explored the story of Belle Gibson, a popular Australian wellness influencer who amassed a following talking about curing her terminal brain cancer with a healthy lifestyle and alternative medicine. In 2015, Gibson admitted to lying about having a cancer diagnosis. Australia's federal court later fined her for failing to donate money she said would go to charity through sales of her cookbook and app.

With personal wellness remaining a hot topic, here are some tips health experts have for evaluating the material you see online:

Be cautious when an influencer promotes products

Most influencers have or want business relationships with companies that allow them to earn income by promoting products. The arrangements don't necessarily mean content creators don't believe in what they're marketing, but they do have a vested interest in publicizing products that may or may not work.

Creators can get paid for pictures or videos that hype up a product and also earn commissions on sales through features such as affiliate links. Experts note it's therefore better to proceed with caution when someone inspires you to hit the "buy" button, whether it's for natural supplements, teas with purported weight loss benefits or any other wellness products that show up in your social media feed.

Research published last month in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed a sizable amount of Instagram and TikTok posts that discussed five popular medical tests mostly came from account holders with "some form of financial interest" in promoting the screenings.

After analyzing roughly 980 posts on the two platforms, researchers said most of the posts they found were misleading and failed to "mention important harms, including overdiagnosis" resulting from health

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 86 of 93**

people having full-body MRIs or tests to detect early signs of cancer, evaluate microorganisms in the gut or measure hormone levels.

Promoting dietary supplements has been a particularly lucrative exercise for many influencers, said Timothy Caulfield, a health policy and law professor at the University of Alberta. He views the supplements industry as "the backbone" of health misinformation aimed at consumers and designed to fuel billions of dollars in revenue.

"It's gotten to the point where if someone is selling a supplement, it's a red flag," he said. "I don't think it was always like that, but it certainly is now."

Check for expertise

In general, consumers should take all bold claims with a degree of skepticism, said Cedric Bryant, chief executive officer at the nonprofit American Council on Exercise. The goal of creators is to increase engagement with their content, and some influencers may be tempted to make unproven assertions to draw in more viewers.

"If it's too good to be true, it probably is," Bryant said.

Some health and wellness influencers have medical training, but many do not. Before taking health tips from someone on social media, it's a good idea to make sure they have the proper expertise or at least able to share the data that led them to recommend certain products or lifestyle choices.

In the fitness area, Bryant recommends checking to see if a creator holds certification from an accreditation organization and then confirming the information through the U.S. Registry of Exercise Professionals database.

The American Medical Association and The American Board of Medical Specialties maintain searchable databases for medical doctors, which may help verify the qualifications of creators who share their legal names and general locations. States also operate databases that allow users to check if someone is licensed to practice medicine or has been disciplined for misconduct.

If an influencer holding the appropriate credentials pushes certain products, consumers still may want to consider if a brand partnership or other factors are shaping their recommendations.

Federal Trade Commission guidelines that reflected the agency's interpretation of federal law directed influencers featuring specific products or services to prominently disclose any endorsements. Yet sponsorships and potential conflicts of interest are not always revealed.

In 2023, the year the guidelines were issued, the FTC issued warnings to a dozen online influencers for failing to adequately disclose paid social media posts that promoted "sugar-containing products" and aspartame, a sweetener found in diet soda, ice cream and other foods. Some of the influencers were registered dietitians.

Compare to the prevailing medical consensus

If a creator cites studies to support health and diet claims, it's best to check and see if what they're saying aligns with the latest evidence-based medical consensus.

"Just because somebody has an 'M.D.' after their name doesn't make them entirely trustworthy," said Elias Aboujaoude, a psychiatrist and Stanford University professor who studies the intersection of psychology and technology.

Aboujaoude suggests double-checking health claims with traditionally reputable sources, such as major academic institutions or government health agencies. He also advised looking at studies cited by creators and assessing whether they've been published in reputable journals and subjected to peer review.

In some cases, it might be too soon to know if promising results should be trusted or not, said Katherine Zeratsky, a registered dietitian with the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. For example, a study might show the benefits of a specific type of herb. But that doesn't necessarily mean the findings have been replicated in other research, a requirement for treatment methods to be considered proven effective, she said.

## George Foreman, the fearsome heavyweight who became a beloved champion, dies at 76

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

George Foreman became the heavyweight champion of the world in his 20s, only to lose his belt to Muhammad Ali in perhaps the most memorable fight in boxing history.

A full 20 years later in 1994, the 45-year-old Foreman became the oldest man to win the heavyweight championship, throwing one perfect combination to steal Michael Moorer's title in an epic upset.

Few fighters ever had more big moments than Big George Foreman — and even after he finally left the ring, he was only getting started.

The fearsome heavyweight, who lost the "Rumble in the Jungle" to Ali before his inspiring second act as a surprising champion and a successful businessman, died Friday night. Foreman was 76.

Foreman's family announced his death on social media, not saying how or where he died.

"A devout preacher, a devoted husband, a loving father and a proud grand- and great-grandfather, he lived a life marked by unwavering faith, humility and purpose," his family wrote. "A humanitarian, an Olympian and two-time heavyweight champion of the world, he was deeply respected. A force for good, a man of discipline, conviction, and a protector of his legacy, fighting tirelessly to preserve his good name— for his family."

A native Texan, Foreman began his boxing career as an Olympic gold medalist who inspired fear and awe as he climbed to the peak of the heavyweight division by stopping Joe Frazier in 1973. His formidable aura evaporated only a year later when Ali pulled off one of the most audacious victories in boxing history in Zaire, baiting and taunting Foreman into losing his belt.

Foreman left the sport a few years later, but returned after a 10-year absence and a self-described religious awakening.

The middle-aged fighter then pulled off one of the most spectacular knockouts in boxing history, flooring Moorer — 19 years his junior — with a surgical right hand and claiming Moorer's two heavyweight belts. Foreman's 20 years is easily the longest gap between heavyweight title reigns.

"His contribution to boxing and beyond will never be forgotten," former heavyweight champion of the world, Mike Tyson, said on X, formerly Twitter, as he expressed his condolences.

Foreman's transformation into an inspirational figure was complete, and he fought only four more times — finishing 76-5 with 68 knockouts — before moving onto his next career as a genial businessman, pitchman and occasional actor.

Outside the ring, he was best known as the face of the George Foreman Grill, which launched in the same year as his victory over Moorer. The simple cooking machine sold more than 100 million units and made him much wealthier than his sport ever did.

"George was a great friend to not only myself, but to my entire family," Top Rank president Bob Arum said. "We've lost a family member and are absolutely devastated."

In the first chapter of his boxing career, Foreman was nothing like the smiling grandfather who hawked his grills on television to great success.

Foreman dabbled in petty crime while growing up in Houston's Fifth Ward, but changed his life through boxing. He made the U.S. Olympic team in 1968 and won gold in Mexico City as a teenager, stopping a 29-year-old opponent in a star-making performance.

Foreman rose to the pinnacle of the pro game over the next five years, but was also perceived as an aloof, unfriendly athlete, both through his demeanor and through the skewed racial lenses of the time.

Jim Lampley, the veteran boxing broadcaster who worked alongside Foreman for many years at HBO, told The Associated Press on Friday night that Foreman's initial demeanor was an attempt by his camp to emulate Sonny Liston, the glowering heavyweight champ of the 1960s.

"At some point somewhere along the way, he realized that wasn't him," Lampley said.

Foreman stopped Frazier in an upset in Jamaica in January 1973 to win the belt, with his knockout inspiring Howard Cosell's iconic call: "Down goes Frazier! Down goes Frazier!"

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 88 of 93

Foreman defended his belt against Ken Norton before accepting the fight with Ali in the now-immortal bout staged in Africa by promoter Don King. Ali put on a tactical masterclass against Foreman, showing off the "rope-a-dope" strategy that frustrated and infuriated the champion. Foreman was eventually knocked down for the first time in his career, and the fight was stopped in the eighth round.

Foreman told the BBC in 2014 that he took the fight almost out of charity to Ali, who he suspected to be broke.

"I said I was going to go out there and kill him, and people said, 'Please, don't say you're going to kill Muhammad,'" Foreman said. "So I said, 'OK, I'll just beat him down to the ground.' That's how easy I thought the fight would be."

Exhausted and disillusioned, Foreman stopped fighting in 1977 and largely spent the next decade preaching and working with kids in Houston after his religious awakening. He returned to boxing in 1987 in his late 30s with a plan to defy time through frequent ring appearances, and he racked up a lengthy series of victories before losing to Evander Holyfield in a surprisingly competitive title fight in 1991.

Three years later, Foreman got in the ring with Moorer in Las Vegas, more for his celebrity than for his perceived ability to beat Moorer. The champion appeared to win the first nine rounds rather comfortably, with Foreman unable to land his slower punches. But Foreman came alive in the 10th, hurting Moorer before slipping in the short right hand that sent Moorer to the canvas in earth-shaking fashion.

Lampley, who was calling the fight, named his upcoming autobiography — which includes a prologue about Foreman — after his famous call of that moment: "It Happened!"

Foreman quit the ring for good in 1997, although he occasionally discussed a comeback. He settled into a life as a boxing analyst for HBO and as a pitchman for the grills that grew his fame and fortune. Much of the world soon knew Foreman as both a lovable friend and a ferocious fighter.

"He started performing as this pitchman, this product pitchman with the big, ever-present giant grin on his face," Lampley recalled. "When I was working with him, people would say, 'George is a big clown.' And I would say, 'Well, you can call him a clown, but he's actually a genius. He may be the greatest genius I've ever met.' And people would say, 'Well, genius, what do you mean?' I'd say, 'Well, check the bank account. If that isn't proof enough, I don't know what is.' So, he was a genius. He was a human genius."

Foreman briefly starred in a sitcom called "George" in the 1990s, and he even appeared on the reality singing competition "The Masked Singer" in 2022. A biographical movie based on his life was released in 2023.

Foreman had 12 children, including five sons who are all famously named George Edward Foreman.

"Legendary boxing champion, life-changing preacher, husband, father, grand- and great-grandfather and the best friend you could have," WBC President Mauricio Sulaiman wrote on social media. "His memory is now eternal, may Big George rest in peace."

## **Viral videos of dogs called a 'Himalayan fur goblin' and 'teacup werewolf' boost adoptions**

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — For over a decade, Adrian Budnick has taken adoption photos of the dogs at Nashville's county animal shelter, but it wasn't until the COVID pandemic that an idea came to her.

As one of only a few people allowed to visit in-person, she could take videos of dogs, inventing humorous nicknames and capturing their individual personalities, for an audience of potential adopters.

First came her TikToks playing the persona of Anita Walker, a fast-talking, cowboy boot-wearing purveyor of certified pre-owned pets. Then she struck gold with the "What's this then?" series — short videos featuring goofy dog names that drew in viewers and boosted adoptions.

Imaginative dog names made the videos go viral

"It was kind of just on a whim," Budnick said. "We had this — I'm assuming it was like a poodle-doodle situation, and he was really big and lanky."

People often assume the shelter doesn't have fluffy dogs, so Budnick adopted what she calls her "Karen"

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 89 of 93

voice — slightly bored and complaining — when she looked into the camera to say: “The shelter only has pit bulls.”

“And then I held up this giant curly dog with legs and the tongue hanging out. And I was like, ‘What’s this then?’”

She called it a “Himalayan fur goblin.”

The video “exploded over night,” Budnick said. So much so that she went back the next day to make another one “because I’m like, I can’t let this go.”

Since then she has promoted the adoption of such imaginative dog breeds as the “Teacup werewolf” and the “Speckled freckled cuddle calf.” Then there’s the “French baguette long lady” and the “Creamsicle push-up pup.”

The shelter does get its share of pit bull mixes. A December video featuring several of them in festive costumes with Budnick singing “I Want a Pitt-o-potomous for Christmas” has been viewed more than 5 million times.

Adoptions got a boost

While it is gratifying to gain visibility, Budnick said, the real payoff is in the adoptions. Data provided by the shelter shows dog adoptions increased by just over 25% between 2021 and 2024.

“We’ll get calls from all over. And it’s not just local here to Tennessee even,” said Metro Animal Care and Control Director Ashley Harrington. “We’ve had an adopter from Canada. We’ve had ones from states all over.”

She said people often call asking about a specific, made-up dog breed from one of the videos. “It’s been pretty great, and it’s been fun for our staff.”

The popularity of Budnick’s videos have also led to donations of both money and supplies. Letters to the shelter referencing her videos are taped to a wall in the volunteer room.

Still, like many other shelters in the South, it’s overcrowded.

Budnick has one thing to say about that situation: “Spay and neuter, spay and neuter, spay and neuter.”

Returning to photography — for the love of dogs

Budnick started taking photos as a kid. While on camping trips, she’d take nature pictures with a 35 mm Canon AE-1. In high school she took photography classes and learned to make her own prints in a darkroom. But eventually she stopped taking pictures.

That changed when she adopted a dog.

“When I got Ruby, my 13-year-old, she was five weeks old, and I started taking pictures of her,” she said. A few months later, Budnick adopted Ruby’s sister, and a few months after that she began as a volunteer photographer at the shelter. “So really, my dogs got me back into it.”

With her photos and videos, Budnick fights against the stigma that the shelter is a sad place with dogs no one would want. In many of the videos, she holds even the large dogs in her arms and gets her face licked.

“You see them running around in the videos when they’re in playgroup, and you see them cuddling, and you see their goofy smiles when I’m holding them, and it just really showcases them,” she said.

Budnick’s success has been noticed. She loves it when other shelters copy her ideas, or even lip sync over her videos while showing their own dogs, but she’s not interested in taking on more work. She has a regular job in addition to volunteering for the shelter between 7-10 hours each week, but she doesn’t mind the long hours.

“I’m just having fun,” she said. “I absolutely love dogs. I think they’re the best thing on earth.”

## More states requiring paid medical or sick leave

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Hannah Jones credits paid medical leave with helping her survive an aggressive form of breast cancer. Her employer provided time off for chemotherapy treatments and to recover from surgery. Most importantly: Jones didn’t have to delay care for work, something doctors warned against.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 90 of 93**

"I am cancer-free because I followed the treatment plan," the 35-year-old said. "I am an example of how paid (medical leave) makes a huge difference in the life and survival of a cancer patient."

More states are passing or considering laws that require employers to offer leave like this. Advocates say these laws can reduce financial stress and make workers more productive. But some measures also stress employers, and the patchwork nature of different state laws can create frustration.

What are the different types of leave?

Paid family and medical leave allows workers time off to undergo a treatment or care for a family member or a new child.

Separately, more states and cities also are requiring paid sick time, which helps people deal with shorter-term illnesses like the flu. Nineteen states plus Washington, D.C., have laws requiring paid sick time, as do 17 cities and four counties, according to the non-profit National Partnership for Women and Families.

Many employers also offer paid sick time without a government mandate.

Laws requiring longer-term paid family and medical leave are less common. Thirteen states and D.C. require some version of it, according to the National Partnership.

Details of these laws can vary by state. Some, for example, allow employers to provide only partial pay for certain types of leave.

Some states or municipalities also have laws requiring specific types of paid time off. New York recently enacted a paid leave law for prenatal medical checkups. Some laws also give people time off to care for themselves or a family member dealing with domestic violence or sexual assault.

There is no federal law requiring paid leave. The Family and Medical Leave Act guarantees only unpaid time off. It also doesn't apply to a large chunk of the workforce, including employees of small businesses that are exempt.

This makes the U.S. a "major outlier" globally, according to Aleta Sprague of UCLA's World Policy Analysis Center. She said that 95% of countries provide some kind of paid leave for personal health.

"And in most countries that are our economic peers, it's a substantial amount of leave," she said.

What are the arguments for paid time off?

Advocates say providing paid sick time can reduce the spread of disease.

It also can improve production by cutting down on "presenteeism," or people showing up for work sick and unable to focus on their jobs, said Jessica Mason, a senior policy analyst with the National Partnership.

Paid leave for longer-term illnesses can help people focus on care and recovery.

Jones said she was able to take every Friday off for weeks during treatment to get chemotherapy. That gave her the weekend to be a "couch zombie" and recover before returning to work.

Paid leave also helped Jones and her husband stay afloat financially. They faced around \$14,000 in medical bills even with insurance.

"We might have had to cash out our 401(k)s," she said. "We might have had to sell our house if I hadn't had that paycheck continue."

What are the drawbacks?

Skye Nevada has cancelled plans to hire about 30 or 40 temporary employees for her Anchorage, Alaska, catering company and seasonal restaurant, The Bridge Co. She says she can't afford her state's new paid sick leave law.

Nevada said that when someone calls in sick, she would have to pay that person and their replacement, who would likely get overtime.

"To expect small businesses to just absorb this cost is crazy," Nevada said, adding that the business will only host private events instead of opening to the public this summer during tourist season.

Small businesses often don't have a separate human resources department to track compliance with mandated leave policies, noted Beth Milito of the National Federation for Independent Business.

"The paperwork is time, and time is money to a small business owner," she said.

Experts say the patchwork nature of the laws can be an additional hassle for multi-state employers.

It affects patients too.

Jones, who is helping the nonprofit Children First advocate for a Pennsylvania family leave law, had paid

leave through her New York-based employer.

But her husband's Pennsylvania company didn't offer it. That left the suburban Philadelphia resident cobbling together help from family members during treatment after her husband used his vacation time and had to return to work.

Where do things go from here?

Sprague doesn't see a federal law requiring paid leave happening anytime soon. But momentum is building in the states.

Voters in Missouri, Nebraska and Alaska approved paid sick leave laws in November.

At least seven states are considering paid family and medical leave laws this year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Mason says interest in paid leave has been building since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The pandemic really brought to the forefront of everyone's mind how important paid sick leave is," she said.

## **James Monroe's Oak Hill estate has historic roots. Some hope to preserve it as a Virginia park**

By OLIVIA DIAZ Associated Press/Report for America

ALDIE, Va. (AP) — The room where President James Monroe crafted part of his famed doctrine exudes a quiet, stately atmosphere.

Inside the enclosed west porch a few footsteps away, a quarried-stone floor marked by fossilized dinosaur tracks glimmers in the sunlight. Just around the corner, a portico built by enslaved African Americans looks out over rolling foothills stretching into the misty northern Virginia horizon, a captivating view untarnished by monied property developments bellying up nearby.

It's an early morning at Oak Hill, where centuries of history are deeply rooted in Monroe's Loudoun County estate. It's the last home of a presidential Founding Father still in private hands, according to conservation experts.

That is, maybe, until now.

The DeLashmutt family, which has owned Oak Hill in the community of Aldie since 1948, hopes to convert its sprawling 1,240 acres (502 hectares) into a state park. A bill to that effect unanimously passed the House of Delegates last month but failed in the Senate.

The DeLashmutts, along with a nonprofit corporation, The Conservation Fund, hope Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin will revive the multimillion-dollar project by including it in his proposed amendment to the budget bill ahead of the General Assembly's veto session. The governor has until Monday to submit his revisions.

"We've taken good care of it," family matriarch Gayle DeLashmutt said, gazing up at trees in the garden during a recent tour of the grounds. "And I think it's time to let somebody else do it."

A long history of family ownership

The DeLashmutt family, which is unrelated to the Monroes, is part of a long line of Virginians who have lived in Oak Hill. Other Founding Fathers' homes in the state — Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, George Washington's Mount Vernon and Monroe's Highland estate — are owned by educational and historical institutions that open the estates' doors to the public.

The residence at Oak Hill has a complex heritage: At the top of a split staircase leading to the entrance sits a gifted bell from the decommissioned USS Oak Hill. Inside, elegant parlors feature fireplace mantelpieces made of decadent marble, a gift from Monroe's longtime friend, the Marquis de LaFayette, to thank first lady Elizabeth Kortright Monroe for saving his wife from the guillotine. On an interior windowpane, a young man with the last name of Fairfax, a family that previously owned the house, scratched his name and the date of his graduation from the Virginia Military Institute.

Gayle DeLashmutt's daughter, India DeLashmutt, grew up on the estate, charging about on go-carts and sledding down steep hills in the same place that Monroe hosted first lady Dolley Madison more than

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, March 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 271 ~ 92 of 93**

100 years earlier. Her father used to tell her stories about finding arrowheads in Little River, a tributary that streams through the property.

"There's just this span of time, and this place can really represent it," she said.

Histories of enslaved residents and Indigenous generations

The estate also embodies the histories of the enslaved African Americans who built and cared for the property.

There is George Williams, an enslaved carpenter who constructed the main house in Oak Hill, according to independent researcher Emily Stanfill. And Natus Berryman, who lived at Oak Hill before being forced to move to the South, said Lori Kimball, another researcher.

Opening the estate to the public full time would allow people to learn more about their stories, Kimball said.

Donna Bohanan, chair of the Black History Committee at a Loudon County genealogical library, said it would also educate the public about the Indigenous people and tenant farmers who lived on and worked the land.

"I advocate for not just focusing on the great men of history or military history because that leaves out a lot," Bohanan said. "By telling our more inclusive stories, we can start to see the connections between all of us as members of the human race."

Uncertain commitment from Virginia

Loudoun County has allocated \$22 million toward the roughly \$52 million needed to support the project, while The Conservation Fund and other groups have raised another nearly \$25 million. The family is selling the property for \$20 million. The Conservation Fund says the state won't have to pay a dime toward the project.

The legislation for such an acquisition, backed by Democratic Del. Alfonso Lopez, passed unanimously in the Virginia House last month but stalled in the state Senate. During the final days of the session, Democratic Sen. L. Louise Lucas told reporters that she thought the bill was an excellent idea but expressed concern about long-term commitments from the state, even if it has no upfront financial obligation.

"That's a lot of park for somebody to take care of," she said. "Those are the kinds of things you have to consider when you're working on these budgets."

Youngkin said Wednesday he was initially resistant to the project because he was not sure the business plan was fully fleshed out. But he said he felt less uneasy after touring the estate with Republican Del. Geary Higgins, whose district includes Oak Hill.

"We had a good visit, and I'm still trying to decide what we do," Youngkin said. "No promises, but I'm open-minded."

## Today in History: March 23

### 'Titanic' wins record-tying 11 Academy Awards

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, March 23, the 82nd day of 2025. There are 283 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 23, 1998, "Titanic" tied an Academy Awards record by winning 11 Oscars, including best picture, best director for James Cameron and best original song for "My Heart Will Go On."

Also on this date:

In 1775, Patrick Henry delivered an address to the Virginia Provincial Convention in which it is said he declared, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

In 1919, Benito Mussolini founded his Fascist political movement in Milan, Italy.

In 1933, the German Reichstag adopted the Enabling Act, which effectively granted Adolf Hitler dictatorial powers.

In 1942, the first Japanese Americans incarcerated by the U.S. Army during World War II arrived at the internment camp at Manzanar, California.

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In 1965, America's first two-person space mission took place as Gemini 3 blasted off with astronauts Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom and John W. Young aboard for a nearly 5-hour flight orbiting Earth.

In 1993, scientists announced they'd identified the gene that causes Huntington's disease.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, a \$938 billion health care overhaul.

In 2021, a cargo ship the size of a skyscraper ran aground and became wedged in the Suez Canal; hundreds of ships would be prevented from passing through the canal until the vessel was freed six days later.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Chaka Khan is 72. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Geno Auriemma is 71. Fashion designer Kenneth Cole is 71. Actor Amanda Plummer is 68. Actor Hope Davis is 61. Musician Damon Albarn is 57. Basketball Hall of Famer Jason Kidd is 52. Actor Randall Park is 51. Actor Michelle Monaghan is 49. Actor Keri Russell is 49. Country singer Brett Young is 44.